

## NEW INVENTION SHOWS COURSES OF THE STARS

An instrument that is expected to have a great influence on the teaching of popular astronomy has been installed at the German Museum of Natural Science and Technology at Munich. It is the product of the optical firm of Zeiss, and has been under construction for five years. The chief advantage of the machine lies in the fact that it substitutes a realistic and accurate picture of the happenings in the heavens for a confusing arrangement of wires and wooden balls heretofore used.

The "planetarium", as the instrument is called, is of unusual, even weird and startling, appearance. There is something about its general make-up that would suggest a small anti-aircraft cannon, but instead of ending in a long barrel it has as its most essential part a large sphere studded with high-power lenses, resembling a gigantic insect's eye. Each of these lenses is arranged to project the image of a certain part of the heavens, so that the whole starry universe can be made to march across the dome-shaped ceiling of the "sky room" where the planetarium is housed.

All stars down to the sixth magnitude are shown, as well as the milky way, the planets, the sun and the moon. The instrument can be rotated at any speed, showing the celestial events of a day in a period of four minutes, or crowding a year into fifty seconds. Within the artificial sky of the planetarium study the operator has the power of a Joshua; for he can bid the sun and moon to stand still, and cause the stars to run backward in their courses. So accurate is the instrument that after rotations representing five thousand years there is an error of less than two degrees.

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CHINESE STARLING SPREADS AT VANCOUVER

The Chinese starling or crested mynah, perhaps the largest and most beautiful of the wide-spread starling family, has obtained a firm foothold about Vancouver, B.C.

The certainty that this oriental visitor will extend its range has caused considerable anxiety along the Pacific coast for, like all starlings, it has a reputation for raiding fruit orchards. The bird now has a radius of about 50 miles about the Vancouver water front. It is advancing in all directions about a mile a year, according to local bird students. An individual specimen has been noted as far south as Portland but it is not certain that this was not an escaped cage bird.

This starling is about the size of a robin with a yellowish white bill overhung by a fan-like crest. Its glossy black plumage is in striking contrast with a large, white marginal wing patch. It makes a good pet but in the wild state it is a marauder, and steals the eggs and nests of other birds.

While little effort has been made to eliminate the visitor it is regarded as decidedly an undesirable by R. F. Butler, secretary of the British Columbia Game Conservation Board.

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Air express shipments between army flying fields now occasionally include dogs.  
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