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978-1-107-65001-5 - The Herschel Chronicle: The Life-Story of William Herschel and
His Sister Caroline Herschel

Edited by His Granddaughter Constance A. Lubbock

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THE HERSCHEL CHRONICLE

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

*The more a man hath unity and simplicity in himself the more things
and the deeper things he understandeth. The spirit which is pure,
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do, because it doth all to the honour of God.*

THOMAS À KEMPIS, *Imitation of Christ*, Book 1, 3, 3

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

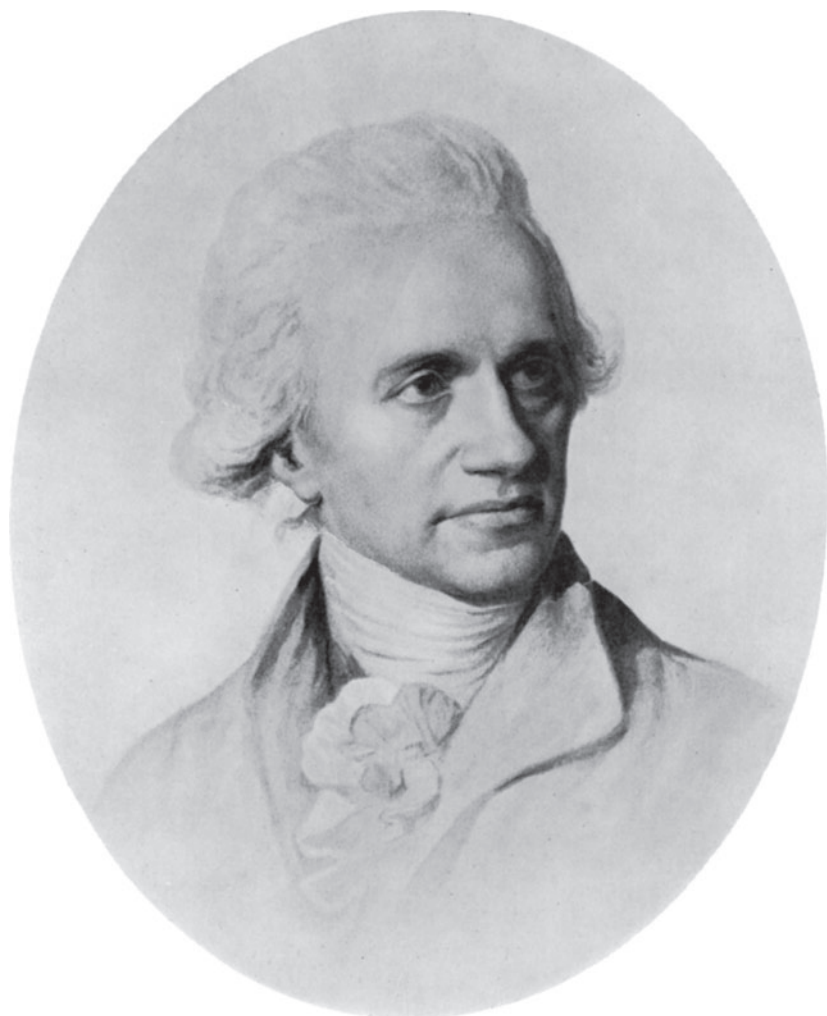
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Frontmatter

[More information](#)



SIR WILLIAM HERSCHEL

at the age of 46

*From a crayon copy of the oil painting by L. T. Abbott
in the National Portrait Gallery*

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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THE LIFE-STORY OF
WILLIAM HERSCHEL AND HIS SISTER
CAROLINE HERSCHEL

Edited by his Granddaughter
CONSTANCE A. LUBBOCK

CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1933

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[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

THE aim of the present work is to present the life-story of William and Caroline Herschel in the setting of their family circle and of contemporary history, giving it as far as possible in their own words, by extracts from William Herschel's brief autobiographical notes and from Caroline's very full Journals, as well as from letters.

It may be thought that too many details concerning William Herschel's brothers have been included, but the bonds of family affection were so strong in the Herschel family that no true picture of the two principal characters can be formed if the other members are excluded.

