

University of Birmingham (on automation). In addition, Mr. J. Allan Cash, a photographic journalist, will show slides of a number of photographs which he took last August in the U.S.S.R. Prof. Powell and Dr. Lilley have also visited the U.S.S.R. during August and September of this year. Admission tickets to the symposium (price 2s.) and further information can be obtained from the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R., 14 Kensington Square, London, W.8.

### Mineralogical Society

THE following have been elected officers for 1955-56 of the Mineralogical Society: *President*, Prof. L. Hawkes; *Vice-Presidents*, Dr. F. A. Bannister and Dr. F. Dixey; *Treasurer*, Prof. J. H. Taylor; *General Secretary*, Dr. G. F. Claringbull; *Foreign Secretary* and also *Editor of the Journal*, Dr. L. J. Spencer.

With the issue of No. 231 (December 1955) of the *Mineralogical Magazine*, Dr. L. J. Spencer will retire from the editorship, having completed fifty-five years in this honorary office, to which he has devoted his whole time since he retired in 1935 from his post as keeper of minerals in the British Museum (Natural History). The work involved is now so onerous that the Council of the Society has decided to appoint two editors, one of the *Magazine* and one of the *Abstracts*; the new editors will be Dr. M. H. Hey and Dr. N. F. M. Henry, respectively. The Society has recently moved its offices from Burlington House, and its new address is now 41 Queen's Gate, South Kensington, London, S.W.7.

### The Night Sky in December

NEW moon occurs on Dec. 14d. 07h. 07m., U.T., and full moon on Dec. 29d. 03h. 44m. The following conjunctions with the Moon take place: Dec. 5d. 15h., Jupiter 6° N.; Dec. 10d. 18h., Mars 4° N.; Dec. 12d. 07h., Saturn 4° N.; Dec. 16d. 20h., Venus 5° S. Mercury, in superior conjunction on December 4, is unfavourably placed for observation during the month. Venus sets at 17h. 10m., 17h. 35m. and 18h. 25m. on December 1, 15 and 31, respectively, and is visible for some time after sunset; but owing to its large southern declination it does not attain a great altitude. Its stellar magnitude varies from -3.3 to -3.4, the visible portion of its illuminated disk decreasing from 0.923 to 0.870; its enhanced brightness is due to its distance from the Earth decreasing from 142 to 129 million miles. Mars rises about 4h. 15m. during December; it moves from a position near  $\alpha$  Virginis early in the month to about midway between  $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$  Librae towards the end of the month, its stellar magnitude varying from 1.9 to 1.8 and its distance from the Earth between 215 and 195 million miles. Jupiter rises at 22h. 35m., 21h. 40m. and 20h. 40m. on December 1, 15 and 31, respectively, and remains fairly close to  $\alpha$  Leonis, its motion being westward until December 18, after which it is eastward. Its stellar magnitude varies from -1.8 to -1.9 owing to its distance from the Earth decreasing from 478 to 437 million miles. Saturn rises at 6h. 30m., 5h. 50m. and 4h. 50m. on December 1, 15 and 31, respectively. Its eastward motion from near  $\gamma$  Librae towards Scorpius can be observed, its stellar magnitude varying from 0.7 to 0.8; owing to its southern declination, it will not attain an elevation of 22° during the month in the latitude of Greenwich and is not very well placed for observation. Occultations of stars brighter than magnitude 6 are as follows, observations being made

at Greenwich: Dec. 3d. 04h. 02.8m., 5 Cnc. (R); Dec. 4d. 02h. 48.7m.,  $\alpha$  Cnc. (D); Dec. 4d. 03h. 49.8m.,  $\alpha$  Cnc. (R); Dec. 7d. 02h. 20.2m.,  $e$  Leo (R); Dec. 26d. 02h. 28.3m., 8 Ari. (D); Dec. 27d. 03h. 56.3m., 51 Tau. (D); Dec. 27d. 04h. 18.4m., 56 Tau. (D); Dec. 28d. 01h. 58.0m.,  $n$  Tau. (D); Dec. 30d. 06h. 40.7m.,  $f$  Gem. (R). *R* and *D* refer to reappearance and disappearance, respectively. The Geminid meteors attain a maximum during December 11-13, the radiant being close to  $\alpha$  Geminorum. An annular eclipse of the Sun, invisible at Greenwich, takes place on December 14, and will be visible in the Sudan, the Indian Ocean, Thailand and part of China, the partial phase being visible generally over Africa and Asia.

### Announcements

DR. OTTO MAASS, principal research officer in the Division of Pure Chemistry of the National Research Council of Canada, and formerly Macdonald professor of physical chemistry and head of the Department of Chemistry of McGill University, has been elected an honorary member of the Chemists' Club of New York. Honorary membership is restricted to about a dozen chemists, and Dr. Maass is the only Canadian so honoured. His scientific work has been mainly concerned with the chemistry and technology of paper.

THE National Science Foundation, Washington 25, D.C., has appointed Dr. James M. Mitchell as associate director of the Foundation and Dr. John T. Wilson as assistant director for biological and medical sciences. Dr. Mitchell, a past president of the American Society for Public Administration, was formerly assistant to the director of the Foundation, and Dr. Wilson was formerly programme director for psychobiology.

PROF. J. R. WHITEHEAD, associate professor of physics in McGill University, has been appointed head of the new research laboratories in Montreal of the RCA Victor Co., Ltd. Associated with him will be Dr. Sydney Wagner, also formerly of McGill University, and a number of other physicists, and their work will be in the field of pure physics and electronics research, not necessarily connected with the Company's projects or developments. Prof. Whitehead is British by birth, being a graduate of the University of Manchester and Cambridge, and during 1939-51 he was on the staff of the Telecommunications Research Establishment, working on radar.

MR. W. F. GRIMES, director of the London Museum, has been appointed director of the Institute of Archaeology and professor of archaeology in the University of London. Dr. E. O'F. Walsh, senior lecturer in the Department of Physiology, the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, London, has been appointed to the University readership in biochemistry tenable at that School.

A SYMPOSIUM on the various chemical, biochemical, physiological and medical aspects of heparin, organized by the Società Lombarda di Scienze Mediche e Biologiche, will be held on December 19 in Milan at the Museo della Scienza e della Tecnica, 17 Via S. Vittore. For non-members of the Società Lombarda a registration fee of 1,000 lire will be charged, which will entitle them to a copy of the proceedings. Further information can be obtained from Prof. Walter Montorsi, Pad. Monteggia, Via F. Sforza 35, Milan.