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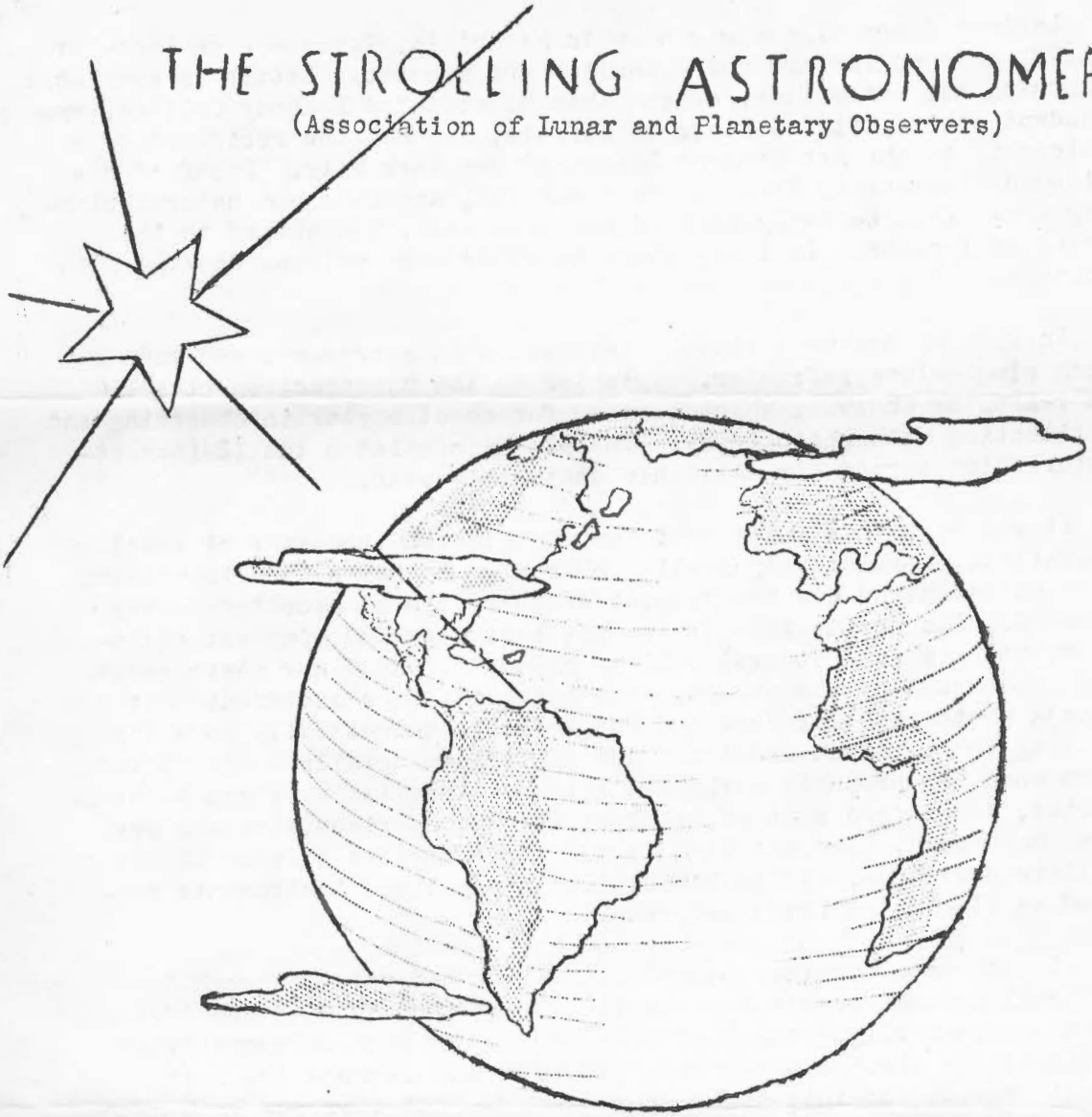

