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THE  
Petitioning-COMET:

Or, a Brief

CHRONOLOGY

Of all the Famous

COMETS,

And their EVENTS,

That have happen'd from the Birth of CHRIST,  
to this very day.

Together with a Modest Enquiry into  
this present COMET.

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*Cum Deus puniturus est Gentem vel Urbem, prodigiis id prius solet significare. Herodot. lib. 6.*

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*2206.*

*Cy. Pamph.*  
*2206.*

*1.*

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**LONDON:** Printed by NAT. THOMPSON, next door to the  
Groff-Keys in Fetter-lane, 1681.

THE GREAT COMET

GERONTOLOGY

COMETS

AND ITS EVENTS

The history of the comet of 1811  
and its return.

Together with a Model Enquiry into  
this present COMET

By Thomas Digges, Esq. of the Middle Temple  
and of the University of Cambridge.



Printed by N. & J. Johnson, next door to the  
Coffee House in Pall-mall, 1781.

# A LETTER out of the Country,

FROM THE

AUTHOR to the PRINTER.

SIR,

Since my last recess from *London*, I have wholly devoted my self to Contemplation; which is as natural to a Country life, as Flattery to the Court, Debauchery to the Town, Cozening to the City, and Fawning to the Clergy. Now of this Contemplation I have spent some part in the Evenings, about observing the Motion and Progress of this so-much-talkt-of COMET, and in this enclosed have sent you the Result of my Thoughts concerning it, together with a Meteorological Compendium of all the most remarkable BLAZING-STARS, that have been at any time conspicuous from the Nativity of Christ, to this very day: as also the Events and Misfortunes both to Kings and Kingdoms, that have attended each of those Meteors. This present Comet (it's true) is of a menacing Aspect, but if the *New Parliament* (for whose Convention so many good men pray) continue long to sit, I fear not but the STAR will lose its virulence and malignancy, or at least its portent be averted from this our Nation; which being the humble request to God of all good men, makes me thus entitle it, *A Petitioning-Comet*. Now as for you, *my old Friend*, I must confess the late Noise abroad of your being a *Papist*, or at least *Popishly affected*, made me at first hesitate whether I might with safety entrust any more Papers with you, or proceed in our old Acquaintance as formerly; but when upon mature deliberation I recollected all your former Letters and Discourses, as well as examined what several eminent Pieces against *Popery* you have published, even such as would be a damning Sin in the very *Pope* himself to dispense with, after this I soon satisfy'd my Reason with the absurdity of the Report; and from that time, examined every one of your Adversaries *Intelligences*, with as great expectation to find that the Emperor of *Turky* was turn'd a *Christian*, and the *Pope* a *Protestant*.

As

As for News out of these parts, we have not any, save a Popular Rumour of a Parochial Church in the North, that was lately in danger of being consumed by Fire, for that the Patron (whether a *Papist*, *Protestant*, or any thing I know not) out of ill will to his Neighbours, though to his own chief Loss, deny'd them any of the adjacent Water, whereof he had the sole propriety; nay though the *Church-wardens*, and Officers of the Parish made their several *Addresses* and *Petitions* to him for Water, and often solicited him thereto even with *Money* it self, as well as with a *Representation* of the flaming *State* of his own Church; yet did he still persist in denying them, although in a very obliging manner: for nevertheless he told them, that if they could find out any other *Expedient* whereby to quench the Fire, he would to his utmost assist them, but for Water he positively declared they should have none: Nay so obliging was he, as to propose an *Expedient* to them himself; which was, that half a core broad-backt Country-Fellows should joyn forces together on the top of the Steeple, and there try to *Piſs out the Fire*: But this Proposal being slighted as ridiculous, the Fire proceeded vigorously, till at last the Sparkles flying so high, that they began to reach the Patron's own Barns, and burnt one or two of his Hay-ricks; Necessity, and not good Nature, made him then grow wise too late, and help his Neighbours with Water, without either *Money* or *Thanks*, whereas before he might have had both, but now they would give him neither. However by this means the substantial Body of the Church was preserv'd, although miserably defaced; but the Chancel, Altar, Vestry, Surplice, and other pieces of Ceremony therein reposed, were (as I am inform'd) totally consumed before the Controversie was ended. Now whether this be true or no, I cannot certainly affirm, but if you esteem it a Fable, 'twill do as well.

Your Friend,

DEMOCRITUS.

A

*A brief Chronology of all the famous COMETS  
that have happened, from the Nativity of  
CHRIST, to this very day.*

**H**OW it comes to pass (saith the most wise *Florentine*) I know not; Machiav. disc. 1. b. 1. c. 56. but by Ancient and Modern example it is evident, that no great accident befalls a City or Province, but it is presaged by Divination, or Prodigy, or Astrology, or some way or other; and that I may not go far for my proof, every one knows what was foretold by Frier *Girolamo Savonarola*, before the Expedition of *Charles* the 8<sup>th</sup>. into *Italy*; besides which, it was reported all over *Tuscany*, that there were armed men seen fighting in the Air over the Town of *Arezzo*, and that the clashing of their Arms in the conflict, was heard by the people. It is generally known in *Florence*, that before the death of the old *Laurence de Medici*, the *Dicomo* or chief Church in that City was struck with Lightning, and the people destroy'd: and before *Piero Soderini* (who was made *Gonfaloniere* for his life by the people) was banish'd and degraded, the Palace was likewise burnt by Lightning. Many other Instances might be produced, which I omit for brevity sake: I shall only add one, which is mention'd by *Livy*, before the coming of the *French* to *Rome*. *Marcus Cedetius* a Plebeian acquainted the Senate, that passing one night about twelve a clock through the *Via Nova*, he heard a voice (bigger then a man's) which advised him to let the Senate know, the *French* were upon their march to *Rome*. Now how these things could be, it is to be discoursed by persons well versed in the causes of Natural and Supernatural Events; for my part, I will not pretend to understand them, unless (according to the opinion of some Philosophers) we may believe, that the Air being full of Intelligences and Spirits, who foreseeing future Events, and commiserating the condition of Mankind, give them warning by such like intimations, that they may the more timely provide and defend themselves against their Calamities. But whatever is the cause, Experience assures us, that after such denunciations, some extraordinary thing or other does constantly happen, as by the sequel of this discourse will more fully appear.

