

MINOR PLANET No. 262.—This object has received the name of Valda.

HARVARD COLLEGE OBSERVATORY.—The late Uriah A. Boyden having left property to the value of 230,000 dollars in trust for the purpose of astronomical research, the Trustees of the fund have transferred the property to the President and Fellows of Harvard College, in order that the researches proposed by Mr. Boyden may be directed at the Harvard College Observatory. These researches will be supported by a portion of the means of the Observatory, in addition to the trust fund itself. By the terms of the will the money is to be devoted to observations "at such an elevation as to be free, so far as practicable, from the impediments to accurate observations which occur in the observatories now existing, owing to atmospheric influences."

ASTRONOMICAL PHENOMENA FOR THE WEEK 1887 MARCH 27—APRIL 2

(FOR the reckoning of time the civil day, commencing at Greenwich mean midnight, counting the hours on to 24, is here employed.)

At Greenwich on March 27

Sun rises, 5h. 49m.; souths, 12h. 5m. 30".s.; sets, 18h. 22m.; decl. on meridian, 2° 35' N.; Sidereal Time at Sunset, 6h. 41m.
Moon (at First Quarter on April 1) rises, 7h. 19m.; souths, 14h. 12m.; sets, 21h. 16m.; decl. on meridian, 9° 44' N.

| Planet | Rises | Souths | Sets | Decl. on meridian |
|-------------|--------|--------|-------|-------------------|
| | h. m. | h. m. | h. m. | h. m. |
| Mercury ... | 5 19 | 11 26 | 17 33 | 0 40 N. |
| Venus ... | 6 38 | 13 47 | 20 56 | 12 41 N. |
| Mars ... | 6 3 | 12 30 | 18 57 | 4 37 N. |
| Jupiter... | 20 47* | 1 52 | 6 57 | 11 28 S. |
| Saturn... | 10 39 | 18 48 | 2 57* | 22 30 N. |

* Indicates that the rising is that of the preceding evening and the setting that of the following morning.

Occultations of Stars by the Moon (visible at Greenwich)

| March | Star | Mag. | Disap. | Reap. | Corresponding angles from vertex to right for inverted image |
|--------|----------------------|------|--------|-------|--|
| | | | h. m. | h. m. | |
| 27 ... | μ Ceti | ... | 18 42 | 19 35 | 108 359 |
| 29 ... | 71 Tauri | ... | 6 | 20 38 | near approach 47 — |
| 29 ... | θ ¹ Tauri | ... | 4½ | 21 17 | 22 13 ... 117 335 |
| 29 ... | θ ² Tauri | ... | 4½ | 21 26 | 22 8 ... 91 0 |
| 29 ... | 75 Tauri | ... | 6 | 21 46 | near approach 226 — |
| 29 ... | B.A.C. 1391 | ... | 5 | 22 16 | 23 7 ... 159 288 |
| 29 ... | 85 Tauri | ... | 6 | 23 12 | near approach 42 — |
| 31 ... | 115 Tauri | ... | 6 | 0 9 | 0 45 ... 173 258 |

April
2 ... B.A.C. 2731 ... 6½ ... 21 20 ... 22 30 ... 111 288

March
27 ... 0 ... Venus in conjunction with and 4° 50' north of the Moon.

April
1 ... 22 ... Saturn in conjunction with and 3° 23' north of the Moon.

Variable Stars

| Star | R.A. | Decl. | h. m. | h. m. |
|------------------|---------|----------|---------------------|-------------|
| | h. m. | h. m. | | |
| Algol ... | 3 0'8 | 40 31 N. | Mar. 28, | 19 3 m |
| ζ Geminorum ... | 6 57'4 | 20 44 N. | ,, | 30, 22 0 m |
| δ Libræ ... | 14 54'9 | 8 4 S. | ,, | 30, 22 21 m |
| U Coronæ ... | 15 13'6 | 32 4 N. | ,, | 30, 22 43 m |
| U Herculis ... | 16 20'8 | 19 9 N. | Apr. 1, | m |
| U Ophiuchi... | 17 10'8 | 1 20 N. | Mar. 28, | 4 58 m |
| | | | and at intervals of | 20 8 |
| W Sagittarii ... | 17 57'8 | 29 35 S. | Mar. 29, | 3 0 M |
| R Lyræ ... | 18 51'9 | 43 48 N. | ,, | 31, m |
| η Aquilæ ... | 19 46'7 | 0 43 N. | Apr. 2, | 2 0 M |
| S Sagittæ ... | 19 50'9 | 16 20 N. | ,, | 2, 4 0 M |
| T Aquarii ... | 20 44'0 | 5 34 S. | Mar. 28, | m |
| T Cephei ... | 21 8'1 | 68 2 N. | ,, | 31, M |
| δ Cephei ... | 22 25'0 | 57 50 N. | ,, | 28, 2 0 m |

