

Introducing the Constellations. Robert E. Baker. The Viking Press, New York. \$2.50. Many star charts; well illustrated.

Stars for Sam. W. Maxwell Reed. Harcourt Brock & Co. New York. \$2.75. Well illustrated with astronomical charts; also other illustrations.

Stars and Their Stories. Muriel Kinney. D. Appleton & Co. New York. Small stories and illustrations.

So Thats Astronomy. R. Ray Baker. \$1.00. One of a series. Many pictures.

Wonders of the Heavens. 50¢. Arthur Draper, Director of Buhl Planetarium. Only 27 pages; well illustrated.

Astronomy Through a Dipper. Eliot C. Clarke. Houghton Mifflin Co. New York. Small book - charts.  
---Eleanor B. Davis

STAR-STRUCK

I've known of spiral nebulae  
And other telescopic lore--  
Andromeda, the Pleiades  
Will charm me evermore.  
Ursa Major is a wonder  
No one can deny;  
But when I see the Milky Way  
All spilt across the sky,  
The petty cares are gone like mist,  
Our Earth has shrunk to size;  
And I have rapture in my heart  
And star dust in my eyes.

---Dorothea Lamore

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PHILIP C. KEENAN will speak on "The Measurement of the Temperatures of the Stars" at the meeting on December 4th, 8 p.m. at the National Museum. Dr. Keenan is astrophysicist at the Yerkes Observatory, now on leave of absence and engaged in war work for the Navy at the Bureau of Ordnance. In addition to having published several papers in astronomical journals, he is one of the authors of "An Atlas of Stellar Spectra" by W. W. Morgan, Philip C. Keenan, and Edith Kellman, issued by the University of Chicago Press in 1942. This notable book contains 265 photographic prints of stellar spectra obtained with the 40-inch refractor, showing all the different classes of spectra, with the luminosity effects within the subdivisions of each spectral class, and 45 peculiar spectra; a brief text describes the methods of classification.

For members who wish to do some reading that will provide a background for this lecture, the following reference is suggested: Leo Goldberg and L. H. Aller, "Atoms, Stars, and Nebulae," published by Blakiston Co., Philadelphia, 1943; this is one of the series of popular Harvard Books on Astronomy now being published under the editorship of Harlow Shapley and B. J. Bok.

---Edgar W. Woolard

TIDES HAVE A NEW MEANING for those who heard Mr. H. A. Marmer describe tidal phenomena at the last lecture. He showed with slides the classifications of tides and how those in some parts of the world were similar and others opposite in behavior. One fact of unusual interest was that in a few localities tides are due to the

sun instead of the moon. Another feature was the machine used for predicting tides. He explained the process of this device with the aid of pictures.

TELESCOPE MAKING COMMITTEE: Capt. U.S. Lyons, chairman; Messrs. Ralph C. Masters, C. A. Peterson, and Edwin V. Smith. This committee was inadvertently omitted in last month's bulletin.

THE JANUARY MEETING will be held on the 15th instead of the first Saturday.

A MEETING IN JUNE was agreed upon, whether lecture or outdoor event to be decided later.

SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION RATE for Sky and Telescope will be \$1.65 after the first of the year, so take advantage now of the present rate of \$1.50. Non-members, \$2.00.

CONSTELLATION OBSERVATIONS will be arranged upon request. Miss Warthen will be glad to meet with those who would like to learn constellations.

HISTORY OF ASTRONOMY was the subject of the group led by Dr. Woolard at his home November 15th, when six members had the opportunity to use his fine collection of books on Egyptology. Dr. Woolard brought out the influence or lack of it, of Egyptian astronomers, spoke of various approaches by historians, and many other phases in the work of deciphering Egyptian records. The next class will meet there Monday, December 13th, at 7:30 p.m.

CELESTIAL NAVIGATION drew more women than men at the first meeting of such an interest group on November 17th at the home of Mr. Herreshoff. Commander Lee obligingly explained and repeated whenever requested. The object of this class is to learn the fundamentals of the subject rather than exact computations. Monday, November 29th, 7:45 is the date of the next meeting at the home of Mrs. Elanora B. Davis, 5 Rhode Island Avenue, N. W.

CHRISTMAS always brings to mind the Star of Bethlehem, and the many speculations and discussions as to whether this Star was an astronomical phenomenon of some known type, such as a nova or an unusual planetary conjunction. Christmas has other astronomical associations, however, which can be more easily investigated from historical records: The early Church Fathers fixed the date of Christmas to coincide with the occasion of the festivals that had long been held among many peoples at the time of the winter solstice. Among all the nations of antiquity, a tendency existed to worship the sun as the giver of life and a manifestation of the Deity. Even where this did not take the form of outright sun worship, it frequently led to the custom of celebrating the occurrence of the winter solstice, and often of starting the new year then, as the sun commenced its return journey northward. Christmas thus became the Christian continuation of the widespread pagan observance of the solstice. See Wm. H. Barton, Jr., "Christmas Story," Sky and Telescope, December 1941; and Marian Lockwood, "That Christmas Star," Sky and Telescope, December 1942.

---Edgar W. Woolard

#### BOOKS WE ARE READING

Weather and the Ocean of Air. Wm. H. Wenstrom, Major, U.S.A. (Ret.) Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston. A wholly scientific book that tells you how to predict the weather and why it behaves as it does. The first book of its kind to take advantage of information resulting from man's knowledge of high altitudes.

---Elanora B. Davis

#### CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS FOR CHILDREN

Astronomy for the Young Folks. Isabel Martin Lewis. (U.S. Observatory.) Dodd, Mead & Co. Contains some star illustrations.