

Early Science at the Royal Society.

January 3, 1662/3. The president reported a letter in favour of the society to the duke of Ormonde, lord lieutenant of Ireland.—“ I am desired by the Royal Society in their names to entreat your grace's favour and countenance in the effectual settlement of the fractions of adventures, arrears, lands, &c., which by the act for the better execution of his majesty's gracious declaration were vested in his majesty, in trust for, and the better to enable his majesty to grant the same to them, so as his majesty being their founder might also be their chief benefactor” . . . [signed Brouncker, P.R.S.].—Sir William Petty who was then in Ireland, was desired to make a calculation of these fractions of adventures &c., which he accordingly did, but did not send the society the result of it, in regard that interest was past before by patent acts unto some others, as he mentions to Sir Robert Southwell, when the latter desired him, in the name of several of the most eminent members of the society, to send over to them his calculations.

January 4, 1664/5. Mr. Francis Willughby being come home from his travels [mostly in Spain] and present, was desired to communicate his philosophical observations. He produced a printed cut representing Saturn and Jupiter, and what Campani had lately observed in them by means of his new glasses, wrought by a turn-tool without a mold.

1666/7. Mr. Oldenburg read an extract of Mons. Auzout's letter to him from Paris, mentioning a new method esteemed by him better than any hitherto practised, of taking the diameters of the planets to seconds, and of knowing the parallax of the moon by means of her diameter. Dr. Wren and Mr. Hooke having related to the society several ways, which they had known long before of taking the diameters of the planets to seconds, were desired briefly to describe them, that so it might be signified to the Parisian philosophers, that it was a thing not at all new among the English.

January 6, 1663/4. Mr. Boyle remarked that swallows frozen up in ice, upon the thawing away of the ice had been found alive, and flying about; and that a minister had sent a certificate of this to the king from Dantzic.—Sir Robert Moray related that he had been informed by his highness the Duke of York, that there were certain little springs at Croyden, which would run together, and make a stream for a certain space, and then slide under the ground, and afterwards break out again. Dr. Wilkins having acquaintance at Croyden, was desired to make a particular inquiry after this fact.

January 7, 1662/3. Mr. Bruce brought in an account of windmills in Holland, which was ordered to be registered. [We may recall here the reference that was made in NATURE, of Sept. 13, to the acquisition by the Franklin Institute in 1922, of a collection of books and pamphlets on windmills, inclusive of treatises on the subject in German and Dutch, 17th and 18th centuries.]

January 8, 1661/2. Sir Robert Moray communicated letters, in French, from Mons. Frenicle to Mons. Huygens, concerning the hypothesis of Saturn.—Mr. Rooke read a paper of inquiries to be made in the East-India captain's voyage to Bantam.—It was ordered that all the papers of inquiries for foreign parts be written out into one paper.

1672/3. There was produced to the society a discourse of Dr. Grew, concerning his whole design with respect to vegetables, and the means of effecting it. Part of this discourse was read, to the great satisfaction of the Society who urged the publication of it.

Societies and Academies.

LONDON.

Royal Anthropological Institute, December 9.—H. Balfour: The origin of the art of stencilling in the Fiji Islands. The use of stencils in the Fiji Islands, for decorating bark-cloth, does not appear to have been introduced into the group from the outside, and it was suggested that the stencil designs, which are cut in leaves almost invariably, may very probably have been suggested by leaves which have been tunnelled by insect larvæ while still in the tightly rolled up state of the budding leaf. The leaves, when they unroll in the course of their development, exhibit transverse alignments of regular perforations, which bear a striking resemblance to some of the simpler Fijian stencil designs.

PARIS.

Academy of Sciences, November 24.—L. Lecornu: The tetrahedral system. Lowthian Bell, in 1875, regarded the earth as possessing a symmetry analogous with that of a regular tetrahedron. This question has been examined by several geologists: the author submits it to a mathematical analysis, applying the theory given in a recent note (*Comptes rendus*, t. 179, 1924, p. 853) on the deformation of a spherical envelope.—J. and Mlle. M. Bordet: The bacteriolytic power of colostrum and milk. Colostrum exerts a powerful bacteriolytic action upon organisms commonly present in the atmosphere. This confirms the work of Jensen (1905) and of T. Smith and Little (1922).—W. Kilian: The fluvio-glacial deposits of the southern bank of the lake of Geneva and their hydrological regime (Evian, Amphion, Thonon).—Jules Andrade: A curious theorem of metrology and its applications to chronometry.—P. J. Myrberg: A generalisation of the linear equations of finite differences.—E. F. Collingwood: The exceptional values of integral functions of finite order.—Nikola Obrechhoff: The convergence of trigonometrical series.—Paul Mentré: The non-special complexes with multiple inflectional focus.—D. Riabouchinsky: Some considerations on the plane rotational movements of a liquid.—P. Idrac: Theoretical study of the flight of the albatross in a wind increasing with the altitude.—Charles Nordmann and C. Le Morvan: Variable stars with continuous variation and Ritz's hypothesis. de Sitter has adduced observations on double stars as evidence in favour of the constancy of the velocity of light. La Rosa has criticised these views and concludes that observation of these stars proves nothing for or against the hypothesis of a constant velocity of light. The authors have shown that the amplitude of the light variation of variable stars with continuous variation is not the same in different regions of the spectrum. This experimental fact the authors consider invalidates the extension of the ballistic hypothesis of Ritz, as given by La Rosa.—F. Baldet: Observations of the planet Mars with the 83 cm. telescope of the Meudon Observatory. Reproductions of six drawings of the planet are given, taken between September 5 and 28. All the observations detailed confirm those already published by Antoniadi. No trace has been found of the geometrical network of filiform "canals."—J. Guillaume: Observations of the sun made at the Observatory of Lyons during the second quarter of 1924. Observations were possible on 83 days during the quarter. The results are summarised in three tables, showing the number of spots, their distribution in latitude, and the distribution of the faculæ in latitude.—Rafael de Buen: Some observations on the course of the currents in the Straits of Gibraltar.—