

on exploration in Tibet. On succeeding Thursday afternoons there will be two lectures by Prof. H. J. Fleure on prehistoric trade and traders on the west coasts of Europe, and two by Prof. F. O. Bower on the natural classification of ferns as a study in evolution. Mr. W. P. Pycraft is to give two Saturday afternoon lectures on use and disuse and their effect on the bodily structure of animals. The Friday evening meetings will be resumed on April 24, when Dr. W. A. Craigie will deliver a discourse on the Icelandic Sagas. Succeeding discourses will probably be given by Prof. W. L. Bragg, Dr. H. H. Dale, Prof. C. G. Darwin, Dr. Thorne M. Carpenter, Sir Henry Newbolt, and others.

MESSRS. Negretti and Zambra, 38 Holborn Viaduct, London, E.C.1, have issued a useful list of second-hand and shop-soiled instruments which they have for disposal. The list contains, among other items, a useful selection of microscopes, pieces of surveying apparatus, and thermometers, while under "sundries" are offered projectors, barographs, aneroids, and so on. The list should be seen by all who are contemplating the purchase of apparatus.

A VERY full and comprehensive catalogue (No. 125) of second-hand botanical works has just reached us from Messrs. Dulau and Co., Ltd., 34 Margaret Street, W.1. It contains 4439 titles conveniently arranged in the following sections: Regional Floras, Gardening and Horticulture, Fruit Culture, Sylviculture, Gardens and Landscape Gardening, Biology of Plants, Monographs, Biography, Bibliography, Terminology, Dictionaries, Manuals, etc., Herbals and Early Gardening, Cryptogamic Botany, Phyto-pathology, Geoponica, and Serial Publications.

THE Cambridge University Press will shortly publish Vol. 19 of the Royal Society's "Catalogue of Scientific Papers," covering the letters T to Z and completing the work. Another book to be issued by the same house will be "Aerial Surveying by Rapid Methods," by Prof. B. Melvill Jones, the main purpose of which is to discuss the possibilities of aerial photography as a means of surveying and mapping the earth, and to record and describe a series of experiments made at Cambridge by the author and the late Capt. J. C. Griffiths.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments, on or before the dates mentioned: a guide-lecturer in agriculture at the British Empire Exhibition—The Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 10 Whitehall Place, S.W.1 (April 25); an assistant lecturer in agriculture at the Agricultural Institute, Kirton, near Boston, Lincs.—J. C. Wallace, at the Institute (April 30); demonstrators in physics and organic chemistry respectively, at Bedford College for Women, Regent's Park, N.W.1—The Secretary (May 2); three assistant naturalists in the fisheries department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries—The Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 10 Whitehall Place, S.W.1 (May 8); a woman lecturer in geography in the department of education of the University, Birmingham—The Secretary (May 16); assistant professor of zoology in McGill University, Montreal—The Secretary (May 20); an assistant professor of chemistry, of Egyptian nationality, at the Cairo School of Medicine—The Director (May 31).

ERRATUM.—In NATURE of April 4, p. 518, col. 1, line 14, the name of Mr. Savin is printed incorrectly as Sairn.

Our Astronomical Column.

A SIMPLE INTERFEROMETER. — Probably many people are under the impression that interferometer methods are only possible with very large instruments. This is undoubtedly the case where measurement of stellar diameters is in question. But a short paper by Mr. L. Richardson (Brit. Astron. Assoc. Journ., Feb. 25) describes an application of the method that is within the reach of all amateurs. This is a cardboard screen covering the object-glass with a number of parallel openings cut in it, the width of the closed spaces being made equal to that of the open ones. The card can be turned by strings from the eye-end about an axis in its own plane through its centre, and the amount of tilt read on a scale made of millimetre paper. Each star then shows a central image, and a series of diffraction images on each side diminishing in brightness. Turning on Castor (for example), the card is tilted until the distance between the principal and first diffraction image is equal to that between the two stars of the binary. The tilt of the card then gives a very good measure of the angular distance between the stars. Four measures of Castor give distances 4'57", 4'56", 4'54", 4'59". Since the images are short spectra, there is a liability to personality in the measures, but a single observer can obtain accurate relative results.

THE NEW WASHINGTON CATALOGUE OF FUNDAMENTAL STARS.—Prof. W. S. Eichelberger com-

municates to *Ast. Nach.* No. 5353 a paper on this catalogue, which will appear in full in vol. 10 of "Papers of the American Ephemeris," a summary of results being given in the Ephemeris for 1925. It uses the results of two observatories only (the Cape and Washington); the Cape declinations are corrected by $-0.15''$ tan zenith-distance-north, as a result of a rediscussion of refraction. The general result of the discussion is that the declinations in Boss P.G.C. need a nearly constant correction of about $+0.47''$ from 50° N. Decl. to 40° S. Decl.

Prof. Eichelberger then turns to the new Greenwich catalogue for 1925 and notes that, while on the published figures it agrees better with Auwers than with the new Washington one, yet if two changes were made, (1) the use of his new proper motions in bringing up to 1925, (2) giving Venus equal weight with the sun in fixing the equator point, the Greenwich and Washington results would not differ much.

The errors in Boss's proper motions are ascribed to uncorrected systematic errors in the older catalogues that he employed. In the future it will probably be desirable to discard, at least for fundamental stars, all catalogues that rest on observations with instruments the division errors, etc., of which were not determined by modern methods.