

though a writer of credit in other respects, had spoken very childishly in that matter. In another epistle prefixed to the work (by Andreas Osiander), the reader is reminded that the hypotheses of astronomers are not necessarily asserted to be true, by those who propose them, but only to be a way of *representing* facts. We may observe that, in the time of Copernicus, when the motion of the earth had not been connected with the physical laws of matter and motion, it could not be considered so distinctly real as it necessarily was held to be in after times.

The delay of the publication of Copernicus's work brought it to the end of his life; he died in the year 1543, in which it was published. It was entitled *De Revolutionibus Orbium Cœlestium Libri VI*. He received the only copy he ever saw on the day of his death, and never opened it: he had then, says Gassendi, his biographer, other cares. His system was, however, to a certain extent, promulgated, and his fame diffused before that time. Cardinal Schomberg, in his letter of 1536, which has been already mentioned, says, "Some years ago, when I heard tidings of your merit by the constant report of all persons, my affection for you was augmented, and I congratulated the men of our time, among whom you flourish in so much honor. For I had understood that you were not only acquainted with the discoveries of ancient mathematicians, but also had formed a new system of the world, in which you teach that the Earth moves, the Sun occupies the lowest, and consequently, the middle place, the sphere of the fixed stars remains immovable and fixed, and the Moon, along with the elements included in her sphere, placed between the orbits (*cœlum*) of Mars and Venus, travels round the sun in a yearly revolution."<sup>8</sup> The writer goes on to say that he has heard that Copernicus has written a book (*Commentarios*), in which this system is applied to the construction of Tables of the Planetary Motions (*erraticarum stellarum*). He then proceeds to entreat him earnestly to publish his lucubrations.

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<sup>8</sup> This passage has so important a place in the history, that I will give it in the original:—"Intellexeram te non modo veterum mathematicorum inventa egregie callere sed etiam novam mundi rationem constituisse: Qua doccas terram moveri: solem inum mundi, atque medium locum obtinere: cœlum octavum immotum atque fixum perpetuo manere: Lunam se una cum inclusis sue sphere elementis, inter Martis et Veneris cœlum sitam, anniversario cursu circum solem convertore. Atque de hac tota astronomiæ ratione commentarios a te confectos esse, ac erraticarum stellarum motus calculis subductos tabulis te contulisse, maxima omnium cum admiratione. Quaniobrem vir doctissimo, nisi tibi molestus sum, te etiam atque etiam oro vehementer ut hoc tuum inventum studiosis communices, et tuas de mundi sphaera lucubrations, una cum Tabulis et si quid habes præterea quod ad eandem rem pertinet primo quoque tempore ad me mittas."