

Hurd Rusby, professor of materia medica in the College of Pharmacy, University of New York, when the Hanbury Gold Medal of the Pharmaceutical Society will be presented to Prof. Rusby. A note on Prof. Rusby's life and work appeared in NATURE of June 1, p. 845, in announcing the award of the Hanbury Gold Medal.

Mr. F. D. OMMANNEY, Mr. F. J. Hart, and Mr. A. H. Laurie have been appointed to zoological posts on the scientific staff of the Discovery Committee. Mr. Ommanney has already left England to undertake whaling investigations with Mr. J. F. G. Wheeler at the Marine Biological Station, South Georgia. Mr. Laurie is joining the R.R.S. *William Scoresby* at Cape Town, and Mr. Hart will sail towards the end of the year in the R.R.S. *Discovery II*.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments, on or before the dates mentioned:—A full-time head of the Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Department of the Harris Institute, Preston—The Principal, Harris Institute, Preston (Oct. 1). An assistant in the Mechanical Engineering Department of the Coventry Municipal Technical College—The Director of Education, Council House, Coventry (Oct. 1). A head of the Pharmacy Department and a full-time assistant lecturer in engineering at the Cardiff Technical College—The Principal, Technical College, Cardiff (Oct. 5). An inspector under the Alkali, etc., Works Regulation Act, 1906—The Director of Establishments, Ministry of Health, Whitehall, S.W.1 (Oct. 5). An Astley Cooper assist-

ant to the Curator of the Gordon Museum of Guy's Hospital Medical School—The Secretary to the Astley Cooper Trustees, Medical School Office, Guy's Hospital, S.E.1 (Oct. 7). A research assistant in engineering applied to glass technology, in the Department of Glass Technology of the University of Sheffield, and research fellowships in glass technology in the same department—The Registrar, The University, Sheffield (Oct. 14). An assistant in botany in the University of Aberdeen—The Secretary, The University, Aberdeen (Oct. 15). An assistant professor in electrical engineering at the City and Guilds (Engineering) College—The Secretary to the Delegacy, City and Guilds (Engineering) College, Exhibition Road, South Kensington, S.W.7 (Nov. 1). A technical assistant in the Physics Department of the British Boot, Shoe, and Allied Trades Research Association—The Director of Research, British Boot, Shoe, and Allied Trades Research Association, 19 Bedford Square, W.C.1. A full-time lecturer in mathematics at the Borough Polytechnic Institute—The Principal, Borough Polytechnic Institute, Borough Road, S.E.1. A woman lecturer in education in the department for the Training of Teachers of the University of Reading—The Registrar, The University, Reading. A lecturer and adviser in veterinary science in the Harper Adams Agricultural College and National Institute of Poultry Husbandry—The Principal, Harper Adams Agricultural College, Newport, Salop. A Principal of the Derby Technical College—The Secretary to the Derby Education Committee, Education Offices, Becket Street, Derby.

Our Astronomical Column.

Comets Neujmin and Forbes.—The following elements of these comets have been computed by Dr. A. C. D. Crommelin; the first from observations on Aug. 4 and 31 (Königstuhl) and Aug. 15 (Lick); the second from photographic observations at Johannesburg by H. E. Wood on Aug. 3, 8, 13. The equinox is 1929.0; *T* is in U.T.:

	Neujmin.	Forbes.
<i>T</i>	1929 June 28.922.	1929 June 26.619.
$\omega$	140° 45' 50"	260° 18' 39"
$\Omega$	158 15 53	25 5 38
<i>i</i>	3 40 23	4 39 34
$\phi$	35 38 12	33 51 12
log <i>q</i>	0.309227	0.185458
Period (years)	10.7914	6.4370

Almost identical elements of Forbes's comet were found by Dr. R. T. A. Innes using the same observations. He notes that they indicate a close approach to Jupiter at the aphelion passage of 1920. There is a slight resemblance to the elements of Barnard's Comet 1884 II. A period of 5.4 years was found for it, but it has not been seen since its first apparition.

The Discovery of Proxima Centauri at Johannesburg.—An account is given in the Johannesburg *Star* of Aug. 24 of the circumstances which led to the discovery of the sun's nearest stellar neighbour. It is emphasised that the discovery was no fluke, but that Dr. Innes, noting other cases of distant companion stars, had an inspiration that Alpha Centauri might have such a companion. The circumstances recall Prof. W. H. Pickering's successful search for Phœbe, the distant satellite of Saturn; in that case also there was a sort of inspiration that such a body existed.

There were to hand the photographs of the region taken by Mr. Franklin Adams at the Cape in 1902, and similar photographs taken with the same instrument at Johannesburg in 1910. Further, a blink microscope for comparing star plates had been procured for the Observatory in 1915. At Dr. Innes's request, Mr. Wood took a further photograph of the region in 1915, under exactly the same conditions as the 1910 one. Comparing these plates, Dr. Innes quickly detected a faint star that had changed its position very obviously in the interval of 5 years; further examination showed that its motion was very nearly equal and parallel to that of Alpha. The connexion was further established by the determination of the parallax of Proxima, both at Johannesburg and by Dr. Voute. In the last few months a further determination has been made by Dr. Alden at the Yale station at Johannesburg; these determinations all agree in indicating that the distances of Alpha and Proxima are nearly the same, the latter being slightly nearer to us; the distance from Alpha is so great that the period of revolution must be of the order of a million years; but there is little doubt that Proxima and the two components of Alpha form a connected system.

General Perturbations of Minor Planets by Jupiter.—E. de la Villemarqué, *S. J.*, has computed tables of the perturbations by Jupiter of a large number of minor planets: he is now engaged on the planets whose mean daily motion lies between 1250" and 1350". *Astr. Nach.*, 5654, contains the first instalment for these planets. The labour of keeping up the positions of more than 1000 planets is so heavy that any tables that shorten the work deserve a hearty welcome.