

to the ethnologist and philologist. But they are numerically too insignificant to claim further notice here.

The Island of Cyprus presents no fresh ethnical elements beyond those specified in our scheme. The bulk of the population are Greek, or, at all events, a mixed Phœnician, Carian, and Greek people that have long been Hellenised. The rest are mainly Turks, and both have hitherto been permitted to live harmoniously together. They are not likely to prove a source of trouble to their new rulers.

As to the future of this varied and interesting region, it is not for us to speak. Everywhere there are evidences that at one time it must have been thickly populated and its resources highly developed. What the country is capable of may be learned from the classical reports of Palgrave, Scherzer, and other British and foreign consuls, as well as from the various special reports on the much-talked-of trans-Asiatic railway. In this connection books worth referring to are Palgrave's "Essays on Eastern Questions," Goldsmid's "Telegraph and Travel," and Goldsmid and Blanford's "Eastern Persia." Good authorities to consult on the geography and science of the region are the various articles in the "English Cyclopædia," recent volumes of Petermann's *Mittheilungen*, Hellwald's "Die Erde und ihre Völker," the *Bulletin* of the French Geographical Society, Chihacheff's "Asie Mineure," Schliemann's and Cesnola's works, Thielmann's "Caucasus, Persia, and Turkey," Unger's "Die Insel Cypern," besides older well-known works.

TYCHO BRAHE'S CORRESPONDENCE¹

WE have received the first three *fasciculi* of this work, projected by M. Früs in 1876. Its purpose is to place in the hands of the astronomer, in a collective form, the letters of Tycho and his correspondence, preserved in the Royal Library at Copenhagen, and in the libraries of Vienna, Pulkowa, and Basle, and others which may be found elsewhere, and it is expected that the work will be complete in about sixteen parts. The earliest letter is one from Tycho to Joannes Aalborg, afterwards librarian at Copenhagen, dated January 14, 1568. There are letters to or from Steno Bille, or Bilde (an uncle of Tycho's, at whose house, it may be remembered, he detected the celebrated star of 1572 which is associated with his name), Thaddæus Hagecius, physician to the Emperor Rudolph II., Paulus Haintzel, Hieronymus Wolfius, and others, whose names occur in the well-known treatise, "De Nova Stella Anni 1572." In a letter, No. 47, written in 1584, to Henricus Brucaeus, Tycho enters into some discussion of the "Hypothesis Copernici," in another to Hagecius (we follow the Latin names in use at the time) he refers at length to the parallax of the comet of 1577, observed by him with much care; from his observations of this body, as Pingré says, "on en conclut que le lieu des comètes était au-delà du ciel de la Lune."

The third part contains a finely-executed portrait of Tycho (Woodburytype) from the oil painting in the possession of Dr. Crompton, of Manchester, for information respecting which M. Früs refers his readers to *NATURE*, vol. xv. p. 406, and vol. xvi. p. 501; an account of it also appeared in the *Proceedings* of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, October 31, 1876.

We may express the hope that the success attending the publication of the first three numbers of this work may be sufficiently encouraging to induce a more rapid issue of the remaining parts.

OUR ASTRONOMICAL COLUMN

PERIODICAL COMETS IN 1879.—Of the known comets of short period, two will pass through perihelion in the spring of the ensuing year. The comet discovered by

¹ "Tychois Brahei, et ad eum doctorum virorum Epistolæ nunc primum collectæ et editæ," a F. R. Früs. (D. Nutt: London.)

Brorsen at Kiel in February, 1846, and since observed in 1857, 1868, and 1873, according to the elements deduced at the last appearance by Dr. Schulze, will arrive at perihelion again on April 1, perturbations, which must be light in the actual revolution, being neglected. This comet still approaches very near to the orbit of the planet Jupiter, though perhaps not quite so close as in 1842, when the present form of orbit was impressed upon it by the action of the planet, the point of nearest approach being at a true anomaly of 167° 48', or in heliocentric longitude 283° 30' (Eq. 1870); when last passing this point of its orbit, early in October, 1875, Jupiter was distant from the comet, 5'58, whence the effect of his attraction upon the length of the present revolution will be comparatively trifling. At the ascending node the comet may approach pretty near to Venus, as was the case in October, 1873, a few days previous to the last perihelion passage. To obtain an idea of the track in the heavens in the spring of next year, we may assume that the comet will arrive at its least distance from the sun at midnight on April 1 (guided by Schulze's elements) and will have the following positions:—

12h.	R.A.	N.P.D.	Distance from Earth.	Distance from Sun.	Intensity of Light.
March 12...	23°6	89°7	1'35	0'71	1'08
„ 22...	32°4	80°5	1'20	0'63	1'77
April 1...	41°6	69°7	1'05	0'59	2'58
„ 11...	51°7	57°5	0'91	0'63	3'06
„ 21...	63°3	45°9	0'81	0'71	3'00
May 1...	85°0	33°3	0'74	0'83	2'66
„ 11...	118°6	27°2	0'71	0'96	2'12
„ 21...	154°2	30°8	0'74	1'09	1'53
„ 31...	176°3	40°1	0'81	1'23	1'02
June 10...	189°0	50°2	0'91	1'36	0'65

Whence it may be expected that the comet will be observed in the latter half of March, attaining its greatest brightness as it traverses the constellation Perseus, about the middle of April.

The second comet due in 1879 is that discovered by M. Tempel at Marseilles in April, 1867, and re-observed in 1873, after undergoing great perturbation from a close approach to the planet Jupiter, early in 1870. The best elements for 1873 are those of Sandberg, according to which the next perihelion passage would fall on April 26, without taking into account the effect of planetary action, which, as in the case of Brorsen's comet, is not likely to be material in the present revolution; indeed, when the comet was last in aphelion, and nearest to the orbit of Jupiter, the planet was on the opposite side of the sun.

Assuming, then, that the next perihelion passage will take place at midnight on April 26, the following positions and distances will result:—

	R.A.	N.P.D.	Distance from Earth.	Distance from Sun.	Intensity of Light.
April 26 ...	261°8	106°5	0'916	1'770	0'38
May 16 ...	262°9	109°3	0'819	1'778	0'47
„ 26 ...	262°1	111°0	0'796	1'789	0'49
June 5 ...	260°7	112°6	0'791	1'804	0'49
June 15 ...	259°1	114°5	0'808	1'823	0'46

The comet under the above condition, will therefore be situated during the whole period in the southern part of the constellation Ophiuchus, and it may be hoped that it will be well observed, as, during the ensuing revolution, material perturbations of the elements may be again occasioned by the action of Jupiter, from which body the comet at the beginning of October, 1881, may not be distant more than 0'55, a degree of approximation that, although not sufficient to lead to such heavy disturbance of the comet's motion as in 1870, will yet render a precise determination of the orbit in 1879 very essential for an accurate prediction of the apparent track in 1885.

In September, 1879, another return of Biela's comet will be due with the elements of 1866, but we reserve a few remarks upon this subject for another note.