

men to free themselves from the prejudices of the senses, and to interpret their testimony in such a manner as to conceive the sphericity of the earth. It is natural that they should have stopped at this point, before putting the earth in motion in space."

Some of the expressions which have been understood as describing a system in which the Sun is the *centre of motion*, do really imply merely the Sun is the *middle term* of the series of heavenly bodies which revolve round the earth : the series being Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. This is the case, for instance, in a passage of Cicero's *Vision of Scipio*, which has been supposed to imply (as I have stated in the History), that Mercury and Venus revolve about the Sun.

But though the doctrine of the diurnal rotation and annual revolution of the earth is not the doctrine of Pythagoras, or of Philolaus, or of Plato, it was nevertheless held by some of the philosophers of antiquity. The testimony of Archimedes that this doctrine was held by his contemporary Aristarchus of Samos, is unquestionable ; and there is no reason to doubt Plutarch's assertion that Seleucus further enforced it.

It is curious that Copernicus appears not to have known any thing of the opinions of Aristarchus and Seleucus, which were really anticipations of his doctrine ; and to have derived his notion from passages which, as I have been showing, contain no such doctrine. He says, in his Dedication to Pope Paul III., "I found in Cicero that Nicetas [or Hicetas] held that the earth was in motion : and in Plutarch I found that some others had been of that opinion ; and his words I will transcribe, that any one may read them : 'Philosophers in general hold that the earth is at rest. But Philolaus the Pythagorean teaches that it moves round the central fire in an oblique circle, in the same direction as the Sun and the Moon. Heraclides of Pontus and Ecphantus the Pythagorean give the earth a motion, but not a motion of translation ; they make it revolve like a wheel about its own centre from west to east.' " This last opinion was a correct assertion of the diurnal motion.

The Eclipse of Thales.

"THE Eclipse of Thales" is so remarkable a point in the history of astronomy, and has been the subject of so much discussion among astronomers, that it ought to be more especially noticed. The original