

15th, avers that he *had a good view of it on the 14th*, and remarked nothing particular in its appearance. Be that as it may, the comet from a single became a double one. What domestic troubles caused the secession it is impossible to conjecture, but the two receded farther and farther from each other up to a certain moderate distance, with some degree of mutual communication and a very odd interchange of light—one day one head being brighter and another the other—till they seem to have agreed finally to part company. The oddest part of the story, however, is yet to come. The year 1852 brought round the time for their reappearance, and behold! there they both were, at about the same distance from each other, and both visible in one telescope.

(37.) The orbit of this comet very nearly indeed intersects that of the earth on the place which the earth occupies on the 30th of November. If ever the earth is to be swallowed up by a comet, or to swallow up one, it will be on or about that day of the year. In the year 1832 we missed it by a month. The head of the comet enveloped that point of our orbit, but this happened on the 29th of October, so that we escaped that time. Had a meeting taken place, from what we know of comets, it is most probable that no harm would have happened, and that nobody would have known anything about it.*

* It would appear that we are happily relieved from the dread of such a collision. It is now (Feb. 1866) over due! Its orbit has been recomputed and an ephemeris calculated. Astronomers have been eagerly looking out for its reappearance for the last two months, when, according to all former experience, it ought to have