

THE PRACTICAL NATURALISTS' SOCIETY.

We are gratified to learn of the existence of this Association, whose headquarters are at Great Horton, Yorkshire, England, and whose aims are quite similar to those of the A. S. C. The methods are also similar with this exception, that the P. N. S. prescribes no course of study. Like the A. S. C. it seeks to build up a fraternity of youthful naturalists, who shall be mutually helpful to one another by means of correspondence, exchange of specimens, etc. The Society has now over one hundred members, "most of whom are young collectors, though some are naturalists of considerable experience." The entrance fee is *sixpence*, which the Secretaries, Messrs. Ward & Riley, report is insufficient to pay expenses. May this and all similar societies live and grow.

If every one interested in scientific work, to whose notice this number of the SCIENTIST may come, will at once favor us with his subscription, if he has not already done so, and also induce others to do the same, we shall be enabled to make *now* some much desired improvements.

In another column we direct attention to the good fortune of the A. S. C. in securing Dr. Garnier as a member of the directorial staff. The Doctor will soon commence in the SCIENTIST a series of papers on the Herpetology of British North America. As there is nothing of the kind now extant this will be exceedingly valuable and interesting.

We are pleased to assure our readers that they may soon expect contributions from the following well known Naturalists, Dr. Garnier, Lucknow, Ont., (Herpetology;) Messrs. G. U. Hay, (Botany,) and Montague Chamberlain, (Ornithology,) St. John, N. B., and L. Abbe Provancher, (Entomology.) Cap Rouge, P. Q.

Astronomical Department.

Conducted By Prof. A. E. COLDWELL.

THE PONS-BROOKS COMET.

This comet, called also the comet of 1812, was discovered by Pons at Marseilles, July 20. 1812. Encke predicted that it would return in 70.68 years. Schulhof more recently predicted a return in September, 1884. It was actually found by Brooks, of Phelps, N. Y., September 1st, 1883. It made its nearest approach to the earth on January 8th, and was in perihelion on January 25th. It passed within 53 million miles of the earth and 70 millions from the sun. This strange visitor from the celestial realms, after having been visible to the eye for a few weeks, is now receding into the depths of space, tracing his immense orbit, but getting beyond the powerful grasp of the Sun.

THE PLANETS FOR FEBRUARY.

MERCURY is a morning star this month. He makes his greatest angle with the sun on the 31st, and may be seen for a few days at that time about an hour before sunrise.

NEPTUNE is an evening star. He sets on the 1st about 1 o'clock in the morning; on the 29th at 11.30 in the evening. Though 76 times as large as our earth it requires a good telescope to find it.

The four planets, *Mars, Jupiter, Venus* and *Saturn*, are very conspicuous this month. Mars shines with his peculiar mild light in the Eastern sky immediately after sunset. He is now in opposition, and in a most favorable position for observation.

JUPITER is about an hour high at sunset. He is one of the most magnificent objects in the star-spangled