

## THE TRANSIT OF VENUS.

### THE GOVERNMENT PREPARATIONS FOR ITS OBSERVANCE.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 17.—The preparations at the Naval Observatory in this city for fitting out the parties to observe the transit of Venus in December next, are in active progress, and five of the eight parties will leave on the first of June for their destinations. The first will be in charge of Prof. Peters, of Clinton College, New-York, and will be stationed at New-Zealand, in the Southern Pacific. The second, in charge of Capt. Ryan, of the navy, and stationed on Kerguelan's Island, in the Indian Ocean. The third, in charge of Capt. Raymond, of the army, and stationed upon the Crozet Islands, in the same ocean. The fourth, in charge of Prof. Harkness, of the Naval Observatory, and stationed at Hobart Town, Tasmania. And the fifth, in charge of Prof. Smith, of the Coast Survey, and stationed at Chatham Island, in the South Pacific.

Of the other three parties, the first will be in charge of Prof. Hall, of the Naval Observatory, and stationed at Wladiwostok, Siberia; the second in charge of Prof. Watson, of Ann Arbor, Mich., and stationed at Pekin; the third in charge of Prof. Davidson, of the Coast Survey, and stationed at Yokohama. Each party will consist of five persons, including the astronomer in charge. The five parties first named will sail from New-York on the United States steamer Swatara, and the three other parties will leave here on the 1st of July for California overland, then by mail steamer to Japan, where the United States steamer Lackawanna will take them aboard and convey them to the points named. Each party will take out three portable houses, besides a very large assortment of astronomical and photographic instruments, and a full supply of tools of every description for the erection of temporary observatories, &c.

The five parties which are to be located south of the equator will be absent about eighteen months or two years, and the others will be absent about ten or twelve months. All the members of each party are here now with the exception of Prof. Watson, and daily experiments are made with the instruments at the Observatory. Next week there will be a thorough inspection of the instruments and supplies for the expeditions by the commission having charge of the subject.