

ANTARCTIC METEOROLOGY.

THE recent revival of interest in Antarctic exploration is a welcome sign to meteorologists, for Antarctic meteorology is in a sad state of incoherence and uncertainty. Our knowledge of the meteorological conditions of the Arctic is now in a fairly satisfactory state as compared with what we know of the sister zone around the South Pole. The October number of the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* is a 'Special Antarctic Number.' It contains reprints of Sir John Murray's address before the Royal Society, on 'The Scientific Advantages of an Antarctic Expedition,' with the remarks of Buchan, Neumayer and others made in connection with that address. Further, 'A History of Antarctic Discovery,' by the acting editor, and a most valuable Antarctic Bibliography, containing titles of publications bearing dates from 1761 to 1898, compiled by Bartholomew. A chart of the South Polar Region, after Sir John Murray's scheme for Antarctic exploration, presents, in small marginal charts, the mean temperature and the isobars and winds of the region in February. On the latter chart a considerable number of wind arrows (in red) are added to the observed wind directions (in black), in order to emphasize the hypothetical wind circulation around the South Pole. This hypothetical circulation is strongly anticyclonic in character. It remains to be seen, as the result of observation, how accurate this prediction is.

THE ASCENT OF ACONCAGUA.

THE physiological effects of the diminished pressure at high altitudes, noted during the ascent of Aconcagua in 1896, are vividly described by Fitzgerald in *McClure's Magazine* for October. During the night spent at 16,000 feet one of the porters suffered terribly from nausea and faintness. At 18,700 feet Fitzgerald himself was completely used

up. "It was very difficult to sleep more than a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes at a time without being awakened by a fit of choking." At 21,000 feet one of the porters was very ill, his face turning a greenish, livid hue. All the members of the party suffered from severe headache and mental depression, the usual symptoms of *soroche*. At 22,000 feet Fitzgerald was completely disabled, and was obliged to lie on his back, gasping for breath. He was so weak that he could not hold himself for more than a few paces at a time, and continually fell forward, cutting himself on the stones that covered the mountain side. The summit was reached by Zurbriggen, the Swiss guide, Fitzgerald himself being unable to continue the ascent owing to mountain sickness.

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CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

INDIAN GEOGRAPHIC NAMES.

SCATTERED over the map of the United States are many thousand local names derived from the various aboriginal dialects which were once spoken in the vicinities. In sound they are often harmonious and in meaning picturesque. It is a commendable curiosity which searches for this meaning, and also it is of ethnologic value, for sometimes these names are the chief or only evidence that the area where they occur was inhabited by some particular tribe or stock. A complete gazetteer of such would be most desirable, but the completion of such a task is a long way off.

One of the most diligent and capable students in the Algonquian geographic nomenclature is Mr. William Wallace Tooker. His latest publication on the subject is in the January number of the *Publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society* (Vol. V., No. 4). Its title is 'Indian Geographic Names, and why we should study them;

illustrated by some Rhode Island examples.' Its contents are well worth perusal and reflection.

THE MAYAN HIEROGLYPHICS.

IN the *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, August, 1898, Dr. Ed. Seler gives what is intended to be a withering review of the 'Primer of Mayan Hieroglyphics,' written by me and published in 1895. It could hardly be expected that Dr. Seler should be pleasantly impressed on reading the book, for I felt constrained in various passages (pp. 83, 87, 89, 91, 92, 99, 112, 114, etc.) to point out the patent errors into which he had fallen, and how often he had adopted the Abbé Brasseur's views, always without acknowledgment of his French authority. He makes himself especially merry over what I explain (p. 24) as the 'cosmic sign,' representing the world as a whole in the pictography of the Mayas. Had he been really acquainted with the symbolism of native American art, as shown, for instance, by Professor Putnam and Dr. Willoughby in their model paper on the subject (*Proc. Am. Assoc. Adv. Science*, 1896), or as appreciated in the writings of such students as Mr. Cushing, Dr. Matthews and Miss Fletcher, he would probably have been less humorous, certainly less dogmatic and possibly more just.

COINCIDENCES.

UNDER this title Professor Max Müller has an article in the *Fortnightly Review* which he closes in these words: "I shall remain true to my conviction that all coincidences, whether in mythology, religion, art or literature, have a reason, if only we can find it."

It is evident from the examples in the article that the Professor means an objective reason, one from external suggestion, and that coincidences to him signify appropriations.

Of course, in a certain percentage of cases this is so, and nobody would deny it; but

in another and large percentage it is not so. The coincidences are due to independent mental evolution along the same lines, under the impulse of the same desires. This is true in all four of the fields named by the essayist, as well as others; and it is perhaps the most significant discovery in modern ethnology. That Professor Max Müller has refused to accept it is the reason why his vast labors on Comparative Religion have exerted such incommensurate influence on anthropologic science.

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SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

A MONUMENT to Pasteur was unveiled, if the arrangements were carried out, at Lille, on November 5th, an oration in memory of Pasteur being made by M. Duclaux.

THE University of Vienna will place in the hall of the University a bust of Dr. Müller, whose life was sacrificed in attending the laboratory servant Barisch, infected with the plague in Professor Nothnagel's laboratory.

THE Royal University of Ireland has conferred its honorary D.Sc. on Mr. Thomas Preston, the physicist.

DR. T. H. BEAN has recently spent a month in making collections of fishes along the southern shore of Long Island, in the interest of the U. S. Fish Commission.

A VACANCY in the position of Marine Meteorologist, Mare Island Navy Yard, California, will be filled by a civil service examination on December 6th.

WE record with much regret the death of Dr. James I. Peck, assistant professor of biology in Williams College and Assistant Director of the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Holl. We hope to give in a subsequent issue some account of Dr. Peck's life and work. His untimely death is a serious loss to zoology and will be deplored by many friends.

THE death is announced of Dr. David A. Wells, the eminent writer on economics. It is, perhaps, not well known that he began his