Concerning the nature of Comets in general, many and various are the Opinions of the Learned: some took the Comet to have been a Star, ordained and created from the beginning of the World, but appearing only at such and such times; of this mind was *Seneca*; and *Cardan* also harps Natur. Quest. 1. 7. c. 22, 23. much upon the same string: to the same effect I am likewise inform'd, that a learned Prelate of this Nation will suddenly publish an ingenious Treatise, wherein he will make it appear, that Astrologers may foretell such Comets, with the same certainty as they do Eclipses. But *Aristotle* (on whose Judgment I most depend) conceiveth the matter of the Comet to be an hot, dry, and clammy Exhalation, which being lifted up by the

force and vertue of the Sun, into the highest Region of the Air, is there inflamed, partly by the Element of Fire on which it bordereth, and partly by the motion of the Heavens which hurleth it about ; so as there is the same matter of an Earthquake, Wind, Lightning, and a Comet : if it be imprison'd in the bowels of the Earth, it causeth an *Earthquake* ; if it ascend to the middle Region of the Air, and from thence repell'd, it produceth *Wind* ; if it enters that Region, and be there environed with a thick Cloud, it sends forth *Lightning* ; but if it passeth that Region, it then becomes a *Comet*, or some other fiery Meteor, in case the matter be not sufficiently capable thereof.

Now of these *Ignita mixta*, some continue a longer, and some a shorter time ; seven days is the least, but some have been visible six months together ; all which happeneth according to the scarcity or plenty of the matter whereof it consisteth. In a Comet there are two things remarkable ; the *colour*, and the *fashion*.

As for their *colours*, they are usually but of three sorts : 1. If the matter be thin, then the colour is white : 2. If reasonably thick, then the colour is ruddy, resembling Fire : and 3. If very thick, then their colour is like the burning of Brimstone, or of a blue appearance. Yet nevertheless they are not always so exactly of these three colours, without any different tincture, but as near them as the disposing of their matter will admit ; so that instead of white, we sometimes have them of a yellowish colour ; and instead of a blue, of a watchet or greenish colour, and the like.

In the next place, as for their *shapes* or *forms*, (if we stand upon a curious examination of them) they may be manifold, however *Aristotle* resolves them into two, all their other shapes being dependant on these two : For first, either they seem round, with Beams about them, which cometh to pass when the Matter is thin on the edges, and thick every where else ; or secondly, they seem as it were with a Beard or Tail, which happeneth when it is but meanly thick towards some one side or other, and rather long than round. But some would have these two fashions, to be three, because the Tail hangs downward sometimes, as well as side-long ; and so there is by this means *Stella crinita*, *Stella caudata*, and *Stella barbata* : concerning which, I am not solicitous.

Now concerning the Prognostications of such Meteors, many and various are the opinions of all Meteorologists ; whether Comets or Blazing-Stars be generally of such terrible effects, as elder times have conceiv'd them, is (saith Dr. *Brown*) very uncertain : for since it is found that many from whence these predictions are drawn, have been above the Moon, why may they not be qualified from their Positions and Aspects which they hold with Stars of favourable natures ? or why, since they may be conceived to arise from the *Effluvioms* of other Stars, may they not retain the benignity of their Originals ? or since the natures of the fixed Stars are Astrologically differenced by the Planets, and are esteem'd Martial or Jovial, according to the colour, whereby they answer these Planets ; why although the red Comets do carry the portensions of *Mars*, should not the brightly white be of the influence of *Jupiter* or *Venus*, answerably unto *Cor Scorpii* and *Arcturus*, is not absurd to doubt. Therefore some are of opinion, that this superstitious dread of Comets may possibly

*Brown*  
Vulg. Err.  
1.6. c. 14.

bly proceed from some terrour struck into mens thoughts by reason of their rare and unexpected appearance, rather than from any certain ground of knowledge of the reason of the thing it self; as if all but the history of them, were only uncertain conjectures. For (say they) although it may be true, that after such Comets have appear'd, strange things have happen'd, yet is there no more connexion of causality between the Comet, and the deaths of Great men, or Alterations of Government and Religion, than (as the ingenious Sir *Thomas More* instances) that the building of *Tenterden* Steeple was (as the old Sage would have it) the cause of *Goodwin Sands*; because the one appear'd presently upon the building of the other. And that the Almighty (they say) hath given these Signs in the Celestial or Aerial Regions, not only to affrighten such mortals as pretend not but to be ignorant what they are; nor only to exercise the curiosity of others, who affect an enquiry into such things; but also to puzzle (it may be) and discover the vanity of those, who would be thought ignorant of nothing, be it never so much above them; and who choolse rather to adventure the after-censure of Folly, then quit the Ambition and vain-glory of being thought Prophets, if the event chance to answer their prediction, by interpreting the portent of those things which fore-signifie (it may be) nothing, or at best they know not what: For (say they) no certain knowledge, or scarce a satisfactory probability, appearing of *what a thing is*, who shall pretend to know *what it signifies*; when no one would think, but *that* should (in reason) be known *before*, if not more *easily* than *this*.

