

2 Rodney Terrace Chesham, 3 Dec. 183.

306

My dear Mr. Birtum,

(244)

The above address will explain to you why, as we have been "kavelling about"; your very kind letter has remained unanswered. We left our home on Sat 4<sup>th</sup> & were busy in Hereford all day - my wife going on to her friend Mrs. West at Townhope, & to the Drunkeny, leaving to preach for the infirmen yesterday morn<sup>g</sup> - Gates Townhope (a beautifully restored village Church) in the evening & today finds us here.

So much for apology - now for business. Euge. Sp-time. Bravo. *Macte virtute esto!* You've done it - & heartily do I rejoice that my dear old friend had won so noble a place in Saturnian discovery. Some recompense for all the trouble & expense of getting what proves to be such a noble instrument. And thank you for letting secret a "sub" as myself know about it. I have looked at it but twice this season & have not noted its date, Nov. 26. I don't know whether my instrument will have caught the "Raymond Bell" (it might concern as I have repeatedly last year seen such a decision) but I recollect that neither time had I a very good image - and I certainly did not look at the planet at the earlier date when your strange discovery was so visible. What next? - Why this, I think, pretty clearly - if we really know much less about those magnificent globes than we have been flattering ourselves - & that one mystery solved - or fancied to be solved - is but the entrance upon innumerable more! [That's my old vein, you know.] Well, go on & prosper. Find us help a day: more such stripes - & rediscover Prowelot's transverse notches (which certainly are very queer) & if seriously speaking, ~~but~~ if you do all I wish & hope, you will take rank among the first observers of the ages. -