

lum, of the performance of the telescope, and of the machinery by which it is moved, will then appear in the Proceedings.

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May 9.

**SIR W. M. R. HAMILTON, LL.D.**, President, in the Chair.

William Blacker, Esq. and the Rev. James Booth were elected members of the Academy.

James Mac Cullagh, Esq. was elected Secretary of the Academy, in the room of the Rev. Dr. Singer, resigned; and Dr. Kane was elected Secretary of Council.

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A paper, by the Rev. Dr. Hincks, "On the True Date of the Rosetta Stone," was read.

The date usually assigned to this monument, on the authority of Dr. Young, is the 27th March, 196 B. C., according to the proleptic Julian reckoning; the true date, as determined by Dr. Hincks, is the 27th March, 197 B. C. Taking the former date for granted, M. Letronne has drawn from it a great many inferences, which the error of a single year entirely vitiates. These inferences relate to the history of Ptolemy Epiphanes, and to the mode of computing the years of his reign and of the reigns of other Egyptian kings; as also to the various priesthoods of royal personages that are mentioned on the Ptolemaic monuments. The conclusions of M. Letronne, and those which are to be deduced from the corrected date, are exhibited by the author in parallel columns.

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The President made some remarks on the day of the Vernal Equinox at the time of the Council of Nice.

It has been stated by some eminent writers on astronomy, for example by Brinkley and Biot, and seems to be generally supposed, that the vernal equinox in the year 325, A. D.

fell on the 21st of March. But Sir W. Hamilton finds that Vince's Solar Tables (or Delambre's, from which those are formed) conduct to about  $2\frac{1}{4}$  hours before the Greenwich mean noon of the 20th of March, as the true date of the equinox in that year; which thus appears to have been assigned to a wrong day, by some erroneous computation or report, perhaps as long ago as the time of the phenomenon in question.

As this result is curious, Sir W. Hamilton conceives that it may not be uninteresting to confirm it by a very simple process of calculation, derived from the Gregorian Calendar. According to that calendar, 400 years contain 146097 days, being a number less by 3 than that of the days in four Julian centuries; and if the farther refinement be adopted, which some have suggested, of suppressing the intercalary day in each of the years, 4000, 8000, &c., then, in the calendar thus improved, 4000 civil years will contain 1460969 solar days. Assuming then, as a sufficiently near approximation, that such is the real length of 4000 tropical years; multiplying by 3, and dividing by 8, we find that 1500 tropical years are equivalent to 547863 days and a fraction; which fraction of a day, according to this simple arithmetic, would be equivalent to 9 hours. But 1500 Julian years contain 547875 days, that is, 12 more than the number last determined; and these 12 days are precisely the difference of new and old styles in the present century. If, then, we neglect the fraction, the new-style date of an equinox in any year of the nineteenth century ought to be the same with the old-style date of the same equinox in the corresponding year of the fourth century; and in particular the vernal equinox of 325 ought to have fallen on the 20th of March, because that of 1825 fell on the day so named: while the fraction of a day above referred to, though not entirely to be relied on, renders this result a little more exact, by throwing back the equinox from the evening to a time more near to noon.