Accordingly (saith Dr. *Hakewell*) the late Lord Privy-Seal, and Earl of *Northampton*, in his *Defensative against the poison of supposed Prophecies*, Apolog. l. 2. sect. 6. sheweth that as Comets do not always fore-run such Events, so neither do such Events always follow upon the appearing of Comets: some instances he produceth of Comets, which brought with them such abundance of all things, as stories have recorded it for Monuments and Miracles to posterity: And the like, saith he, could I say of others, *An. Dom.* 1555, 1556, 1557, 1558. after all which years nothing happen'd that should drive a man to seek out any cause above the common reach: and therefore I allow the diligence of *Gemma Frisius*, taking notice of as many good, as bad effects, which have succeeded after Comets. Moreover he tells us, that *Pecner* a great Mathematician of *Germany*, prognosticated upon the last Comet before the writing of his *Defensative*, that mens Bodies should be burnt up with heat; But how fell it out? we had not (saith he) a more unkind Summer for many years, in respect of extraordinary Cold; nor was there any inclination to War, or any Prince deceas'd at that time; but on the contrary, the Plague which had raged before in *Lombardy*, as God would have it, ceased at the rising of that Comet. Queen *Elizabeth* (1558.) being then at *Richmond*, and being dissuaded from looking on a Comet which did then appear, made answer, *Facta est alea*, the Dice are thrown; thereby intimating, that the pre-order'd providence of God, was above the influence of any Star or Comet. Neither (saith he) do I remember that any Comet appear'd before her death, as at her entrance there did; nor before the decease of Prince *Henry*, nor of *Henry* the Great of *France*, all three famous Princes.

Charle-



*Charlemagne* profess'd, that he fear'd not the sign of a Blazing-Star, but the great and potent Creator thereof; and so much fear consists both with Christianity, and prudence:

Ὁυδὲν κομήτης, ὅστις ἔχεται φέρον.

Also *Manilius*:

*Nunquam futilibus excanduit ignibus aether.*

That Comets of themselves are mischievous, I disown; yet how knows any man but that they may be set there as menaces of the Almighty's Anger? The common opinion hath been, that New Stars, Comets, and the like, either as signs or causes, or both, have always prognosticated some dreadful misfortune to the World, as outrageous Winds, extraordinary Drought, Déarth, Pestilence, Wars, death of Princes, &c. Accordingly we find the wise men of the East prophecying, that our Saviour (at whose Birth a new Star appear'd) should bring destruction upon the Kingdom of the Jews, his Native Country. But that which above all others does most influence me, is the experience of former Ages, wherein 'twas rarely observ'd that any terrible Comet appear'd, without an effect altogether as terrible. There is no general Rule without an Exception; and as we must not define Luxury to be a Vertue in a Prince, because some few extravagant Princes have lived and died happily beyond expectation; so neither must we esteem a Comet the less ominous, because one in a hundred has proved a Blessing to the people, although fatal to *Nero*.

There are many Authors who have wrote concerning Comets, some in particular Treatises upon that subject, and some only by the by: as *Josephus*, *Manilius*, *Xiphiline*, *Pliny*, *Seneca*, *Suetonius*, *Eusebius*, *Nicephorus*, *Pontanus*, *Amerbachius*, *Niphus*, *Apiarius*, *Funccius*, *Mylichius*, *Carrion*, *Cufrinianus*, *Suessanus*, *Peucerus*, *Camerarius*, *Aretius*, *Garcaus*, *Grimineus*, *Pratorius*, *Dasypodius*, *Latomus*, *Celichius*, *Ireanus*, *Zeisius*, *Nagelius*, *Keckermannus*, *Puteanus*, *Lyosthenes*, *de prodigiis ab orbe condito*, and others; out of whom, but more especially out of *Alstedius* his Chronology, I have perfected this following Breviary of all the Comets that have occur'd from *Christ's* time, to this very day. As for those that happen'd before *Christ*, History mentions not above ten or eleven, and therein they vary: however the most eminent of them were that which happen'd *A. M.* 3519. before the *Peloponnesian War*; and those which preceded *Julius Caesar's* death; whereof *Virgil* speaks:

*Non alius cælo ceciderunt plura sereno*

*Fulgura, nec diri toties arsere Cometa.*

An. Ch.

13. A Comet was seen, at which time *Quintilius Varus* was slain by the  *Germans*, under the conduct of *Arminius*.
16. The death of *Augustus Caesar* was foretold by several bloody Comets.
56. Being the year that *Claudius* died, not only a Comet was seen, but also it rained Blood: as if one had portended the death of *Claudius*, and the other the Reign of his wicked successor *Nero*; who murder'd his Wife, his Mother, and his Schoolmaster *Seneca*, besides the many other robberies and exorbitances he committed.
57. Was seen a Comet and 3 Suns, to usher in the bloody Reign of *Nero*.

