

country since 1893. Other parts already published are on fishes of the Khatanga basin, by L. S. Berg; on the Coccinellid beetles of Yakutia, by F. G. Dobrzhansky; on the hydrology of the eastern Siberian Polar Sea, and so on.

A RECENT issue of the *Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society* gives interesting historical particulars of the Society's development. Founded in 1888 as the New York Mathematical Society, its activities soon assumed a national character, the title 'American' dating from 1894 and the *Transactions* from 1900. The Society's meetings are held at various centres in the country from time to time, a practice that could well be adopted by some of the English learned societies which meet only in London. Ten colloquia connected with the summer meetings of the Society have been held, the lectures given at the more recent ones being available in book form. In 1914 the membership had reached 700 and the Society was recognised as one of the world's great scientific societies. At the end of the difficult War period, the Society, like most similar bodies, was faced with a serious financial crisis due to the great increase in the cost of printing its *Transactions*. The membership has now increased to 1700, and more than thirty sustaining members, comprising some of the great engineering firms and insurance companies of the country, as well as several universities, contribute annually to the support of its activities. In the last direction also there is scope for similar development in Great Britain.

ON several previous occasions we have directed attention to the sets of coloured post-cards issued by the British Museum (Natural History), South Kensington, London, S.W.7, and illustrating British or exotic insects contained in the collections. Four new series illustrating exotic moths (sets E45 to E48) have recently appeared. The 47 examples depicted on the fifteen cards in sets E45, 46, and 48, are selected on account of their rarity, while set E47 illustrates the occurrence of eye-spots in various families of moths.

Our Astronomical Column.

KORDYLEWSKI'S VARIABLE STAR.—This very remarkable variable, the position of which for 1927.0 is R.A. $12^{\text{h}} 33^{\text{m}} 16^{\text{s}}.6$, S. Decl. $17^{\circ} 7' 3''$, is in the same field as S Corvi, and was first seen by the discoverer, at Cracow Observatory, on Dec. 14, 1925. He was familiar with the field, as he was in the habit of observing S Corvi and noticed the presence of a strange star, the magnitude of which on the B.D. Scale was 9.5 or brighter. There were then two months of cloudy weather, after which he failed to find the stranger. Search on the Harvard plates was at first abortive, but a recent Harvard post-card circular announces that images have been found on seven plates taken between 1895 and 1908. They suggest a period of about 400 days, which is confirmed by the star's recent reappearance. The range of photographic magnitude is from 11.5 to less than 17, and therefore about the same as that of Mira Ceti.

Recent photographs by Herr Pavel at Babelsberg on plates of different types show that its colour index is greater than 1.5^m, which would explain its visual brightness at the time when Kordylewski discovered it. The star was in opposition to the sun at the

In all cases direct colour photography has been used of actual specimens, and the reproductions portray their coloration and form with remarkable fidelity. Each set consists of five cards, and is obtainable at the Museum, price 1s. per set.

WE have received a copy of the Catalogue of the Collections in the Science Museum, South Kensington, Chemistry Section, published for the Board of Education (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1927). The catalogue, which is illustrated by plates and contains interesting descriptive notes of the exhibits, forms a useful guide to the collection in the Museum. Among the exhibits are a replica of Black's balance, some of the original apparatus used by Graham in experiments on colloids and on gaseous transpiration, Hartley's quartz spectrograph, specimens of synthetic rubber prepared by Sir William Tilden in 1892, several specimens which belonged to Faraday, and reproductions of other notable apparatus. There are also collections of specimens intended to illustrate important branches of chemistry, such as synthetic and natural dyes, alkaloids, vitamins, and laboratory apparatus.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments, on or before the dates mentioned:—A resident tutor in economics in the University of Bristol—The Registrar (April 30). Part-time gas examiners under the London County Council—The Clerk of the London County Council, The County Hall, Westminster Bridge, S.E.1 (May 9). A qualified dentist and a woman assistant under the Medical Research Council for work in connexion with a special investigation into the causes, progress, and prevention of dental caries in children—The Secretary, Medical Research Council, 15 York Buildings, Adelphi, W.C.2 (May 11). A pathologist and bacteriologist at the Hospital for the Insane, Claremont, Western Australia—The Agent General for Western Australia, Savoy House, 115 Strand, W.C.2 (May 16). A lecturer in physics in the Queen's University of Belfast—The Secretary (May 28).

beginning of April, and is therefore well placed for observation during the next two months. Observations are very desirable in order to determine the character of the light curve. Owing to the large colour-index, the type of plate used should be noted in photographic observations.

CALENDAR REFORM.—Mr. M. B. Cotsworth, known to most computers by his useful calculating tables, is an enthusiast for calendar reform, and has published a pamphlet on the subject under the auspices of the Pan-American Union. He traces the history of the calendar from early times, noting the great advantage that the use of a solar year gave to all nations to whom agricultural operations were important. He seems to be in error in stating that a 'leap-year' was used in ancient Egypt. His suggestions for reform of the calendar are now familiar, namely, 13 months of 4 weeks each, and one day each year (two in leap-year) that stand outside the weekly reckoning. Both suggestions excite considerable opposition, and there appears to be little prospect of general agreement upon them.