

nite and calculable proportion known beforehand; and, moreover, the longer ought to be situated in a parallel of latitude, and the shorter in a circle of longitude passing through the star.

(24.) There is a star, the 61st of Flamsteed's list, of those in the Constellation Cygnus—a star far, however, from *conspicuous* for its brightness; being only of the fifth magnitude; but which, for a reason presently to be mentioned, was suspected to be nearer than the generality of the stars. This star was subjected by the late Professor Bessel to the examination above described between the years 1834 and 1838, and the result of his examination (made public by a singular coincidence *a few days before* the announcement of Professor Henderson's discovery) was such as to leave no doubt of the reality of its parallax, to the amount (as slightly corrected by a further continuance of his observations) of $0''.35$. Later astronomers,* going over the same ground, with more perfect instruments and improved practice in this very delicate process of observation, have found a somewhat larger result—stated by one at $0''.57$, and by another at $0''.51$ —so that we may take it at $0''.54$, corresponding to somewhat less than twice the distance of α Centauri; or to 374,320 solar distances, which light would require about eight years and four months to travel over.

(25.) It cannot be supposed that results like these would be accepted without undergoing the most severe scrutiny and receiving confirmation from further and

* Messrs Auwers and O. Struve.