

| Date.   | $\alpha$  | $\delta$   | Log. $\Delta$ | Date.   | $\alpha$   | $\delta$   | Log. $\Delta$ |
|---------|---|------------|---------------|---------|--|------------|---------------|
| Nov. 20 | 15 <sup>h.</sup> 43 <sup>m.</sup> 7 <sup>s.</sup> | +45° 41'9" | 0.1561        | Nov. 27 | 16 <sup>h.</sup> 6 <sup>m.</sup> 7 <sup>s.</sup> | +47° 20'1" |               |
| 21      | 46 32   | 45 56.6    |               | 28      | 9 16   | 47 33.4    | 0.1921        |
| 22      | 49 54   | 46 11.0    |               | 29      | 12 23  | 47 46.7    |               |
| 23      | 53 14   | 46 25.2    |               | 30      | 15 27  | 47 59.8    |               |
| 24      | 56 31   | 46 39.1    | 0.1746        | Dec. 1  | 18 28  | 48 12.8    |               |
| 25      | 15 59 45  | 46 52.9    |               | 2       | 16 21 27   | +48 25.6   | 0.2086        |
| 26      | 16 2 57   | +47 6.6    |               |         |  |            |               |

1851, November 18.

THE last comet (BRÖSEN'S of October 22) had on the 22d October already become so faint that I was only able to distinguish it with great trouble, — and could not think of observing it. It seems to have been one of those comets whose light decreases with great rapidity as they move away from the sun (it passed its perihelion September 30), for although it was seen in Vienna with the naked eye on the 24th October, it is now so faint that we shall not probably receive any more ob-

servations of it. The latest observation which I have is one made by LUTHER at the Berlin Observatory.

| 1851.   | M. T. Berlin.                                      | $\alpha$       | $\delta$       | Comp. |
|---------|--|----------------|----------------|-------|
| Nov. 11 | 6 <sup>h.</sup> 38 <sup>m.</sup> 3.2 <sup>s.</sup> | 227° 44' 53".5 | +43° 17' 43".9 | 6     |
|         | * $\alpha$   |                | * $\delta$     |       |
|         | 227° 16' 24".1                                     |                | +43° 9' 5".6   |       |

the assumed place of the comparison-star being

A. C. PETERSEN.

ON THE SYMBOLIC NOTATION OF THE ASTEROIDS,

BY THE EDITOR.

As the number of the known asteroids increases, the disadvantages of a symbolic notation analogous to that hitherto in use increase much more rapidly even than the difficulty of selecting appropriate names from the classic mythology. Not only are many of the symbols proposed inefficient in suggesting the name of which they are intended to be an abbreviation; but some of them require for their delineation more artistic accomplishment than an astronomer is necessarily or generally endowed with. The symbol proposed for *Irene* (*A. J.*, II. 23), for example, has not only never appeared, but I am not aware that it has ever been actually drawn. To remedy this evil, and not to lose the unquestionable advantage connected with a system of symbols easily remembered and readily drawn, — it has been agreed upon by several astronomers in Germany, France, England, and America, to propose for adoption a more simple system for the group in question, — consisting of a circle containing the number of the asteroid in the chronological order of its discovery. This number will speedily become mnemonically associated with the asteroid itself; we thus have a symbol ready for every asteroid hereafter to be discovered,

and this remarkable group are distinguished from the larger planets in the character of their notation. As this notation will hereafter be adopted in the *Astronomical Journal*, a table may at first not be unserviceable for reference.

| Planet.             | New Symbol. | Date of Discovery. | Old Symbol. |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| <i>Ceres</i> ,      | ①           | 1801, January 1,   | ♁           |
| <i>Pallas</i> ,     | ②           | 1802, March 28,    | ♁           |
| <i>Juno</i> ,       | ③           | 1804, September 1, | ♁           |
| <i>Vesta</i> ,      | ④           | 1807, March 29,    | ♁           |
| <i>Astræa</i> ,     | ⑤           | 1845, December 8,  | ♁           |
| <i>Hebe</i> ,       | ⑥           | 1847, July 1,      | ♁           |
| <i>Iris</i> ,       | ⑦           | " August 13,       | ♁           |
| <i>Flora</i> ,      | ⑧           | " October 18,      | ♁           |
| <i>Melis</i> ,      | ⑨           | 1848, April 25,    | ♁           |
| <i>Hygea</i> ,      | ⑩           | 1849, April 12,    | ♁           |
| <i>Parthenope</i> , | ⑪           | 1850, May 13,      | ♁           |
| <i>Clio</i> ,       | ⑫           | " September 13,    | ♁           |
| <i>Egeria</i> ,     | ⑬           | " November 2,      | ♁           |
| <i>Irene</i> ,      | ⑭           | 1851, May 20,      | ♁           |
| <i>Eunomia</i> ,    | ⑮           | " July 29,         | ♁           |

CONTENTS.

- ON THE CORRECTIONS TO BE APPLIED TO THE SUN'S COÖRDINATES IN THE BRITISH NAUTICAL ALMANAC, BY DR. WILLIAM CHARLES GOETZE.
- OBSERVATIONS OF IRENE, MADE WITH THE FILAR-MICROMETER OF THE WASHINGTON EQUATORIAL, BY MR. JAMES FERGUSON.
- LETTER FROM MR. HIND TO THE EDITOR.
- FROM LETTERS OF DR. PETERSEN TO THE EDITOR.
- ON THE SYMBOLIC NOTATION OF THE ASTEROIDS, BY THE EDITOR.

CAMBRIDGE: METCALF AND COMPANY, PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.