

Automobile Engineers deals with the subject of industrial standardisation. A little standardisation had been accomplished subsequent to 1910, but the year 1914 found us in a condition of partial impotence, and gave the "component assemblers" in America their opportunity for reaping a rich harvest. Co-operation in this and other matters with a view to the re-establishment of trade is urgent at the present time. Hitherto British industry has been more or less indifferent to the question of standardisation; many directors have been, and still are, apathetic in the matter, and vote money for standardisation more in the spirit of charity donations than as matters of important business. Mr. Watson considers it would be best for British makers to concentrate on the standardisation of commonly applicable details rather than to attempt to produce vehicles alike in all particulars. Abroad there will always be found an appreciable percentage of distinctive British-built cars owned by discriminating users. Standardisation in foreign countries is making great strides; indeed, there are now standards committees in thirteen different countries. A Standards Committee of Ger-

man Industry was formed three years ago, and in two years had issued 160 standard sheets and had more than 400 in progress.

MESSRS. H. K. LEWIS AND CO., LTD., have just issued a list of additions to their Medical and Scientific Circulating Library for the months July-September. The catalogue should be of service to all students of science, whether subscribers to the library or not.

MESSRS. GURNEY AND JACKSON will shortly publish "The Natural History and Physical Features of the Canary Islands: Their Fauna, Flora, and Geological Formation." The work, which will be illustrated by reproductions of photographs and maps, will deal especially with the ornithology of the islands.

WE have received a copy of a short paper "On Correlation," by Alf Guidberg, from the Norsk Matematisk Forenings Skrifter. The paper (written in English) criticises the divergent definitions of correlation that have been given, and suggests cautions as to interpretation, but there does not appear to be much novelty in the views of which an exposition is given.

Our Astronomical Column.

THE NOVEMBER METEORS.—Mr. W. F. Denning writes:—The shower of Leonids is due at the middle of November, and though the parent comet of the stream is now at a great distance from the earth (approaching us from near the orbit of Uranus) there will probably be a tolerably active exhibition of meteors.

Observations in past years have proved that certain sections of the ellipse are more rich in meteors than others, so that if we assume a period of about thirty-three years for all portions of the stream, the display of November 14, 1888, ought now to be repeated. The shower of that year was not of very special character, but it was fairly conspicuous, and furnished some large fireballs. It was, in fact, considerably more striking than an ordinary return of Leonids when Tempel's comet is far removed from perihelion.

The best time for observation this year will be the morning of the 15th, but unfortunately there will be a full moon in the sky, so that only the brighter meteors will be visible. However, the members of the Leonid stream usually supply a number of splendid objects, and tolerably bright meteors are quite a common feature. Though the conditions affecting this year's return are not therefore favourable, the event should be carefully watched, for it is important to accumulate evidence as to the visible character of the annual displays.

LIGHT OF THE NIGHT SKY.—*Scientia* of October 1 contains an article by Prof. Charles Fabry on the luminosity of the night sky. Prof. Fabry discusses whether or not this luminosity can be attributed to an unresolved background of faint stars. In this connection he insists on the importance of concentrating attention on some small selected area and determining how many stars of each magnitude are present, with a view of extrapolation to stars below the 20th magnitude, which cannot be detected by existing telescopes. The luminosity of the general background of this area should be observed concur-

rently. If, as appears probable, we cannot plausibly attribute the general illumination to unresolved stars, it would be natural to fall back on the hypothesis of scattered light. That the light can be due to scattering by gaseous matter appears improbable in view of Lord Rayleigh's recent observations on the colour and state of polarisation of the light of the night sky. It may, however, be scattered by meteoritic matter. The article concludes by reference to the aurora as contributing in some cases to the light of the night sky.

DELINEATIONS OF THE MILKY WAY.—Dr. F. Goos, of Hamburg University, has produced a useful series of representations of the Milky Way as delineated by various astronomers, partly from visual study and partly from photographs. The work of Heis, Gould, Easton, Boeddicker, and Houzeau has all been reduced by photography to a common scale, which is somewhat small, but sufficient to show all the important features. There is also a new delineation made by Dr. Goos himself from photographs by Prof. Max Wolf, who contributes an introduction in which he points out that photography is incomparably more rapid and convenient than visual work, but that it has difficulties of its own, as no lens covering a large field will give images of the same character on all parts of the plate; it is thus easy to draw fallacious conclusions as to the relative brightness of different regions. The exposures lasted from three to four hours, and stars down to the thirteenth magnitude are shown on the negatives. The reproductions were made by hand from the negatives and then reduced by photography. They show a large amount of complicated structure, including many of the dark rifts which may be due to opaque matter. Comparison of the different authorities reveals many differences. Boeddicker shows some faint outlying streamers, which are absent from Houzeau and shorter and fainter on the Wolf pictures. Dr. Goos suggests that colour-differences may explain some of these discordances.