

of this size. I have only had a $5\frac{1}{4}$ inch one tried, which I found
very good. It was not indeed equal to my beautiful $5\frac{1}{2}$ Alvan Clark
but that was an unfair criterion. This 8 inch one probably would
be so, or nearly so - defining nearly or quite as well, with more
light. The exact proportion of light has not been ascertained. I presumed
that of the $5\frac{1}{4}$ equal at least to 4 inches achromatic - & which
rate the 8 inch would fully match 6 inches, & would give fine glo-
rious views of the Moon, planets, nebulae &c. - In fact of the Moon
& planets, reflectors, for some unknown reason, are thought to have
some advantage over achromatics, tho' for stars the reverse. There
are some inconveniences, however, attendant upon this construction.
Finding ~~in~~ & management ~~is~~ & following are of course more
difficult than with the achromatic - & some persons may not like
the sideways view into the tube - (to others, the constant horizon-
tal position of the eyepiece is an actual advantage, reaching the
primula without twisting one's neck & head.) And there is no doubt
that the increase of aperture, to gain equal light with the achromatic,
is attended with the great disadvantage that of exhibiting much more
atmospheric disturbance - just in the same way that a 4 inch achro-
matic can be used in nights not good enough for 6 or 8 inches. The
film of silver is also liable to tarnish, unless it is taken care of -
but with due precaution Dr. Frankland of the Royal Institution who
has made one of these instruments, finds this will not happen - but
if it does, resilvering may always be effected, without the least
injury to the figure of the glass, & at a very trifling cost indeed.
Such an instrument requires a shed, or summerhouse, & keep it
in, but there is ~~no~~ little if any advantage in an observatory -
excepting during wind. If you would like further particulars about
this instrument, which is certainly an extraordinary bargain, I will get
them for you. - The $5\frac{1}{4}$ inch might be had for £12 or £14 - but I sh^d.
for myself adopt the larger size at once. - I have spun so long a yarn that
I fear you will hardly like to ask me questions again, but I can only say, pray make
use of me, that you like in any further way, & believe me,
Yours very faithfully
J. W. Webb.