Appear'd

62. Appear'd another Comet that lasted 6 months, which predicted the tragical end of *Nero*, and so proved fatal to the Prince, although favourable to the people.
66. A Comet also raged for 6 months together, which was succeeded by a terrible Earthquake, wherewith *Laodicea*, *Hierapolis*, and the Inhabitants of *Colossis* in *Natolia* suffer'd much.
68. A Comet like a flaming Sword was seen hanging over the City of *Jerusalem*, in *Judea*, and elsewhere, which portended the destruction of that holy City.
69. Appear'd a Comet, which is call'd *Acontia*, from the resemblance it hath of a Dart.
77. Was seen that Comet, which *Titus* the Emperor describ'd in Verse.
78. A Comet was beheld about *Cyprus* and other places, where soon after many Cities were shaken with a dreadful Earthquake.
79. Terrible Winds, Earthquakes, and Plague, raging at *Rome*, succeeded a Comet; which Comet being shew'd to *Vespasian*, he jestingly said, *This bushy Star belongs not to me, but the Parthian King, Ipse enim comatus est, ego vero calvus sum*: however *Vespasian* soon after died, notwithstanding his Quibble.
181. Was seen a Comet, which resembling a Beard, was call'd *Pogonias*. At this time the Temple of Peace being burnt, many Wars and Troubles followed at *Rome*, which was imputed to the wicked Life of *Commodus*.
190. A Comet boded the burning of the Capitol, as also War and Pestilence.
195. In the time of *Severus* a Comet was seen, of which, it was the opinion at *Rome*, that it portended some great Evil.
323. Divers Comets preceeded the pestilent Heresie of *Arius*.
377. A Comet foreran that almost universal Earthquake, when the Sea, transgressing its bounds, devoured many Cities and people.
383. Appear'd a Comet like *Lucifer*, which from its resemblance of a Sword was named *Xiphias*, and besides many other Mischiefs, portended the Invasion of *Eugenius*.
389. The same *Luciferan* Comet was likewise seen.
405. Under *Arcadius* a Comet was seen, which signified his death.
410. A Comet appear'd like a Sword, which portended many Evil's. About this time *Rome* was besieg'd by *Alaricus* King of the *Goths*; besides sundry calamities that happen'd as well in the East as West; for then was there so great a slaughter of men, that no Age can parallel from the beginning of the World: All *Europe* suffer'd, together with great part of *Asia* and *Africa*; War, Famine, Drought, and Pestilence infested the whole Universe: there was also at this time so great an Eclipse of the Sun, that the Stars appear'd at Noon-day.
418. Under *Honorius* another Comet appear'd, which was succeeded by an Insurrection throughout all *Spain* and *Italy*.
443. A Comet was seen, and Bloud flowed at *Tholouse*.
448. A Comet shining for many days together, there happen'd a terrible Earthquake; also *Attyla*, having after a long Siege taken *Aquileia*, gave terrour to *Vincentia*, *Verona*, *Millane*, *Pavia*, *Basil*, *Argentina*, *Vormatia*, *Cologne*, and other Cities upon the *Rhine*, till at length he was overthrown in a great Battel in the Campaign Fields.

A.C.

459. A Comet and other Prodigies happen'd, after which a Plague destroy'd many.
519. A bearded Comet appear'd, which portended an Earthquake, wherein many Cities and Men perish'd.
533. Another Comet blazed under *Justinian*, which was succeeded not only by an Earthquake that lasted for ten days, but also by a Sedition at *Constantinople*, and Plague at *Antioch*, and other places.
550. A Comet appear'd in the form of a Lance, soon after which *Rome* was taken by *Totila*, and *Franconia* and *Turingia* wasted by the *Huns*.
589. A Comet gave warning of the overthrow of the *Persians* by *Mauritius*.
594. A dreadful Comet appear'd, which was attended with many Evils: as for instance, Drought, scarcity of Corn, the *Lombards* War in *Italy*, and vast swarms of Locusts all thereabouts.
602. A most prodigious Comet was seen, besides many other strange things, which were the forerunners of the Emperor *Mauritius* his slaughter, the future Idolatry of *Mahomet*, and Tyranny of the Bishop of *Rome*, when *Boniface* the III. (notwithstanding the Patriarch of *Constantinople*) commanded of *Phocas*, that the Church of *Rome* should be call'd and esteem'd the Head of all other Churches.
620. A Comet appear'd; at which time *Cosroes* King of *Persia* sackt *Jerusalem*, and in the year 622. *Mahomed* began. There were likewise seen several other Prodigies, as well as horrid Noises heard of Thundring, &c.
633. A Comet was seen in shape of a Spear; about which time the *Saracens* rendred themselves Masters of *Damascus*, *Jerusalem*, and all *Syria*.
674. Another great Comet foreran Drought, Pestilence, and Famine.
675. A Comet lasted for 3 whole months, when soon after the *Saracens* violently infested the *Roman* Empire, coming with a great Navy into *Sicily*.
676. *Bellarmino* in his Chronology places this Comet in the year 678. and further adds, that it did not rain one drop in the 3 following years.
684. A Comet foretold the following Plague, Thunders, Famine, and Inundations.
729. Two Comets were seen; and in the same year many parts of the World were infected with a Plague, especially *Constantinople*, wherein 300000 men lost their Lives; and soon after *Eutprandus* King of the *Lombards* besieges *Rome*; also the *Saracens* sailing out of *Africa* into *Spain*, possessed themselves of part of that Province.
745. A Comet appear'd in *Syria*, and many sickly Distempers followed.
761. Two Comets were seen, the one in the East, the other in the West, after which the *Turks* invaded *Armenia*.
763. Another Comet was succeeded first by a great Cold, and afterwards by a Blast; also the *Turks* increase in power.
814. Before the death of *Charles* the Great appear'd a most remarkable and dreadful Comet, whereat the Emperor being struck with terror, (fearing lest it threatned either the loss of his Kingdom or of his Life) consulted with *Eginardus* the Philosopher about it; who being unwilling to increase the Emperor's Melancholy, referr'd him to that comfortable place in the Prophet, *A signis Cæli nolite timere*. Whereupon the good Emperor replied, *We ought not to fear any thing but that God who is the Creator both of Men and Stars; nevertheless are we bound to praise his Clemency, who,*  
when

