

MÉCANIQUE CÉLESTE, VOL. IV

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Mécanique Céleste, Vol. IV by Pierre Simon Laplace

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PIERRE SIMON LAPLACE

**MÉCANIQUE
CÉLESTE, VOL. IV**

MÉCANIQUE CÉLESTE.

BY THE

MARQUIS DE LA PLACE,

FELLOW OF FRANCE; GRAND CROSS OF THE LEGION OF HONOR; MEMBER OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY, OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF PARIS, OF THE BOARD OF LONGITUDE OF FRANCE, OF THE ROYAL SOCIETIES OF LONDON AND GÖTTINGEN, OF THE ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES OF RUSSIA, DENMARK, SWEDEN, PRUSSIA, HOLLAND, AND ITALY; MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES; ETC.

TRANSLATED, WITH A COMMENTARY,

BY

NATHANIEL BOWDITCH, LL. D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETIES OF LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND DUBLIN; OF THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON, OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY HELD AT PHILADELPHIA, OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES; CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ROYAL SOCIETIES OF BERLIN, PALERMO, ETC.

VOLUME IV.

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE TRANSLATOR,

BY HIS SON,

NATHANIEL INGERSOLL BOWDITCH.

BOSTON:

FROM THE PRESS OF ISAAC R. BUTTS;

CHARLES C. LITTLE AND JAMES BROWN, PUBLISHERS.

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ENTERED, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1850, by
N. I. BOWNICK,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

MEMOIR.

THE following Memoir has been printed as part of the Fourth Volume of Dr. Bowditch's Translation of the *Mécanique Céleste*. A short notice, containing the outline of the present one, with only a few of its details, was written by the author during his father's last illness and upon the day of his death. It was prepared solely for the private perusal of a few friends, without any view to its publication. Six months passed, and the volume which had been left unfinished by the Translator was completed. At this time, it was suggested by the family that with it should be published the original notice, prepared as above mentioned. This led the author, who was conscious of its defects and omissions, to write it again in the form in which it is now laid before the reader. Several of the notes were added from day to day during the process of stereotyping, which continued from the month of November to the sixteenth of March, being exactly one year after Dr. Bowditch's death. Though the delay has been greater than was wished or expected, it has probably contributed somewhat to the accuracy and completeness of the Memoir.

Of the *Mécanique Céleste* only five hundred copies have been printed, the greater part of which will probably remain unsold for several years, as, from the nature of its subject, it must necessarily find but few readers, besides that it is contained in four large and expensive quarto volumes. The author has, therefore, caused to be printed a small extra edition of the Memoir, chiefly with the view of presenting it to such individuals as he believed would feel an interest in the account which he has given of his father's life and character.

This copy is presented to

the Library of Harvard College,

by The Author.

Boston July 26 1839.

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Mary Bowditch

Portrait of Mary Bowditch
taken in 1842

THIS

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

ARE DEDICATED, BY THE AUTHOR,

To the Memory of his Wife,

MARY BOWDITCH;

WHO DEVOTED HERSELF TO HER DOMESTIC AVOCATIONS WITH GREAT JUDGMENT, UNCEASING
KINDNESS, AND A ZEAL WHICH COULD NOT BE SURPASSED;

TAKING UPON HERSELF THE WHOLE CARE OF HER FAMILY,

AND THUS PROCURING FOR HIM THE LEISURE HOURS TO PREPARE THE WORK;

AND SECURING TO HIM,

BY HER PRUDENT MANAGEMENT,

THE MEANS FOR ITS PUBLICATION IN ITS PRESENT FORM,

WHICH SHE FULLY APPROVED;

AND

WITHOUT HER APPROBATION THE WORK WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN.