image at all produces an elongated image, whose intensity is compared with difficulty with the circular stellar image. The photometric magnitude is 12.70 ± 0.08, which implies, when compared with the visual magnitude, that the color of the planet is redder than that of the comparison stars.

Professor Pickering notes that the planet offers opportunity for the examination of several photometric problems:

"First, the approximate diameter may be determined by comparison with the brighter asteroids and satellites, assuming that the reflecting power is the same. Secondly, the great variation in the distance of this object from the earth will afford an excellent test of the law that the light varies inversely as the square of the distance. The existence of an absorbing medium in the solar system will thus be tested. Thirdly, owing to the proximity of this object to the earth at opposition, its phase angle will vary by a large amount. It will, therefore, afford an excellent test of the law connecting this angle with the variation in brightness which has been found by two or three observers independently."

THE ANDROMEDA NEBULA.

SUSPICIONS of change in this nebula have been recently announced, but lack confirmation. Mr. A. A. C. Merlin, British Vice-Consul at Volo, Greece, telegraphed August 29th that a star near the nucleus of the nebula was visible in an 8-inch refractor. This information was not cabled to this country, because observations at Hamburg, Bamberg and Bonn, on August 30th and 31st, failed to confirm the observation. But the *Observatory* for September announced publicly the alleged discovery, and added that observations at Greenwich, August 31st, showed nothing unusual. On September 20th a despatch was sent from Kiel to this country and distributed announcing that "Seraphimoff, of Pulkowa, confirms a stellar condensation in the center of the Nebula in Andromeda." Photographs at Harvard Observatory on September 20th and 21st, when compared with those taken in 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, failed to confirm the confirmation, and the evidence of the suspected change seems to be decidedly in the negative.

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ZOOLOGICAL NOTES.

ANOTHER SPECIMEN OF NOTORNIS.

FOURTEEN years ago, in referring to the capture of the third living *Notornis*, the great flightless water-hen of New Zealand, the writer took occasion to remark that "it is by no means impossible that other specimens may be added to the three already known, since the localities at which these were taken were some 90 miles apart in a region little known." This expectation has recently been realized and the capture of a fourth *Notornis* is recorded at some length by a correspondent of the London *Times*. The species was based by Owen on some bones, including an imperfect cranium, collected by Walter Mantell so long ago as 1847, and as the remains were associated with those of *Moas* it was naturally supposed that, like them, *Notornis* was extinct. The discovery of a living bird in 1849 showed that fortunately this supposition was incorrect and that this, the largest member of the Rail family, had escaped being 'eaten off the face of the earth by gluttonous man.' It may be said here that Dr. Meyer, and doubtless correctly, considers the fossil and living species of *Notornis* as distinct species, the former bearing the original name *Notornis mantelli*, while the latter is called *Notornis hochstetteri*.

The first living *Notornis* was taken on the shores of Dusky Bay by some sealers who followed its tracks through a light snow, and a second was caught three years later on

Secretary Island, Thompson Sound. Then followed an interval of twenty-seven years without any reliable record of *Notornis*, and it seemed not improbable that the species had at last become extinct, when a third was captured by a rabbit hunter, or rather by his dog, on the eastern side of Lake Te Anau. This specimen was offered in the United States for $600, and was finally sold at Stevens's famous auction rooms, London, for £110.

The exact locality where the fourth and last bird was found is not given, but it is pretty certain that the species ranges over a considerable extent of wild country and, although probably what may be termed a 'decadent' species, will persist for a while longer.

It is to be hoped that the last specimen has fallen into the hands of some one who will preserve both skin and skeleton, for there is no reason why so large a bird should not be both mounted and skeletonized. The habit of 'keeping the skin and throwing away the characters' of a bird is, however, only too prevalent, and when this is done by professional collecters we can not expect much from others. And this leads to the remark that, when the party dispatched to the Galapagos Islands by Hon. Walter Rothschild obtained four specimens of the flightless and all but extinct cormorant they simply took the skins and failed to preserve a single bone. Considering that the problems of the place of origin and lines of dispersion of the cormorants hinge upon anatomical evidence, such neglect is little less than culpable.

ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE.

In *The Auk* for October, Mr. D. G. Elliott attacks and Dr. J. A. Allen defends, successfully it seems to us, Canon XL of the Code of the American Ornithologists' Union. This canon states that "the permanence of a name is of far more importance than its signification or structure.* * * It therefore follows that hybrid names [anagrams, 'nonsense' names and 'barbarous' or 'exotic' names] cannot be displaced. * * * " Why any working zoologist, including under this term paleontologists, should wish to abolish this canon it is difficult to understand, for its removal, or lack of adoption, would open, or does open, the way to countless changes of nomenclature and the creation of hundreds, if not thousands, of new names. And all for no good reason; zoological names are not literature, but simply handles by which species may be grasped, and they serve their purpose equally well if rough hewn or grammatically polished. Le Conte used *Gyascutus* as a generic name simply to illustrate the point that a name need not of necessity have any meaning, and Dr. Leidy coined names with the express statement that they were not etymologically correct, but used because they were shorter than if correctly formed. While it is well when proposing a new name to have it properly formed, there is no reason why long-existing names should be overthrown simply because of some fault in their construction. Possibly most of the readers of Science are familiar with Professor Walter Miller's paper on 'Scientific Names of Latin and Greek Construction,' published in the Proceedings of the California Academy of Sciences, but the paper deserves to have a wide circulation. F. A. L.

CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

ANTIQUITIES OF COSTA RICA.

The last report (March, 1898) of Señor Juan F. Fèrraz, Director of the National Museum of Costa Rica, presents in succinct form the condition of the institution, its aims, its regulations and its needs. It is earnestly to be hoped that to the latter there will be a liberal response, as the Museum has done excellent work and is a credit to the State of Costa Rica.