
Variable Stars

This little book tells the story of stars which fluctuate in brightness. The author is one of the best of the Mt. Wilson astronomers and the story, unpretentiously told, is on the whole to his credit.

The opening chapter, done in question and answer style intended to engage the reader, is inclined to suggest instead that the author is a little nervous in getting started. Once the first uneasiness is passed, however, the story is admirably told.

The chapter on the history and cataloging of variable stars is particularly interesting in that it gives an excellent idea of the typical early childhood of an astronomical problem. The rest of the book is largely explanatory of the physical conditions prevailing in such stars. The only disappointing feature of the book is the very inadequate chapter of Novae, those stars which occasionally burst forth with approximately a million times their normal brightness.

The book is written for those people who have an interest in and an elementary knowledge of astronomical phenomena.—*C. E. Hesihal.*

The Nature of Variable Stars, by Paul W. Merrill. 134 pp. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1938. \$2.00.