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Life on the Planets

It is highly unlikely that there is any life on any planet in the solar system except the earth. Dr. W. S. Adams, who has himself made some spectroscopic investigations of our fellow planets, has enumerated the factors which preclude the possibility of life on each of them (Science Service, Washington, D.C.). In the case of Mercury, the planet is too hot and too small to hold an atmosphere. Venus has neither oxygen nor water above the dense clouds which hide its surface, but it does have carbon dioxide, which shows that plants, if any, are not numerous. The possibility of life is least remote in the case of this planet, but without plant life there can be no animals or human beings. Mars is so small, and its gravity so weak, that its atmosphere is thin. It has polar caps suggesting water, but the spectrum shows no free oxygen. The outer planets have temperatures far below zero: their great masses enable them to hold dense atmospheres, containing gases which are rare in the earth's atmosphere: the poisonous gas ammonia is a fairly abundant constituent of their atmospheres, but oxygen has not been found in any of them. Imaginative enthusiasts who project interplanetary journeys in rockets, must envisage a complete departure from the solar system, and conduct an extensive search among the satellites—if any—of some of the nearer stars, if they wish to find a landing place at which they can avoid suffocation at the end of their journey.

British Spas and Health Resorts

WE have received the 1934 edition of the official handbook of the British Health Resorts Association, edited by Dr. R. Fortesque Fox ("British Spas, Inland and Seaside Resorts". London: Messrs. J. and A. Churchill. 1s. 0d. net). The book has expanded and contains several new features. The section on spa treatment and particulars of British spas has been extended, and health attractions of New Zealand, South Africa and Canada are detailed. Full information is also given respecting seaside resorts, and of the medical values of some of them as winter resorts for convalescents and delicate persons, and a full guide to hotels, hydros, etc., is included. The Minister of Health, Sir E. Hilton Young, contributes a foreword.

Announcements

SIR HENRY GEORGE LYONS, lately director of the Science Museum, South Kensington, has been appointed a Trustee of the National Portrait Gallery, in succession to the late Sir William Hardy.

MR. H. T. TIZARD, rector of the Imperial College of Science and Technology, has been appointed to be one of the Development Commissioners.

THE following appointments in the Colonial Agricultural Service have been made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies: Mr. L. L. De Verteuil, to be assistant agricultural officer, Antigua; Mr. S. M. Gilbert, assistant director of Agriculture, Trinidad, to be chief scientific officer, Coffee Research and Experimental Station, Tanganyika; Mr. R. O. Williams, economic botanist, to be assistant director of agriculture, Trinidad.

THE Council of the Royal Society of Edinburgh has made the following awards: Keith prize for the period 1931-33, to Dr. A. Crichton Mitchell, for his paper on "The Diurnal Incidence of Disturbance in the Terrestrial Magnetic Field" published in the *Transactions* within the period of the award; Neill prize for the period 1931-33, to Dr. G. W. Tyrrell, for his contributions to the geology and petrology of sub-arctic and sub-antarctic lands. These prizes will be presented on July 2.

It is reported in the *Moscow Daily News* that a conference is to be held in Leningrad in April at which the study of the stratosphere is to be discussed. It is anticipated that some 350 scientific workers will attend this conference, including Profs. Joffe, Vavilov, Molchanov and the crew of the stratostat *USSR*. It is stated that the Geophysical Observatory has issued a symposium on the first Soviet flight into the stratosphere summarising the scientific material obtained.

A USEFUL bibliographical list of geographical books both for university and school use has been issued by Messrs. W. Heffer and Sons, Cambridge (Catalogue No. 422). It contains more than 700 entries classified under various headings for easy reference. New as well as relatively old but standard works are included. The list should prove useful to all students of the subject.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments, on or before the dates mentioned:—A woman lecturer in needlework, hygiene and household science at Bingley Training College—The Education Officer, County Hall, Wakefield, Yorkshire (March 13). Mechanical and automobile engineers in the Ministry of Transport—The Establishment Officer, Ministry of Transport, Whitehall Gardens, S.W.1 (March 15). A district live stock officer and an assistant marketing officer in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries—The Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 10, Whitehall Place, London, S.W.1 (March 19). An electrical inspector of factories—The Industrial Division, Home Office, London, S.W.1 (March 20). A resident lecturer in science, chiefly biology and gardening, at St. Hild's College, Durham—The Principal (March 28). Examiners in various subjects of the Matriculation and General School Examination of the University of London—The Secretary to the Matriculation and School Examinations Council, University of London, South Kensington, S.W.7 (April 4). Professors of medicine and pathology at the British Post-Graduate Medical School—The Academic Registrar, University of London, South Kensington, S.W.7 (May 4).