Mailing Address

The Strolling Astronomer
Institute of Meteoritics
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

LATIMER JAMES WILSON (1878-1948)

Some Notes on His Life
by Frank R. Vaughn

Latimer James Wilson was born in Nashville, Tennessee on December 1, 1878, amid no fanfare nor apparition of a comet. Little is available concerning his early life, except that he attended Peabody College, was a student at the Art Institute of Buffalo, and was the recipient of a scholarship to the Art Student League of New York City. Proof of his skilled draftsmanship lies in his beautiful, accurate and natural planetary drawings. He early studied music as well, but turned to the writing of fiction. In later years he wrote some volumes dealing with astronomy.

In 1908 he became seriously interested in astronomy, and made a 4-inch single-lens refractor. This led to the construction of a 10-inch reflector in 1910, which he used for about a year in observing and experimenting with photography. In 1911 he completed the 12-inch reflector which served him until his death this year.

It was with this instrument that he amassed thousands of excellent observations, a relatively small number of which were used in writing papers which gained him the respect of observers of excellence over the world. His genius for getting the best from the simplest equipment served him (and others) well in planetary and lunar photography. Actual observers of the planets will appreciate the statement that Wilson's photographs of Mars and Jupiter were successfully used for measuring the latitude and longitude of surface details. His pictures of the moon are probably surpassed only by those taken at great observatories, and indeed some of his best stand comparison with any ever taken. Cardboard, glue and wire formed the mountings of some of his auxiliary equipment, and in his skilled hands these instruments performed as if made of brass and steel.

Wilson wrote numerous papers of quality and value, though from a personal perusal of his records the writer can say with confidence that he wrote hardly a tenth of what would have been conservatively justifiable on the basis of observations made. Perhaps the most probable reason for this state of affairs is that surmised by Hugh Johnson, who corresponded with Wilson considerably: "The workings of a scientific mind which accumulates vastly more observations than it can hope to publish or even analyze could make an interesting study. I should suspect that expensiveness of publication, particularly pictures, has much to do with it, coupled with an irresistible impulse to observe anyway."

It is to be hoped that these records and drawings will be preserved, as it is most likely that as time passes they will be valuable adjuncts to consideration of planetary problems.

The experience of the writer, as well as that of many personally known to him, has been that Wilson valued and appreciated the efforts of younger or more inexperienced men; and although it was a sort of joke among some of his correspondents that one did well to get more than a one-page letter from him at a writing, these were always of value and to the point. His personal poor circumstances, at least in the last years (but possibly also long before), were never reflected in the tone of his letters except in such matter of fact statements as that the price of photographic materials was high, or something similar.

A visit to the home of relatives in Nashville in 1943 afforded an opportunity to visit Wilson at his home, and resulted successively in feelings of dismay, curiosity, wonder, and finally of amazement: dismay that a man of such talent should be forced to live so poorly; curiosity as to what such a man was personally like; wonder that he bore up under (indeed seemed to ignore) frankly miserable personal conditions; and finally amazement at the scope of his knowledge, sensitivity of feeling, and humility of character. Many men have been described as "truly modest", where the words "truly" and "falsely" might have been interchanged with greater approximation to the truth. Latimer Wilson paid the price which most men of great ability but with humble characters seemingly must pay in our society—nominal recognition by those whom society pays to give nominal recognition, and poverty. Two classes of these men having ability but simple ways may be observed—those who despair and who hence degenerate and coarsen, and those who find what society fails to grant them within the ample space of their own minds—who create their own wealth from the abundance of their spirits. One of these latter is a cultured man, and such a man was Latimer James Wilson.

ADDENDUM

It is probable that there are some readers of The Strolling Astronomer who are not familiar with Latimer Wilson. Although a full list of his activities and associations would be redundant for the purpose in mind (for the same reason meaningless dates, as well as data on kin, are omitted), a few are here listed along with the suggestion that a perusal of old issues of Popular Astronomy will prove fruitful in uncovering some of his work—nearly all of it is excellent.

