

BULLETIN

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SPECIAL REQUEST TO LONDON MEMBERS

As mentioned in last **Bulletin**, the September meeting will be an Inaugural one to ascertain members wishes as to future activities of the London section. Suitable films, lectures by prominent personalities and a visit to Greenwich Observatory are some suggestions. Will all London members please note the date, **Tuesday, September 7**, at "The Mason's Arms," Maddox Street, W1, from 7 p.m. and make every effort to attend.

MODEL AIRPLANE CONTEST

Many members may have read the article by Mr. Moore-Raymond in the **Sunday Dispatch** recently, mentioning that the BIS was shortly to organise a competition for model airplanes using jet propulsion instead of being propellor driven. Full details of this project will appear in the September issue of this **Bulletin**.

JULY MEETING

The following report was unfortunately held over from last issue.

Member S. Klemantaski gave a full and interesting lecture upon use of the Spectroscope in Astronomical work. Unfortunately, he was compelled to point out that the hopes of our Technical Staff utilising the Spectrum Shift for measuring a spaceship's velocity could not be realised.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED

BIS member Dr. W. Olaf Stapledon's "Star Maker" (Methuen 8/6), President A. M. Low's "Adrift in the Stratosphere" (Blackie 2/-) and E. F. Northrup's "Zero to Eighty" (14/6). All three are fiction. Acknowledgments and thanks to latter two authors for copies given to Society's library.

FRIEDRICH SCHMIEDL'S ARTICLES.

The first three of Mr. Schmiedl's articles deal fundamentally with the possibilities of space travel. As members of this Society are fully aware of these possibilities, only one of these will be reproduced for perusal here.

(1) Limitations of Space Travel.

Whenever there is talk of space travel, the question immediately arises whether the heavenly bodies are inhabitable, and the most fantastic conceptions and possibilities for the future are drawn up in connection with the subject. Does the earth alone possess at present, in the immeasurably large Cosmos, the remarkably preferential position of being suitable as habitation for intelligent beings? Our astronomers can give no reply to this question because all the millions of wonderful stars which they can see with their telescopes, and all those which we can observe with the naked eye, are, without exception, glowing, self-radiating bodies. It is probable that there are very many more extinct stars on which life can and does exist, but all these millions of lightless stars (which alone come into consideration for living beings) are outside the possibility of being observed by us; we cannot see them because they have no light of their own. We have no knowledge of them. In order to render them "visible," science must find quite new ways and means. We are not so far yet. But, one can hardly assume that among the millions and millions of heavenly bodies, the earth alone should occupy the preferential position of sheltering intelligent beings. There may be very many "earths" with similarly, perhaps even higher, developed life, but of these life-containing extinct world bodies we cannot gain any knowledge because Astronomy depends on Optics, and it is just their own light which these life conserving earths do not radiate any longer. Nor would we be able to reach them even with space ships, for our very short life does not last long enough.

Our nearest neighbour is Proxima Centauri; light requires 4.26 years to reach it from the earth. The life of an individual on earth is therefore much too short to reach even the star system which is nearest to the earth. We have therefore unfortunately to content ourselves with space travel in our own sun system. If only we had plenty to choose from. But there are only the planets, numerous small planetoids (upon which, on account of their smallness, there is presumably not even an atmosphere) and our nearest neighbour the Earth Moon, which we have to visit (even if there should be no atmosphere or water there) because it belongs to our Earth.

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