

Survey of Egypt, briefly inquires under the above title (Survey Notes, Cairo, 1906, 18-20), whether the deserts bordering the Nile offer illustrations of "the geographical cycle in an arid climate" (see *Journ. Geol.*, xiii., 1905, 381-407), and suggests that forms in various stages of arid development are recognizable at many localities. He offers a number of examples of independent basins with local centripetal drainage, which are taken to represent the youthful stage of the arid cycle. "Most members of the Geological Survey [of Egypt] have shown that the Nile valley was once occupied by a series of fresh-water lakes in which calcareous travertine and other lacustrine products were deposited"; but the brief text does not suffice to show whether these basins were "initial," that is, due to inequalities in the originally uplifted land surface, or whether they were due to the long-continued desert erosion of such a surface, the basins being temporarily occupied by lakes during a moist climatic epoch of brief duration. The probability of the survival to-day of any initial basins in the region of the Nile is contradicted by the evidence of long-continued erosion presented in the preceding note. Examples of the disintegration of drainage, supposed to be characteristic of an advanced stage of the arid cycle, are also instanced by Ferrar; but the disintegration here noted is due to obstruction by invading sand dunes, and not to the excavation of shallow basins by wind action, as suggested in the general scheme of the arid cycle.

The interest thus manifested in the physiographic study of desert forms leads us to hope that their detailed and systematic description may be forthcoming in the publications of the Egyptian survey; but the possibility of finding, even in the deserts that border the Nile, the results of arid erosion, not dominated by the occasional action of flooded streams, is made improbable by the account of the sudden rain-floods ("seils") given by H. G. Lyons, director general of the survey department of Egypt in his admirable report on "The physiography of the River Nile and its basin" (Cairo, 1906). A few local rain-

storms occur every winter east of the Nile, where the slope from the desert plateau toward the river is well marked. "In about every second year one or other of the larger wadies comes down in flood, sometimes so suddenly as to carry away camels and sheep. . . . Their effect in eroding the desert is immense. . . . These 'seils' are less rare than is usually supposed, and the dry arid appearance of the desert, together with the rareness of rain, cause the effect of such storms as do occur to be underestimated." Yet on the lower desert upland west of the Nile, it appears that the occasional rainfall "drains into shallow wind-worn depressions and there soaks into the rock or is soon evaporated" (p. 293, 294).

The reviewer finds difficulty here, as in the preceding note, in the attempt to translate a general descriptive account into a systematic account, in terms of structure, process and stage.

W. M. D.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PLANT HARDINESS AND ACCLIMATIZATION

AN important conference will be held under the auspices of the Horticultural Society of New York on October 1, 2 and 3 in rooms of the American Institute and the Museum building of the New York Botanical Garden.

The preliminary list of papers to be presented is as follows:

D. T. MACDOUGAL, Tucson, Ariz.: "The Determining Factors in the Seasonable Activity of Plants."

HENRY C. COWLES, University of Chicago: "Factors that control Acclimatization."

B. L. LIVINGSTON, Tucson, Ariz.: "Evaporation as a Climatic Factor influencing Vegetation."

ERNST A. BESSEY, Subtropical Laboratory, Miami, Fla.: "Air Drainage as affecting Hardiness of Plants."

FREDERIC E. CLEMENTS, University of Nebraska: "The Real Factors in Acclimatization."

W. M. HAYS, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture: "Plant Improvements needed in Specific Cases."

J. C. WHITTEN, Missouri: "Comparative Hardiness of Plants of the same Variety from Northern and Southern Points."

M. ROBERT, Algeria: "Observations on Eucalyptus Hybrids; The Japanese Loquat in Al-

geria; Truth to Seed of Eastern and African Varieties of *Vitis vinifera*."

D. W. MAY, Porto Rico: "Temperate Zone Plants in the Tropics."

D. MORRIS, Imperial Department of Agriculture for the West Indies: "Acclimatization of Economic and other Plants in the West Indies."