Life Member Société Astronomique de France, author of Mars and its Mysteries and The True Story of the Man in the Moon, Associate Editor Popular Science Magazine 1919 to about 1922, ex Regional Director of the American Meteor Society, Member American Association for the Advancement of Science, Member American Amateur Astronomical Association and Director of its Mars, Jupiter and Saturn Sections.

Drawings of Mars

The enclosed sheet of photographic copies of 28 drawings of Mars should be of considerable interest to all students of that planet. It was prepared by Mr. Edwin E. Hare, 1621 Payne Ave., Owensboro, Kentucky. We think that readers will agree that Mr. Hare has done a most excellent job of preparing and photographing the drawings and that he has arranged them in a very attractive manner. The original drawings were of widely diverse sizes so that he had to begin by laboriously recopying all 28. The complete job required many hours and not at union wages!

The 28 drawings here selected were chosen with two objectives: to give a good sample of the better drawings made by members of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers and to show all longitudes of the planet. We have omitted with regret many excellent drawings and some deserving observers. When Mars was near opposition in 1948, the season was late spring in the northern hemisphere, the summer solstice of that hemisphere falling on April 26, 1948. One accordingly finds the north polar cap to be conspicuous, though melting rapidly, and the south polar cap (in its late autumn) to be rapidly variable, frequently absent, and rarely at all notable. The north pole of Mars was tipped toward the earth by 18 degrees at opposition so that northern features were observed to better advantage than southern features.

We shall make no attempt here to discuss the drawings. It is planned to prepare later a comprehensive report dealing with all observations available to us. The attentive reader will see many opportunities on the enclosed sheet for comparing the work of different observers. For example, drawings 1 and 2, by Reese and White respectively show the same part of Mars as independently viewed by the two men with an intervening interval of four days. If the differences that appear in such comparisons are gross enough, there are also many examples of pleasing agreement.

On some drawings the telescope is described as "O. G. ", meaning "object glass" or refractor.

Some readers may desire additional copies of this sheet of Mars drawings. We shall undertake to furnish them at a cost of 20 cents apiece to members of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers and of 30 cents apiece to non-members. Membership is identical with subscription to The Strolling Astronomer.

Statistics on Searches for Lunar Meteors

In several issues of Volume I of The Strolling Astronomer we discussed the possibility of lunar meteoritic impact-flares and of lunar meteors. The former must occur in huge numbers on a completely atmosphereless moon. Even a very rarefied atmosphere, however, would make lunar meteors possible and would greatly reduce the number of impact-flares. The careful and prolonged examination of the moon, particularly of the dim earthlit portions, should hence be a delicate test for a tenuous atmosphere.

Systematic searches of this sort carried out in the years 1941-8 total 145 hours. Observers reporting results during the last two years are W. H. Haas, M. Williams, L. T. Johnson, H. M. Johnson, A. W. Mount, F. M. Garland, and H. Dall. The estimated average area of the lunar region they watched is about 900,000 square miles. The estimated average stellar magnitude of the faintest observable meteor of impact-flare is 8.3. These 145 hours of searching have revealed 15 luminous specks. Of these, three were patently ordinary terrestrial telescopic shooting stars. Two others were stationary and may be impact-flashes; they may also be meteors moving on the line of sight. The remaining 10 moved with reference to the lunar surface and showed just those aspects which we should expect lunar meteors to exhibit. The observed velocities, however, are often great enough that interpreting these moving lunar specks as meteors luminous in a thin lunar atmosphere, will require admitting a number of hyperbolic velocities.

An extremely conservative estimate of the number of meteoritic impact-flares in a year upon our lunar area of 900,000 square miles that would be brighter than stellar magnitude 8.3 is 1,000 if the moon has no atmosphere. At most two such flares were observed during the 145 hours of our searches. The probability of this obtained result can be computed from one of Bernoulli's Theorems to be less than .00001, and we are accordingly compelled to reject the hypothesis that the noon has no atmosphere at all. Clearly, a very few meteorites reach the lunar surface with undiminished cosmic velocities; otherwise, impact-flares would be more numerous.

