

### The Night Sky in May

THE duration of night (sunset to sunrise) on May 1 in the latitude of London is 9.3 hours, decreasing to 7.8 by June 1. The moon is full on May 3 at 15.3<sup>h</sup>, and new on May 19 at 4.4<sup>h</sup>. A total eclipse of the moon, invisible from Great Britain, occurs on May 3. On May 5, the bright star  $\beta$  Scorpii (mag. 2.9) is occulted by the moon, the disappearance as seen from Greenwich taking place at 3<sup>h</sup> 34.5<sup>m</sup> at position angle 164° from the north point. Lunar conjunctions with the planets occur as follows: on May 9<sup>d</sup> 10<sup>h</sup> with Mars; on May 14<sup>d</sup> 23<sup>h</sup> with Jupiter; on May 16<sup>d</sup> 21<sup>h</sup> with both Venus and Saturn; on May 17<sup>d</sup> 14<sup>h</sup> with Mercury. Venus, Jupiter and Saturn are morning stars. Mars rises about an hour after midnight at the beginning of the month and just before midnight at the end. Mercury is not visible either as a morning or evening star. On May 12 at about 3<sup>h</sup> 45<sup>m</sup> it is worth looking at Jupiter when satellites I, II and IV present a curious arrangement on the east side of the planet. A corrected ephemeris for Comet Pons Winnecke (1939 c) is given in I.A.U. *Circular* No. 758. On May 17, the ephemeris places the comet 6° greater in declination than the star  $\beta$  Boötis. No ephemeris is available here for the bright comet, Comet Hassel, discovered on April 18 in the constellation of Andromeda. Solar activity is sufficiently high to warrant a look-out to be kept for auroras. (All times are given in Universal Time; add 1<sup>h</sup> to convert to Summer Time.)

### Announcements

THE first superintendent of the new Engineering Research Establishment in Australia (see p. 697) is Mr. L. P. Coombes, formerly senior scientific assistant of the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, where he was in charge of the aeroplane experimental tank.

PROF. GUSTAVE ROUSSY, professor of pathological anatomy in the University of Paris, has been elected a free academician of the Paris Academy of Sciences in succession to the late Paul Helbronner.

THE Makdougall-Brisbane Prize of the Royal Society of Edinburgh for the period 1934–1938 has been awarded to Prof. D. M. S. Watson, for his paper published in the *Transactions* of the Society, within the period, entitled "On *Rhamphodopsis*, a Ptyctodont from the Middle Old Red Sandstone of Scotland", and for his many distinguished contributions to the science of vertebrate palaeontology.

THE International Congress of the Latin Federation of Eugenics will be held at Bucharest next September under the presidency of Prof. C. Parhon, when the subjects for discussion, among others, will be: (1) prophylaxis of hereditary diseases, (2) heredity and liability to infections, (3) inheritance of intellectual aptitudes, and (4) heredity and endocrinology.

THE annual Congress of the Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene will be held at Hastings

on May 23–27 under the presidency of the Right Hon. Walter Elliot, Minister of Health. The Congress will consist of five sections, in which the following subjects will be discussed: Section I, State medicine and industrial hygiene; Section II, women and children and the public health; Section III, tuberculosis; Section IV, rheumatism and allied diseases; Section V, nutrition and physical education.

FARMERS and all interested in agriculture in its practical, technical, or educational aspects are invited to visit the Rothamsted and Woburn plots at any convenient time between the beginning of May and the end of October. Mr. H. V. Garner and Capt. E. H. Gregory will be in charge of the demonstrations. There is ample material at each farm to occupy a full day, and therefore visitors should arrange to see them on separate days. The director, Sir John Russell, will be happy to arrange full details with organizations of farmers, farm workers and others wishing to accept this invitation; small groups of farmers are specially welcomed. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary, Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden.

A NATIONAL conference on Maternity and Child Welfare will be held at the British Medical Association House, Tavistock Square, W.C.1, on June 27–29 under the presidency of Mr. Walter Elliott, the Minister of Health, when the following subjects will be discussed: safety in childbirth for mother and child; encouragement of breast-feeding; the nursery school, nursery class and the day nursery; the child in relation to foster mother and the daily minder; parents with a physically defective child, and propaganda on the maternity and child welfare movement. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary, National Association of Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, Carnegie House, Piccadilly, W.1.

WE have received an annotated catalogue of works on chemistry, pure and applied, No. 857, from Messrs. Henry Sotheran, Ltd., 2–5 Sackville Street, London, W.1. This contains a large number of interesting items, and in most cases each work has a note of bibliographical, biographical or scientific interest. The catalogue is one of considerable interest and is valuable for the large amount of accurate information it contains.

RECENT statistics show that infantile mortality in Germany, though continually falling, is greater than that in some other countries including the United States.

WE regret that in the issue of NATURE of February 25, p. 329, it was stated incorrectly that Prof. Helmuth Scheel had been appointed president and Prof. Theodor Vahlen vice-president of the Prussian Academy of Sciences; Prof. Vahlen has been appointed president and Prof. Heymann vice-president, with Prof. Scheel as director of the Academy.