

magnitude, proves the body to have been at least of magnitude - 1, and at the time of greatest brilliancy this is probably an under-estimate.



PHOTOGRAPH OF A METEOR.

It begins very faintly, showing the initial contact with the atmosphere, and, gradually increasing in brilliancy until it has travelled about  $1\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ ; it is evident that about this time an explosion occurred, the details of which are well recorded on the photograph. The products of the detonation are seen spread out in all directions round the central mass, but the main portion again takes a definite path; not, however, in the original direction of the meteor's flight, as can be readily seen on reference to the photograph.

This is probably due to the body being of such a nature as to resist disruption in some directions more than others, and so the resultant of the initial velocity and the new velocity, due to the recoil of the main mass, might lie in some other direction than that of the original path. This has been the case here. If, as an approximation, we take its first appearance to have been at a height of sixty miles, the extreme diameter of the area occupied by the matter expelled during the explosion would be a little more than a mile. The brightest portion of the streak is about  $3\frac{1}{2}^\circ$  long, but the fainter trail may be traced for a considerable distance beyond, becoming at last too faint to affect the sensitive plate.

#### THE ROYAL CITY OF ZENOBIA.<sup>1</sup>

LIKE all ancient cities of the East that have once been centres of trade and culture, but are now only marked by piles of ruins and a few squalid huts, Palmyra has a strange fascination. Though on the edge of the Syrian desert, the site of this ancient city is but five days' journey from Damascus, so that her ruins have been thoroughly explored, her inscriptions copied, and all facts that might be of interest to the man

<sup>1</sup> "An Account of Palmyra and Zenobia, with Travels and Adventures in Bashan and the Desert." By Dr. William Wright. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1895.)

of science, the archæologist, or the historian, have been obtained from her. On opening Dr. William Wright's "Palmyra and Zenobia," therefore, we did not look to find anything very startling or original.

From internal evidence of his work, we gather that Dr. William Wright, who must not be confused with the late Prof. William Wright of Cambridge, is connected with a Protestant missionary society, and from his preface we learn that he was resident in Syria for nine years. It was, perhaps, in consequence of his duties at Damascus that he was unable during this period to break fresh ground in his excursions from that city, and had to be content to follow the more beaten tourist track. His book, in fact, contains an account of two visits to Palmyra, one in 1872, the other in 1874; and as neither of these was of very long duration, we must congratulate him on the production of the present work. The latter part of the book records a trip to the south of Damascus as far as Bosra.

His account of his experiences on the road is amusingly told, and to many will be novel, for Syria is not yet so well known as Switzerland; but what Dr. Wright regards as "adventures," would perhaps appear to the veteran explorer as somewhat ordinary incidents of travel. His description of the ruins, however, and his sketch of the history of Palmyra, though a little superficial and wanting in arrangement, is in the main trustworthy and will, no doubt, prove attractive to many readers. On one occasion the author drops his rôle of gossipy narrator, and inserts on p. 124*f.* two Palmyrene inscriptions, to



COLONNADE OF THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN.



which he appends translations. The inscriptions appear to have been reproduced from De Vogüé's "Syrie Centrale," pl. 4, Nos. 28 and 29, and the translations are versions of the French rendering to be found on p. 28 *f.* of the same work. We do not blame Dr. Wright for this apparently learned insertion, as no doubt many of his readers would be interested in seeing what a Palmyrene inscription looks like; but we do think he should have given some reference or indication of the source from which he took his information. It is the more to be regretted that he omitted to do this, as in his translation Dr. Wright has written "the daughter of *Zabbai*" for *Bath-Zebhinah* of the original, not recognising the proper name, *Zηνοβία*, in its semitic dress—an odd mistake to come across in a book which claims to give an account of that great queen.

In a book of travel one does not expect any remarkable purity of style, but Dr. Wright has perhaps too great a liking for fine language; as, for instance, when he

while from the other some idea can be obtained of the forest of columns which are still standing on the site of that once famous city.

#### NOTES.

THE Council of the Pasteur Institute are about to organise a committee to make an international appeal for funds to erect a statue of Pasteur in Paris.

AN expedition to observe the solar eclipse next August will be sent out to Yezo from Amherst College, U.S.A., under the direction of Prof. David P. Todd. The expedition is expected to leave San Francisco next spring.

IT is reported by Reuter that steps are being taken to invite the Prince of Wales and the Secretary of State for the Colonies to visit Toronto in August 1897, when the British Association



TRIUMPHAL ARCH, WITH CASTLE IN THE DISTANCE.

describes a lady out riding as "bounding over the desert on a splendid charger, whose neck of thunder swayed hither and thither to her silken touch." But this is a minor detail, and, although we cannot honestly say that the man of science or antiquary will gather any particularly new or useful information from his pages, it would be ungenerous to discourage any one from describing, for the benefit of other people, the places and incidents from which he himself has derived pleasure. The book, in fact, would form a chatty and by no means uninteresting companion to any more solid work on the same subject, such as Socin's "Palestine and Syria," published by Baedeker, in which all historical and topographical facts concerning Palmyra and Syria in general are carefully arranged. We may add that the volume before us is prettily bound, well printed, and has plenty of illustrations, two of which are here reproduced. The one gives a view of a colonnade from the Temple of the Sun at Palmyra,

meets there, to open the new municipal buildings, which by that time will have been completed at a cost of £500,000.

AN Electrical Lighting and Power Act has recently been passed at the Cape of Good Hope, authorising regulations for the safety of the public. Mr. A. P. Trotter has been appointed Government Electrician and Inspector under this Act.

THE deaths are announced of Dr. A. J. Woitow, Professor of Bacteriology at Moscow; Dr. Ludwig Rüttimeyer, Professor of Zoology at Basel; Dr. F. P. Porcher, of Charleston, South Carolina, author of numerous works on pharmaceutical botany.

THE Executive Committee of the City and Guilds of London Institute are inviting applications for the appointment to the Salters' Company's Research Fellowship for the ensuing year. The Fellowship was founded by the Salters' Company for the encouragement of higher research in chemistry in its relation to