It is impossible to regard all the moving lunar specks as terrestrial meteors because of the extreme shortness of their paths. (Some, of course, may be terrestrial.) In addition, they are far more numerous than studies have shown terrestrial meteors of the same brightness to be.

There have now been observed, to our knowledge, a total of 16 moving lunar specks, six of them when the moon was not being specifically watched for their appearance. (We do not count specks obviously terrestrial meteors.) The following data on the frequency of specks of different brightnesses may be of some interest.

Stellar Magnitude:	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12
No. Specks:	1	2	4	6	2	1

It will be noticed that the specks grow more common with decreasing brightness until we reach those so dim that most of them go unobserved.

Our possible lunar meteors in this respect resemble terrestrial ones.

It would be a very excellent thing to obtain duplicate observations of one of these moving lunar specks. One could thus have a completely conclusive test of whether these objects are in the earth's atmosphere (though what they could be is far from evident) or far beyond it and hence presumably near the surface of the moon. For this purpose one requires simultaneous surveys of the moon by two observers. They need not be far apart; two or three miles would be sufficient. It would be best for them to be in easy and rapid communication with each other in order to insure identity of any object the two observed against the moon. Surely this important project is simple enough to engage the attention of two or more of our readers. We shall welcome correspondence from anyone on the subject.

Some Recent Observations

Note. All dates and times in The Strolling Astronomer are given by Universal Time unless the contrary is explicitly stated. Universal Time is also called Greenwich Civil Time. It is the local mean solar time at longitude zero degrees.

Venus has been receiving much attention from E. Pfannenschmidt and his colleagues at several German observatories during its present very favorable morning apparition. Perhaps the most interesting and surprising result of their observations comes from the Treptow Observatory in Berlin. On July 18 at $2^h\ 15^m$ Messrs. Bomm and Pocher, both experienced observers, saw the dark hemisphere "illuminated in a purple-brownish color with a clearly lighter (less dim) part eccentrically located" in the north central part of the disc regarded as a complete circle. They were using a 6-inch reflector with good seeing and transparency. To the best of the editor's knowledge, no one else has ever perceived differences in the brightness of the "ashy light" in its different portions. "The same effect", this same curious lighting of the non-sunlit regions, was observed by Bomm with a 2-inch refractor on July 19 , by Pocher with a 6-inch reflector and a 4-inch refractor on July 21, by Pflug (also at Berlin) with a 4-inch reflector on July 21, and finally by both Bomm and Pocher with a 6-inch reflector on July 29. It is interesting that the July 18 observation, if not the others as well, was made with Venus still brilliant on a dawn sky. On that date the sun rose at Treptow at $3^h\ 4^m$, U. T., 49 minutes after the observation. Many of the past records of the "ashy light" have been made with Venus viewed against a daylight sky. Readers interested in this phenomenon might like to review the observations outlined on pgs. 4 and 6 of our August, 1948, issue.

We are also indebted to Mr. Pfannenschmidt for a set of nine drawings of Venus between July 30 and August 11, inclusive, by

Dr. W. Sandner with a $2\frac{1}{2}$-inch refractor and (usually) 70X. This observer is at the Volks-Observatory in Munich and plans to continue his studies of Venus with "a very fine $4\frac{1}{2}$-inch refractor". Dr. Sandner regularly drew bright cusp-caps, with the south one often eccentrically positioned on its cusp. The cusps of the crescentic planet looked blunted rather than sharp to him, the south one frequently being more blunted than the north. On August 6 the north cusp-band was "very dark and distinct". Dr. Sandner's drawings show a number of dusky shadings, but he thinks that these may well be illusions. Venus was also drawn by Mr. Oberndorfer on August 1 with a 4-inch reflector at 160X in fairly good seeing. His sketch shows bright cusp-caps (the north one being prolonged), dark cusp-bands, with the south one the thicker, a thin bright limb-band, and a dark shading along the terminator (where the solar illumination of the planet is necessarily most feeble).