William Herschel's discoveries and theories have also been presented in his own words, quoted either from the Papers which he communicated to the Royal Society or from his letters. Letters also are given from contemporary men of science to show how these discoveries and theories were regarded in his own time; their ultimate value must be decided by the wider knowledge of later generations. It was as an intrepid pioneer, breaking a way to new fields of discovery and to new trains of thought that William Herschel appeared in his lifetime and as such it is sought to represent him in this *Chronicle*.

A few words are needed to explain the peculiarities of spelling to be met with in Caroline Herschel's narrative. She wrote, and no doubt spoke, English with sufficient fluency, but there are certain spellings, as for example: "infitation", "oftens", "wimsical", which she invariably used, and as her version gives an indication of her pronunciation and seems to bring the reader into closer touch with her personality, these words have been left as she wrote them. Occasional slips of the pen, which are more frequent in the autobiography which she wrote in her old age, have, however, been corrected.

The word, now spelt "gauge", was invariably written "gage" by William Herschel, and this form has been retained in the quotations made from his Papers.

The editor of this *Chronicle* would wish to take this opportunity of thanking all those who have so kindly helped her in her task; especially Professor Newall for much assistance in the portions relating to

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978-1-107-65001-5 - The Herschel Chronicle: The Life-Story of William Herschel and His Sister Caroline Herschel

Edited by His Granddaughter Constance A. Lubbock

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi

PREFACE

Herschel's Papers: *On the Construction of the Heavens*, and *On Nebulous Stars*; and Dr Crommelin for some useful suggestions on the same. To Dr Steavenson she is greatly indebted for help in the description of Herschel's telescopes, and to Professor Wright, of the Lick Observatory, California, for the interesting photograph of the Nebula, *N.G.C. 1514*, taken expressly for this work.

Lastly she wishes to express her thanks to the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press for undertaking the publication of this record of the life and work of William Herschel, and to acknowledge her indebtedness to the expert assistance of the Staff and the kind encouragement given her by the Secretary, Mr S. C. Roberts.

C. A. L.

May 1933

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-65001-5 - The Herschel Chronicle: The Life-Story of William Herschel and His Sister Caroline Herschel

Edited by His Granddaughter Constance A. Lubbock

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

- Chapter I: 1651–1757* *page 1*
 Origin of the Herschel Family. Isaac Herschel's autobiography. Early life of William and Caroline Herschel. William joins the band of the Hanoverian Guards. Historical sketch. William's account of his visit to England with his father and brother. Battle of Hastenbeck. Retreat and surrender of the Hanoverian army. William and Jacob come to England.
- Chapter II: 1757–1761* *page 12*
 William and Jacob in London. Jacob returns to Hanover. William goes to Yorkshire. Lord Darlington's Militia band. Extract from Southey's book *The Doctor*. Letters to Jacob begin. William goes to Edinburgh—meets Hume—studies mathematics.
- Chapter III: 1762–1766* *page 29*
 William engaged as director of concerts at Leeds. Gets his discharge from the Guards Band. Visits Hanover. The Herschel family at Hanover. Isaac Herschel's death. William's Memorandums. Chosen organist at Halifax. Miller's story. William accepts the post of organist at Bath. The Octagon Chapel. Organ built by Snetzler.
- Chapter IV: 1767–1772* *page 42*
 William's life at Bath—Jacob joins him. Dietrich sent to Bath. Alexander settles at Bath. Caroline's life at home—William goes to Hanover—brings her to Bath—her life at Bath.
- Chapter V: 1773–1780* *page 59*
 William Herschel turns to astronomy. Letter to Dr Hutton. Condition of astronomical knowledge. Ferguson. William begins to make telescopes. Caroline's autobiography. William goes to Hanover in search of Dietrich. Houses occupied by the Herschels at Bath. Meeting with Dr Watson—Maskelyne—Aubert. Papers communicated to the Royal Society.
- Chapter VI: 1781* *page 78*
 Discovery of Uranus. Letters from Hornsby, Maskelyne. Paper "Account of a Comet" read at the Royal Society. Letter from Messier. William's attempt to cast a mirror for a 30-foot telescope. Experiments on metals.
- Chapter VII: 1781–1782* *page 93*
 Reappearance of the "comet". Letters from Hornsby, Gerstner. William Herschel receives the Copley medal. Paper "On the Parallax of the Fixed Stars"—its reception by the Royal Society. Dr Watson's letter. Correspondence with Watson, Hornsby, Maskelyne, Sir Joseph Banks.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-65001-5 - The Herschel Chronicle: The Life-Story of William Herschel and His Sister Caroline Herschel

