

Development of the Evolutionary Idea," by Branišlav Petronievičs, which is a translation of the first chapter of Petronievičs' work, "L'Évolution universelle"; "The Heredity of Acquired Characters," by Prof. L. Cuénot, from the *Revue Générale des Sciences* of October 15, 1921; "The Indian in Literature," by Herman F. C. ten Kate, from papers published in the Dutch magazines *De Gids* (1919) and *De West-Indische Gids* (1920); and "The Alimentary Education of Children," by Prof. Marcel Labbé, from the *Revue scientifique* of September 10, 1921.

THE Christmas lectures at the Royal Institution, which are to be delivered this year by Sir William Bragg, will be published afterwards in book form by Messrs. G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., under the title, "Concerning the Nature of Things."

WE have received from Messrs. Ogilvy and Co., 18 Bloomsbury Sq., W.C.1, the British agents, new editions of Leitz catalogues of microscopes and dissecting microscopes and magnifiers. Microscopes, objectives, magnifiers, and other apparatus of all types are listed, and the purchaser has a wide choice as regards both elaboration and price. In addition, some interesting and instructive details are given of the general properties of objectives and eyepieces and of their classification.

MESSRS. C. BAKER, of 244 High Holborn, London, W.C.1, have recently issued a new classified list of second-hand scientific instruments (No. 79) which they have for disposal. The catalogue contains a large assortment of apparatus, and particularly of microscopes, telescopes, and their accessories. Among the astronomical telescopes (refractors) are a 12 in. equatorial and a 7½ in., both by Cooke, and an 8 in. by

Grubb. A wireless department has been established by Messrs. Baker, and a list of the apparatus available, all of which is new, has been added to the catalogue of second-hand instruments.

IN the Year-book of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, Session 1923-24, recently issued, an account with illustrations is given of the Chalmers and Manson memorial medals of the Society. The former, founded by a donation from Mrs. Chalmers, is in memory of Dr. Albert J. Chalmers; the latter, by a surplus of a portrait fund, is in memory of Sir Patrick Manson. The Chalmers medal is awarded biennially, and this year has been presented to M. E. Roubaud, of the Pasteur Institute, Paris. The Manson medal is awarded triennially, and has been presented to Sir David Bruce.

THE Cambridge Philosophical Society is to publish, through the Cambridge University Press, as separate supplements to the Proceedings, translations of Dr. Niels Bohr's present series of papers "On the Application of the Quantum Theory to Atomic Structure," Part I. of which has already appeared in the *Zeitschrift für Physik*, vol. xiii. (1923). The translation of Part I. will be closely followed by a similar translation of Part II., which it is hoped will appear simultaneously with the German version. Part I. will deal with the fundamental postulates of the quantum theory, and Part II. with the theory of series spectra.

ERRATA.—In our issue of November 10, p. 704, in the Research Item on the Early Proboscideans, for "Schlasser" read "Schlosser"; December 1, p. 806, in the Research Item on the Cheiropterygium in Amphibia, line 3 from end, for "its first 'i'" read "its first 'e.'"

Our Astronomical Column.

THE DECEMBER METEOR SHOWER.—Mr. W. F. Denning writes: "This annual display of meteors may be expected on the night of Wednesday, December 12, when it will probably reach its maximum intensity. The shower is visible, though it supplies very few meteors, during the first week of December, and the radiant point appears to be a moving one like that of the August Perseids. As the moon will be absent from the evening sky during the early part of December this year, it will be possible to watch the oncoming and development of the shower if we get sufficiently clear weather. The position of the radiant on Dec. 1 will be about $98^{\circ}+34^{\circ}$; on Dec. 5, $104^{\circ}+33^{\circ}$; on Dec. 10, $110^{\circ}+33^{\circ}$; and Dec. 15, $116^{\circ}+32^{\circ}$.

"Occasionally, the shower proves a rich one and supplies about 40 or 50 meteors per hour; but the most abundant displays are usually witnessed in the morning hours, as the radiant is then at a greater altitude than in the earlier part of the night. In 1920, on Dec. 12, the shower returned with considerable strength, though it does not appear to have been well observed, in consequence of unfavourable weather.

"The individual meteors of this stream are moderately swift and short, and as they do not often leave streaks or trains they are rather difficult to record accurately. The radiant point is therefore not often determined as correctly as that of the Perseids or Leonids."

COMPANION TO OMICRON CETI.—The interesting variable Omicron or Mira Ceti has been found by Prof. R. G. Aitken (Harv. Coll. Obs. Bull. No. 792) to have a close companion, at distance 1.01", position angle 132.3° . The companion was bluish in colour, and on October 19 was fully half a magnitude fainter than the variable. The tardy discovery of a companion to such a well-scrutinised star is remarkable, and suggests that the distance may be increasing. It will doubtless be carefully followed in the hope of obtaining an orbit, which would determine the mass of Mira. It is possible, however, that the pair is an optical, not a physical, double.

PROPOSED OBSERVATORY IN NEW ZEALAND.—The Bulletin of the New Zealand Astronomical Society announces that the University of Yale has offered a large telescope for astronomical observation in New Zealand, provided a good site can be found, the conditions of seeing to be tested with a telescope of 6 or 7 in. aperture, in a similar manner to the tests made before setting up the Victoria telescope in British Columbia. The New Zealand Government has been approached to grant funds for this examination, and has given a hopeful reply. The difficulty appears to be to combine good seeing with convenient access. Most of the towns are near the coast, and the seeing is poor. Various sites are suggested by amateur astronomers, and it is greatly to be hoped that the scheme may go through.