Observers of Venus on this continent in recent weeks include E. J. Reese, T. Cragg, R. Missert, and E. K. White. Mr. White employed a 7-inch reflector; the others, 6-inch reflectors. Reese wrote on August 12 that he had seen nothing resembling bright cusp-caps "in recent weeks" but that "dusky belts" had been common. By "belts" he means dark bands perpendicular to the line joining the cusps. Such belts are well shown on Ross' famous 1927 photographs with the Mount Wilson 60-inch reflector, and it has been suggested that they are close analogues of the Jovian and Saturnian cloud-belts and hence evidence a rapid rotation for Venus. Though most visual observers of the planet do not depict such forms, F. R. Vaughn regularly does so; and Reese here confirms him. Moreover, two faint shadings remarked by Pfannenschmidt in a good view on May 14,1948, suggest this same band-like character. As for the bright cusp-caps lacking to Reese in July and early August, they apparently grew more conspicuous as the phase increased; for during the first half of September he repeatedly recorded the north cusp to be brighter than the south cusp . On September 12 he noted: "The north cusp-cap is small, being bounded by a dark bluish-gray band." White wrote on September 9 that Venus presented "bright cusp-caps, especially the nothern one". Drawings by Missert on August 29 and on September 5 show the north cusp-cap larger and plainer than the south one. Missert and White thus prettily confirm Reese that the north cap was dominant in early September. Missert's drawings show the bright limb-band, with several brighter spots upon it, and a darker shading along the terminator. Three drawings by Cragg show considerable detail. He remarked both cusp-caps and on September 2 again observed a white area protruding from one cap toward the equator (assuming the cusps to lie near the poles). Is one here dealing with cold polar air-masses flowing into lower latitudes from the Venusian polar regions? Mr. Cragg has now seen several cap-protrusions of this kind, and other observers might like to look carefully for them.

E. J. Reese made numerous and careful observations of the phase of Venus near the last dichotomy. Averaging his estimates in several ways, he adopts that the terminator between the cusp-caps was straight on September 6.7, $i = 87^\circ.5$, and that the center of the terminator was in line with the cusps on September 9.1, $i = 86^\circ.1$. Here i is the angle at Venus between lines drawn to the sun and to the earth. At two previous dichotomies Reese observed a straight terminator at $i = 87^\circ.5$ and at $i = 87^\circ.3$ respectively.

The agreement between his three determinations is indeed excellent, bearing in mind that the daily change in i is 0°.6 near dichotomy. Theoretical dichotomy, i=90°.0, fell on September 2.7, 1948, the difference between theory and observation being presumably due to the atmosphere of the planet. It is worth noting that Reese's observations show the cusps projecting more beyond immediately adjacent portions of the terminator than beyond its center. A number of previous observers confirm Reese about this appearance, but some think that it is an illusory effect produced by the dark cusp-bands. If real, it would appear to mean that the Venusian atmosphere varies in transparency at different positions along the terminator. We have but few other observations of the phase near the last dichotomy. Missert on September 5.4 found the terminator "very slightly concave, almost straight." Missert on September 12.4 drew the terminator as a whole convex. White on September 7.5 found it "still slightly concave." Cragg on September 4.5 called the terminator "just barely concave." Three of these four views accord with Reese's results.

On pgs. 2 and 3 of our August, 1948, issue, we listed observations of the angular perimeter of Venus near the inferior conjunction on June 24, 1948. M. B. B. Heath, one of the leading planetarians in the British Astronomical Association, has written of his views at that time with a 10-inch reflector. He found the horns prolonged "well beyond " the semicircle on June 17, "considerably beyond" on June 19, "far beyond" on June 22, and merely "beyond" on June 25 in poor air. On June 26 with fair conditions he noted: "The cusps project far beyond the semicircle; in fact, a faint ghost-like line of light extends almost all around the circle—quite 3/4 around, perhaps more, but I cannot see quite a full circle." On the same date E. K. White did see Venus as a complete ring of light, and probably Mr. Heath would have done so too with slightly better conditions.

