

no means clear. Brandis's "Forest Flora of North-west and Central India" is an admirable and scholarly book. With the preparation of this Dr. Stewart was at first associated, and the present list is apparently a rough draft of the ground intended to be covered by the more elaborate work. After testing Dr. Stewart's list in several places, it is clearly evident that it is a mere compilation of no value whatever, critical or otherwise. One example out of many will suffice: *Hopea floribunda*, Wall., is identified with *Shorea robusta*, the well-known *Sal*. A. De Candolle fell into this error; but seeing that Wallich's specimens are in London, Dr. Stewart might easily have avoided following him. The confusion in Indian botany is already sufficiently deplorable without importing fresh mystifications.

Mr. Etheridge, jun., F.G.S., contributes a notice of some newly discovered specimens of *Pothocites*, a carboniferous fossil which has been held to represent the oldest known angiospermous Phanerogam. A note on the Chinese *Lan-hwa* makes Prof. Balfour by some error speak of *Olea fragrans* as belonging to the *Orchidaceæ*. The remainder of the matter filling the 188 pages of this part contains nothing else worth noting.

THE RECENT STORMS IN THE ATLANTIC

IN reference to the suggestion contained in the last number of NATURE, p. 290, we notice in the *Times* of the 13th inst. the following telegram:—

"New York, Feb. 12.—In consequence of the continuance of intensely cold weather, the East River is totally blocked with ice, and the shipping on the Hudson River is seriously impeded. In all parts of the States travelling is almost suspended, and the present condition of things is without parallel in the history of the last forty years."

The cold weather appears to have set in during the Christmas week, and not to have abated in the end of January and the first days of February, when we in Western Europe were brought under the influence of the polar wind. It remains to be seen whether the gales abated in the Atlantic when both sides were brought under similar conditions. We find in one of the most recent numbers of the *New York Herald* a list of the several years in which the freezing of the East River occurred at New York. Our contemporary notes,—January 19, 1792; January 8, 1797; January 19, 1821; January 21, 1852; January 1854; January 8, 1856; January 17, 1857; January 23, 1867; February 1871.

It cannot be said that each of these years was cold in Europe as well as in the States; so that it may be asserted with some degree of probability that the freezing of the East River in New York, and the freezing of the Seine or the Thames, are not regulated by the same laws. Without going deeply into the matter we can say, *exempli gratia*, that in 1821 the first part of the winter was cold in Europe, but that the weather was milder among us when the East River was frozen. On the contrary, the whole of the winter in 1853–1854 was rather cold in our temperate regions. In 1857 the freezing of the East River occurred when the winter was beginning to get colder in Europe. But in 1871, the cold disastrous winter which helped so much the German armies was over, and February was rather mild, when the East River was bridged over by coalescing icebergs. Consequently the only point which can be easily settled is to ascertain whether differences of temperature between America and Europe are an indication of the existence of gales raging in mid-ocean. The interest of the suggestion is independent of the origin of the inequality of temperatures, which can be attributed to many different causes, but would take too long to enumerate, and which would lead to no immediate practical conclusion.

W. DE FONVIELLE

NOTES

THE British Eclipse Expedition in charge of Dr. Schuster sailed last Thursday in the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamship *Surat*, for Galle and Singapore. Dr. Vogel, of Berlin, joins the expedition at Suez, and Dr. Janssen at Singapore. Prof. Tacchini, also a member of the expedition, is already at Calcutta. The Viceroy has chosen Camorta, in the Nicobars, and Mergui as observing stations. The English observers will proceed to Camorta, where, as Mr. Hind has already stated in NATURE, totality lasts 4m. 27s. Before the accident to the *Charybdis*, that ship had been detailed by the Admiralty for the conveyance of the observers from Singapore to Siam. The *Surat* passed Gibraltar yesterday, all well.

THE medals of the Geological Society will be awarded as follows at the anniversary meeting to be held to-morrow:—The Wollaston Medal to Prof. L. G. de Koninck, of Liège, a distinguished palæontologist, especially as regards carboniferous fossils; the balance of proceeds of the Wollaston Fund to Mr. L. C. Miall, of Leeds, who has done good work on the Labyrinthodonts; the Murchison Medal to Mr. W. J. Henwood, of Penzance, for researches in respect to mineral veins and underground temperature; and the Murchison Fund to Prof. H. G. Seeley, in aid of his researches in fossil osteology.

THE medal of the Royal Astronomical Society has been awarded this year to M. D'Arrest, for his great catalogue of Nebulæ.

CAPT. HOFFMEYER, Director of the Danish Meteorological Institute, has issued a circular in reference to his admirable Daily Weather Charts, from which it is gratifying to see that they have been well received by the meteorologists of Europe. He is resolved to continue the publication, although hitherto the subscriptions have not been sufficient to cover the outlay. In the hope, however, that the number of subscribers will more and more increase, Capt. Hoffmeyer will continue to issue the charts at the same price as heretofore; he will, moreover, issue charts embracing a larger portion of the globe than before, and giving, besides, some idea of the distribution of temperature. These changes in the charts have been adopted in accordance with the advice of the directors of various central institutions. He has rejected Mercator's projection in order to avoid the exaggerated dimensions of northern regions, and he has somewhat diminished the scale in order to be able to embrace more degrees of longitude. He has also placed beside the stations figures showing in centigrade degrees the observed temperature, without the correction for altitude. Subscriptions are received at the Meteorological Office, 116, Victoria Street, London, S.W., at the rate of 12s. 6d. per quarter, including cost of delivery. We hope that Capt. Hoffmeyer will be encouraged in his most laudable enterprise by an increased number of subscribers; it is the duty of all friends of science to do what they can to support so valuable a work.

THE tercentenary of the University of Leyden appears to have been a very brilliant affair. The delegates from other universities, to the number of over seventy, were treated with boundless distinction and hospitality. They came from Claudopolis in the east, and Coimbra in the west, and from Finland in the north. Considerable disappointment was felt at no representative being sent by Oxford, and that no notice of any kind was taken of the invitation. No doubt Oxford will be able to render a reason for this seeming uncourteous conduct. The Universities of Cambridge, Dublin, and London were all represented. It is interesting to hear that amongst the honorary degrees none was received with so much applause as that conferred on Mr. Darwin.