Edited by His Granddaughter Constance A. Lubbock

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

CONTENTS

- Chapter VIII: 1782* *page 112*
 William Herschel's prospect of becoming private astronomer to the King. Letters. William goes to London. His letters to Caroline and Alexander. The King's offer accepted. Congratulatory letters. Name for the new planet. Letter from Bode. Sign for Uranus. Herschel dedicates it to the King as "Georgium Sidus". Letters from Lalande, C. Mayer, Magellan, Lichtenberg, Schroeter.
- Chapter IX: 1782–1786* *page 133*
 William and Caroline settle at Datchet. Caroline's Autobiography. Damp at Datchet. William has ague. Making the large 20-foot telescope. Move to Clay Hall. The King's gift of £2000 for the 40-foot telescope. Move to Slough. Mrs Papendiek's Journal.
- Chapter X: 1786–1789* *page 147*
 William Herschel goes to Göttingen—his letters to Caroline. Caroline discovers her first comet. Letters to Blagden and Aubert. William returns to Slough. Making the 40-foot telescope. The King gives another £2000. Discovery of the satellites of the Georgium Sidus, and of two new ones of Saturn. History of the 40-foot telescope.
- Chapter XI: 1786–1788* *page 169*
 Fanny Burney's *Diary*. Caroline's Autobiography. She receives a salary from the King as assistant to her brother. Mrs Papendiek's Journal. Her account of William Herschel's marriage. Character of Mrs Herschel. Letters—Aubert, Sir W. Watson. Portraits of William Herschel.
- Chapter XII: 1783–1785* *page 183*
 William Herschel's astronomical work. State of science. Sir Joseph Banks, Priestley, Cavendish. Variability of Algol. Letters—William Herschel to Prof. A. Wilson with summary of "First Paper on the Motion of the Sun", Aubert. Former theories on Construction of the Universe, Thomas Wright. Extracts from Herschel's first and second papers "On the Construction of the Heavens"—reception by the Royal Society. John Herschel's remarks on Prof. Pictet's disapproval. William Herschel as a mathematician.
- Chapter XIII: 1784–1794* *page 200*
 Foreign correspondence—Lalande, Schroeter, Bode, etc. Abstract of Herschel's first paper "On the Construction of the Heavens" in letter to Bode. Lichtenberg's appreciation. Abstract of second paper "On the Construction etc." in letter to Lalande. Correspondence with Schroeter. Observations on Venus. Volcanoes in the moon.
- Chapter XIV: 1786–1802* *page 221*
 William Herschel's discovery of nebulous matter. "First and Second Catalogues of New Nebulae and Clusters." Laplace's remarks on Herschel's nebular theory. Present view.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-65001-5 - The Herschel Chronicle: The Life-Story of William Herschel and His Sister Caroline Herschel