In our July issue, on pg. 7, we described how on May 14, 1948, C. S. Slemaker remarked "a rather long and shallow depression" in the north part of the terminator and E. Pfannenschmidt on that date noted a dent in the north cusp-band. On August 1 Pfannenschmidt wrote that Slemaker's feature had been "nicely confirmed by the observations of four members of the Treptow group with apertures between four and 26 inches. My observation of the dent in the north polar band (as observed also by Bartlett) has been confirmed here too." The editor then sought more information from Mr. Slemaker about his observation, but it unhappily emerged that several persons at the Naval Observatory at the time agreed only that there was an irregularity of some kind on the north half of the terminator. It now appears to the editor impossible to say whether Slemaker and Pfannenschmidt saw the same object or not. All that does appear clear is that Venus was generous with terminator-irregularities last May 14 and that available data do not allow a proper study of them.

Still reviewing the past, we wish now to consider J. C. Bartlett's perhaps unique observation of an isolated bright speck off the center of the terminator of Venus near $0^h\ 5^m$ on May 11, 1948. It perfectly resembled a lunar peak at sunrise or sunset, he emphasized. At the editor's request Dr. Bartlett kindly measured the position of this bright point on his original drawing.

The distance from the terminator came out to lie between 0.031 and 0.063, where the unit is the radius of the planet; perhaps the mean of 0.047 is the best value to use. The height above the visible surface of the object causing the bright point can then easily be computed to be 0.0011 radii or 4.2 miles. This number should be regarded as a minimum value since perhaps more than the extreme top of the object was receiving sunlight. The object causing the bright point could be either a cloud or a mountain. The editor would consider the former the more likely on Venus. If so, this determination should be a very useful addition to knowledge of the planet's atmosphere.

Several readers have written that clouds prevented them from watching the daylight occultation of Mars by the moon on September 6. E. K. White on September 5 found the planet to be "very conspicuous" in his 7-inch reflector, using powers up to 250X. The daylight sky, it appears obvious, would have allowed observations of the occultation with even small telescopes. We doubtless should mention that Mr. White's telescope is equipped with setting-circles. On this subject of planetary occultations and the curious lunar limb band sometimes observed then, M. B. B. Heath writes that he has seen "a considerable number [of occultations] of Venus and Mars, a few of Uranus and Neptune, none at all of Jupiter or Saturn. Although looking particularly for it I have never seen a sign of any limb band."

A few reports on the remote Mars may be worth mentioning. The quantity ⊙ given below measures the seasons on Mars, being 90° at the summer solstice of the northern hemisphere and 180° at its autumnal equinox. On June 5, ⊙ 108°, C. S. Slemaker observed both polar caps, using a 5-inch refractor. The north cap was small; the south one, long, narrow, and not exactly opposite the north cap. T. Cragg on August 9, ⊙ 139°, was surprised to find the south cap fully twice as large as the north cap. He used a 6-inch reflector. The south cap was much the more brilliant. A friend of Mr. Cragg's confirmed these appearances. On August 8 and 10 W. H. Haas, also with a 6-inch reflector, found the north cap larger, brighter, and more conspicuous than the south cap. Now do we have here one more example of the ability of observers to disagree, or was the south cap rapidly variable from August 8 to August 10?

T. Cragg writes that he and T. R. Cave agreed about the curious fuzziness of Callisto, or Jupiter IV, in the Griffith 12-inch refractor on June 13 (pg. 8 of August issue). The other three satellites were sharply outlined.

