

for his work on blood plasma drying during the War and which has already been described in these columns (*Nature*, 153, 485; 1945).

World Magnetic Data

WITH reference to the article "The Earth's Surface Magnetic Field and its Secular Change" by Prof. S. Chapman in *Nature* of January 31, Commander Elliott B. Roberts, chief of the Division of Geomagnetism and Seismology, U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, Department of Commerce, Washington 25, writes: "The Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution of Washington adopted a change of policy after the accomplishment of the monumental magnetic study culminating in the isomagnetic chart series for 1945.0 and publication 578. Routine work in magnetic surveying and compilation of isomagnetic charts will no longer be performed by the Department, which will henceforth restrict itself to experimental and theoretical scientific researches. The Coast and Geodetic Survey has assumed the function, in addition to its normal work of magnetic field surveys in the United States, of collecting all available magnetic field and observatory data from world-wide sources. It is intended to maintain a national reference library of such data for future American use in connexion with the compilation of world isomagnetic charts. The Bureau will continue to compile United States charts on its own account, and, by arrangement with the Hydrographic Office, United States Navy, will henceforth compile world isomagnetic charts, in editions successive to the 1945.0 series. The Bureau solicits magnetic data and copies of isomagnetic charts from all world-wide sources and will undertake in exchange to furnish any required data of American origin."

The Museum in Education

THE Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History (*The Explorer*, No. 93, Winter, 1948) contains interesting information about the way in which the Museum's exhibits are put to effective use as part of a general educational campaign. A caravan has been converted into a travelling museum and fitted out with exhibitions to suit the season of the year and the various types of audiences. The "Traveling Trailside Museum" is towed out to schools, hospitals and other organisations, where the contents are exhibited and usually explained in a supporting talk by one of the Museum staff. This travelling museum is greatly in demand and is performing an educational function which brings great credit to its sponsors. Another feature of the educational work of this Museum are the weekly walks led by one of the staff and which are well attended by members of the public. The walks are supported by exhibitions at the Museum depicting local natural history at the time of the walks.

International Council of Scientific Unions

THE report of the Executive Committee of the International Council of Scientific Unions, July 1947 (London: Cambridge Univ. Press. Pp. viii+79), affords the usual handy reference to the activities and personnel of the Unions, the present report including, moreover, the statutes of the newly formed International Unions of Crystallography, of Geodesy and Geophysics, of Biological Sciences, of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics, and of History of the Sciences, as well as the revised statutes of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics. The most im-

portant feature of the year was the conclusion of a definitive agreement with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. The text of this agreement is appended to the report, which also includes details of grants made by the Organisation for the year 1947. The Organisation has undertaken to give attention to the reorganisation of a scientific inquiry into the causes of international tension and the methods of overcoming them, and to take positive action to forward international scientific organisation for research and the development of free exchange of scientific information.

Conference on Modern Applications of Liquid Fuels

THE Institute of Petroleum and the Institute of Fuel are to hold a joint conference on "Modern Applications of Liquid Fuels" in the University of Birmingham during September 21-23, together with an exhibition of items related to the subjects on the programme. The general scope of the Conference will be indicated in an opening address on "The Place of Liquid Fuel in the British Economy". Separate sessions, each of 2½ hours, will then be devoted to the following subjects: Diesel engines for power generation and railway traction; oil for gas making; gas turbines for land and marine power purposes; agricultural drying processes; and fuel oil in the steel, metal, glass and ceramic industries; there will also be an evening lecture on domestic heating. The fifteen authoritative papers, to be presented at the Conference in summary form, will be printed in full and issued, bound in one volume, one month before the Conference. Inquiries in connexion with the Conference should be sent to the Secretary, Institute of Fuel, 18 Devonshire Street, London, W.1.

Biography of the late Sir James Jeans

PROF. E. A. MILNE, F.R.S., 19 Northmoor Road, Oxford, states that he is engaged upon a biography of the late Sir James Jeans, to be published by the Cambridge University Press. If any readers of *Nature* have in their possession letters or papers of particular interest written by Sir James Jeans, Prof. Milne would be grateful for their loan.

The Night Sky in May

NEW moon occurs on May 9d. 02h. 30m., U.T., and full moon on May 23d. 00h. 37m. The following conjunctions with the moon take place: May 10d. 03h., Mercury 0.06° S.; May 12d. 10h., Venus 0.1° S.; May 15d. 08h., Saturn 4° S.; May 16d. 05h., Mars 4° S.; May 24d. 23h., Jupiter 4° N. In the early part of the month, Mercury is too close to the sun to be seen, but it sets at 21h. 25m. on May 15 and at 22h. on May 31, nearly two hours after sunset, and can be seen in the western sky. The planet is in greatest easterly elongation on May 29. Venus is conspicuous in the western sky, setting at 23h. 42m., 23h. 31m., and 22h. 40m., on May 1, 15 and 31, respectively, and attains its greatest brilliancy on May 18 when 0.305 of the illuminated disk is visible, its stellar magnitude then being - 4.2. Mars and Saturn are conspicuous in the constellations of Leo and Cancer, respectively, and can be observed during the earlier hours of the night, neither planet setting until after midnight. Jupiter, in the constellation of Sagittarius, rises at 23h. 30m., 22h. 27m. and 21h. 22m. at the beginning, middle and end of the month, respectively. No occultations of stars brighter than magnitude 6 take place during May. An annular eclipse of the sun occurs on May 8-9, invisible at Greenwich.