

a case of over-function of the parathyroid gland caused by a parathyroid tumour, with rapid restoration to health on its removal. The volume is issued by a 'selection committee', of which Mr. Hugh Cairns is honorary secretary.

MESSRS. Dulau and Co., Ltd., have just issued a catalogue (No. 176) of upwards of 700 second-hand works on botany and horticulture. Copies of the catalogue can be obtained free upon application.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments, on or before the dates mentioned:—A principal of the Government Technical Continuation and Commercial School, Kingston, Jamaica—The Secretary, Board of Education, Whitehall, S.W.1, or, for Scottish candidates, The Secretary, Scottish Education Department, Whitehall, S.W.1 (May 24). An analytical chemist under the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom—The Director, Marine Biological Laboratory, Plymouth (May 27). A technical officer in the Admiralty Technical Pool, with experience in the design of telephones, bells, buzzers, and similar electrical instruments used in low-power signalling systems—The Secretary of the Admiralty (C.E. Branch), Whitehall, S.W.1 (May 27). An assistant lecturer in political science at the London School of Economics and Political Science—The Secretary, London School of Economics, Houghton

Street, Aldwych, W.C.2 (May 29). An assistant lecturer in biology at University College, Nottingham—The Registrar, University College, Nottingham (May 29). A lecturer-in-charge, with training in engineering and workshop practice, for branch of the Witwatersrand Technical College, near Johannesburg—Chalmers and Guthrie (Merchants), Ltd., 9 Idol Lane, E.C.3 (May 31). A sanitary inspector under the Sudan Medical Service—The Controller, Sudan Government London Office, Wellington House, Buckingham Gate, S.W.1. A principal of the proposed Department of Business Administration at the London School of Economics—F. W. Lawe, 44 Hans Crescent, S.W.1. A lecturer on hygiene and physical training at the Training College, Truro—The Principal, Training College, Truro. A chief lecturer in the electrical engineering section of the engineering department of the Halifax Municipal Technical College—The Principal, Municipal Technical College, Halifax. A full-time lecturer in mining and engineering subjects at the County Technical College, Mansfield—The Principal, County Technical College, Mansfield. An assistant chemist at the South Eastern Agricultural College, mainly for arsenic estimation by the electrolytic method—The Secretary, South Eastern Agricultural College, Wye, Kent. A zoologist and an algologist at the Port Erin Marine Biological Station—The Registrar, The University, Liverpool.

### Our Astronomical Column.

**Conjunction of the Planets Venus and Jupiter.**—An interesting spectacle for the naked eye will be provided by the conjunction of the planets Venus and Jupiter on May 17. The nearest approach of the two bodies will occur at 7 P.M. when their distance apart will be only  $1\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ . This will, however, be nearly two hours before sunset. The two planets will set at about 11 o'clock (Summer Time) and should offer an interesting configuration during about an hour and a half preceding that time. The higher object of the pair will be Venus, which will be a little above and to the left of Jupiter. This will provide an excellent occasion on which to estimate the difference of colour and magnitude of the two orbs.

**Comet 1927d.**—M. Ebell gives the following elements of this comet in *B.Z.* No. 21:

$T$	1930 June 12.7904 U.T.
$\omega$	$187^{\circ} 20' 13''$
$\Omega$	$81^{\circ} 27' 11''$
$i$	$20^{\circ} 24' 44''$
$\log q$	0.01283

Ephemeris for  $0^{\text{h}}$ :

	R.A.	N. Decl.
May 16	$16^{\text{h}} 59^{\text{m}} 43^{\text{s}}$	$37^{\circ} 18'$
20	17 31 6	36 27
24	18 15 37	33 56
28	19 17 52	27 54

The comet is approaching both sun and earth, so is likely to become brighter. It is only  $8\frac{1}{2}$  million miles from the earth on June 3.

**The Lowell Planet.**—Prof. Stroobant has found an image on the plates taken at Uccle Observatory in 1927 which very probably belongs to the Lowell planet. He is fairly certain that it is a heavenly body,

not a flaw on the plate, and it falls accurately on the trajectory of the planet.

The position is as follows for the equinox of 1927.0: 1927 Jan.  $27^{\text{d}} 21^{\text{h}} 27^{\text{m}} 41^{\text{s}}$  U.T.; R.A.  $7^{\text{h}} 1^{\text{m}} 59.7^{\text{s}}$ ; N. Decl.  $21^{\circ} 17' 59.5''$ ; magnitude, 15 to 15.5.

On comparing this position with those computed from the two parabolas deduced by Prof. Banachiewicz and Dr. C. H. Smiley, it is found to lie 0.7 of the way from the receding parabola to the approaching one, the separate ratios being 0.695 from the R.A., 0.714 from the Decl.; the former has three times the weight of the latter. Hence, if the identification is correct, the body is approaching the sun, and the eccentricity may be estimated as about 0.4. The observations in 1930 favoured *recession* rather than *approach*, but the observed arc was not long enough to settle the question.

**'Wolf's Numbers' for 1929.**—No. 122 of *Astronomische Mitteilungen* contains the counts of sunspots, made during the year 1929 by 55 observers at various stations, from which the Wolf, or relative sunspot, numbers are deduced. Tables are given for (1) daily values for the sun's whole disc, (2) daily values for a central zone the diameter of which equals half that of the disc, (3) monthly values for the whole disc. The 'number' deduced for the year 1929 is 65.0; the corresponding values for the years 1923–28 inclusive are—5.8, 16.7, 44.3, 63.9, 69.0, 77.8. Table 3 shows that the least active month of 1929 was September (34.4), and the most active, December (108.0). On no day of the year was the sun free from spots. Advance data, corresponding to those given in Tables 1 and 2 of the above publication, are included in the quarterly circulars issued from Zurich by Prof. Brunner under the auspices of the International Astronomical Union.