duction of the primitive art motif into modern designing.

Dr. Spinden will begin forwarding specimens to New York as soon after his arrival in the field as possible. He will start in Guatemala and extend his investigations to western Honduras, Salvador and Nicaragua. In these localities are small groups of Indians most interesting for their civilization and culture, although comparatively little known. Dr. Spinden will not only obtain examples of designs but will also learn the details of the art of weaving and study the dyestuffs used by the native artisans. The costumes worn by the Indians of Central American countries are not only picturesque, but have many details of construction which might be successfully adapted. The fundamental ideas on which these garments are based are said to be unique.

Dr. Spinden will also get all possible information concerning the native food products with a view to calling attention to their economic value, which is often very great. Specimens of these alimentary substances will be collected for display in the Preparedness Exhibit which the American Museum now has under way. Dr. Spinden will be accompanied by S. G. Morley, of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, who is likewise interested in the archeological features of the expedition. The work is undertaken with the official sanction of all the Central American governments. Most of the traveling will be on mule back through mountainous and sparsely settled regions and over native trails. Dr. Spinden left New York on April 16 and expects to return in about three months.

RESEARCH WORK OF THE LEANDER McCORMICK OBSERVATORY

THE visiting committee of the Leander McCormick Observatory of the University of Virginia met in Washington on April 17. The director reported that the scientific work accomplished during the year was as follows:

1. The determination of the parallax of fifty stars, results thus having been obtained on one hundred and twenty-five stars since the parallax work was started two and a half years ago. A preliminary value of the parallax of Barnard's star of large proper motion was found to be 0″.47.

2. More than 10,000 observations of meteors were made by amateurs during the year 1916, and were sent in to the McCormick Observatory for discussion and publication. This probably makes the largest number of meteor observations ever collected in any one year, except perhaps during the years of a meteor shower.

3. A plan of cooperation has been entered into with Harvard College Observatory whereby the 26-inch refractor is to be used for the visual observation of variable stars while they are at minima. More than one hundred and fifty stars are on the program, these stars being mainly long period variables.

4. Photographs have been made with an objective grating and with yellow light in order to find the photovisual magnitudes of the Harvard Standard regions.

5. Micrometric measures by C. P. Olivier of two hundred double stars have been published in the *Astronomical Journal.*

Grateful acknowledgment was expressed for financial assistance from the Leander McCormick estate, from the special Adams fellowship from Columbia University for parallax work, from the J. Lawrence Smith fund of the National Academy of Sciences for research on meteors, and for the gift of a wireless apparatus and a computing machine from Mr. John Neilson, of New York.

THE ENGINEERING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

THE following engineering committee has been appointed: George F. Swain and Edgar C. Marburg (representing American Society of Civil Engineers), Pope Yeatman and Albert Sauveur (representing American Institute of Mining Engineers), C. D. Young and William F. Durand (representing American Society of Mechanical Engineers), Frank B. Jewett and Clayton H. Sharp (representing American Institute of Electrical Engineers), Lewis B. Stillwell (representing American Institute of Consulting Engineers), John A. Brashear, George K. Burgess, J. J. Carty, Howard E. Coffin, John R. Freeman, Hollis Godfrey,