M signifies maximum; m minimum.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

IN a recently-issued Colonial Office Report on the Gambia will be found some useful data on the climate of that colony which completely upset the results of previous observations and greatly reduce the temperatures hitherto accepted. The mean temperature, according to these latest observations, varies from 68°·5 in January to 80° in July at 7 a.m., and from 73°·7 in January to 82°·5 in July at noon. The same Report contains some interesting statements relating to the ethnology of the colony.

THE principal paper in the just-issued Bulletin (only No. 4 of 1885) of the American Geographical Society is on the historical and geographical features of the Rocky Mountain Railways, by Mr. James Douglass. There is also a translation of Baron Nordenskjöld's reply to criticisms on the "Voyage of the Vega." The criticisms relate to points of minor importance.

THE new number of the "Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine" (Christmas, 1886), consists, besides a reprint of Mr. A. R. Wallace's chapter on the fauna of Madagascar, mainly of papers on linguistic topics and on Malagasy folk-lore. M. Grandidier's paper on the channels and lagoons of the east coast of the island is translated with some interesting remarks by Mr. Sibree appended. Mr. Sibree points out that it would only require about thirty miles of canals to connect all these lagoons and so create a safe and extensive internal waterway of the greatest commercial value. The Rev. W. Montgomery contributes a paper on the Malagasy game of "Fanerana," in many respects resembling chess.

IN the new number (Heft i. Band 10.) of the *Deutsche Geographische Blätter*, we find a useful and careful, if rather too favourable, study of the trade-routes of Mexico, old and new, and their commercial importance, by Herr A. Scobel. From a scientific point of view the most valuable paper is that of Dr. Otto Finsch on his visit three years ago to the atoll of Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago, about half-way between the Seychelles and Ceylon. Dr. Finsch was only a few hours on the islands, but his notes on the people (mostly of the Negro type from the Mauritius) and the richness of the bird life are interesting. An open space in the little east island was covered with "millions" of birds, whose combined cry was deafening. Eggs, also in "millions," lay about everywhere, unprotected by any nest. The commonest among these birds was the sooty tern (*Sterna fuliginosa*). Next to the Laccadives, the Chagos Islands seem to be the favourite breeding-place of this bird in the Indian Ocean. The variety in the colouring of the eggs was unprecedented in Dr. Finsch's experience, especially considering the fact that they all belonged to birds of the one species named above. The only other species noticed in the island by Dr. Finsch was the noddy (*Anous stolidus*). The birds arrive in the islands in the month of June, and stay till the young are fledged; by November they have all taken their departure. As on most coral islands, the animal world generally is very poor.

THE same number contains an account of Fontana's exploration of Eastern Patagonia in 1885, and also a short biography of Emin Pasha. From the latter we learn that Edward Schnitzer was born at Oppeln, in Silesia, in 1840; received his early education at Neisse, in Upper Silesia, and studied medicine at Breslau, Berlin, and Königsberg. From his earliest years he had a special taste for natural history, and especially ornithology, and in the latter department he has all along been a diligent collector. In 1864 we find Schnitzer at Antivari, in Albania, as a surgeon in the Turkish service. In 1870 he accompanied Ismail Pasha to Syria and Arabia, and afterwards to Trebizond, Erzerum, and Epirus. At Ismail's death in 1874, Schnitzer came to Constantinople, and in 1875 made a short visit to his German home. Entering the Egyptian service, he, in 1876, followed Gordon Pasha from Cairo into the Soudan, where, under the title of Emin Effendi, he was appointed chief surgeon, and in 1878 Governor-General of the Equatorial Province, with the title of Bey. His work as administrator, scientific explorer, and collector, since then is well known. To Bremen and Vienna he has sent some 2000 bird-skins, carefully labelled with all necessary information, and including some twenty-five new species.

SINCE the time of Herodotus travellers in Africa have brought home reports of pygmy tribes scattered about in various regions of Africa. Readers of Schweinfurth will remember the Akkas