such influence has accumulated for several generations. If time would permit I might go on and speak of tomatoes, cabbage and onion, each of which in my experience seems to have distinct habits in this respect, and considering all these cases it seems to me that plants of different natural orders differ in the degree to which influences of soil and climate are transmitted through the seed.

WILL W. TRACY, SR.

CURRENT NOTES ON METEOROLOGY.

CHANGES OF CLIMATE IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

IT is reported (*Pet. Mitth.*, X., 1903) that Lake Shirwa, southeast of Lake Nyassa, in central Africa, has entirely disappeared. Desiccation has been going on for many years, but the last stages in the process were very rapid. This lake used to be shown on the maps as an oval-shaped body of water, about thirty miles long and ten to fifteen miles wide. It now consists of a few small ponds. Livingstone discovered the lake in 1859. Lake Ngami, also discovered by Livingstone, has since disappeared. These changes seem to be a manifestation of a gradual desiccation which is going on in central Africa, but it is important that they should be more carefully studied before any definite conclusions are drawn. The recent reports to the effect that the Sea of Azov is drying up are misleading, in that the apparent desiccation seems actually to be due to a silting up of the lake.

A NEW DROSOMETER.

THE measurement of dew has always given trouble, because no drosometer has ever commended itself for universal use, and the results obtained by different methods have not been accurate, satisfactory or comparable. In *Das Wetter* for March, Ferle, of the Agricultural Experiment Station of Peterhof-Kurland, describes a new kind of drosometer, which he has found very useful, viz., a piece of specially prepared paper, soaked in a chemical solution. This paper is exposed over a box placed on the ground at night, and the amount of dew is indicated by the discoloration of the paper. A scale of discoloration, determined by experiment, is adopted, and the entry in the observation record book, based on the amount of discoloration, gives the amount of dew which formed during the night. Three kinds of paper are used, the first for the smallest amounts, the second for larger, and the third for the largest amounts. It is best to expose two kinds of paper, selected according to the season, so that, in case the amount of dew is too great to be indicated by one sheet, it may be recorded by the discoloration of the other paper.

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATORY ON MONTE ROSA.

AT the instance of the Italian Alpine Club, and with the support of Queen Margarita, the Duke of the Abruzzi, and of the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, an observatory has been erected on Monte Rosa, at an altitude of 4,560 meters (14,960 ft.) above sea level. Next to the Vallot Observatory on Mont Blanc, this is the highest meteorological station in Europe. Observations are to be begun during the coming summer. The observer is to live at the summit throughout the summer months, and during the winter when weather conditions are favorable. The observatory is to be open to scientific men of all nationalities who wish to carry on investigations there. The observations made on Monte Rosa will be of special value in connection with the international balloon ascents. The Monte Rosa Observatory will have, as companion Italian institutions, the Etna and the Monte Cimone observatories, at 2,942 (9,650 ft.) and 2,162 (7,095 ft.) meters respectively.

METEOROLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF ROUMANIA.

AMID the disturbed political conditions on the Balkan Peninsula, the Meteorological Institute of Roumania, under the able directorship of Dr. Hepites, continues its excellent work. Vol. XVI. of the *Annals* of the institute is at hand, comprising over 700 quarto pages, containing the annual report of the director for the year 1900; memoirs on the rainfall, earthquakes, climatology and magnetic observations of 1900; the regular hourly observations of all the elements at Bucharest, as well as the means for the 16 years 1885–

1900, for the successive lustra between 1885 and 1900, and the observations made at 52 stations of the second order during 1900. There are now 395 rainfall stations in Roumania. An index of the publications of the Roumanian Meteorological Institute from 1885 to 1903, comprising 31 octavo pages, offers the best of evidence as to the scientific activities of this institution.

R. DEC. WARD.

ERWIN E. EWELL.

ERWIN E. EWELL, lately first assistant chemist of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and more recently representative of the German Kali Syndicate in the Southern States with headquarters at Atlanta, Georgia, died in New Orleans, La., on February 7, after a brief but severe attack of grippe and rheumatism, followed by typhoid fever.

Mr. Ewell was born in Washington, Michigan, in 1867. His education was secured entirely through his own exertions since, through the death of his father, he was at an early age thrown entirely upon his own resources. He was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1890 and in the same year entered into the service of the Bureau of Chemistry of the Department of Agriculture. His efficiency led to his advancement to the position of principal assistant chemist of the department, and he contributed very largely to the success of the bureau. He was greatly interested in standards of measurements, was chairman of the committee of the American Chemical Society to secure better uniformity and accuracy in the standards in use and he was active in promoting the movement which finally led to the establishment of the bureau of standards. In 1903 he entered the service of the German Kali Syndicate and had begun with his characteristic energy and enthusiasm the presentation of the importance of potash salts in the nutrition of farm crops.

The many warm friends of Mr. Ewell will find in his death a serious personal loss and the scientific world will miss one of its most effective workers.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

THE summer meeting of the American Chemical Society will be held at Providence, R. I., June 21–23.

THE Alumni Association of the School of Applied Science of Columbia University has arranged to have painted a portrait of Dr. Charles F. Chandler, head of the Department of Chemistry. The portrait will be presented at the sesquicentennial celebration in October, when Dr. Chandler will have been for forty years professor of chemistry at the university.

THE alumni of the engineering department of the University of Michigan, now resident in Chicago and vicinity, have presented to the university a portrait in oil of the late Professor Charles E. Greene, dean of the engineering department from its organization until his death.

PROFESSOR W. OSTWALD gave the Faraday lecture of the Chemical Society at the Royal Institution, London, on April 19. At the close of the lecture he was presented with a medal bearing the image of Faraday, which had been specially struck for the occasion.

PROFESSOR L. V. KELLOGG, of the Department of Entomology of Stanford University, has been elected a member of Société Entomologique de France.

M. GUICHARD has been elected a member of the Paris Academy of Sciences in the section of geometry.

THE University of Glasgow has conferred its Doctorate of Laws on Professor Mendelejev, the eminent chemist.

AMONG the distinguished lecturers at the summer session of the University of California, which begins on June 27, are Professor Svante A. Arrhenius, of the University of Stockholm; Professor Hugo De Vries, of the University of Amsterdam; Sir William Ramsay, of University College, London, and Professor James Ward, of the University of Cambridge.

PROFESSOR RUSSELL H. CHITTENDEN, director of the Sheffield Scientific School, Yale University, on April 29, tendered a banquet in honor of Dr. C. S. Sherrington, professor of physiology in the University of Liverpool, who