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- CONSTELLATIONS**. For convenience of reference the stars are arranged into groups of which each has received a name which applies generally to the region which the group occupies. The stars in the group are distinguished in order of brightness as  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , &c. Thus the three brightest stars in Orion are known as  $\alpha$  Orionis,  $\beta$  Orionis,  $\gamma$  Orionis. The constellations through which the sun passes in its apparent annual motion are called the signs of the Zodiac.
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- HORIZONTAL wire** in the meridian circle, 467.
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- NODE. The points in which any great circle cuts another (taken as the circle of reference) are called the nodes of the former. Of these two points, that at which a point, moving around the great circle in the positive direction, passes from the negative to the positive side of the reference circle is the *ascending* node. The opposite point is the *descending* node, 33. Of a planetary orbit, 407. Closest approach of sun and moon at a node, 364. *See* Ascending node.
- NOLE. That pole of a graduated great circle which lies towards the left hand of a man walking on the outside of the sphere along the circle in the direction in which the graduation increases is called the *nole*. The opposite pole is called the *antinole*, 25.
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- ORBIT. The orbit of a planet is the path in which a planet moves round the Sun, 145. Of a planet found from observation, 408. Stationary points in planetary, 415.
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- PARALLAX. Parallax is the change in the apparent direction of a celestial body as seen from two different points of view. Geocentric parallax is the angle between the actual direction of the object as viewed from a place on the surface of the earth and the direction in which it would appear if it could be seen from the centre of the earth. Annual parallax is the angle between the direction in which a star appears as seen from the earth and the direction in which it would appear if it could be observed from the centre of the sun, 277. Fundamental equation for finding the parallax

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- PRECESSION OF THE EQUINOXES. By the precession of the equinoxes is meant the slow secular movement of the equinoctial points along the ecliptic in the opposite direction to increasing longitudes. Precession is due to the spheroidal form of the Earth and to the fact that the resultant attraction of the

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