- when we offend, admonishes us by such Signs. Others attribute this passage to *Ludovicus* the I. the Son of *Charles* the Great.
- 818 Was a Comet seen; as also another in the year 830. about which time, some of the Heads of the Clergy, in malice to the Emperor *Ludovicus*, for his reproving their insolent behaviour, excited his own Sons to conspire against him, to take their Father and imprison him.
- 840 Three Comets appear'd before the Dissention and War between *Ludo-*  
841 *vicus Pius* his Sons, that arose about the division of the Kingdom. Then  
842 it was also that the *Saracens* march'd out of *Africk* into *Italy*, and sackt *Rome*, in their return from whence they were drowned.
- 868 A Comet preceded a terrible Earthquake.
- 876 A Comet was succeeded by a dreadful Plague and Famine.
- 882 A Comet was seen before the burning of *Triers*.
- 900 A Comet lighted the Emperor *Arnolphus* to his Grave. Soon after which, the *Huns* and *Saracens* made their Incurfion into *Italy*.
- 905 A Comet appear'd before the *Hungarians* entred and laid waste *Germany*. Also about the same time, *Berengarius*, Emperor of *Italy*, deprived *Ludovicus* King of *Lombardy* of his Sight.
- 906 Another Comet, after which followed a prodigious quantity of Hail.
- 912 More Comets portended the *Hungarians* Invasion of *Italy*, as also the great Inundation of Waters, which happen'd chiefly in *Saxony*; both which things happen'd soon after.
- 942 Comets predicted the ensuing War, Famine, and Mortality of all kinds of living Creatures.
- 945 In *Italy* a Comet of a wonderful bigness was seen, which was attended with Plague, Famine, and extraordinary Floods of Water.
- 964 A Comet and other prodigies were seen, portending that Famine which soon after followed.
- 984 Was a Comet that presaged a Famine, Pestilence, and Earthquake.
- 1000 Comets and other wonderful things appear'd, before *Otho* the III. subdued the growing Greatness of the *Patricii*, and substituted seven Electors in their stead.
- 1006 A Comet and other things supernatural, portended that great Plague and Famine, which raged so violently in *England* for 3 years together, that the living were hardly sufficient to bury the dead, many Towns being thereby exhaulted of Man, Woman, and Child.
- 1017 A Comet gave warning of the ensuing War and Plague in *Polonia*.
- 1031 A Comet preadvertised of a Plague, Famine, and great Inundations of Water.
- 1038 A Comet gave light to the Sedition in *Italy*.
- 1043 The War in *Hungary* succeeded a Comet.
- 1058 The death of the King of *Poland*, and Famine in the same Countrey, were presignifi'd by a Comet.
- 1066 For a considerable space together Comets were visible all the World over; at which time *William* the *Norman* first attack'd this Kingdom, which afterwards he conquer'd. Also in this same year, Pope *Gregory* the VII. or *Hildebrand*, excommunicated *Henry* the IV. and substituted *Rodolphus* in his place.
- 1067 A Comet foreboded a great Drought, Pestilence, and Famine.

