



# VENUS STILL BRIGHT

by James Stokley

Although Venus still shines brightly in the west for a few hours after sunset, it will soon disappear from the evening sky. Drawing rapidly toward the sun, it will be very low by the end of March, setting about the time twilight ends.

Another planet, Saturn, stands to the left of Venus. Both are in the constellation of Pisces. About a hundredth as bright as Venus, Saturn will be even harder to see at month's end.

Toward the east in Virgo is Jupiter, the second brightest planet. It is about a seventh as bright as Venus. Jupiter is now visible all night since it will be directly opposite the sun on the 21st. At that time it will be about 413.8 million miles from earth, its closest approach this year.

Spring will commence on March 20 but the assemblage of brilliant stars that is so typical of winter evenings is still visible in the southwest and west. These constellations are shown on the maps, which depict the skies as they appear about 10:00 p.m. standard time on March 1, at 9 p.m. on the 15th and 8 p.m. on March 31st.

Sirius, in Canis Major, is the brightest star. To the right is Orion with Betelgeuse and Rigel. Both are of the first magnitude. Between them is the row of three stars that form Orion's belt.

To the right of Orion is Taurus with red Aldebaran. And above shine Gemini, with Castor and Pollux, the latter the brighter. Lower and toward the left you'll see Canis Minor. The bright

star here is Procyon. And to the right of Taurus, in the west, is Auriga with Capella.

High in the southeast you can see another bright star: Regulus, in Leo. It marks the end of the handle of a little star group called the Sickle.

## CELESTIAL TIMETABLE

March	EST	
3	5:00 a.m.	Venus at greatest brilliancy
4	12:18 a.m.	Full moon
5	2:00 p.m.	Moon passes south of Jupiter
10	3:00 a.m.	Moon passes south of Mars
11	2:45 a.m.	Moon in last quarter
12	9:00 p.m.	Moon nearest, distance 229,600 miles
16	3:10 a.m.	Algol (variable star in Perseus) at minimum
17	11:52 p.m.	New moon—annular eclipse of sun visible from area of Indian Ocean
18	12:00 p.m.	Algol at minimum
20	1:00 a.m.	Moon passes south of Venus
	5:00 a.m.	Moon passes north of Saturn
	2:08 p.m.	Sun above equator—spring begins in Northern Hemisphere
21	6:00 p.m.	Jupiter opposite sun
	8:50 p.m.	Algol at minimum
23		Jupiter closest to earth—distance 413.8 million miles
25	1:00 p.m.	Moon farthest, distance 251,200 miles
	7:49 p.m.	Moon in first quarter



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