Jupiter has naturally been the chief object of observation during the last two months. We have reports from J. C. Bartlett, T. Cragg, J. P. Dow, R. S. Ellwood, W. H. Haas, E. E. Hare, (Miss) A. I. Hoth, H. M. Johnson, L. T. Johnson, R. R. La Pelle, R. Missert, E. Pfannenschmidt (reporting for Messrs. Oberndorfer, Meyer, Gerstenberger, and the Treptow observers), E. J. Reese, C. S. Slemaker, and C. B. Stephenson—a gratifyingly long list.

Many of these observers have submitted drawings showing the famous Red Spot Hollow as an elliptical white oval in the South Tropical Zone, often bordered by fairly conspicuous dark bands. None of the drawings which

have arrived during the last two months show any sign of a dark Red Spot inside the Hollow. On July 27 W. H. Haas found the Hollow considerably brighter than in late June and mid-July and indeed equal to the brightest zone on the planet. He confirmed this aspect on July 29 and August 3; on August 10 he was surprised to find the Hollow brightening considerably as it moved across the disc while C. M. (II) increased from 210° to 250°. Reese found the Hollow rather dull from June 25 to July 3 and distinctly brighter from July 8 to September 11, with unusual brilliance on August 1 and 18. He thus at least partially confirms Haas. On July 20 Reese found the Hollow brighter in its north portion than in its south portion. He further notes: "The intensity of the Hollow decreases with increasing distance from the C. M. much faster than that of the E. Z." Would this behavior mean that the Hollow lies at a different level in the Jovian atmosphere than the Equatorial Zone? And if so, have we neglected a simple but effective method of investigating heights in the Jovian atmosphere? Reese has often recorded the color of the Hollow during the last few months. "Yellow-white" is his most common estimate; "ochre" and "yellow-ochre" also appear, and "orange" occurs once. Missert on August 8 thought the Hollow, as well as the South Tropical Zone on either side of it, "murky." Cragg on August 12 saw "a definite pinkish tint" in the Hollow (6-inch reflector). Three observers have determined the longitude (II) of the Hollow by the method of central meridian transits (described, among other places, in The Strolling Astronomer for May, 1947, pgs. 6-8). E. J. Reese from July 3 to September 11 placed the preceding end at 221° (16 transits), the center at 233° (16 transits), and the following end at 245° (17 transits). Observations by E. E. Hare from July 27 to August 25 give: prec. end at 227° (4 transits), center at 236° (5 transits), fol. end at 249° (1 transit). The results of W. H. Haas from July 27 to August 10 are: prec. end at 223° (3 transits), center at 233° (3 transits), and fol. end at 242° (5 transits). It appears certain that the longitude (II) of the Hollow has been increasing this year. The editor would tentatively, and all too brashly, suggest that the center moved from 228° in March to 234° in September.

E. J. Reese has made a careful study of the motion of darker sections of the South Equatorial Belt North near the Red Spot Hollow. He succeeded in establishing four drifts for June and July, each of the four marks being the preceding end of such a section and each being observed five to seven times. The average period was $9^h\ 53^m\ 17^s$. Several very scantily observed other terminal ends may well admit of drift-lines parallel to the four well-established ones.

On pg. 8 of our August issue we mentioned Reese's perhaps "remarkable and significant" dark streak on the south edge of the North Equatorial Belt. Hi three observations from June 24 to July 1 indicated a highly abnormal rotation-period of over 9^h52^m. He now writes that he saw this same streak to extend from 157° to 184° on July 8 (longitude I), from 166° to 194° on July 10, and possibly from 204° to 233° on July 18. He considers the last observation a very doubtful identification. If this last identification may be used, Reese derives a period of about $9^h\ 53^m\ 25^s$ on the basis of six observations over a period of 24 days. The picture is unhappily confused by other streak-like features at the same latitude.

