and North Pacific, though not with the Atlantic. Admiral Sir William Wharton, Hydrographer to the Admiralty, said that an Antarctic expedition must be under naval discipline. He hoped such an expedition would not be far off, and he felt sure there would be rush of officers and men to join it. Sir John Evans, in summing up, said the discussion had maintained a high level. All were agreed as to the immense advantages of an expedition, and he was sure it would find a warm advocate in the Hydrographer.

ELLIS'S NORTH AMERICAN FUNGI.

Twenty years ago Mr. J. B. Ellis, of Newfield, N. J., began the distribution of a most important series of volumes containing authentic specimens of the fungi of North America. Many botanists have availed themselves of the opportunity here afforded of securing excellent specimens of all groups of the fungi. For eight years Mr. Ellis worked alone, at the end of which he had issued fifteen volumes ('centuries'), each containing one hundred specimens. He was then joined by Mr. B. M. Everhart, and from this time the series bore the names of both authors. The announcement is now made that this work has been brought to a close.

The importance of being able to fix accurately the date of publication of each of the centuries is so great that the following statement by Mr. Ellis is given for the benefit of the readers of Science: Century I., September 6, 1878; II., April 15, 1879; III., February 11, 1880; IV., April 20, 1880; V., January 28, 1881; VI. and VII., May 23, 1881; VIII. and IX., April 13, 1882; X. and XI., April 26, 1883; XII. and XIII., April 15, 1884; XIV. and XV., March 25, 1885; XVI. and XVII., March 16, 1886; XVIII. and XIX., March 13, 1887; XX. and XXI., March 23, 1888; XXII. and XXIII., March 6, 1889; XXIV. and XXV., February 19, 1890; XXVI. and XXVII., February 21, 1891; XXVIII., April 30, 1892; XXIX., March 2, 1893; XXX., October 21, 1893; XXXI., April 18, 1894; XXXII., November 26, 1894; XXXIII., March 25, 1895; XXXIV., February 3, 1896; XXXV., December 16, 1896; XXXVI., February 1, 1898.

In regard to the foregoing Mr. Ellis says: "The dates on this sheet are the dates on which the centuries were sent to Charles E. Bessey. Usually when a century (or oftener two centuries) was ready only three or four were sent each day, so that some subscribers received their copies at a later date than others—from one to three weeks in some cases."

As to the number of copies of each century issued Mr. Ellis says: "I am not sure just how many copies of Century I. were issued, but I think there were thirty-five. The number was afterwards increased to forty, and then to fifty, and from Century XVII., to sixty." There were thus about two hundred thousand specimens in this great work. What wonder that the author upon whom the greater part of the labor has fallen should wish rest.

This notice would be incomplete without a reference to the part taken by Mrs. Ellis in the preparation of the volumes. The writer recalls a pleasant letter from Mr. Ellis shortly after the distribution began, in which he spoke of the fact that Mrs. Ellis now bound the books, and that they were better and neater than those of Century I., which came from a professional binder. From that time her hands made all the books (about two thousand), folded most of the papers for the specimens, and pasted the packets into the books.

While the distribution known as the 'North American Fungi' now comes to an end, the authors will continue for a time their second edition under the name of 'Fungi Columbiani.' This was begun in

1893, by the issuance on October 3d of centuries I. and II. Of this distribution sixty copies have been made of each century, and the centuries have now reached XII. This brings the total number of specimens handled in the two series up to about two hundred and seventy thousand.

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CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

ALLEN ON HAWAIIAN SKULLS.

A CRANIOLOGICAL contribution of the first order of merit has just appeared in the Transactions of the Wagner Free Institute of Philadelphia, January, 1898. It is entitled 'A Study of Hawaiian Skulls, by Harrison Allen, M. D.' In this last labor of his busy and useful life Dr. Allen presented a model of patience, accuracy and clearness of statement which it would be difficult to parallel elsewhere. The characteristics of the skulls were exhibited comparatively, by a novel plan, that which he called the 'terrace method,' and which is a great improvement over the older graphic representatians.

With his customary, far-reaching insight into the problems of racial anatomy, Dr. Allen took occasion, in the description of these Polynesian specimens, selected from ancient cemeteries, drawn, therefore, from a single stock of undoubted purity, to point out the changes brought about in skull form by social contrasts, by mental superiority and by differences of nutrition. Comparing them with later crania from the stock, he discovered the singular alterations produced in the skull by exanthematous diseases; and many suggestions stimulating to future students are scattered through his pages.

PRIMITIVE COSMOGONIES.

IN the *Correspondenzblatt* of the German Anthropological Society, December, 1897, is a careful study by the Baron von Andrian on the cosmological and cosmogonical notions of primitive peoples. A wide collection of such myths and a critical analysis of their contents show in far separated centers many strange similarities. These, he argues, must be considered 'autochthonous,' *i. e.*, of independent origin, under the laws of thought and imagination. Later in time, when tribes commingled and the bards and priests sought to impart fixed forms to myths, borrowing arose over areas of varying size. It is the chief duty of the student of to-day to separate the 'common, psychological basic strata' from those which were added later by intercommunication. Quite late elements of mythology, such as the notion of the river Styx, or the tale of Orpheus and Euridice in Greek lore, belong to the primitive thought of the Hellenic stock and were not of alien origin. The article is replete with both erudition and suggestiveness.

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NOTES ON INORGANIC CHEMISTRY.

IT has long been known that that the composition of the 'green iodid' of mercury is far from constant, and is not that which would be theoretically required for mercurous iodid, HgI. Varet has considered that the mercurous iodid exists in two modifications, a green and a yellow, which can be changed the one into the other. The matter has been studied by Maurice François, who gives his results in the *Journ. pharm. chim.* The mercurous iodid is of a pure yellow color, and is readily obtained in this condition by the action of potassium iodid upon an excess of mercurous nitrate in the presence of dilute nitric acid. The green color of the salt as usually obtained is due to the presence of free mercury, which may run up to a very large proportion. It might not be without interest to