

for its readers, since God himself waited fully six thousand years until there came a man capable of comprehending and admiring his works."

The immortal GALILEO GALILEI* was one of the most ardent



FIG. 16.—GALILEO.

believers in the Copernican system. Making use, for the first time, of the simple astronomical telescope which he had constructed on the mere hint of the discovery of such an instrument, Galileo established the movement of rotation of the planet Venus, and that of the planet Mercury, around the Sun. Reasoning by analogy, he concluded that the Earth moved; confirming this fundamental truth by those other arguments which Kepler had laid down.

The religious bigotry of his age compelled the immortal Florentine to expiate by cruel sufferings the presumed iniquity of his scientific convictions. Alas! who is not familiar with the melancholy tale of

"The starry Galileo, with his woes"?

In 1633 the Roman Inquisition decreed the arrest of the philosopher, and he was condemned to imprisonment for having professed and enunciated the principle of the Earth's motion in space, contrary, as they were pleased to assert, to the statements of the Scriptures. Threatened with the rack, the feeble old man, worn with seventy winters and physical infirmity, humbled himself before his persecutors, and on his knees abjured the glorious truths of the new philosophy. We subjoin the formula to which he affixed his signature, after

* [Galileo Galilei was born at Pisa, of an ancient Florentine family, on the 15th of February 1564. His great discovery of the four satellites of Jupiter was made on the night of the 7th of January 1610. He died at Arcetri, January 8th, 1642, at the age of 78.]