

## THE TARIFF AND SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: The House Committee on Ways and Means is now holding hearings on the proposed revision of the tariff and is asking all interested parties to appear before it to state their views. Is any one preparing to appear before the committee armed with the necessary facts to show the folly and injustice of the tariff on scientific books written in the English language? Regarded as a means of raising revenue, this tariff is insignificant; regarded as protection, it is an insult. From any other point of view it is simply an oppression suffered by American men of science, whose efficiency is usually impaired besides by incomes insufficient for their needs, and this tariff has for its sole effect to make good scientific work more difficult than it would otherwise be by hindering the ready access to the literature published in another country.

Of course any effort to remove the tariff on English books will be opposed by the publishers of school books, and perhaps also by those who publish popular fiction. The tariff on these classes of books probably does no great harm, and it might be allowed to stand at the present rate of twenty-five per cent.

This being admitted, there arises the administrative difficulty of distinguishing in the custom house between English books which would be dutiable and those which would be on the free list. But this difficulty would not seem to be insurmountable. For example, there is, I believe, a clause of the copyright law which provides for the admission of foreign books to American copyright. Might not the difficulty be met and our object be gained at the same time by the simple provision that all English books which are copyrighted in the United States shall be subject to the present import duty of twenty-five per cent. *ad valorem*, and that all other books may be imported duty free? Under this provision the publishers of school books and popular fiction in America would receive the same protection as at present; while the English publishers of scientific works, for which the demand is too small to be a temptation for reprinting, might

be expected to avoid the copyright as an unnecessary expense and a hindrance to the free entry of their books into this country.

R. P. BIGELOW

## SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

*Climate.* Considered especially in Relation to Man. By ROBERT DECOURCY WARD. 8vo, xiv + 372 pp. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons; London, John Murray, 1908. (The Science Series.)

In 1903 Mr. Ward rendered excellent service by translating and publishing the first volume of Hann's classic "*Handbuch der Klimatologie*," thus making available to a larger circle of readers the best text-book on the principles of climatology that has thus far appeared. Ward's "*Climate*" may be regarded as a supplement to the first volume of Hann's handbook, in which the author sets forth clearly and systematically some of the broader facts and relations of climate, primarily for the benefit of the general reader, although the needs of the teacher and student are not overlooked.

The introduction is essentially a condensed synopsis of the first six chapters of Hann's handbook, preparing the way for a better understanding of the chapters which follow. The classification of climatic zones is treated at considerable length, including a discussion on the climatic types resulting from the control of land, water and altitude. Chapters IV. to VI. give an excellent account of the characteristic features of the different zones, and chapter VII. discusses the relations existing between weather, climate and diseases. The three following chapters are devoted to a consideration of the life of man in the three principal zones. In the final chapter the author considers the evidences of change of climate during the historic period.

In the primary classification of climates Mr. Ward wisely adheres to the simple and time-honored classification into three zones—the tropical or warm zone, the temperate or intermediate zone, and the polar or cold zone—