Regretfully admitting that the fate of Reese's dark streak is obscure with present information, we are glad to report that Hare's white area in the South Temperate Belt at 155° (II) on May 27 has been more obliging. Mr. Hare writes that it has been moving in decreasing longitude at the rate of almost a degree per day. He placed its center at 122° on July 2 and at 77° on August 19 (both by System II), the length of the area being 15 degrees. C. B. Stephenson made a careful study of what must be this feature with the University of Chicago 6-inch refractor. On August 14, 15, and 19 Stephenson noted a faint shading in the South Tropical Zone at this longitude, while the South Temperate Belt itself was deflected southward where adjacent to the shading. On August 26 the shading in the zone was only suspected, and by August 31 there was no sign of it. On these later dates, however, Stephenson did note an enclosed dusky area within the South Temperate Belt—obviously Hare's object. The area extended from 63° to 86° (II) on August 26. The belt as a whole was much lightened in the object's position.

We conclude with a few bits of Jovian miscellany. L. T. Johnson on July 11 with his 8-inch reflector found a slanted streak in the Equatorial Zone to be quite conspicuous, CM (I) 258°. The streak appeared to be connected to the north edge of the South Equatorial Belt but faded into the zone before reaching the south edge of the North Equatorial Belt. What certainly looks like this same streak was drawn by Mr. Johnson on August 26 near C.M. (I) 250°. It was, to be sure, less conspicuous on the later date. T. Cragg's detailed drawings of Jupiter often include a small white spot near the south pole. Perhaps this feature is rapidly variable. Mr. Cragg has often remarked a belt in the north part of the shaded North Polar Region and hence certainly at a very high latitude. C. S. Slemaker on June 14 was much surprised by a wedge-shaped appearance of the South Equatorial Belt North. At C. M. (I) 316° and C. M. (II) 312°, he noted, this belt became very considerably darker and wider near the C.M. On July 10 near C.M. (I) 150° Slemaker found the North Equatorial Belt to be extremely irregular in shape prec. the C.M. He called it "wavy-undulating even." E. M. Hare on August 29 and earlier dates found the South Equatorial Belt South sinuous, beginning at the following end of the Red Spot Hollow and continuing 260° or a little more in increasing longitude. Following longitude (II) 50° the northern crests, he reports, apparently touched the South Equatorial Belt North; but there were clear spaces between the southern crests and that belt. The Equatorial Band remains faint, and the German observers have not succeeded in seeing it in all longitudes. Jupiter and his followers can hardly complain of a dull summer.

World's Largest Stony Meteorite

The Institute of Meteoritics of the University of New Mexico is now proudly housing a record-breaking meteorite found in August in Furnas County, Nebraska. This specimen is the largest stony meteorite as yet found anywhere in the world, the largest meteorite of any type ever seen to fall (with still larger "finds" nothing is known of the circumstances of fall), and the sixth largest meteorite so far found in the United States (the five larger being all irons). It is also unique in that it is to date the only fall

which has dropped fragments in two states. The weight is approximately 3,000 pounds. The fall occurred on February 18, 1948; and striking luminous and acoustic phenomena were reported from several states. A thaw unfortunately prevented immediate field-work. The region was subsequently surveyed by an expedition from the Institute of Meteoritics; and a stony meteorite weighing about 500 pounds was still later recovered in Norton County, Kansas. The present much larger specimen was accidentally discovered during some anthropological excavations carried on by the University of Nebraska. The meteorite was jointly purchased by the University of New Mexico and the University of Nebraska. Dr. Lincoln La Paz, head of the Institute of Meteoritics, directed its surveys of the region of fall. The meteorite is of a very fragile composition, and it appears likely that only a small fraction of the original mass reached the earth's surface and that most of it formed the smoke-train widely observed just after the meteor's passage on February 18. If so, the meteorite (s) just outside the earth's atmosphere must have had a mass of many tons. A description of the Furnas County stone will be published soon by Dr. F. C. Leonard in the Contributions of the Meteoritical Society in Popular Astronomy. (This brief note is to our knowledge the first printed reference to it in an astronomical publication.)

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STAFF

Editor — Walter H. Haas, Instructor in Mathematics
Astronomer, Institute of Meteoritics
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Counsellor — Dr. Lincoln La Paz, Head of Mathematics Department
Director, Institute of Meteoritics
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico