

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

SECRETARY LONG, of the Navy Department, has appointed a Board of Visitors to examine and report upon the U. S. Naval Observatory, to consist of Senator Wm. E. Chandler; Representative Alston G. Dayton; Professor Geo. C. Comstock, Director of the Observatory of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.; Professor Geo. E. Hale, Director of the Yerkes Observatory, Williams Bay, Wis.; and Professor Edward C. Pickering, Director of the Harvard College Observatory, Cambridge, Mass. This Board of Visitors will meet at the Naval Observatory on the 30th of the month.

WE learn from Dr. Tiessen, of Berlin, that the Norwegian Storting has passed an act regulating the administration of the Nobel foundation. The prizes, which it will be remembered are in physics, chemistry, medicine, literature and for the promotion of peace, will each be of the value of 15,000 crowns (about \$11,000) annually. The prizes are to be conferred on the anniversary of Nobel's death, on the 18th of December, and for the first time in 1901. The prizes in physics and chemistry are to be awarded by the Swedish Academy of Sciences and the prize in medicine or physiology by the Medico-Surgical Institute of Stockholm. Any one making application for one of the prizes is thereby excluded. A prize may be divided between two persons who have carried out a joint work. It appears that part of the income is to be used for the establishment of Nobel Institutes, regarding the scope of which we are not informed.

SEVERAL years ago Dr. Robert Lamborn bequeathed to the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences his entire estate, valued at over \$600,000. The will was contested and a compromise has now been effected by which half of the property is received by the Academy.

THE American Geographical Society, New York, has bought a plot of land 50 x 102 feet on the north side of West 82d St., near Central Park, and facing the open square on which stands the American Museum of Natural History. In addition to the legacy of General Cullum, subscriptions amounting to \$30,400 have been received, and the Council proposes to

begin the construction of a fire-proof building, completing it at present only so far as may be necessary to provide for a library and offices.

ON the occasion of the official inspection of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, on June 3d, the new buildings were opened to visitors. The new Observatory building, which has been in progress since 1891, was completed last March by the addition of the east and west wings, and a new magnetic pavilion, in an enclosure in Greenwich Park, about 360 yards from the Observatory, was completed last September. Among the distinguished visitors present were M. Cornu and Professor Newcomb.

THE University of Oxford, on June 8th, entertained the delegates to the centenary of the Royal Institution and conferred the honorary D.C.L. upon the following: Henri Becquerel, Membre de l'Institut, professor of physics at the École Polytechnique, Paris; Guglielmo Körner, professor of chemistry in the Scuola Superiore d'Agricoltura, Milan; Matthias Eugen Oscar Liebreich, Director of the Pharmacological Laboratory, and professor of pharmacology in the University of Berlin; Henri Moissan, professor of toxicology in the École Supérieure de Pharmacie, Paris, and Simon Newcomb, U. S. Navy and Johns Hopkins University. At the luncheon, given in the hall of Christ Church, Professor Newcomb responded to the toast in honor of the guests.

THE following have been elected foreign members of the Royal Society: Dr. Ludwig Boltzmann, professor of theoretical physics in the University of Vienna; Dr. Neumayer, of the Hamburg Observatory; Dr. Anton Dohrn, Director of the Zoological Station, Naples; Professor Emil Fischer, professor of chemistry at the University of Berlin, and Dr. Melchior Treub, Director of the Buitenzorg Botanical Gardens.

ERNST A. BESSEY, A.M., of the University of Nebraska, has been appointed to the position of Assistant Vegetable Pathologist in the Division of Vegetable Physiology and Pathology in the United States Department of Agriculture, the appointment dating from June 1st.

THE subjects of Professor Emile Picard's lectures to be delivered at Clark University, in

connection with the Decennial Celebration, July 5th to 8th, are as follows: (1) Sur le développement des mathématiques, et en particulier de l'idée de fonction, depuis un siècle. (2) Quelques vues générales sur la théorie des équations différentielles. (3) Sur la théorie générale des fonctions analytiques et sur quelques fonctions spéciales.

THE statue of Benjamin Franklin, presented to the city of Philadelphia by Mr. Justus C. Strawbridge, was unveiled on June 14th with ceremonies under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania, the American Philosophical Society, the Franklin Institute, the Library Company of Philadelphia, and the Pennsylvania Hospital. The oration was delivered by U. S. District Attorney James M. Beck.

THE death is announced of Dr. A. Charpentier, professor in the faculty of medicine in the University of Paris, and the author of contributions on vision numbering over 100. His publications concern especially the time phenomena of vision, intensity, contrast, etc.

DR. LAWSON TAIT, a surgeon of Birmingham, England, who was eminent for his operations in abdominal surgery, died in London on June 13th, aged fifty-five years.

THE next meeting of the International Committee on Meteorology has been called for August 25th of the present year at St. Petersburg.

THE annual meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, London, was held on June 5th, when the medals were awarded in accordance with the announcement that we have already made. A banquet was held in the evening. Among the speakers were Count du Pontavice de Heusey, who had received one of the medals in the afternoon, and the American Ambassador, Mr. Choate.

THE 21st Congress of French Geographical Societies will be held at the building of the Paris Society of Geography, from the 23d to the 29th of July, 1900.

DR. CYRUS ADLER informs us that Comte Angelo De Gubernatis, President of the 12th International Congress of Orientalists, to meet at Rome, October 12, 1899, states that a special

section of this Congress will be devoted to researches concerning the origin of the American Indians, and that papers from students of American archaeology, ethnography, mythology and folklore will be welcome.

A REUTER telegram from Stockholm, dated June 6th, says that the Anthropological and Geographical Society of Stockholm has received the following telegram from Herr Vathne, a shipowner at Mandal: "Captain Hueland, of the steamship *Vaagen*, who arrived there on Monday morning, reports that when at Kola Fjord, Iceland, in 65° 34' north lat., 21° 28' west long., on May 14th, he found a drifting buoy marked 'No. 7.' Inside the buoy was a capsule, marked 'Andrée's Polar Expedition,' containing a slip of paper, on which was written the following: 'Drifting buoy, No. 7. This buoy was thrown out from Andrée's balloon on July 11, 1897, 10:55 p. m., Greenwich mean time, 82° north lat., 25° east long. We are at an altitude of 600 metres; all well. Andrée, Strindberg, Fraenckel.'" Herr Andrée made his ascent from Danes Island on July 11, 1897, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, so that when the buoy was thrown out the explorer had only travelled seven hours and 55 minutes.

THE *Stella Polare*, with the Duke of Abruzzi, nephew of the King of Italy, and his polar expedition on board, sailed from Christiania on June 12th.

AMONG those who will embark on the steamship *Hope* for the Arctic regions are Professor Wm. Libbey, of Princeton University, and Dr. Robert Stein, of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Dr. Stein will spend the winter in Ellesmereland, and will be accompanied by Dr. Leopold Kann, who will pay special attention to the study of terrestrial magnetism.

THE New Mexico Biological Station will be conducted this summer at Las Vegas, N. M., beginning work about June 25th. Mr. T. D. A. Cockerell will be in charge, and will be assisted by Miss W. Porter. It is also expected that two parties will undertake field-investigations in New Mexico, Professor C. L. Herrick having charge of a geological party, and Professor E. L. Hewitt of an anthropological one. Professor E. O. Wootton will also be

in the field, investigating the flora of the White Mountain region of New Mexico, which has already yielded him so many interesting novelties. Professor C. H. T. Townsend and Mr. C. M. Barber are collecting in the region of the Sierra Madre Mountains, in northern Mexico.

PROFESSOR W. A. SETCHELL, of the University of California, and other botanists of the University, are about to leave on an expedition to study the flora of the Aleutian Islands.

“Two French explorers have returned to Paris, Dr. Macclaud, who had been in French Guinea, and M. Peroy, who has been for three years in Gen-Thé and Caï-Binh.

MR. CHARLES H. SENFF has given \$5,000 to the zoological department of Columbia University for purposes of exploration and publication. Mr. Harrington and Mr. Sumner expect, with the assistance of this fund, to make a second expedition to the Nile in search of *Polypterus*, if the unsettled political conditions make this possible. The fund will also be used for the publication of a memoir on the anatomy of *Polypterus*, to be undertaken conjointly by Messrs. Dean, Harrington, McGregor, Strong, Herrick and Professor Wheeler, of the University of Chicago. Professor E. B. Wilson, after ascertaining last spring that the trip to Khartoum was impracticable, established a temporary laboratory at Mansourah, upon the lower Nile, the point visited by Messrs. Harrington and Hunt last summer. The fishermen assured him that *Polypterus* would return in quantity, and raised his hopes greatly; but, when after a long period, the fish began to appear it was ascertained that all the females had spawned, so that further efforts to obtain the eggs would be futile during the remainder of the season. Professor Wilson is now occupying the Columbia University table at Naples and is engaged in the revision for the third edition of his volume, ‘The Cell,’ which is to be translated into Italian and French.

THE Peabody Museum, of Harvard University, has received from the heirs of the late Moses D. Kimball a valuable collection of archæological and ethnological specimens.

AT a meeting of the British Astronomical Association on May 31st Mr. E. Walter Maun-

der announced that the report of the eclipse expeditions of last year were now far advanced and were expected to be issued before the next meeting. With regard to the arrangements of the expeditions for next year, they had not yet entered into a contract with any steamship company, but they were carrying on negotiations in that direction. They expected to arrange without difficulty for a steamship to take a party out from England, leaving approximately a fortnight before the eclipse, and reaching England again about a week after it. It would probably call at some port in Portugal—either Oporto or Lisbon—then, perhaps, at Cadiz and Alicante, finally going to Algiers, where the steamer could be used as a hotel by those members of the party who went the full journey. They had received 109 names so far for the European and Algerian expedition, and additions to that number were expected.

THE University of the State of New York has just issued a museum bulletin by the State Entomologist, Dr. Felt, on *Shade Tree Pests*. Those likely to prove most destructive this season are described and depicted in various stages, and directions for the most effective means of exterminating them are given. This bulletin, No. 27, will be sent to any address for five cents. State Paleontologist Dr. John M. Clarke has prepared a *Guide to excursions in the fossiliferous rocks of New York* (University Hand-book 15), which will be of special interest to teachers and students wishing to acquaint themselves more intimately with the classic rocks of this State. Itineraries of 32 trips are given, covering nearly the entire series of paleozoic rocks, with careful details as to typical localities, how to get to them without loss of time and comfort, what strata and fossils to look for and where to find them. It is hoped to send this hand-book to all the schools in the University before the end of the school year.

AMONG important American scientific books announced for early publication are the ‘Races of Europe,’ by Professor W. Z. Ripley (Appletons) based on the series of articles published in the *Popular Science Monthly*; and ‘Statistical Methods with Special Reference to Biological Variation,’ by Dr. C. B. Davenport (Wiley), de-

scribing the statistical methods elaborated by Galton and Pearson and their application in the natural sciences.

ACCORDING to the Boston *Transcript* the University of Chicago has set aside \$5,000 to defray the expenses of explorations which are about to be conducted under its auspices in Yucatan. A collection of hitherto-unknown ruins has been discovered lately some distance southeast of the city of Merida, on the north coast, and a representative of the institution paid a visit to the spot this winter. He found the remains of what seemed to be an enormous tribal dwelling, with buildings scattered around it over an area of nearly a mile. The main edifice was built massively of stone, and the façades were literally covered with the most intricate and beautiful carving. The top is covered with earth and vegetation, and from a distance looks like a square wooded hill, so there is fairly good reason for supposing that the interior rooms are in a state of good preservation, at least that they have not been opened and ransacked by prowling Indians. There are many tombs also that have every appearance of being intact, and, if so, they may contain much matter to shed light on one of the most mysterious pages of the history of humanity. The exploring expedition will start some time within the next month, and New Orleans will be the point of departure.

A *conversazione* in connection with the meeting of the Institution of Civil Engineers, London, was given on August 9th, the guests being received by the President, Sir W. H. Preece. The London *Times* states that Sir W. Martin Conway showed a series of photographs taken during his recent expedition to the Andes, and Mr. Mansergh exhibited views in the Elan valley, illustrating the progress of the works, of which he is the engineer, for giving Birmingham a new supply of water from Wales. For those who desired still lighter amusement a number of electrophones were fitted up in connection with the theatres. Of engineering models and scientific apparatus there was a very interesting display. Among the former, which were particularly numerous, were representations of the *Powerful*, *Latona*

and *Fearless*, lent by Messrs. Vickers, Sons & Maxim; of the *Turbinia* and a torpedo-boat destroyer with a guaranteed speed of 35 knots, from the Hon. Charles A. Parsons; of the steel ice-breaking steamer *Ermak*, from Messrs. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co.; of the proposed new bridge at Kew, from Sir John Wolfe Barry; of the new high-level bridge at Newcastle, from Mr. Charles Harrison; of the new P. and O. steamer *Isis*, from Sir Thomas Sutherland; and of dredgers of various descriptions, from Messrs. J. C. Coode and William Matthews. The Royal Ordinance Factories had an interesting exhibit showing the component parts of a 303 Lee-Enfield magazine rifle and the stages in the manufacture of a solid-drawn 6-inch cartridge case. The Cambridge Scientific Instrument Company showed some specimens of Professor Callendar's beautiful electrical recording instruments. One was arranged as a pyrometer recording the variations in the radiation from an ordinary incandescent lamp, and it was very curious to see the constant alterations in the readings with minute fluctuations in the current when the eye could perceive no change whatever in the lamp. The same firm also showed the seismograph, designed by Professor Ewing, and Mr. W. Duddell's oscillograph for tracing alternate-current wave forms. Another model in action that attracted considerable notice was Professor Dunkerley's machine to illustrate the whirling and vibration of shafts in rapid rotation. Among the railway exhibits may be mentioned examples of Mr. James Holden's liquid fuel burner for locomotives, as successfully used on the Great Eastern Railway; an interesting series of rail sections from Mr. W. Dean, illustrating the development of the permanent way on the Great Western; and a working model of a magnetic system of train signalling from Mr. W. S. Boulton.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS.

THE gift of Mr. B. N. Duke, of the American Tobacco Company, to Trinity College, which we announced last week, makes his gifts to the College during the year \$183,000; \$6,000 of which is to improve the scientific laboratories.