

Life" an account of measures recently adopted for encouraging intellectual activity. The title "merited" has been established, to be conferred for distinguished service by scientific and technical workers. Money premiums are to be given for inventions and suggestions, even though they may not directly result in the saving of expenditure. Instances of pensions for prominent services in science are also mentioned. Under "International Cultural Relations" are reports of visits to Russia by Profs. Erlander of Stockholm, Wiegand and Rodenwald of Berlin, and Tenier of Strasbourg, and visits to Egypt by the Rector of the Russian Hydrological Institute to take part in the International Navigation Congress at Cairo, and to the Balkan countries and Italy by N. P. Sycher of the Russian Academy of History of Material Culture.

WE have received from Messrs. Stafford, Allen and Sons, Ltd., Cowper Street, Finsbury, London, E.C.2, a sample of 'Sira' immersion oil and of 'Sira' mountant. Originally produced as a result of researches conducted at the British Scientific Instrument Research Association, these products are now prepared by the manufacturers in accordance with the directions of the Association. The refractive index of the immersion oil ( $1.524$  at  $20^\circ$ ) is adjusted to suit modern high-power object glasses, condensers, and micro cover glasses. An important feature of the oil is its freedom from corrosive action on metals or on optical glass. 'Sira' mountant, being quite neutral, may be advantageously used in place of Canada balsam, the acidic properties of which are known to affect certain stains and other substances

when mounted in it. These 'Sira' products, which may be obtained from all scientific instrument makers and dealers, should prove of considerable value to microscopists whose work demands critical observation, in assisting them to obtain the best possible results from their microscope and its accessories.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments, on or before the dates mentioned:—A pathologist for the City of Nottingham—The Town Clerk, Guildhall, Nottingham (October 18). A junior inspector of mines for North Wales (Lancashire and North Wales Division)—The Under-Secretary for Mines, Establishment Branch, Mines Department, Dean Stanley Street, S.W.1 (October 25). A mycologist under the Ceylon Rubber Research Scheme—The Private Secretary (Appointments), Colonial Office, 38 Old Queen Street, S.W.1 (January 1). A lecturer in physics in the University of Otago, New Zealand—The High Commissioner for New Zealand, 415 Strand, W.C.2. A junior technical officer at an Admiralty Experimental Establishment, with good theoretical and practical manufacturing knowledge of the design of electrical apparatus—The Secretary of the Admiralty (C.E. Branch), Whitehall, S.W.1. A lecturer in mechanical engineering at the School of Science and Art, Newark-on-Trent—The Secretary, Old Magnus Buildings, Appleton Gate, Newark-on-Trent. A junior mathematical mistress—subsidiary subjects geography and botany—at the Southport High School for Girls—Application forms from the Director of Education, Education Office, Southport, but returnable to the Headmistress.

### Our Astronomical Column.

MINOR PLANETS.—Vol. 9, No. 9 of the *Journal des Observateurs*, contains a study of the orbit of No. 117 Lomia by M. Henri Blondel. This covers the period from 1913 to 1925, and includes the perturbations by Jupiter and Saturn. A good agreement with observation is obtained. It is noted that observations over a period of some four months are required to obtain a good orbit from a single opposition. It is suggested that ephemerides should be extended over a longer range than is usually done.

This is a favourable time for observing the interesting planet 132 Aethra, which was recovered a few years ago after being lost for half a century. It is in high north declination and of magnitude 11. Ephemeris for  $0^h$  by H. Hartog (*Astr. Nach.* 5464):

	R.A.	N. Decl.
Oct. 16	$3^h 33^m 16^s$	$41^\circ 16'$
„ 28	$3 23 36$	$40 30$

ANOTHER DETONATING FIREBALL.—Mr. W. F. Denning writes that a very large meteor was visible on the evening of Saturday, October 2, at  $19^h 25^m$  G.M.T. As observed at Bristol, its path was from  $330^\circ - 7^\circ$  to  $34^\circ + 14^\circ$ . A considerable number of observations have been received, and a comparison of these shows that the object passed from over the English Channel (45 miles south of Brighton), northwards over the western suburbs of London, and on to the northern region of Hertfordshire, where it exploded at a height of about 11 miles. The radiant point was in Capricornus at  $305^\circ - 13^\circ$ . The velocity of the fireball was

about 13 miles per second along a real course of about 125 miles. The nucleus was green, followed by red sparks. The weather being generally clear in the south of England, the phenomenon was pretty generally witnessed, though observers differ materially in their impressions concerning it. The radiant of the fireball agrees with that of a well-known shower in July and August.

C. SCHOCH'S RESEARCHES ON ANCIENT ECLIPSES.—Allusion has already been made in these columns to Schoch's conclusions on the eclipse of the Odyssey, which he identified as that of April 16, B.C. 1178. He has now discussed a still more ancient eclipse, that in the tenth year of the Hittite king Mursilis II. He identifies this as the annular eclipse of B.C. 1335, March 13, which was central in the region of the Azzi (about Erzeroum). The total eclipse of Jan. 8, 1340, is excluded, since military operations would not take place so early in the year in that elevated region. Schoch notes that the region is the same as that afterwards traversed in the retreat of the Ten Thousand. He has also identified various eclipses mentioned by Greek poets:

Poet.	Date B.C.
Mimnermos, same as eclipse of Thales . . . . .	May 28, 585.
Stesichoros and Kydias . . . . .	May 19, 557.
Agathokles eclipse, concluded position of Agathokles in Straits of Messina . . . . .	Aug. 15, 310.