

64 *Report to the Twenty-eighth Annual General Meeting.*

of Professors Oersted and Schumacher to the Grand Crosses of the Danebrog—an honour perhaps never before conferred on a professor—saying that he felt great pleasure in being thus able to prove that he considered literary and scientific merit as not inferior to that of any other kind.

Christian VIII. is succeeded by his son Frederic VII., born Oct. 6, 1808.

On the subject of Miss Herschel's astronomical career, the Council feel that they cannot do better than insert, with some additions, an account contributed by our President to a literary journal,* on the recent occasion of her death. The Council always endeavour to procure biographical notices in the most authentic form, and from the most unquestionable sources; and not generally feeling at liberty to alter the words of communications so received, they begin by giving the above-mentioned communication entire.

MISS CAROLINE LUCRETIA HERSCHEL died at Hanover on the 9th of January, in the ninety-eighth year of her age. She was the fourth daughter of Isaac Herschel and his wife, Anna Ilse Moritzen, and sister to the celebrated astronomer of that name, as well as the constant companion and sole assistant of his astronomical labours, to the success of which her indefatigable zeal, diligence, and singular accuracy of calculation, not a little contributed. She was born† in Hanover on the 16th of March, 1750; where she resided under the parental roof till her twenty-second year—when she joined her brother, then actively engaged in the musical profession at Bath, in England, a country which was destined to be her home for half a century. There, from the first commencement of his astronomical pursuits, her attendance on both his daily labours and nightly watches was put in requisition; and was found so useful, that on his removal to Datchet, and subsequently to Slough—he being then occupied with his reviews of the Heavens and other researches—she performed the whole of the arduous and important duties of his astronomical assistant,—not only reading the clocks and noting down all the observations from dictation as an amanuensis, but subsequently executing the whole of the extensive and laborious numerical calculations necessary to render them available to science, as well as a multitude of others relative to the various objects of theoretical and experimental inquiry in which, during his long and active career, he at any time engaged. For the performance of these duties His Majesty King George the Third was graciously pleased to place her in the receipt of a salary sufficient for her singularly moderate wants and retired habits.

Arduous, however, as these occupations must appear,—especially when it is considered that her brother's observations were always carried on (circumstances permitting) till day-break, without regard

* The *Athenæum* of January 22.

† This is 1750 as then called in Germany, where the new style was established. Had it been the English date of that name, it must have been now rendered by 1751.

to season, and indeed chiefly in the winter,—they proved insufficient to exhaust her activity. In their intervals she found time both for actual astronomical observations of her own, and for the execution of more than one work of great extent and utility.

The observations here alluded to were made with a small Newtonian sweeper, constructed for her by her brother; with which, whenever his occasional absences or any interruption to the regular course of his observations permitted, she searched the Heavens for comets,—and that so effectively as on no less than eight several occasions to be rewarded by their discovery (viz. on Aug. 1, 1786; Dec. 21, 1788; Jan. 9, 1790; April 17, 1790; Dec. 15, 1791; Oct. 7, 1793; Nov. 7, 1795; and Aug. 6, 1797). On five of these occasions (recorded in the pages of the *Philosophical Transactions* of London) her claim to the *first* discovery is admitted. These sweeps, moreover, proved productive of the detection of several remarkable nebulae and clusters of stars previously unobserved: among which may be specially mentioned the superb Nebula, No. 1, Class V. of Sir William Herschel's catalogues—an object bearing much resemblance to the celebrated nebula in *Andromeda*, discovered by Simon Marius—as also the Nebula V, No. 18; the 12th and 27th clusters of Class VII.; and the 45th, 65th, 72nd, 77th, and 78th, of Class VIII. of those catalogues.

The astronomical works which she found leisure to complete were: 1st. *A Catalogue of 561 Stars observed by Flamsteed*, but which, having escaped the notice of those who framed the *British Catalogue* from that astronomer's observations, are not therein inserted: 2nd. *A General Index of Reference to every Observation of every Star inserted in the British Catalogue*. These works were published together in one volume by the Royal Society; and to their utility in subsequent researches Mr. Baily, in his *Life of Flamsteed*, pp. 388, 390, bears ample testimony. She further completed the reduction and arrangement as a *Zone Catalogue* of all the nebulae and clusters of stars observed by her brother in his sweeps: a work for which she was honoured with the Gold Medal of the Astronomical Society of London, in 1828,—which Society also conferred on her the unusual distinction of electing her an Honorary Member.

On her brother's death, in 1822, she returned to Hanover, which she never again quitted,—passing the last twenty-six years of her life in repose, enjoying the society and cherished by the regard of her remaining relatives and friends, gratified by the occasional visits of eminent astronomers, and honoured with many marks of favour and distinction on the part of the King of Hanover, the Crown Prince, and his amiable and illustrious consort.

To within a very short period of her death her health continued uninterrupted, her faculties perfect, and her memory (especially of the scenes and circumstances of former days) remarkably clear and distinct. Her end was tranquil and free from suffering—a simple cessation of life.

So far the account in question. Besides the tributes mentioned