Note on the Opposition-Magnitudes of Uranus and Jupiter.

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In a note which I communicated to the Astronomical Section in May, 1878, I pointed out the gradual increase in the brightness of Uranus at each successive opposition, which increase will go on till the opposition of 1882, after which the planet's brightness will diminish. On the evening of 24th April, 1878, or sixty-seven days after the opposition, I found the planet to be of the 5 1/2 magnitude, the comparison being made by means of a small telescope with Nu (ν) Leonis. The star and planet were seen in the same field of view, and were estimated to be equal. On 18th March last, or twenty-one days after opposition, I compared the planet with B.A.C. 3621 and 3622. The comparison, which was made by means of the naked eye and also a small telescope, showed the planet to be about equal to the former but superior to the latter. The B. A. Catalogue gives 5 and 6 respectively as the magnitudes of the stars, so that Uranus may, at the recent opposition, be safely recorded as a star of the 5 1/2 magnitude. Some idea may be formed of its conspicuous character when it is stated that I determined pretty accurately its distance from Regulus and γ Leonis by means of an ordinary sextant. I may here draw attention to the circumstance that Jupiter will, at its opposition in October next, be very near its perihelion, and that the planet will in consequence be a very brilliant object. At each opposition near perihelion, which occurs every twelve years, it rivals Venus in brilliancy, and may be seen distinctly without a telescope in full sunlight. It was a splendid object in September and October, 1868.

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