

Eminent Literary Ladies.

(From the *Athenaeum*.)

Miss Caroline Lucretia Herschel.

This lady died at Hanover on the 9th instant, in the ninety-eighth year of her age. She was the fourth daughter of Isaac Herschel and Anna Ilse Moritzen, his wife—and sister to the celebrated astronomer of that name, as well as the constant companion and sole assistant of his astronomical labors, to the success of which her indefatigable zeal, diligence, and singular accuracy of calculation not a little contributed. She was born in Hanover on the 16th of March, 1750; where she resided under the parental roof till her twenty-second year—when she joined her brother, then actively engaged in the musical profession at Bath, in England, a country which was destined to be her home for half a century. There, from the first commencement of his astronomical pursuits, her attendance on both his daily labors and nightly watches was put in requisition; and was found so useful that on his removal to Datchet, and subsequently to Slough,—he being then occupied with his reviews of the Heavens and other researches—she performed the whole of her arduous and important duties of his astronomical assistant,—not only reading the clocks and noting down all the observations from dictation as an amanuensis, but subsequently executing the whole of the extensive and laborious numerical calculations necessary to render them available to Science, as well as a multitude of others relative to the various objects of theoretical and experimental inquiry in which during his active career, he at any time engaged. For the performance of these duties his Majesty King George the Third was graciously pleased to place her in the receipt of a salary sufficient for her singularly moderate wants and retired habits.

Arduous, however, as these occupations must appear,—especially when it is considered that her brother's observations were always carried on (circumstances permitting) till day-break, without regard to season, and indeed chiefly in the winter,—they proved insufficient to exhaust her activity. In their intervals she found time both for actual astronomical observations of her own and for the execution of more than one work of great extent and utility.

The observations here alluded to were made with a small Newtonian sweeper constructed for her by her brother; with which, whenever his occasional absences or any interruption to the regular course of his observations permitted, she searched the heavens for comets.—and that so effectually as on no less than eight several occasions to be rewarded by their discovery (*viz.* on Aug. 1, 1786; Dec. 21, 1788; Jan. 8, 1790; Dec. 15, 1791; Oct. 7, 1793; Nov. 7, 1795; and Aug. 6, 1797). On five of these occasions (recorded in the pages of the "Philosophical Transactions" of London) her claim to the first discovery is admitted. These sweeps moreover proved productive of the detection of several remarkable nebulae and clusters of stars previously unobserved; among which may be specially mentioned the superb Nebulae, No. 1, Class V. of Sir William Herschel's catalogues—an object bearing much resemblance to the celebrated nebula in Andromeda, discovered by Simon Inarius—as also the Nebula V., No. 18; the 12th and 27th clusters of Class VII; and the 45th, 65th, 72nd, and 78th, of Class VIII of those catalogues.

The astronomical works which she found leisure to complete were: 1st. "A Catalogue of 561 Stars observed by Flamsteed,"—but which, having escaped the notice of those who framed the "British Catalogue" from that astronomer's observations, are not therein inserted: 2nd. "A General Index of Reference to every observation of every Star inserted in the British Catalogue." These works were published together in one volume by the Royal Society; and to their utility in subsequent researches Mr. Baily, in his "Life of Flamsteed," pp. 388, 390, bears ample testimony. She further completed the reduction and arrangement as a "Zone Catalogue" of all the nebulae and clusters of stars observed by her brother in his sweeps; a work for

which she was honored with the Gold Medal of the Astronomical Society of London, in 1828,—which Society also conferred on her the unusual distinction of electing her an honorary member.

On her brother's death, in 1822, she returned to Hanover; which she never again quitted,—passing the last twenty-six years of her life in repose, enjoying the society and cherished by the regard of her remaining relatives and friends, gratified by the occasional visits of eminent astronomers, and honored with many marks of favor and distinction on the part of the King of Hanover, the Crown Prince, and his amiable and illustrious consort.

To within a very short period of her death her health continued uninterrupted, her faculties perfect, and her memory (especially of the scenes and circumstances of former days) remarkably clear and distinct. Her end was tranquil and free from suffering—a simple cessation of life.

We subjoin the following eloquent notice from the pen of the astronomer Nichol:

SIR WILLIAM HERSCHEL, during those engrossing nights, was constantly assisted in his labors by a devoted maiden Sister, who braved with him the inclemency of the weather—who heroically shared his privations that she might participate in his delights—whose pen, we are told, committed to paper his notes of observations as they issued from his lips; "she it was," says the host of authorities, "who having passed the nights near the telescope, took the rough manuscripts to her cottage at the dawn of day, and produced a fair copy of the night's work on the ensuing morning; she it was who planned the labour of each succeeding night, who reduced every observation, made every calculation, and kept every thing in systematic order;" she it was—Miss CAROLINE HERSCHEL—who helped our astronomer to gather an imperishable name. This venerable lady, in one respect been more fortunate than her brother, she has lived to reap the full harvest of their joint glory. Some years ago the gold medal of our Astronomical Society was transmitted her to her native Hanover, whither she removed after Sir William's death; and the same Learned Society has recently inscribed her name upon its roll: but she has been rewarded by yet more—by what she will value beyond all earthly pleasures—she has lived to see her favorite nephew, him who grew up under her eye unto an astronomer, gather around him the highest hopes of scientific Europe, and prove himself fully equal to tread in the footsteps of his Father.

QUEEN VICTORIA

VICTORIA, since her accession to the throne, has often given evidence of the strength of principle by which she is governed. The following anecdote illustrates the devout regard she entertains for the sacredness of the Christian Sabbath. Soon after she ascended the throne, at a late hour on one Saturday night, a nobleman, occupying an important post in the government, arrived at Windsor with some state papers. "I have brought," said he, "for your majesty's inspection, some documents of great importance; but, as I shall be obliged to trouble you to examine them in detail, I will not encroach upon the time of your majesty to-night, but will request your attention to-morrow morning." "To-morrow morning!" repeated the queen; "to-morrow is Sunday, my lord." "True, your majesty; but business of the state will not admit of delay." "I am aware of that," replied the queen; and as, of course, your lordship could not have arrived earlier at the palace to-night, I will, if those papers are of such pressing importance, attend to their contents after church to-morrow morning." In the morning the queen and her court went to church, and, much to the surprise of the noble, the subject of the discourse was on the sacredness of the Christian Sabbath. "How did your lordship like the sermon?" asked the queen. "Very much indeed, your majesty," replied the nobleman. "Well, then," added her majesty, "I will not conceal from you that, last night, I sent the clergyman the text from which he preached. I hope we shall be improved by the sermon." Not another word was said about the state papers du-