

PHYSICAL NOTES.

THE 'DARK LIGHT' OF M. LE BON.

DURING the past two years M. Gustav Le Bon has brought out a remarkable fact regarding the passage of light through metals and other so-called opaque substances. This fact, so far as it can be estimated from a study of Le Bon's and others' published results, without resort to confirmatory experimentation, is either that the extreme red or infra-red components of sunlight and of gas light pass through thick metal plates sufficiently to affect sensitive plates after prolonged exposure; or that the medium wave-length components of sunlight and of gas light excite hyperphosphorescence in such metals as copper and lead just as they are known to do in case of uranium as shown by Becquerel. It seems that Le Bon in his experiments has eliminated the effects of direct pressure upon the sensitive film, the effects of temperature and such effects as might be due to chemical action between the film and the metal screens.

In the exposition of his results Le Bon is unsatisfyingly fragmentary and vexatiously notional, and it is amusing, at best, to read his claim of a new connecting region between light and electricity—*la lumière noire*. "Elle ne se propageait peut-être plus comme la lumière et peut-être propageait-elle comme l'électricité." So far as known, 'electricity,' when it is propagated at all, is propagated in a manner identically the same as light, and a fancied difference is of no use in setting forth results. Facts are plain, new facts utterly so, and a discoverer who would have it appear otherwise is either not a discoverer or does not know himself to be one.

W. S. F.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

THE Weights and Measures (Metric System) Bill passed through the Standing Committee on

Trade of the British House of Commons on July 5th, and was ordered to be reported without amendments.

A BRONZE monument of Père Marquette, the priest and explorer, was unveiled in Marquette, Mich., on July 15th.

A MONUMENT in honor of Daguerre, erected by public subscription, was unveiled at Bry-sur-Marne on June 27th.

THE Paris Academy has elected Professor Virchow as a foreign associate in the room of the late M. Tchebitchef. The other nominees were Lord Rayleigh, as second choice, and, as third choice, Professors Schiaparelli, Stokes and Suess.

THE Right Honorable Leonard H. Courtney, M. P., has been elected President of the Royal Statistical Society.

THE Royal Society of Edinburgh has awarded the Gunning Victoria Jubilee Prize to Mr. John Aitken, the Keith Prize to Dr. Kargill G. Knott, the MacDougall-Brisbane Prize to Professor J. G. M'Kendrick and the Neill prize to Mr. Robert Irvine.

It is stated in the *Washington Star* that M. Zolla has been sent to America by the French government to study methods of agriculture.

THE subject of the essays for the Howard Medal and Prize of the Royal Statistical Society for 1898 is 'The treatment of habitual offenders, with special reference to their increase or decrease in various countries.'

A MEETING was held on July 2d, at University College, London, to inaugurate the memorial to the late Sir John Pender, to which we have already referred. Remarks were made by the chairman, the Marquis of Tweeddale, by Mr. Haldane and by Lord Kelvin. A check for £5,000 was presented by the chairman to the authorities of University College to endow the electrical laboratory, and the bust of Sir John Pender was exhibited. Lord Kelvin spoke of what Sir John Pender had accomplished. When the first experiment was made to lay a cable across the Atlantic, Sir John Pender was one of the directors of the company. When the temporary success was followed so soon by