

a course in meteorology and climatology, suitable for medical schools, is given, and reference is made to the books which will be found most useful in the work. The writer believes that the subject of climatology is of sufficient importance to stand by itself, as an independent course in the medical curriculum, and that every medical student should have a general knowledge of it. The special relations of climate in the different branches of medicine can be discussed by the instructors in hygiene, or therapeutics, or bacteriology, after the students have the general knowledge just referred to. Correspondence has shown that a large number of the deans of our medical schools favor the giving of some such instruction in climatology in the medical course, and there can be no doubt that all the most progressive schools of medicine will provide such instruction before long.

SUNSTROKE WEATHER OF AUGUST, 1896.

WE are reminded of the exceptionally hot weather which prevailed over the eastern two-thirds of the United States early last August, by a paper by Dr. W. F. R. Phillips, entitled 'Sunstroke Weather of August, 1896,' in the November *Monthly Weather Review*. The opportunity which this extraordinary heat wave offered, of studying the relations of meteorologic conditions and the occurrence of sunstroke, was made good use of by our Weather Bureau, and, as a result of a careful study, Dr. Phillips has been able to draw some interesting conclusions from the large body of hospital and official city statistics collected. The most important results are as follows: (a) the number of sunstrokes follows more closely the excess of temperature above the normal than it does that of any other meteorological condition; (b) the number of sunstrokes does not appear to sustain any definite relation to the relative humidity; (c) although the absolute humidity was

greatest during the maximum of sunstrokes, yet it does not appear that the variations influenced the number of cases; (d) the liability to sunstroke increases in proportion as the mean temperature of the day approaches the normal maximum temperature for that day. It is rather striking to find no decided connection between the humidity of the atmosphere and the occurrence of sunstroke. So far as can be ascertained, the whole number of deaths during August, 1896, directly attributable to sunstroke was 2,038.

DEFORESTATION AND RAINFALL.

Nature for January 28th contains a note on the much vexed question of the influence of forests on rainfall. According to a recent *Bulletin of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Trinidad*, the rainfall on that island is slowly but surely decreasing. The average rainfall for the decade 1862-71 was 66.715 inches; for 1872-81, 65.993 inches, and for 1882-91, 65.037 inches. The cause of this decrease is said to be the disappearance of the forests. It would be well, however, to wait a good many years more before coming to that conclusion. Records for only thirty years, even if they are absolutely comparable and reliable, are hardly sufficient to warrant holding such a belief at the present time.

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CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

THE EUROPEAN 'QUATERNARY' MAN.

OUR geologists rarely use the term 'quaternary.' By European writers it is understood to mean the period which followed the Tertiary and includes the present time. Archæologically it is divided into two epochs, the older including the pre-glacial, the glacial and the post-glacial ages, all characterized by a chipped-stone industry; the later beginning with the neolithic culture and continuing till now.

Professor Gabriel de Mortillet, in the *Revue Mensuelle* of the Paris School of Anthropology (January 15), succinctly explains these divisions and sets forth, with his usual clearness, the typical products and the fauna which characterize them. He has found no reason materially to modify the opinions he advanced in his earlier works, and still maintains that a careful study of the geological data bearing on the question of the antiquity of man does not allow us to assign it a more recent date than 230,000 years ago.

THE AFRICAN DWARFS.

In the *Mittheilungen* of the Vienna Anthropological Society, for December, Professor Paulitschke presents his views on the dwarfs of Africa. He referred to the present localities occupied by them, which are scattered from the Atlas chain in Morocco to the Kalehari desert in South Africa. For a variety of reasons, he believes these dwarfs to be the remnants of a distinct race, not degenerates, but a 'sport' (*Spielart*) of *Homo Sapiens*, which at some distant epoch occupied large areas of the continent and extended to Madagascar.

Referring to the Dume, the small people found by Dr. Donaldson Smith north of Lake Stephanie, he regretted that so little information was secured about them. But Dr. Smith did obtain a vocabulary of their language and photographs of two of the males, which are printed in his recent volume of explorations.

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SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

A BILL FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF SCIENCE, LITERATURE AND ART.

THE new tariff bill now before Congress imposes a tax of 45 per cent. *ad valorem* on scientific apparatus 'imported especially for colleges and other institutions;' it imposes a tax of 25 per cent. on books imported for public libraries,

on books 'printed in languages other than English,' on books 'printed more than twenty years,' and on books 'devoted to original scientific research,' and it imposes a tax of 25 per cent. on works of art. This simple statement is the most severe indictment that can be brought against these provisions of the bill. Argument in such a case seems almost useless.

Import duties are imposed in order to raise revenue and, according to one of our political parties, to protect home industries from foreign competition. Indirect taxes for purposes of revenue are by common consent imposed on those articles whose consumption is not necessary nor useful. Thus the British government collects an import duty only on stimulants, narcotics and silverware. The United States government collects internal revenue only on alcoholic drinks, tobacco, opium, oleomargarine and playing cards. Opposed to such commodities are scientific instruments and books, which contribute the most to the advance of civilization. A single scientific instrument or the book describing it may increase the wealth of the country by millions of dollars. It is inconceivable that any government should deliberately impose a special tax on such an instrument or book for purposes of revenue.

We must suppose that if anyone approve these new duties it is on the ground of protection to home industries—that, for example, they will benefit our instrument makers. But it seems evident that makers of apparatus will be injured by such taxes. If a college must pay 45 per cent. to the government for the apparatus that it imports it will have less to spend on domestic as well as on foreign instruments. If the best models cannot be imported from abroad, and if American men of science are prevented from improving instruments and inventing new ones, the makers of apparatus in the United States will suffer severely.

But a more important consideration remains. Those who believe in the protection by government of home industries undoubtedly must regard as most important the protection of the industry that contributes the most to the welfare and development of the nation. Agriculture, manufactures and commerce depend on sci-