

penumbra and it was stated that its width could be accounted for by supposing the existence of matter outside of the plane of the rings, or in effect by tores or thickenings of the rings; the dark medial core of the band being the projection of the ring proper. It was explained in what way the tores could have been produced and in what part of the rings they should occur. In this connection it was shown how the separations of the rings were produced by the planet's satellites; and it was stated that one should expect that the tores should occur just inside of the paths of the satellites. By observation the tores were found to be just where celestial mechanics would put them under the disturbing influence of the satellites.

In reviewing the conclusions as to the constitution of the rings, and the disintegration that must be taking place as evidenced by the positions of the tores, the ultimate disappearance of the rings was predicted.

R. L. FARIS,  
Secretary

#### DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

##### AGE OF A COOLING GLOBE

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In my paper on a cooling globe in SCIENCE for February 7, pages 231 and 232, the depth of the level of isostatic compensation is stated as 71 miles or 140 kilometers. This last should be 114 kilometers. The blunder arose in copying, and the correct value was used in the computations.

GEORGE F. BECKER

##### THE EARTH AS A HEAT-RADIATING PLANET

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Of the many far-reaching consequences resulting from the discovery announced in SCIENCE for November 22 and December 20, 1907, perhaps no one fact stands out more clearly and strongly than this—*The inherent heat of the earth still plays an important if not controlling part in all terrestrial phenomena* (as, for instance, in the formation of ocean and atmospheric currents, in cloud formation, and the increase in temperature with increase of cloudiness, etc.), *for it now seems certain that without*

*this inherent heat radiation the terrestrial atmosphere could not exist.*

With a surface which, even at its lowest known temperature, is still more than 200° C. above the temperature of surrounding space (ocean temperatures at great depths being about 270° above) and with the temperature increasing with the depth below the surface, there can no longer be much reasonable doubt as to the facts concerning the past or future history of the earth, so far as effects due to temperature changes are concerned.

The earth is now, and has been for ages, radiating heat into space, shrinking in size, and, with a constantly decreasing surface temperature, growing colder.

The mean absolute surface temperature of the earth is, let us say, 300° C. If we regard this as made up of an inherent surface-temperature of 200° C. and a stored or trapped heat equivalent to a temperature of 100° C., the radiation into space is such that the moon, for example, receives about one twenty-seventh as much heat from the earth as it does from the sun.

The sun's influence is rendered overpoweringly conspicuous because this influence is zonal and varyingly differential, thereby obscuring to a great degree the nearly constant but large effect of inherent earth-radiation.

The earth's desert areas are increasing and the glaciers are retreating not because the sun's influence has seemingly become predominant, but because the earth has, even during known historical time, grown sensibly colder.

At any given time in the history of the earth, an ice age was inaugurated at a given place whenever the snow-fall during the colder months of the year was so great that the snow could not all be melted during the warmer months of the year. But since the earth is continually growing colder the supply of moisture, through evaporation from the water surface of the earth, is continually growing less, so that *finally even the land areas in the polar regions will be completely bare*, and the upper limit of the atmosphere will then practically coincide with the surface of a solidly frozen ocean.

With the modifications, resulting from the

fact that inherent earth-heat has always been and will continue to be a controlling factor in terrestrial phenomena, Manson's hypothesis as to the cause of the ice age may now, perhaps, be said to be demonstrated as a true theory.

Astronomical observations, for absolute parallax of the fixed stars, when made from the surface of a heat-radiating body revolving about another *central* heat-radiating body, are so influenced as to cause the stars to appear to be more distant than they really are. The effect is similar to the case which I have already treated in No. 3935 of the *Astronomische Nachrichten*, issued March 19, 1904.

As will be demonstrated later on, the evidence seems to be almost conclusive that our now reduced sun is the parent body of both the sidereal and the solar systems; the former created by one process simultaneously going on with the creation of the latter by a largely different action of the same forces of nature.

J. M. SCHAEBERLE

ANN ARBOR,  
December 25, 1907

PROGRESSUS REI BOTANICÆ

It may not be amiss to call the attention of botanical workers to the very excellent summary of the present status of paleobotany from the pens of Professors Scott, Zeiller and Laurent which is contained in the first two volumes of the "Progressus Rei Botanicae" published by the International Association of Botanists under the supervision of Dr. J. P. Lotsy, of Leiden.

There will no longer be any excuse for the lamentable ignorance, too often displayed by botanists, of the striking contributions of paleobotany to the progress of botany.

Professor Scott's article, the first to appear and the most extensive, is entitled "The Present Position of Palæozoic Botany,"<sup>1</sup> and briefly discusses the great plant groups of the Paleozoic, chiefly from the viewpoint of morphology and phylogeny. The quickened interest caused by the recent discoveries of seed-bearing among the fern-like plants and the actual proof of the fern ancestry of at least

the cycads among the gymnosperms will serve, no doubt, to save this paper from neglect.

The second article, by Professor Laurent, of Marseilles, is entitled "Les Progrès de la Paléobotanique Angiospermique dans le dernier décade,"<sup>2</sup> and may be said to treat of the botany of the Cenozoic age, since the floral Cenozoic commences with the dominance of angiosperms in the Mid-Cretaceous. This paper, while it leaves much to be desired, is a thoroughly good, if somewhat philosophical, discussion of angiospermous fossils. It does not go into details as much as would have been desirable and treats of principles rather than the available facts.

The third article, which has just appeared, is entitled "Les Progrès de la Paléobotanique de l'ère des Gymnospermes,"<sup>3</sup> thus roughly corresponding to the Mesozoic age and filling the gap between the contributions of Professors Scott and Laurent. This is a most excellent summary of the recent progress in the realm of Mesozoic botany and no discovery however small seems to have escaped Professor Zeiller's watchful interest. As this treats of the age when cycads and ginkgoes were dominant groups with a world-wide range and when the ancestors of our modern conifers and ferns make their appearance, it is one of very vital interest. Naturally the recent work of Wieland on the Bennettitaceæ receives considerable attention.

A regrettable feature, seemingly part of the plan of the editors, is the absence of citations, except as to authors' names, and the lack of any sort of bibliographies. While this is rendered unnecessary in the first instance by the Paleozoic bibliography compiled by Professor Arber and printed immediately following Professor Scott's paper, it is greatly missed in the other two papers. Paleobotanical workers may be expected to be familiar with the literature, but this is hardly the case with the rank and file of botanical workers to whom these articles are primarily addressed.

It is certainly a cause for congratulation and a distinct sign of progress that the International Association of Botanists recognizes

<sup>1</sup> Erster Band, zweites heft.

<sup>2</sup> Zweiter Band, erstes heft.

<sup>1</sup> Erster Band, erstes heft.