

During the whole day the average percentage appears to have been 15 per cent. higher at Benkoelen than at Palembang.

These are readings from the records of Jordan's sunshine recorder with sensitive paper, furnished by Negretti & Zambra, London. Of course the probability of a clear sky, as needed for the observation of the eclipse, is smaller than is suggested by the above-mentioned figures, as the sensitive paper yields a record also when there are thin clouds. The data therefore have chiefly a relative value with a view to a comparison between the two places in question.

(Signed) C. BRAAK,

Director

C. G. ABBOT,

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION Assistant Secretary

CALENDAR REFORM

I SHOULD like to suggest an amendment to Mr. A. L. Candy's revised calendar. I would have in the new calendar the months of January, April, July and October begin with Sunday, in place of Monday.

It is desirable to have the same number of working days in each calendar month. In order to do this it is necessary to start the 31 day months on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, so that the 31 day months may include five Sundays each, and give 26 week days for every month in the year.

While it would be possible to begin the first day of each quarter with any one of the three days mentioned, it would seem to me desirable to begin them with either Saturday or Sunday, preferably Sunday. By doing so we should have the sequence of Saturday, December 30, New Year's Day, and Sunday, January 1, which would naturally form a three day holiday for almost everyone. In the case of leap years, there would be a similar three day stretch, formed by Saturday, June 30, mid-summer holiday, and Sunday, July 1. This would be a welcome respite for many people who find it hard to get three days together.

In general it is desirable to have holidays come upon Saturday, Sunday or Monday, so they do not break up the working week, and afford the maximum relaxation with minimum interference with business. Where the first day of each quarter begins on Monday, as suggested by A. L. C., only Lincoln's Birthday and Armistice Day come at the week-end, both falling on Monday. But if we start the quarter with Sunday, then we have the above holidays coming on Sunday, which is just as good as Monday because they will be celebrated on Monday, and in addition we have December 25 falling upon Monday instead of Tuesday, which is a manifest addition.

ALVAN L. DAVIS

THE GILBOA FOSSIL FOREST

DR. JOHN M. CLARKE, of the New York State Museum, in an article on "The oldest of the forests" (*The Scientific Monthly*, January, 1921) has vividly described the fossil Devonian Forest (Psaronius) found near Gilboa, New York.

The operations of the Board of Water Supply of the City of New York have uncovered a number of these fossil stumps, and it has occurred to the writer that some, at least, of the museums in the country which have not already secured specimens would like to add to their collections. The work at Gilboa is drawing to a close, and the opportunity of securing specimens will never again be as good as during the present summer season. The number of stumps available is of course, limited. Inquiries may be addressed to the undersigned.

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SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

The Life of Sir William Osler. By HARVEY CUSHING. 2 vols. 1442 pp. 8°. Oxford University Press, New York. Price \$12.50.

HARVEY CUSHING, one of the most virile and straightforward of living American writers, has very rightly conceived his Osler biography as *mémoires pour servir*. Leaving ultimate appraisal of this great physician's merits to posterity, he has, with secure good taste, taken eulogy (an obituary and lapidary function) for granted, and wisely shunned "the foolish face of praise." Here, indeed, the man Osler speaks for himself, through his clinical achievement, his letters and writings, his thousandfold acts of charity and good-will, his humorous pranks, his unique sense of honor. Hence, where necessary, Cushing has not hesitated to cope with those errors in judgment which Osler himself defined as "mistakes of the head, but never of the heart." The material to be handled was enormous, not so much in the way of letters, for Osler was a poor and telegraphic, if multifarious letter writer, but in the adjustment of the countless minor details of his very busy life to its actual course and tenor. Here all is ordered, documented, controlled as to fact, place and date by accurate footnote references, well indexed, with analytical table of contents and a rubric at the top of each page telling its actual content. In consequence, it is very easy to find one's way about in these volumes. The narrative moves steadily and surely forward, from point to point and period to period. Each sentence states a fact, and we can follow Osler's career understandingly, from the boyhood days in unsettled upper Canada, through the prankish student period