Edited by His Granddaughter Constance A. Lubbock

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

ix

- Chapter XV: 1792–1802* *page 233*
 Birth of John F. W. Herschel. William goes on a tour to Glasgow with Count Komarzewski. Death of Paul Adeé Pitt. Letters—Lalande, Méchain. William Herschel made a member of the French Institute. Letters—B. Greathead, De Luc.
- Chapter XVI: 1788–1798* *page 245*
 Caroline Herschel's astronomical work. Extracts from her *Book of Observations*. She discovers seven comets. Letters—to and from Maskelyne, William Herschel to the Earl of Salisbury, Aubert, Sir J. Banks, Lalande. Caroline's Index to Flamsteed's Catalogue. Letter to Dr Maskelyne.
- Chapter XVII: 1793–1804* *page 259*
 William Herschel's scientific work. Paper "On the Nature of the Sun and fixed Stars". Letter to Prof. Wilson. Discovery of heat rays. Letters—Sir J. Banks. Asteroids. Letters—Piazzi, Bode, Olbers, Laplace. William Herschel's experiments for determining the diameters of small spheres.
- Chapter XVIII: 1804–1817* *page 278*
 Second paper "On the Nature of the Sun". Periodicity of sunspots—effect on climate. Letters—William Herschel to Bode, W. Watson. Brougham's article in the *Edinburgh Review*. Paper "On Concentric Rings"—adverse opinion of the Royal Society. Letter from Sir J. Banks. William Herschel's later papers "On the Construction of the Heavens". Sir J. F. W. Herschel's list of his father's most important discoveries.
- Chapter XIX: 1797–1802* *page 291*
 Family life at Slough. Dr Burney's visit. Caroline's daily life—she visits Dr Maskelyne at Greenwich. John Herschel at Eton. Caroline goes to Bath. Letters—Mrs Herschel and William to Caroline. Mme Beckedorff.
- Chapter XX: 1802–1806* *page 304*
 William Herschel's Diary of his visit to Paris—interview with Bonaparte, Laplace, etc. Outbreak of war. State of Germany. Dietrich's letters from Hanover. Caroline's Journal—the Spanish telescope. Dietrich visits England—his letters.
- Chapter XXI: 1807–1813* *page 322*
 Dietrich comes to England. Caroline's Journal. William Herschel and his family make a tour to the north of England—his letters. Trip to Scotland, 1810. John Herschel's diary. James Watt. Trip to Scotland, 1811. Visit to Brighton. Thomas Campbell.
- Chapter XXII: 1812–1816* *page 337*
 Caroline's Journal. John Herschel Senior Wrangler. Letter from William Herschel to Sir Joseph Banks proposing his son as F.R.S. Last observations with the 40-foot. Alexander's accident. Letters. Alexander returns to Hanover. William Herschel receives the Guelphic Order of Knighthood.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-65001-5 - The Herschel Chronicle: The Life-Story of William Herschel and His Sister Caroline Herschel

Edited by His Granddaughter Constance A. Lubbock

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

X

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter XXIII: 1813–1822</i>	<i>page 348</i>
Letters from William Herschel to his son on the choice of a profession. John Herschel leaves Cambridge to take up astronomy. Caroline's Journal. Sophia Baldwin's marriage and her death. Death of Queen Charlotte. William Herschel's declining health. Death of King George III. Foundation of the Astronomical Society. William Herschel first President. Caroline's narrative of Sir William Herschel's last days. Letters of condolence. Epitaph in Upton Church.	
<i>Chapter XXIV: 1822–1848</i>	<i>page 364</i>
Caroline retires to Hanover. Letters to Lady Herschel and to John Herschel. Her Zone Catalogue. Becomes an Honorary Member of the Astronomical Society and of the Royal Irish Academy. Her last years and death.	
<i>Appendix I: Fourier's Eloge of William Herschel</i>	<i>page 377</i>
„ II: Epitaph on Sir William Herschel	<i>page 380</i>
„ III: Epitaph of Miss Caroline Herschel	<i>page 382</i>
„ IV: Papers communicated to the Royal Society by William Herschel, which are referred to in the foregoing chapters	<i>page 383</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>page 385</i>

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-65001-5 - The Herschel Chronicle: The Life-Story of William Herschel and His Sister Caroline Herschel

Edited by His Granddaughter Constance A. Lubbock

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ILLUSTRATIONS

Sir William Herschel	<i>Frontispiece</i>
[From a crayon copy of the oil painting by L. T. Abbott]	
Sir William Herschel	<i>facing page 162</i>
[From the pastel portrait by J. Russell, R.A.]	
The Ten-foot Telescope	79
[From a drawing by Sir W. Watson]	
The Twenty-foot Telescope, probably at Datchet	137
[From a water-colour sketch]	
The Forty-foot Telescope, at Slough	167
[From an engraving dedicated to King George III]	
The Nebulous Star, described by William Herschel	231
A Globular Cluster (M. 3 Can. Ven.)	231
Sir William Herschel	355
[From the oil painting by Artaud]	
Caroline Lucretia Herschel	375
[From an engraving made at Hanover]	