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A COMING CELESTIAL SPECTACLE: THREE PLANETS IN CONJUNCTION.

DRAWINGS AND DESCRIPTION BY M. LUCIEN RUDAUX.

FIG. 1. AN INTERESTING CELESTIAL PHENOMENON TO OBSERVE ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 30: THE THREE PLANETS MERCURY, VENUS, AND JUPITER VISIBLE TOGETHER IN THE TWILIGHT, ALONG WITH THE CRESCENT MOON.

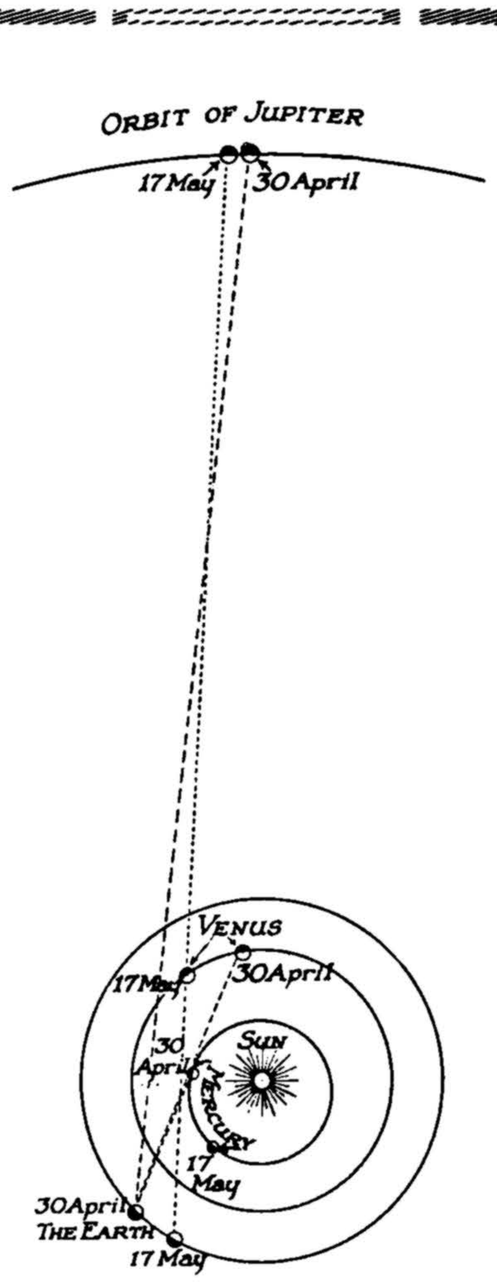

FIG. 2. MOVEMENTS OF THE EARTH, VENUS, MERCURY, AND JUPITER FROM APRIL 30 TO MAY 17, CAUSING THEM TO SEEM IN CONJUNCTION.

