

same parts of the heavens with such regularity, that he was certain no new planet had passed that way between 1808 and 1816. Gauss and Burckhardt computed the orbit of Vesta; and when Gauss compared one of his orbits with twenty-two observations of M. Bouvard, he found the errors below seventeen seconds of space in right ascension, and still less in declination.

The elements of all these orbits have been successively improved, and this has been done entirely by the German mathematicians.<sup>33</sup> These perturbations are calculated, and the places for some time before and after opposition are now given in the Berlin Ephemeris. "I have lately observed," says Professor Airy, "and compared with the Berlin Ephemeris, the right ascensions of Juno and Vesta, and I find that they are rather more accurate than those of Venus:" so complete is the confirmation of the theory by these new bodies; so exact are the methods of tracing the theory to its consequences.

We may observe that all these new-discovered bodies have received names taken from the ancient mythology. In the case of the first of these, astronomers were originally divided; the discoverer himself named it the *Georgium Sidus*, in honor of his patron, George the Third; Lalande and others called it *Herschel*. Nothing can be more just than this mode of perpetuating the fame of the author of a discovery; but it was felt to be ungraceful to violate the homogeneity of the ancient system of names. Astronomers tried to find for the hitherto neglected denizen of the skies, an appropriate place among the deities to whose assembly he was at last admitted; and *Uranus*, the father of Saturn, was fixed upon as best suiting the order of the course.

The mythological nomenclature of planets appeared, from this time, to be generally agreed to. Piazzi termed his *Ceres Ferdinandea*. The first term, which contains a happy allusion to Sicily, the country of the discovery in modern, and of the goddess in ancient, times, has been accepted; the attempt to pay a compliment to royalty out of the products of science, in this as in most other cases, has been set aside. Pallas, Juno, and Vesta, were named, without any peculiar propriety of selection, according to the choice of their discoverers.

#### *Sect. 6.—Application of the Newtonian Theory to Comets.*

A FEW words must be said upon another class of bodies, which at first seemed as lawless as the clouds and winds; and which astronomy

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<sup>33</sup> Airy, *Rep.* 157.