

of refraction being plotted as ordinates and the wave-lengths as abscissas, the resulting curve is found to be an hyperbola.

Prof. Alfred M. Mayer, in describing recent work, stated that he had succeeded, by the use of a lens of ebonite, in inflaming various substances by the concentration of dark rays, for which ebonite is translucent.

Dr. S. H. Scudder gave a general account of the cockroach in the past and present. Of all insect types, this one is best represented in the rocks, and especially the older rocks. The carboniferous, especially, may fitly be called the age of cockroaches. The paleozoic cockroaches were larger, the more recent smaller, than the modern. Mr. G. K. Gilbert discussed the geological age of the *Equus* fauna, maintaining that it belongs to the upper quaternary (later glacial), and not to the upper pliocene, where it had been assigned by students of vertebrate paleontology.

THE DATA NOW REQUISITE IN SOLAR INQUIRIES.

In order to obtain the greatest amount of assistance from observations of the eclipsed sun, it is necessary to consider in the most general way the condition of solar inquiry at the time the observations are made. If any special work commends itself to those interested in the problem, — work which may be likely to enable us to emphasize or reject existing ideas, — then that work should take precedence of all other.

Next, if the observers are sufficient in number to undertake other work besides this, then that work should be arranged in harmony with previous observations; that is, the old methods of work should be exactly followed, or they should be expanded so that a new series of observations may be begun in the light and in extension of the old ones.

In my opinion, and I only give it for what it is worth, the three burning questions at the present time — questions on which information is required in order that various forms of work may be undertaken to best advantage (besides eclipse-work) — are these:—

1. The true constitution of the atmosphere of the sun. By this I mean, are the various series of lines of the same element observed in sun-spots, e.g., limited to a certain stratum, each lower stratum being hotter, and therefore simpler in its spectrum, than the one overlying it? and do some of these strata, with their special spectra, exist high in the solar atmosphere, so that the Fraunhofer lines, represented in the spectrum of any one substance, are the result of an integration of the

various absorptions from the highest stratum to the bottom one? This view is sharply opposed to the other, which affirms that the absorption of the Fraunhofer lines is due to one unique layer at the base of the atmosphere.

I pointed out before the eclipse of 1882 that crucial observations could be made during any eclipse, including the time both before and after totality. I made the observations: they entirely supported the first view, but I do not expect solar inquirers to throw overboard their own views until these observations of mine are confirmed; and I think one of the most important pieces of work to be done during the next eclipse is to see whether these observations can be depended upon or not.

One observer, I think, should repeat the work over the same limited region of the spectrum, near F; another observer should be told off to make similar observations in another part of the spectrum. I have prepared a map of the lines near E, for this purpose, showing those brightened on the passage from the arc to the spark, and those visible alone at the temperature of the oxyhydrogen flame. Whereas some of the spark lines will be seen seven minutes before and after totality as short, bright lines, some of the others will be seen as thin, long lines just before and after totality. We want to know whether the lines seen at the temperature of the oxyhydrogen flame will be seen at all, and, if so, to what height they extend.

2. The second point to which I attach importance is one which can perhaps be left to a large extent to local observers, if the proper apparatus, which may cost very little, be taken out.

With this eclipse in view, I have for the last several months gone over all the recorded information, and have discussed the photographs taken at the various eclipses in connection with the spots observed, especially at those times.

The simple corona observed at a minimum with a considerable equatorial extension (12 diameters, according to Langley), the complex corona observed at maximum when the spots have been located at latitudes less than 20°, have driven me to the view, which I shall expand on another occasion, that there is a flattened ring round the sun's equator, probably extending far beyond the true atmosphere; that in this ring are collected the products of condensation; and that it is from the surfaces of this ring chiefly that the fall of spot-forming material takes place.

If we take any streamer in mid-latitude, we find, that, while the spots may occur on the equatorial side of it, none are seen on the poleward side. I regard the streamers, therefore, like

the metallic prominences, as a sequel to the spot; and there is evidence to suggest that a careful study will enable us to see by what process the reaction of the photosphere and underlying gases produced by the fall of spot-material tends to make the spot-material discharge itself in lower and lower latitudes, as the temperature of the sun's lower atmosphere gets enormously increased.