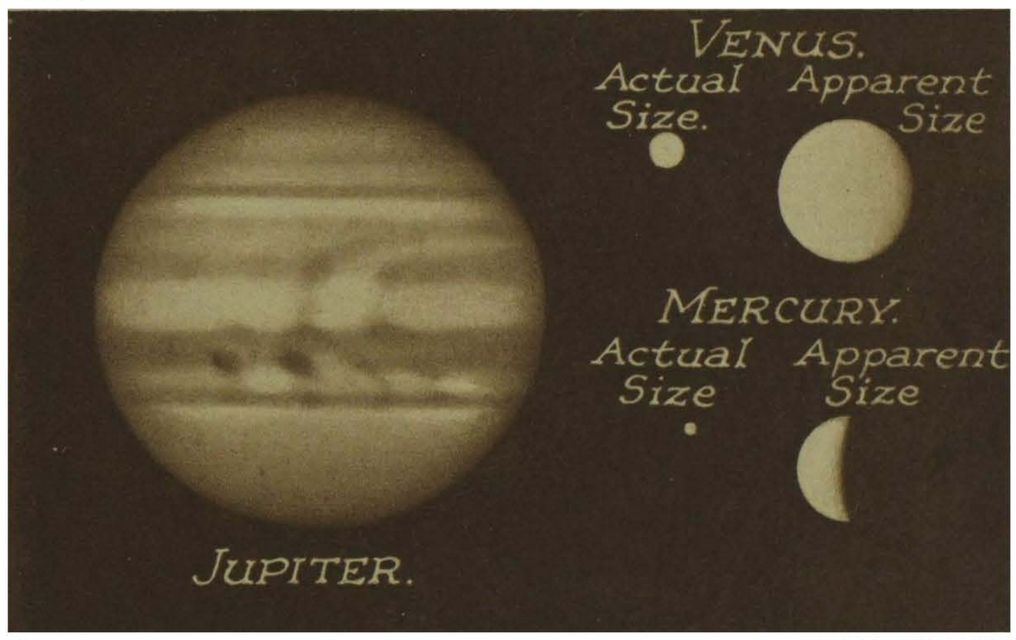

FIG. 3. THE RELATIVE SIZES OF JUPITER, VENUS, AND MERCURY.
"Quite small in reality, by comparison with Jupiter, but nearer to the earth, Venus and Mercury (here shown in their relative sizes) are seen with apparent dimensions that alter their real proportions."

"AN interesting celestial spectacle," writes M. Lucien Rudaux, "will shortly be visible in the evenings — that of the planets Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter shining together in the western sky, and on April 30 this spectacle will be enhanced by the presence of the crescent moon (Fig. 1). Venus and Mercury being close to each other till the beginning of May, it will be a good opportunity to see Mercury, so seldom clearly visible. Thanks to the brilliance of Venus, it will be easy to recognise Mercury near her neighbourhood. One of the illustrations (Fig. 4) shows the apparent motion of the two planets, which for several days will appear to move in company in the heavens; then Mercury, returning on its course at the beginning of May, will soon disappear in the light of the sun. The earth's motion, combined with that of Venus, will bring the latter, on May 17, in conjunction with Jupiter (Fig. 5). The diagram (Fig. 2) explains these motions and the conjunctions which they determine in perspective, in spite of the very unequal and variable distances that separate us from the different planets. Venus and Mercury, which are very small in diameter compared with Jupiter, but much nearer the earth, are seen by us with increased proportions varying according to their distance from our globe. The illustration (Fig. 3) showing the three planets in their relative sizes enables us to appreciate these differences."

FIG. 4. THE APPARENT MOTIONS OF VENUS AND MERCURY, AND THEIR SUCCESSIVE RELATIVE POSITIONS FROM APRIL 26 TO MAY 4.

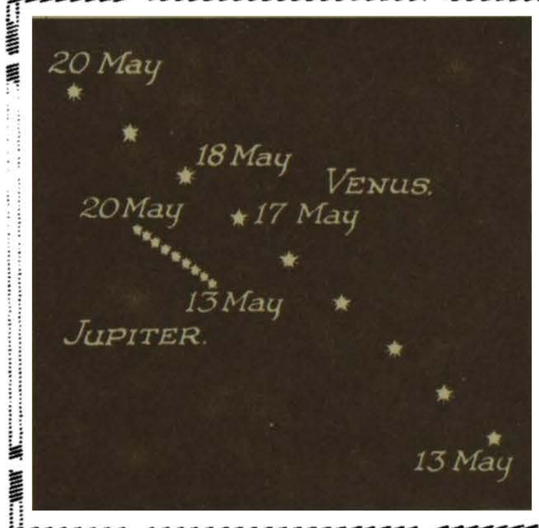

FIG. 5. THE APPARENT MOTIONS AND SUCCESSIVE POSITIONS OF VENUS AND JUPITER FROM MAY 13 TO 20, SHOWING THEIR CONJUNCTION ON MAY 17.