THE OBSERVING ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY.

Hon. Sec. WILLIAM F. DENNING, Ashley Road, Bristol.

REPORT OF OBSERVATIONS MADE DURING THE PERIOD FROM APRIL 7 TO MAY 6 INCLUSIVE.

Occultation of Saturn.

Mr. George J. Walker writes:—"I had a fair view of the occultation of Saturn this morning (April 20), notwithstanding the prevalence of clouds. The following were the times, which I think are reliable to within a second, excepting the third, which was less favourably obtained, as the moon almost immediately afterwards disappeared behind a chimney:—

	h.	m.	s.	
Contact of planet's ring with moon's bright limb	14	49	45·2	G.M.T.
Bisection of planet and ring	14	50	23·2	,,
Disappearance of the planet and ring . . .	14	51	3·2	,,

Telescope $3\frac{3}{4}$-in. O.G., power 175.

I could not, owing to the obstruction of houses, reach the moon at the time of re-appearance with my telescope, and the increase of clouds seemed to preclude hope of seeing it at all. However, I watched for it with my sweeper, and a fortunate break in the clouds showed me the planet, which I conclude, from its brightness, was completely uncovered at 16h. 1m. 2·2s., after which it was again overclouded. I cannot, therefore, be sure that the planet had not re-appeared before, but I am inclined to believe the above is very nearly the time of its re-appearance. The planet, owing to cloud and the greater brightness of the moon, looked a very dingy, leaden kind of colour, as the moon approached it."

Mr. W. Andrews, of Coventry, says:—"The occultation of Saturn was observed by me on the morning of April 20. The atmosphere was not very tranquil, and the definition not good. The division between the rings was visible; also faint traces of belts on the body of the planet. The planet appeared of a pale ashy gray colour, when contrasted with the bright creamy colour of the moon. Not the slightest distortion or any change whatever was observed in the appearance of the planet as it disappeared behind the moon."

At other places, the weather seems to have been unfavourable for the observation of the phenomenon.

Auroræ Borealis.

Mr. H. M. Whitley, of Penarth, Truro, reports that—"On April 5, at 8h. 15m., a rosy streak stretched from the horizon nearly to the zenith. It was brightest and broadest near Polaris—arc of faint white light below. At 8h. 30m. three streaks were visible, the one mentioned, and two others much fainter, which faded away and re-appeared at other parts."

The Rev. S. J. Johnson writes:—"On the 21st of April I observed another exhibition of the aurora. It first became visible between 10h. and 11h. P.M. It reached from beneath Castor and Pollux right round to Vega. The brightest part was always from below Capella to Cassiopeia. There was a line of black clouds along the horizon. I noticed one meteor cross the aurora, and shortly afterwards another small meteor appeared in Leo Minor. Though the brightness of the aurora was considerable, the

streamers that shot upwards were faint and few. I saw none of the rosy tint. At 11h. 30m. the sky became overcast with haze; when this cleared off, about 11h. 50m., the phenomenon appeared to be nearly gone. On the 27th of April I saw another bright display, between 11h. and 12h. The sky was not so clear as on the former night. In some parts of the north, where there were large breaks in the clouds, the phenomenon was very conspicuous. There was a strong tinge of it again the following night, especially in the N.W."

Meteors.

The Rev. S. J. Johnson observed several bright meteors on the 18th and 20th of April. At 11h. 15m. on the 18th he "saw a very bright meteor below Ursa Major. It started from near β Leonis, and disappeared a few degrees S. of σ Leonis. Its colour, so far as I could judge, was peculiar—a kind of reddish white, and the time of its duration was very short. It left a momentary train. A minute or two afterwards, I noticed a moderately bright meteor, which nearly passed over Pollux. I saw no meteors on the 19th; two on the 20th, in the north of Virgo, almost simultaneously."

Mr. Albert P. Holden says:—"A bright meteor was well seen about midnight on May 2nd. The course was from ϵ Cygni towards β Herculis, passing about 5° below β and γ Lyræ. It was without train of any kind, and remained in view about 4 seconds."

Solar Spots.

Mr. T. W. Backhouse reports:—"That the large group of spots in the N. hemisphere of the sun, which was visible from about April 4th to the 16th, was due on this side of the disc on April 30, but only a small spot with a large group of faculæ appeared then, so that if it was the same group it had diminished remarkably during the fortnight it was out of sight, for its penumbra was but 4,000 miles in diameter on May 2 at 4h. On May 2 there appeared a larger group of spots in the same solar latitude as the large group referred to had, but as it was two days after it was due, it seems hardly possible that this can be the same. On May 4, at 3h. 30m., its largest penumbra was 18,000 miles in diameter, and umbra 7,000 miles in a direction parallel with the limb. It has not altered greatly in size since."

The Planet Uranus.

Mr. H. Michell Whitley observed this object on April 5. The disc of the planet was of a pale light blue colour, with no markings on it.

Epsilon Bootis.

Mr. Albert P. Holden writes:—"Two comites to this exquisite pair do not appear to have been remarked till lately. I roughly estimated them as follows:—

b. Pos. 40° Dist. 35″ Mag. 10.
c. Pos. 120° Dist. 60″ Mag. 10½.

These particulars being taken without a micrometer are, of course, only approximate."

Lunar Observations.

Observations of lunar objects by Messrs. H. M. Whitley and H. Ormesher have been forwarded to Mr. W. R. Birt.
