

three, and the range of subjects was more limited; otherwise the examination was exactly the same as in the period 1848-72. But Part III. was a complete novelty, and a great deal of curiosity was felt as to how the first Moderators and Examiners would interpret the regulations. Would the new examination resemble, as regards the character of the questions set, the last three days of the old five days, or was the examination to be one of a distinctly higher order? The result showed that the latter anticipation was the correct one. No longer hampered by the order of merit, the examiners felt themselves free to set difficult and elaborate questions, such as were only appropriate to specialists in the particular subjects; and a new departure was made.

As soon as the new system came into full operation, it was found that it needed amendment in various respects; and this is not to be wondered at, considering that it had been constructed in order to fit in with the few regulations that had escaped the general massacre of May 1878, and that almost every part of it was the result of a compromise. It was found that the interval between June and January—less than seven months, and including a long vacation in which very few lectures were given—was too short for an adequate preparation for Part III. It is true that most of the work for Part III. could be done—and indeed was done—before the examination in Parts I. and II.; but the competition in these two parts remained as keen as ever, and, as the examination became imminent, the candidates were tempted to neglect the higher work, and give their whole attention to the more elementary subjects, upon which the list in order of merit depended. As a consequence there was a diminution in the numbers of students attending the higher mathematical lectures in the University. With respect to the actual conduct of the examination, it was found that the strain upon the Moderators and Examiners was very serious, and general regret was expressed that under the new scheme no provision had been made for the annual appointment of an Additional Examiner, as in the previous scheme which had been in operation from 1873 to 1882. Under the new system the candidates devoted themselves to special branches of the higher mathematics, and there was even greater difficulty in adequately representing all the subjects of examination. Accordingly, on June 12, 1884, the Senate confirmed a Report of the Mathematical Board recommending that the examination in Part III. should take place in June, exactly a year after that in Parts I. and II., and that the Moderators and Examiners, with the Chairman of the Mathematical Board, should nominate an Additional Examiner, the first nomination being made in the Easter term, 1885, and having reference to the examination in January 1886. It was considered that the Moderators and Examiners were themselves the best judges of the branches of mathematics in which they most desired assistance, and were therefore the most suitable body to nominate the Additional Examiner.

The last time that the whole examination took place in January was in 1882. This year (1886) the examination in Part III. has taken place in January for the last time, so that the historic connection between the Tripos and the month of January has now finally ended. Henceforth the examination in all three parts will take place in the middle of the year.

(To be continued.)

EARTHQUAKE AT SEA

WE have received the following communication from Mr. R. H. Scott, F.R.S., Secretary, Meteorological Office:—

*British Consulate, St. John's, Porto Rico,
November 4, 1886*

SIR,—I have the honour to inform you that Mr. J. Simmons, master of the British brigantine *Wilhelmina*,

of Lunenburg, now loading in this port, has reported to me that, on October 20 last, at 4.30 p.m., while in latitude $19^{\circ} 21' N.$, and longitude $64^{\circ} 22' W.$, he felt a shock of earthquake which caused the ship to tremble. The shock lasted one minute, and was accompanied by a loud rumbling noise like distant thunder. Capt. Simmons states further that, were it not that he believed the depth of water at the spot to be no less than two thousand fathoms, he could have imagined that his vessel was running upon the rocks, so great was the vibration and so loud the noise. I have thought it my duty to report this occurrence officially, as it seems not improbable that some volcanic disturbance is in operation in the locality herein referred to.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

REGINALD H. HERTSLET,
H.M. Consul

The Assistant Secretary, Marine Department,
Board of Trade

NOTES

WE regret to hear of the death at Calcutta of Father Scortechini from dysentery. He has succumbed to his extraordinary exertions in the botanical exploration of Perak, where he had made very large and valuable collections. These he intended to make the basis of a flora of this native State in collaboration with Dr. King, the Superintendent of the Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta. His collections will, as far as possible, be made use of by Sir Joseph Hooker in the portions of the flora of British India now in progress at Kew.

ONE of the severest storms of recent years swept over the country in the middle of last week, being indeed a storm seldom paralleled for its wide-spread destructiveness. The damage to property and the loss of life have been exceptionally great, and each morning newspaper has been adding to the long tale of losses and disasters. Another peculiarity of the storm is that it was heralded with only the slightest premonitions of its approach. It was at Valencia only that the observations of the previous evening indicated a storm, and these even seemed to foreshadow no more than a subsidiary cyclone. But on Wednesday morning last week the centre of the storm had already advanced on the north-west of Ireland, where at Belmullet, at 8 a.m., the barometer had fallen, at 32° and sea-level, to 27.580 inches. In the course of the day the cyclone moved eastward at the rather slow rate of 20 miles an hour, and by 6 p.m. its centre was near Barrow-in-Furness, where the barometer is stated to have fallen to 27.410 inches. The centre passed somewhat to the south of Edinburgh, about half-past seven, pressure being then 27.650 inches, and the wind easterly. The greatest interest is attached to the observations that may have been made in the north of England and the south of Scotland during the evening of Wednesday week, from which the path of the cyclone may be traced; and particularly, if the low reading at Barrow-in-Furness be confirmed, what lower readings of the barometer were made to the eastward. But in any case it is plain that in this part of Great Britain, on the evening of Wednesday week, pressure fell nearly as low as it did on January 26, 1884, at Ochertyre, Perthshire, where it fell to 27.333 inches; and it is remarkable that these two low barometers, hitherto the lowest observed by man anywhere on the land surfaces of the globe after being reduced to sea-level, have occurred in the British Islands, and within three years of each other. It is noteworthy that the lowest pressure on Ben Nevis was 23.451 inches at 2h. 31m. p.m., and that at the height of the storm, at 6 p.m., the wind was south-east, and blowing at the rate of fully 120 miles an hour—thus indicating that the storm was not only wide-spread, but that it also, as regards direction and force