The observations of Professors Newcomb and Langley at the minimum of 1878, on the equatorial extension, are among the most remarkable. Professor Newcomb hid the moon and 12' of arc around it at the moment of totality by a disk of wood, carefully shielding his eyes before totality. Professor Langley observed at a very considerable elevation. It is therefore quite easy to understand why this ring has not been seen or photographed at maximum. At maximum no precautions have been taken to shield the eye; no observations have been made at a considerable elevation; while the fact that the ring, if it exists, consists of cool material, fully explains how it is that the photographic plates have disregarded it.

I would propose, therefore, that the repetition of Professor Newcomb's observations of 1878 be made an important part in the arrangements of the eclipse for this year. A slight alteration in the method will be necessary, as the ring will be near the vertex and the lowest point of the eclipsed sun.

3. Another point of the highest importance at the present moment has relation to the existence of carbon. Until Tacchini's observations of 1883, the only trace of carbon in the solar spectrum consisted of ultra-violet flutings. He observed other flutings in the green near the streamers in the eclipse referred to.

Duner's recent work puts it beyond all doubt that stars of class III. *b* have their visible absorption produced chiefly by carbon vapor.

On any theory of evolution, therefore, we must expect the sun's atmosphere to be composed to a large extent of carbon at some time or other; so that the highest interest attaches to this question in connection with the height in the atmosphere at which the evidence of carbon is observed. The existence of the ultra-violet flutings among the Fraunhofer lines tells nothing absolute about this height, although I inferred, at the time I made the announcement, that it existed at some height in the coronal atmosphere.

These three points, then, are those to which I attach special importance at the present time.

We next come to photographs of the corona. I believe, that, with our present knowledge, the chief thing we have to seek in such photographs

is not merely the streamers and their outlines, which we are sure to get anyway, but images on a larger scale; so that in a series of short exposures we may endeavor to get some records which will eventually help us in determining the directions of the lower currents. At present we do not know absolutely whether these flow to or from the poles. My own impression is that the panaches at the poles indicate an upper outflow.

In coming to the photo-spectroscopic observations, I am of opinion, that of the two attacks which I first suggested for the eclipse of 1875, and which have also been used in the last two eclipses of 1882 and 1883, one of them should be discarded, and the whole effort concentrated on the other.

We have learned very much from the use of the prismatic camera,—one of the instruments referred to; but the results obtained by it are not of sufficient accuracy to enable them to be fully utilized. On the other hand, though the slit spectroscope failed in 1875, it succeeded with a brighter corona and more rapid plates in 1882; and, with a proper reference spectrum, every iota of the facts recorded can be at once utilized for laboratory work and subsequent discussion.

On these grounds, then, I would suggest that slit spectroscopes alone be used for photographic registration. I think falling plates should be used, and that the work should begin ten minutes before totality, and continue till ten minutes after; provided the slit be tangential, or nearly so, to the limb.

I may state that arrangements have been made here to take such a series of photographs on the uneclipsed sun; and, with the improved apparatus, I am greatly in hopes that we may get something worth having. J. NORMAN LOCKYER.

DEEP-SEA SOUNDINGS IN THE ATLANTIC.

THE U. S. S. *Enterprise*, Commander Barker, during her recent passage from Montevideo to Barbadoes, and from thence to New York, made a series of deep-sea soundings through the Atlantic Oceans which add considerably to our knowledge of the depths of those seas. Seventy-two casts were taken between Montevideo and Barbadoes, the distance run being 5,031 miles.

After leaving Montevideo, the course of the *Enterprise* was laid to the northward, towards Nelson shoal, where a depth of 2,088 fathoms of water was found, instead of 19 fathoms, as appears on all the charts of that locality. Commander Barker says, "From this point I steamed slowly, running from 200 to 250 miles to the northward of the Challenger's line, taking casts at in-