

controls the primary and secondary male characters of the amphipod *Orchestia gammarella*. Other papers deal with the cytology of neurosecretory cells in many groups of invertebrates, with moulting, metamorphosis, and changes of phase in insects, the possible role of haemocytes in insect growth, and the part played by humoral factors in the discharge of gametes in certain molluscs.

### iboga

THE stimulant properties of the iboga plant have long been known to various Central African peoples (*S. Afr. J. Sci.*, 53, No. 1; August 1956). The pygmies chew iboga leaves and stalks before certain tribal ceremonies during which they must remain awake for several days when they are continually drumming on their tomtoms. Other tribes use the plant for initiation ceremonies when adolescent boys are left alone to roam the forest for five days, living solely on the iboga plant. Hunters of certain tribes also consume iboga before undertaking particularly long and dangerous treks through the forest. French chemists, who have been carrying out research on the plant over the past ten years, have now succeeded in extracting alkaloids from which they can manufacture a stimulant with very little toxic effect.

### The Science Masters' Association: Annual Meeting

THE annual meeting of the Science Masters' Association is to be held during January 2-5 in the University of Cambridge, under the presidency of Sir Alexander Todd, professor of chemistry in the University, who will speak on "The Scientist—Supply and Demand". There will be discussions on "Technical Education and the Schools", introduced by Dr. K. B. Hutton, of Hatfield School, on January 4; and on "The Recruitment and Training of Science Teachers", with particular reference to secondary modern schools, introduced by Mr. W. H. Palmer, of Homerton College, Cambridge, and Mr. C. L. Brereton, warden of Bottisham Village Centre. Lectures to be given include "Science in the Universities and Schools" (Prof. N. F. Mott); "Diseases and Problems of Population" (Prof. A. L. Banks); "Some Recent Advances in the Chemistry of Fluorine" (Prof. H. J. Emeléus); "Botanical Monkeys" (Mr. E. J. H. Corner); "The Silicones" (Dr. P. Sykes); "Radio Astronomy" (Mr. L. Ryle); "Antarctica To-day" (Dr. G. C. L. Bertram); and "The Expanding Universe" (Dr. R. A. Lyttleton). Prof. J. F. Baker and the staff of the Cambridge Faculty of Engineering will be responsible for an evening lecture. There will be the usual exhibitions by members and by instrument manufacturers and publishers, and receptions at the Guildhall and in King's College. The Science and Religion Group of the Association will meet on January 5. The programme of the meeting can be obtained from the Annual Meeting Secretary of the Association, 93 Westbourne Road, West Hartlepool, Co. Durham.

### University of Sheffield

THE following appointments have been made in the University of Sheffield: Dr. R. S. Tebble, senior lecturer in physics; Dr. J. F. Wallace, lecturer in mechanical engineering; Dr. R. G. Ward, lecturer in metallurgy. Dr. W. J. P. Neish has been appointed to the James Morrison Research Fellowship, and M. F. Sheff to the John Stokes Research Fellowship. The following members of staff have resigned:

Dr. R. C. Cass, lecturer in chemistry; A. R. Curtis, lecturer in applied mathematics and Dr. D. W. Wakeman, lecturer in metallurgy.

### The Night Sky in December

NEW moon occurs on Dec. 2d. 08h. 12m., U.T., and full moon on Dec. 17d. 19h. 06m. The following conjunctions with the Moon take place: Dec. 11d. 20h., Mars  $5^{\circ}$  S.; Dec. 24d. 12h., Jupiter  $6^{\circ}$  N.; Dec. 29d. 13h., Saturn  $0.7^{\circ}$  N.; Dec. 29d. 19h., Venus  $0.2^{\circ}$  S. In addition to these conjunctions with the Moon, Saturn is in conjunction with Antares on Dec. 21d. 17h., Saturn being  $6.3^{\circ}$  N., Venus with Antares on Dec. 26d. 10h., Venus  $5.8^{\circ}$  N., and Venus with Saturn on Dec. 26d. 21h., Venus  $0.5^{\circ}$  S. There will be a partial eclipse of the Sun on Dec. 2, but at Greenwich only a small part of the Sun will be seen to be eclipsed at sunrise, the eclipse ending a few minutes after sunrise. Mercury is an evening star, but conditions for observation are not favourable. Venus is a morning star, rising at 4h. 45m., 5h. 25m. and 6h. 10m. on December 1, 15 and 31, respectively, but it will be rather low for good observation from the British Isles. Mars is visible during the evenings, setting at 1h. 00m., 0h. 50m. and 0h. 35m. on December 1, 15 and 31, respectively; its stellar magnitude decreases during the month from  $-0.4$  to  $+0.3$  and its distance increases from 73 to 97 million miles. Mars is moving eastwards in Pisces, being south of  $\delta$  Piscium at the end of the month. Jupiter rises at 1h. 10m., 0h. 20m. and 23h. 25m. at the beginning, middle and end of the month, respectively, and is east of  $\beta$  Virginis; its stellar magnitude is  $-1.6$ , its distance in the middle of the month is about 510 million miles. Saturn is too close to the Sun for observation. Occultations of stars brighter than magnitude 6 are as follows, observations being made at Greenwich: Dec. 7d. 19h. 21.3m.,  $\nu$  Aqr. (*D*); Dec. 10d. 20h. 14.3m.,  $\kappa$  Psc. (*D*); Dec. 20d. 21h. 29.0m., 60 Cnc. (*R*); Dec. 21d. 3h. 29.7m.,  $\kappa$  Cnc. (*R*). *D* and *R* refer to disappearance and reappearance, respectively. The Geminid meteors are active during December 9-13, with a maximum near the latter date, but conditions are not favourable for observation. Winter solstice occurs on Dec. 21d. 21h.

### Announcements

THE Ciba Foundation is offering not less than five awards, of an average value of £300 each, for papers on research relevant to basic problems of ageing. In making the awards, preference will be given to younger workers. The work submitted should not have been published before May 31, 1956, and the paper, which may be in the candidate's own language, should not be more than seven thousand words in length, with a summary in English not exceeding 3 per cent of the paper. Entries must be sent in not later than January 31, 1957, to the Ciba Foundation, 41 Portland Place, London, W.1, from which application forms and further information can be obtained.

IN *Nature* of November 10, p. 1033, an announcement was made of the presentation of the Robert Roesler de Villiers Award to Dr. J. F. Loutit. This award was in fact given for research described briefly in an article in *Nature* of March 10, 1956, entitled "Cytological Identification of Radiation-Chimæras", by Dr. C. E. Ford, J. L. Hamerton, D. W. H. Barnes and Dr. J. F. Loutit, and is being shared between these four authors.