

arboretum—accomplished just before he retired from public life, was part of a scheme (perhaps chimerical) he encouraged with the view of establishing a School of Forestry in Edinburgh—a scheme now receiving some attention in Scotland.

Ready and rapid with his pen, Balfour's contributions to botanical and other literature are very numerous. Besides contributing to several Encyclopædias, he was for many years one of the editors of the *Annals of Natural History* and of the *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal*. Of independent works, his text-books, to which we have already alluded, were very popular in their day, and are now valuable for reference, and he published works on Botany and Religion, Plants of the Bible, &c.

We should fail to give an adequate idea of the veteran Professor were we not to allude to that which gave a character to all he did—his religion. To him all nature was a symbol. He was one of that band of which Faraday, Clerk Maxwell, Greville, Wm. Allen Miller, and others were in the van, who "recognised the harmony between the word and the works of God," and who saw "in the objects of nature around indubitable evidences of a great designing mind."

By those who knew him—and his was a wide circle of friends—he will be remembered as a genial companion with the best attributes of humanity, and his name will always remain inseparably linked with the progress of botany in Scotland during this century, and as that of one of the eminent teachers in the University and city to which he belonged.

#### CAPTAIN HOFFMEYER

IN the early death of Niels Hoffmeyer, which occurred at Copenhagen on the 16th inst., modern meteorology has lost one of its most diligent and successful students, and one whose place it will be hard to fill.

Like more than one of our own physicists, Hoffmeyer was an artillery officer, and had attained the rank of captain in the service. At the close of the Prussian war he had fallen into bad health, and accordingly, on the reduction of the Danish army which then ensued, his name was placed on the retired list, and he was for a time unoccupied.

The Danish Meteorological Institute was organised in 1872, and Hoffmeyer was nominated its first director. There could scarcely have been a more fortunate appointment, for Hoffmeyer was gifted not only with unusual energy, but also with a very pleasant manner, so that he made friends for the new office and for its work wherever he went. He will best be known by his Atlas. He undertook to prepare daily weather-maps of the Atlantic—in great measure at his own expense—and he actually published them for a period of three and a quarter years, from September, 1873, to November, 1876. It is only a few months ago that he announced his intention to resume the work in combination with Dr. Neumayer, of the Deutsche Seewarte at Hamburg.

The most important results which Hoffmeyer had deduced from his own maps were contained in his pamphlet, "Étude sur les Tempêtes de l'Atlantique Septentrional, et Projet d'un Service Télégraphique International Relatif à cet Océan," Copenhagen, 1880; and up to the very last he never ceased to use his utmost efforts for the establishment of a meteorological telegraphic service with America, *viâ* the Faroes and Iceland.

While Hoffmeyer's chief work was in the domain of synoptic meteorology, he by no means disregarded climatology, and the service which the Danish Office has rendered to that science by the maintenance of stations in Iceland and Greenland has been very material.

When Capt. Hoffmeyer was in London last summer as Danish Commissioner to the Fisheries Exhibition, he was complaining of great weakness of the heart. During

December he was laid by for some time, but he had somewhat recovered, when he was seized last week with rheumatic fever, to which he soon fell a victim. He leaves a widow, but no children. He was an Honorary Member of the Royal Meteorological Society (London). He had been one of the secretaries of the Meteorological Congress at Rome, 1879, and of the Conference on Maritime Meteorology in London, 1874, but his chief official service of this nature was as Secretary to the International Polar Commission, where his loss, coming after that of Weyprecht, will be severely felt.

#### NOTES

THE Council of the Royal Society of Edinburgh has awarded the Keith Prize for the biennial period 1881-83 to Mr. Thomas Muir for his researches into the theory of determinants and continued fractions, the most recent instalment of results obtained by him being in a paper on permanent symmetric functions. Also the Macdougall-Brisbane Prize for the period 1880-82 to Prof. James Geikie for his contributions to the geology of the north-west of Europe, including his paper on the geology of the Faröes, published in the *Transactions of the Society*, 1880-81. And the Neill Prize for the triennial period 1880-83 to Prof. Herdman for his papers in the *Proceedings and Transactions on the Tunicata*.

WE learn from the *Standard* that the Royal Astronomical Society has awarded Mr. Ainslie Common its gold medal for his photographs of celestial bodies. This high award has, it is believed, been mainly bestowed on account of the magnificent photograph he has succeeded in taking of the great nebula in Orion, of which we gave an illustration in a recent number.

WE regret to learn of the death of M. T. du Moncel, editor of *La Lumière Électrique*, and author of numerous works in theoretical and practical electricity.

THE needs of the higher education of women in London are gradually being met in the manner that has been found so satisfactory at Oxford and Cambridge, where women students have long enjoyed the advantages of collegiate life. On Monday, February 11, there was a gathering of many of the most influential friends of the movement to inspect an important extension of the College Hall of Residence established at Byng Place, Gordon Square, in October 1882. The success which attended the first development of the scheme, and the growing demand on the part of students for admission, has encouraged the committee to provide additional accommodation by adapting the adjoining house, No. 2, Byng Place. With the new extension they look forward to a yearly surplus instead of a deficit. With the power of accommodating thirteen extra students the receipts would be increased by 876*l.* for the short session, and there would not be a proportionate increase in the expenditure. The advantage of holding the two houses is therefore evident. The second house was opened at the commencement of the current term, and there are now seventeen students in residence. Of this number two are pursuing the course of instruction provided at University College for the B.A. degree, two that for the matriculation examination of the London University, and another, a foreign lady, is a student of English literature at the same college; another student is preparing for the examination of the Pharmaceutical Society. Four ladies are students of the London School of Medicine for Women, and preparing for the M.B. degree (Lond.), and the remainder are studying art at the Slade School and elsewhere. The first student of the Hall who went up for the examination for the B.A. degree passed successfully last October, and has now an appointment as teacher at a school in York. The expenses for board and residence vary, according to the size and position of the room occupied, from 51 to 75 guineas for the