

recent paper, F. H. S. Newbould and E. H. Garrard have described the isolation of a phage specific for *S. scabies*, the pathogen of potato scab (*Canadian J. Bot.*, 32, No. 3, 386; 1954). This phage was isolated from soil surrounding scab-infected potatoes. Tested against fifteen scab-producing *Streptomyces* cultures isolated from scab lesions, thirteen were lysed, one partially lysed and one was resistant. Against fifteen non-scab-producing strains of Actinomycetes, also isolated from scab lesions, thirteen were not lysed and two showed evidence of partial lysis. Tested against Actinomycetes cultures isolated from soil, the phage was less specific and the results were inconclusive. Lack of phage specificity is attributed to variation among *Streptomyces* cultures.

The Night Sky in December

FULL moon occurs on Dec. 10d. 00h. 56m., U.T., and new moon on Dec. 25d. 07h. 33m. The following conjunctions with the moon take place: Dec. 2d. 16h., Mars 6° S.; Dec. 12d. 22h., Jupiter 3° N.; Dec. 21d. 15h., Saturn 6° N.; Dec. 21d. 20h., Venus 7° N.; Dec. 31d. 12h., Mars 6° S. In addition to these conjunctions with the moon, Venus is in conjunction with Saturn on Dec. 16d. 00h., Venus 0.7° N. Mercury, a morning star, rises 1h. 20m. before the sun on December 1 and draws nearer the sun during the remainder of the month; it will not be easily seen at any time during December. Venus, a morning star, rises at 5h. 40m., 4h. 40m. and 4h. 20m. on December 1, 15 and 31, respectively; its stellar magnitude varies between -4.0 and -4.3, and the visible portion of the illuminated disk between 0.08 and 0.34. It is interesting to notice that the planet becomes brighter in spite of its increasing distance from the earth—from 28 to 45 million miles during the month—the increase in brightness arising from the large increase in the visible portion of the illuminated disk. Mars is an evening star, setting about 22h. 15m. during December: stellar magnitude 0.5-0.8, and the visible portion of the illuminated disk 0.862-0.881. The decrease in brightness, in spite of the increase in the visible portion of the illuminated disk, is due to the increase in the planet's distance from the earth from 112 to 132 million miles during the month; it moves from a little north of ι Aquarii early in the month close to the constellation Pisces on December 21. Jupiter, an evening star, rises at 19h. 40m., 18h. 40m. and 17h. 25m. on December 1, 15 and 31, respectively. Its stellar magnitude, -2.1 during most of the month, becomes -2.2 towards the end, the increase in brightness being due to the planet's decrease in distance from the earth by 23 million miles; careful observation will show the westward movement in Cancer. Saturn, a morning star, rises at 5h. 30m., 4h. 45m. and 3h. 50m. on December 1, 15 and 31, respectively; it has a slow movement from α towards ν Librae, and this can be easily detected by careful observation. Occultations of stars brighter than magnitude 6 are as follows, observations being made at Greenwich: Dec. 11d. 05h. 19.4m., μ Gemi. (*D*); Dec. 11d. 06h. 0.8m., μ Gemi. (*R*); Dec. 12d. 04h. 16.9m., 56 Gemi. (*R*). (*D* and *R* refer to disappearance and reappearance, respectively.) The meteor shower during December 11-13, the Geminids, which attains its maximum about this time, will not be easily observed owing to moonlight. An annular eclipse of the moon on December 25, invisible at Greenwich, will be visible in South Africa and the southern Indian Ocean. Winter solstice occurs on Dec. 22d. 09h.

Announcements

MR. J. R. WHINFIELD, a member of the Terylene Council of Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd., at Harrogate, has been made an Honorary Fellow of the Textile Institute, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the science and technology of man-made fibres. Mr. Whinfield is the twelfth recipient of this award.

THE American Documentation Institute has presented a scroll of appreciation to Dr. Atherton Seidell, one of the founders of the Institute, for his work in establishing microfilm services, which have been of particular value to documentation centres and libraries in general. Dr. Seidell founded in 1941 the *Current List of Medical Literature*. He is also noted for his development of an inexpensive viewer for short strips of microfilm and a microfilm projector.

THE Second Middleton Memorial Lecture will be given by Prof. K. Mather, professor of genetics in the University of Birmingham and director of the Agricultural Research Council's Unit of Biometrical Genetics, in the Senate House, University of London, on December 9, at 5.30 p.m. He will speak on "Fundamental Science in Agricultural Research, with Special Reference to the Development of Genetics". Admission is free, without ticket.

AN exhibition of scientific books and periodicals from The Netherlands will be opened at the Science Library, Imperial Institute Road, London, S.W.7, on December 1. The exhibition will remain open until December 22.

THE fifth annual meeting of the Société de Chimie Physique will be held in Paris during May 31-June 3, 1955, when the chemical actions of ionizing radiations on liquids will be discussed. Those wishing to read papers must send in the titles by December 15, 1954, and the full text by February 28, 1955, so that the papers can be printed in advance of the meeting. Further information can be obtained from the secretary-general of the Society, Prof. G. Emschwiller, École Supérieure de Physique et de Chimie, 10 rue Vauquelin, Paris 5°.

THE Meldola Medal, which is the gift of the Society of Maccabæans and is normally awarded annually, is being offered for early award in 1955 to the chemist who, being a British subject and less than thirty years old on December 31, 1954, shows the most promise, as indicated by published chemical work brought to the notice of the Council of the Royal Institute of Chemistry before December 31. Communications should be addressed to the President, Royal Institute of Chemistry, 30 Russell Square, London, W.C.1, the envelope being marked "Meldola Medal".

SIR GEORGE BEILBY Memorial awards, which are considered at intervals by administrators representing the Royal Institute of Chemistry, the Society of Chemical Industry and the Institute of Metals, are made to British scientific research workers, preference being given to investigations relating to the special interests of Sir George Beilby, including problems connected with fuel economy, chemical engineering and metallurgy. The administrators request that their attention be directed, not later than December 31, to outstanding work of the nature indicated. All communications should be addressed to the Convenor of the Administrators, Sir George Beilby Memorial Fund, Royal Institute of Chemistry, 30 Russell Square, London, W.C.1.