H. L. HUTT, Guelph, Canada: "Cooperative Testing to ascertain Hardiness in Fruits."

T. V. MUNSON, Texas: "Resistance to Cold, Heat, Wet, Drought, Soil, etc., in Grapes."

SAMUEL B. GREEN, Ohio: "Developing Hardy Fruits for the North Mississippi Valley."

U. P. HEDRICK, Geneva, N. Y.: "Hardiness of the Peach."

O. M. MORRIS, Oklahoma: "Hardiness of Apples."

W. S. THORNBURGH, Washington: "Fruits and Trees in the Northwest."

B. C. BUFFUM, Wyoming: "Hardiness and Acclimatization of Alfalfa."

S. FRASER, Geneseo, N. Y.: "Some Work with Timothy and Awnless Brome Grasses."

ANTHONY U. MORRELL, Minnesota: "Hardiness of Ornamental Plants in the Middle Northwest."

L. H. PAMMEL, Iowa: "Studies on the Acclimatization of Plants in the Prairie Regions."

JENS JENSEN, Chicago, Ill.: "Observations in the Region at the Head of Lake Michigan."

WALKER H. EVANS, U. S. Department of Agriculture: "Experiments in Plant Acclimatization in Alaska."

D. F. FRANCESCHI, Santa Barbara, Cal.: "Fifteen Years' Experience in Southern California."

ANDREW J. SOULE, Blacksburg, Va.: "Some Experiences with Field Crops in Virginia."

GEO. V. NASH, New York Botanical Garden: "Observations on Hardiness of Plants cultivated at the New York Botanical Garden."

W. TRELEASE, Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, Mo.: "Some Anomalous Observations in St. Louis."

J. E. HIGGINS, Hawaii: "Problems of Hawaii."

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE return giving the accounts of the British Museum, the number of visitors, and the progress made in arranging and adding to the collections for the year ended March 31 last, has been issued. Sir E. Maunde Thompson, director, is quoted in the *London Times*. "It is a matter for regret that a further decline in the number of visits to the Museum

has to be recorded for the year 1906. The total number was 691,950, a falling off of nearly 122,000 from the number in 1905. Nor has the decline been confined to week-day visits, as it was in the previous year. The 57,738 visits on Sundays were less by 4,269 than those in 1905. We must go back to the year 1900, with its 689,249 visits, before finding a total to compare with that of the year 1906. At the same time, it is an indication of a steady growth of intelligent interest in the collections that, while the numbers of visits decrease, the sale of guide-books generally tends to increase. The number of visits of students to the reading-room has also been reduced by 2,000, the total for the year being 212,997, as against 214,940 in 1905. The daily average was 702. The average number of persons in the room, counted at the later hours of the afternoon, were: 4 P.M., 349; 5 P.M., 256; 6 P.M., 172; 6:30 P.M., 119. The number of visits of students to particular departments in 1906 was 55,513, as against 57,557 in 1905. The number of visits to the newspaper-room decreased by 2,000; while, as regards other fluctuations, there were 1,200 fewer visits in the sculpture galleries, but 800 more in the department of manuscripts and nearly 1,100 more in the department of British and medieval antiquities."

SIR E. RAY LANKESTER, the director of the Natural History Museum, says in his report that the total number of visits recorded as having been made to the museum by the public during the year 1906 was 472,557, compared with 566,313 in 1905. This number included 61,151 visitors on Sunday afternoons, as against 70,084 in the previous year. The average daily attendance for all open days was 1,301.8; for week-days only, 1,322.8; and for Sunday afternoons, 1,176. He records presents to the number of 2,057, compared with 2,092 in 1905, the principal donors being the Government of India (collections of Tibetan insects), the Duke of Bedford (zoological specimens from Japan and Korea), Mr. C. D. Rudd (specimens in continuation of his systematic survey of South African fauna), and Mr. W. E. Balston (natural history specimens from Western Australia).