

from the general catastrophe, also arrived about the same period, when their circumstances have been similar, at the same degree of civilization. Now, it might be thought, from the identity of the names of the Chinese astronomers in different reigns (they appear, according to the Chou-king, to have all been named *Hi* and *Ho*), that, at this remote epoch, their profession was hereditary in China, as it was in India, Egypt, and Babylon.

The only Chinese observation of any antiquity, which has nothing in itself to prove its want of authenticity, is that of the shadow made by *Tcheou-kong* about 1100 years before Christ; and even it is far from being correct*.

Hence our readers may conclude, that the inferences drawn from the alleged perfection of astronomical science among ancient nations, is not more conclusive in favour of the excessive antiquity of those nations, than the testimonies which they have adduced in reference to themselves.

But had this astronomy been more perfect, what would it prove? Has the progress been calculated which this science ought to make among

* See, in the *Connaissance des Temps* of 1809, p. 382, and in M. Delambre's *Histoire de l'Astronomie ancienne*, vol. i. p. 391, the extract of a memoir by P. Gaubil, on the Observations of the Chinese.