

of right ascension, with assignment to group and reference to the numbers of the plates.

The tabular form of statement of results, which has become rather characteristic of the Harvard Annals, is followed in this volume. It is sometimes doubtful whether the compactness thus gained compensates for the difficulty of understanding the tables without minute study of them—a difficulty especially felt by foreigners. The notes on individual stars would be more convenient if the name of the star had been used, besides the reference number.

Although the quantitative accuracy of the spectrograph cannot be expected of the objective-prism, yet it seems adequate for the purposes of the volume under review. The objective-prism alone could collect such treasures of information as are included in the vast number of photographs stored in the Harvard Observatory and drawn upon in successive annals.

THE *Atlas der Himmelskunde*, of which the first of its thirty parts is at hand, is chiefly devoted to the reproduction of recent astronomical photographs. The author, A. von Schweiger-Lerchenfeld, has had the assistance of numerous astronomers and instrument makers in preparing this work, which promises to fully represent—especially by its five hundred excellent engravings and half-tones—the instruments and results of modern astro-photographic research. (Wien und Leipzig, A. Hartleben's Verlag.)

E. B. F.

CURRENT NOTES ON METEOROLOGY.

RECENT ARTICLES ON KITE-FLYING.

THE rapidly increasing interest that is being taken in kite-flying is shown by the fact that the May number of the *Century Magazine* contains three articles on the subject. The first, by J. B. Millet, the only one which deals more particularly with the meteorologic aspect of the matter, is en-

titled *Scientific Kite-Flying* and presents the general facts regarding the different forms of kites and the methods of work and the results obtained at Blue Hill Observatory. The second article, *Experiments with Kites*, is by Lieut. Wise, of the U. S. Army, and describes the experiments made by him at Governor's Island, New York Harbor, with an account of the ascent of January 22, 1897, on which day Lieut. Wise was lifted 42 feet from the ground by means of four kites. The last article, by W. A. Eddy, on *Photographing from Kites*, concerns the experiments made with a camera carried up by kites and also gives an account of the first telephoning and telegraphing through a line held by kites. All the articles are illustrated and will undoubtedly attract considerable attention. Although kites can be used for many purposes, the interest that meteorologists have in kite-flying is limited chiefly to the possibility of elevating self-recording instruments to considerable heights above sea level by this means. It is this exploration of the free air by means of meteorographs sent up on kite lines which has been so actively and so successfully carried on at Blue Hill Observatory, as already stated in these Notes.

DEFORESTATION AND CLIMATE.

CLIMATIC descriptions contain frequent allusions to the supposed influence of deforestation on climate, although we have not as yet enough reliable meteorological data to warrant our holding any definite opinion as to this influence one way or the other. In a lecture on the diamond mines of Kimberley, delivered at the Imperial Institute, London, on November 16th last, and reported in a recent number of *Nature* (April 1), Dr. Wm. Crookes, F. R. S., referred to the deforestation which has been going on around Kimberley and to the change in climate which is believed to have resulted from this deforestation. It is reck-

oned that over a million trees have been cut down to supply timber for the diamond mines, and the whole country within a radius of 100 miles has been denuded of wood, with the most injurious effects on the climate, as is generally believed there. The absence of trees to break the force of the wind and temper the heat of the sun, combined with the extreme dryness of the air, is thought to account for the dust storms so frequent in that region in summer.

ACCLIMATIZATION OF THE ENGLISH IN CEYLON.

In connection with the acclimatization of Europeans in the tropics, to which reference was recently made in these Notes, a statement made by a recent writer on Ceylon, who was for many years Judge of the Ceylon Supreme Court, may be of interest. The quotation, which is from an article in the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* for April, is as follows: "When all is said, in a tropical climate, even of the best, we live, as it were, on sufferance, and the climate tells on the next generation. For every one of us who has his livelihood in Ceylon there comes the inevitable day when he must part from his children and send them home. This stern necessity has been styled a price which we must pay our Eastern possessions; and a heavy price it is." The pathetic strain of such a statement serves to emphasize anew the lesson that complete acclimatization of northern Europeans in the tropics is impossible.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

- F. H. BIGELOW: *Storms, Storm Tracks and Weather Forecasting*. Bulletin No. 20. United States Department of Agriculture, Weather Bureau, 8 vo., Washington, 1896. Pp. 87. Charts 20.
- I. H. CLINE: *Influence of Climatic Conditions and Weather Changes on the Functions of the Skin*. Reprinted from Proc. Texas State Medical Association, 1896. Pp. 8. Chart

showing the pathological distribution of climate in the United States.

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SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

THE University of Toronto has conferred the degree of LL.D. on Sir John Evans, President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science; on Dr. Wolcott Gibbs, President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and on three of the most distinguished English men of science, who are expected to attend the Toronto meeting of the British Association: Lord Lister, Lord Kelvin and Lord Rayleigh.

THE third annual meeting of the Botanical Society of America will be held in Toronto on Tuesday and Wednesday, August 17th and 18th, 1897, under the presidency of Dr. John M. Coulter. The Council will meet at 1 p. m. on Tuesday, and the first session of the Society will begin at 3 p. m. The address of the retiring President, Dr. Charles E. Bessey, will be given on Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock. The British Association for the Advancement of Science will meet in Toronto, August 18th to 25th. The opening address is to be given on Wednesday evening, August 18th. A fairly large contingent of British botanists and some Continental botanists of note are expected. This meeting will, therefore, probably give unusual opportunities for renewing or forming acquaintances. All foreign botanists present will be invited to sit as associate members of the Society and to read papers. This invitation will be addressed personally to all whose intention to come to Toronto is known, and will also be made known through the scientific papers.

MISS CATHERINE W. BRUCE, of New York City, has again shown her great interest in astronomy by sending Professor J. K. Rees, Director of the Columbia University Observatory, a check for fifteen hundred dollars (\$1,500). The money is to be used in publishing the observations and reductions for 'Variation of Latitude and the Constant of Aberration,' made by Professors Rees and Jacoby and Dr. Davis. To this fund for publication there had been