Another

- 1068 Another fiery Comet appear'd, with reference to the Evils mention'd in the two former years.
- 1071 Another 4th. Comet was seen, and all relating to the Evils before-recited, but more especially to various Seditions which about this time occur'd: As the trampling on the Emperor's Majesty by Pope *Hildebrand*, which he had continued to do from the year 1060. till this present time 1071. The Rebellion of the *Saxons*: *Cesar* made a Petitioner to the Pope: *Rodolphus* elected in opposition to *Henry*, but afterwards slain: And last of all, the insolent Pope himself reduced to great Extremities by *Henry* the IV.
- 1095 In every one of these years a several Comet was seen; and about this  
1096 time it was, that *Conradus* and *Henry* the V. confederated together against  
1097 his Father *Henry* the IV. Then followed the Holy War, which proved  
1099 very fatal to all Christendom. Histories likewise tells us of many other  
1101 Calamities that happen'd at that time; as Famine, and almost an universal  
1106 Plague throughout the World; as likewise that unhappy War which the  
1109 Pope waged in *Germany*, wherein arming the *Saxons* against *Henry* the V.  
1110 in five several Battels much blood was spilt, and many gallant Princes  
1112 lost their Lives: nor would his Holiness be pacifi'd, until the Emperor abolish'd the Edict of his Grandfather *Henry* the III. wherein it was establish'd, that no one should be acknowledg'd for Pope, until the Emperor had first ratified his Election.
- 1132 A Comet appear'd, and soon after the *Swedes* and the *Danes* revolted from the Emperor *Lotharius*, by whom they were afterwards reduced.
- 1145 Another Comet was seen, and then a War broke out between the *Saxons*, *Vandals*, and *Polanders*; also the Nobles in *Hassia* rebell'd.
- 1211 There appear'd a very great Comet, and in the year following the *Tartars* breaking into *Poland* and *Silesia*, kill'd a great number of men, and cut off one Ear from every man they slew, thereby to keep an account how many were slain.
- 1223 A Comet blazed in *France*, at which time the Pope being at variance with the Emperor *Frederick* II. the faction of the *Gibellines* took part with the Emperor, and the faction of the *Guelphs* with the Pope.
- 1240 A Comet arose, and in the year following the *Tartars* with a vast Army made an incurfion into *Poland*, where destroying all things with Fire and Sword, they afterwards passing through *Moravia* into *Hungary*, made havoc there for three years. At this time also there happen'd in *Burgundy* a most terrible Earthquake, which removed two Mountains, and overwhelmed divers men.
- 1254 A Comet was the forerunner of dreadful High winds.
- 1264 There appear'd a Comet with a vast long Tail, and presently after King *Charles* with an Army out of *France*, began his Expedition against *Sicily*, where having overcome their King *Manfredus*, he took possession of the Kingdom of *Naples*. Two years after this, the *Saracens* marched into *Spain*, where they won and lost several great Battels, with much slaughter on either side. In *Hetruria* also great Tumults arose; and in the third year after the appearing of the Comet, *Bauducar* King of the *Babylonians* and *Assyrians*, with a great Army invaded *Armenia*, reduced *Antioch*, and gave a great discomfiture to the Christians.

- 1298 In each of these years Comets appear'd, which amongst other miseries  
 1300 foretold the afflictions which the Christians should receive from the *Otto-*  
 1301 *man* Family, which began from *Osman* or *Ottoman*, in the year of Christ  
 1304 1297. as also a Pestilence which had almost infected the whole World, in  
 1305 the year 1305.
- 1312 Was seen a Comet, and so also in the other four succeeding years. Now  
 1313 it was that *Henry Lutzelburgius* was poison'd by a Monk: likewise a Con-  
 1314 tention or Civil War did at this time arise about choosing Emperour,  
 1315 which produced great Troubles in *Germany* for the space of eight years;  
 as also the greatest Pestilence amongst both Men and Cattel that ever was  
 known, together with scarcity of Corn.
- 1337 Two Comets were then to be seen: soon after began the contention  
 between *Ludovicus Bavarus*, and Pope *Clement* the 6th. The Locusts also  
 were then very pernicious.
- 1340 Appear'd a Comet in the Heavens, which was fulfilled by a Victory that  
 the *Engliss* obtained over the *French*, of whom ten thousand were slain  
 There was at the same time a Plague raging in *Florence*, which destroy'd  
 fifteen thousand.
- 1347 There was another Comet, and soon after a general Pestilence: and so  
 in the years 1351. and 1353. in both which years there appear'd Comets  
 with the like success.
- 1363 *John Wickliff's* Reformation was introduced by a Comet.
- 1375 Two Comets portended the private discontents of the Princes of *France*,  
 1380 as well as *Bertholdus* the *German* Monk his invention of Guns in the  
 year 1380.
- 1382 A new Comet was seen, which no sooner disappear'd, but a cruel  
 Plague began.
- 1390 Another Comet was visible, and attended with unheard-of and incurable  
 diseases.
- 1394 A Comet appear'd, which the Astrologers call *Venus*, a Dart, and esteem  
 the worst of all others: it denoted the *Italians* Treachery, who then began  
 to shake off the yoke of the *German* Empire.
- 1400 In every one of these years a several Comet appear'd, and many great  
 1401 misfortunes ensued them: divers new diseases, Rivers dried up, and great  
 1402 Plagues. At the same time *Tamerlane*, or *Tamyris* King of the *Scythians* and  
 1403 *Parthians*, with an innumerable Army invaded all *Asia*, calling himself  
 the wrath of God, and desolation of the Earth. Now also it was that *Zisca*  
 Captain of the *Husses*, fought successfully against *Sigismund* the Emperor.
- 1433 Was beheld a great Comet, after which there was great scarcity of Corn  
 for six years together.
- 1434 There was both a Comet, and an Eclipse of the Sun, which was fol-  
 low'd by several Wars.
- 1439 A Comet preceded the invention of Printing, which was discover'd in  
 the year following.
- 1444 Another Comet flam'd, before the *French* King set upon *Helvetia*: at this  
 time *Vladislaus* K. of *Hungary* was slain by *Amurath*; also a Sedition broke  
 out in *England*: And in the year 1454. the *Turk* reduc'd *Constantinople*.
- 1456 A Comet was seen, attended by a great Wind and Earthquake: the  
*Turk* also did then possess himself of *Lemnus*, *Mitylene*, and *Eubœa*.

