

Prof. Michelson's Work in Astronomical Interferometry.

MR. POST-WHEELER, who is on the staff of the American Embassy, attended at the annual general meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society on February 9 to receive the gold medal on behalf of Prof. A. A. Michelson, who was unable to be present himself.

Prof. Eddington gave a most illuminating address on the reasons of the award, explaining that the necessity for the great separation of the mirrors receiving the pencils of light from the stars was to give sufficient difference of length of path to enable the rays from the two extremities of a diameter of the star to be in opposite phase, so that the bright regions of the image from one extremity should fall on the dark regions of the other and so cause the fringes to vanish. It was mentioned that the method had been successfully applied to the measurement of the diameters of Jupiter's satellites, but the stars seem to have been considered hopeless, till recent physical work on the distribution of energy in the spectrum led to the conclusion that the red stars have such dull surfaces that the brighter ones must have appreciable discs in order to give so much light.

The actual figure had been calculated for Betelgeuse, and the observed diameter afterwards proved to be very close to it.

Some letters from Mr. Pease were read, in which he described the great practical difficulties that were incurred in applying the method of diffraction fringes, and the long-continued trials that were finally crowned with success. One of the earliest successes was the determination of the orbit of Capella. This gave, for the first time, a really accurate value of the mass and absolute magnitude of a giant star, which had already proved of use in the physical studies that were being made on these bodies.

A recent interesting development of the Betelgeuse measures was that the diameter came out different at different times, to an extent much beyond the probable errors of the measures. Attempts were being made to correlate these changes with the variable brightness and variable radial velocity of the star, but it will be necessary to carry on these measurements for some time before a definite conclusion could be reached.

Prof. Eddington went on to point out that the famous Michelson-Morley experiment, for which the Copley medal of the Royal Society was awarded in 1907, though not specially contemplated in the present award, might be considered as coming within its terms; for the measures were made by interference methods, and the question whether the movement of the earth through the ether could be detected was one of the highest astronomical interest. He knew that their medallist was disappointed at the negative result, but the whole of the system of relativity had been founded upon it, so that in his (Prof. Eddington's) opinion it was more fruitful than a positive result would have been.

In handing the medal to Mr. Post-Wheeler he asked him to transmit to Prof. Michelson their congratulations on his success and their good wishes for the long continuance of his fruitful labours. Mr. Post-Wheeler replied in a few suitable words expressing his sense of the pleasure it gave him to be there as the representative of America, and thanking the Society for the honour they had conferred upon his country in the person of Prof. Michelson.

University and Educational Intelligence.

BIRMINGHAM.—The Mitsui family of Japan has made a gift of 5000*l.* to the faculty of commerce. The Council has decided to apply the gift to the foundation of a chair of finance which, in view of the personal connexion of the Mitsui family with the university and of their generous contribution to its funds, is to be designated the Mitsui professorship of finance.

Mr. F. W. M. Lamb has been appointed assistant lecturer in pathology.

At the annual meeting of the Court of Governors, the principal appealed for more assistance from the districts surrounding the city. These districts at present contribute only 3500*l.* per annum to the university as against 15,000*l.* given by the city, although half the students come from outside the city.

CAMBRIDGE.—Mr. J. B. S. Haldane, New College, Oxford, and Trinity College, has been appointed Sir William Dunn's reader in biochemistry. Mr. A. Hutchinson, Pembroke College, has been appointed University lecturer in crystallography. Dr. C. Shearer, Clare College, has been appointed University lecturer in embryology.

MANCHESTER.—The following lecturers have been appointed: physics, Dr. J. C. M. Brentano; engineering, Mr. H. W. Baker; biological chemistry, Mr. A. D. Ritchie.

OXFORD.—The vice-chancellor has appointed Sir Archibald E. Garrod, Regius professor of medicine and student of Christ Church, to act as deputy for the current term to Dr. Rudolph A. Peters, fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, who has recently been elected Whitley professor of biochemistry in succession to the late Prof. Benjamin Moore.

The Weldon memorial prize, which was founded in 1907 by friends of the late Prof. Weldon, to perpetuate his memory and to encourage biometric science, has been awarded to Dr. Johannes Schmidt, director of the Carlsberg Laboratory, Copenhagen. This prize is awarded every three years, without regard to nationality, sex, or membership of any university, to the person who, in the judgment of the electors, has, in the six years next preceding the date of the award, published the most noteworthy contribution to biometric science. Previous recipients of the prize have belonged to St. Andrews, London, and Washington University, St. Louis. On one occasion it was awarded to a lady, Miss Ethel M. Elderton, fellow of University College, London.

SHEFFIELD.—Mr. W. Vickers has been appointed lecturer in education and master of method.

PROF. R. V. WHEELER, professor of fuel technology in the University of Sheffield, has been awarded the Greenwell medal of the North of England Institution of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, for his researches on coal.

THE first of a special series of lectures on "Master Minds and their Work," arranged in connexion with the London County Council's scheme of lectures for teachers, was delivered at King's College on February 14 by Dr. Charles Singer, whose subject was Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). The object