A. C.

- 1457 A Comet which they call'd *Nigrum*, did variouly affect the minds of men : the death of *Alphonfus* King of *Arragon* follow'd it, which embroil'd *Emilia*, *Sabina*, *Campania*, and all the Kingdom of *Naples* in a long and grievous War : a Plague follow'd not long after ; also the *Turk* made himself Master of *Peloponnesus*.
- 1460 A Comet preceded those great Victories of *Mahomet* the II. who in the year of our Lord 1451. reduced two Empires and twelve Kingdoms to his subjection.
- 1471 A Comet foretold the deaths of several Princes.
- 1472 Two Comets appear'd, which were succeeded by several Wars, and in the year following by an excessive unnatural Heat, and violent Plague : at this time *Charles* Duke of *Burgundy* made War upon his Neighbours, which War lasted many years, and was ended by his death. *Ussanus Casfanus* King of *Parthia* and *Armenia*, then fought with *Mahomet*, which War swept away abundance of men : also *Stephanus* the Palatinate of *Moldavia*, gave *Mahomet* a great defeat at the *Danubius*. The *Germans* call'd this Comet a *Peacocks Tail*, and most thought it portended the *Burgundian* War.
- 1475 A Comet was conspicuous before *Charles* of *Burgundy* seiz'd upon *Lorain*.
- 1477 A Comet blazed, which was the forerunner of so hot a Season, that it burnt up not only Corn, but Trees ; also many great Rivers dried up, and a great Plague followed. At the same time *Charles* of *Burgundy* was slain by the *Helvetians* : and in this year many great Princes died.
- 1491 A Comet appear'd, and a very unwhollome time follow'd both for Men and Beasts : also the *Turks* possessed themselves of part of *Dalmatia* and *Sclavonia*.
- 1500 A Comet was seen before the *Tartars* devastation of *Poland*, *Muscovy*, and *Lithuania* : a little after the *Bavarian* War began. There was also at this time a raging Famine and Pestilence.
- 1506 A Comet portended the death of *Philip* King of *Spain*, as also the Wars of the Emperor *Maximilian's* Sons with the *French* and *Venetians* ; besides various Inundations, Winds, and scarcity of Corn.
- 1516 *Luther* (who in the year 1517. wrote against Indulgences) his Reformation succeeded a Comet.
- 1523 A Comet appear'd, and the Summer following was full of Storms, Earthquakes, and great falls of Water.
- 1527 A terrible Comet was seen with a long bloody Tail, at which time the *Turk* wasted *Hungary*, and much hurt was done by the great swarms of Locusts.
- 1529 Four Comets appear'd this year, when soon after the *Turk* besieg'd *Vienna*, and became Master of many Cities in *Hungary* : also the Sweating-sickness destroy'd many thousands in *England*.
- 1530 Was another Comet ; then were many Towns and Villages overwhelm'd with Water both in *Holland* and *Zealand* : also the *Tiber* overflow'd *Rome*.
- 1531 A Comet portended no less then a great slaughter of men both in the East and West : for the *Turk* broke into *Hungary* and *Austria*. King *Christianus* with a great Fleet sailed into *Denmark*, to recover his Kingdoms :  
The

*A.C.* The *Helvetian* War began upon the score of Religion, wherein there were two eminent Battels, in the first of which *Zuinglius* was slain.

1532 A terrible Comet was seen, at which time the *Turks* making an irruption into *Hungary*, were repell'd by the Christians.

1533 A Comet call'd *Xiphias* (from its resemblance of a Sword) was conspicuous: after which followed Earthquakes in *Germany*, alterations in the Government of *England*, and a contest between *Charles* the V. and the *French*, about the Dukedom of *Millain*.

1538 A Comet was seen of a fiery colour, upon which follow'd an Epidemical Sickness in many places.

1539 Another Comet was visible, and in the year following ensued so hot a Summer, that it burnt up many Woods, and dried up many Rivers and Fountains.

1541 A great Plague, and the Conquest of *Buda* by the *Turks*, was signify'd by a Comet: also *Charles* the V. his unlucky Voyage into *Africa*, wherein many of his Ships and Men were lost by Storm.

1542 After a Comet followed great swarms of mischievous Locusts: likewise the unfortunate Expedition of the Christians against the *Turks*, wherein great part of their Forces perished by Sickness: also the Grape was this year so sower, that no Wine could be drank.

1545 A Comet preceded the *Gallick* Persecution.

1556 Another Comet appear'd, in which year many learned and pious men deceased: in many parts of *Germany* the Reform'd Church at this time labour'd under great difficulties.

1558 A Comet lighted *Charles* the V. into his retirement, when he resign'd his Empire: also in the year 1566. began the War in the *Low-Countries*, upon the account of the *Spanish Inquisition*.

1572 A new Star was seen in *Cassiopeia's* Sign; which was by most esteem'd a Comet, in which year the *Parisian* Nuptials were celebrated with Blood, instead of Wine.

1577  
1585  
1596  
1602  
1604  
1607

In every one of these years were Comets seen, although the three last were by some eminent men esteem'd only new Stars: they portended the various mutations in *Holland*, *Hungary*, *Bobemia*, and *Germany*.

And besides all these, the *Blazing-Star* before the late *Civil Wars*, as well as those two dreadful Comets before the last *Plague*, and *Fire of London*, may (considering the present ill state of this unhappy Nation, and sinful People) give us just occasion to fear at least no better an Event, after this so much a worse Comet, than has ever yet appear'd; unless Providence grants that happy *Union of Protestants*, and *Exclusion of Papists*, which all good men, that are not so themselves, must ever wish and pray for.

Having thus given you an account of these Comets, their History, Nature, Causes, and Effects, according to the most commonly receiv'd Opinions; so let me now conclude this discourse with some small transitory Remarques upon this present Comet, which (by all the relations I have met with) is far the most large and terrible that ever yet was seen. After it had shewn it self in other parts, it began to appear to us here in *England*, on *Friday* *December* the 10th. about half an hour past four in the Afternoon, being of a pale dusky colour, with a prodigious Stream, at least 35. degrees in length: and the Astrologers say its signification cannot be good, because it is purely *Saturnine*. Now for the more difficult and uncertain part, although I shall leave that to those who dare undertake it; yet concerning the other more easie one, I could not forbear making some small observation, and collecting some conjecture (among the croud of others, for all are no better) from it.

At this Comets first appearing to the view of us near *Buckingham*, there was seen an unusual and prodigious stream of Light, arising out of, or from behind a Cloud at the Horizon, South-West, and darting upward into the *Galaxie* (or *Milkie way*) towards *Cassiopeia*, North-East; visible, in a clear Sky, as soon as the retreating light of the Sun would suffer it to be so; and moving Northward on the Horizon, till about 8. of the clock it disappear'd. It then seem'd broadest at the Horizon, growing sharper upwards by degrees, like a Pyramid or Sword revers'd. This first shape of it, though it caused some doubt in me, yet could not wholly forbid me to think it to proceed from one of those Comets called *Blazing-Stars*, concluding the Star it self to be sunk below our Horizon, either together with, or presently after the



the great Luminary. On the *Wednesday* after this first appearance, was the first time I could perceive the Star at the bottom of the Light, about five degrees above our Horizon, which though not very visible, was yet enough to shew that I were not mistaken. But now the shape seem'd alter'd, the Stream sharpest at the Comet, and broader upwards, (to the wonder of those who apprehended not the reason of it) till at the end of the Tail it yet continued to appear somewhat narrower than in the middle.

After this, the circular motion of the Comet being slower than that of the Sun, it appear'd higher and higher every Night above the Horizon, declining still more and more Northward in its setting; in so much that the last time I have yet seen it, (which was the 4th. of this instant *January*) when its first appearance after Sun-setting was (as I could guess without an Instrument) above fifty degrees above the Horizon, and its setting almost Northward.

In every observation I perceiv'd the Tail or Blaze of light to alter its pointing from the Star, turning every night from the North-East (as the hand of a Watch) more Eastward; and still the higher the Star appear'd, the Tail turning a farther compass, till at this time, from pointing North-East (as it always did) at its first appearing in the Evening, before its setting the Blaze turns so much as to point almost South. This to some seem'd strange, and to me enough to make me, considering the turning to be constant, and guessing (as well as I could without a Globe) at the place of the Sun under our Horizon, easily to fancy (and I thought truly) the Blaze to proceed in a direct Line from the Sun, by the Body of the Comet, and so to turn its pointing agreeably to the Sun's motion, in a direct Line from it. Now this observation, whether exactly true or not, yet appear'd to me so very near the Truth, as to embolden me to have some thoughts, first to publish it (at least in discourse) for others examination, who might have better skill and means to do it; and then to improve it into this further conjecture at the Nature and Cause of such Comets, (if it proves so true, as I presume it is) at least of this present Comet, (the first I ever took so much notice of) for the solving of these *Phænomena* aforesaid: Namely, that wheresoever the place of it is, and whatsoever the Matter whereof it is composed, it seems to be such as is like a Globe of Glass, or (it may be) of concrete Water, apt to reflect a glittering shine to all that behold it in a requisite Position, if not every way: And withall, by its Transparency to transmit in a direct Line, and in a Blaze from it, those Beams which it receives from such a Luminary as the Sun is. So that the Body of the Comet, by a borrowed light from the Sun, somewhat resembles other Stars: but the Tail, or Blaze, may be not a flame from any burning, (for why then should it turn so constantly as the Sun directs it?) but only from the Comets being of a pellucid substance, (which other Stars are not) and so transmitting those Beams, which shine upon the one side, in such a Blaze, on the opposite side. This may also afford a Reason why the Star appearing higher towards our Zenith, the Blaze appears shorter to us, than it did when lower, and nearer to the Sun.

And further, most conjectures of its significancy, as well as most of the Terrour from the thing it self, (for I blame not those who esteem it as Gods Sign) proceeding from the apprehensions of its dreadful burning, in so much as some seem to have been in care for the whole Machine of the Universe, from such vast Conflagrations: I leave it to men to consider rationally, how both these may be abated and allay'd by this opinion, if receiv'd as the most probable. In confirmation whereof, I seem'd to my self to want nothing, but the observation of others, or my own, of more Comets, or of this if it should continue to appear to us so long, as to have the Sun-beams fall on the reverse of it, that so I might perceive whether the Blaze be always darted in such a direct Line from the great Light of the World, wheresoever it be.

But this conjecture seeming at first new, and singular; to my self, and likely to seem so to others also, I could not persuade my self to think of giving it vent, save only in some private talk; till by its importunity on my thoughts, it put me on searching into those few Books I have, that write of such things: And then I was at last surpriz'd with some satisfaction to find, that the famous *Cardan* had the same fancy; and that neither did the as famous *Jul. Scaliger* (though so much disposed to quarrel with him) dissent from him in this subtilty; as whoever thinks it worth the while, may find in *Scaliger's 79. Exercit. de subtil. ad Hieron. Cardan.* where *Cardan* also to my further satisfaction supply'd me with that, which I have said before I wanted, for the encouragement of this conjecture: *Aversa semper à sole cauda est.*