

## MAY METEORS.

IN Spring months meteoric observers can hardly expect very productive results. The weather is often fine and pleasant, it is true, but meteors are usually scarce, and an average night will not present more than about four or five per hour. In 1886, during the month of May, I counted 127 meteors in twenty-five hours of observation. In 1903, May, I saw seventy-two meteors in 18½ hours, and, if allowance is made for time engaged in recording paths, the deduced horary number was about five.

I have noticed that at this season of the year there are comparatively few meteors leaving definite streaks. In July (last half) and August there are, however, a large proportion of streak-producing meteors, but the majority of these are obviously Perseids belonging to the great July-August shower. Some years ago I counted out the number of meteors with streaks seen by me in June and July (1873-1901), and the relative figures were:—

June, of 252 meteors, thirty-one had streaks, proportion 8 to 1.

July, of 641 meteors, 141 had streaks, proportion 4½ to 1.

It cannot be held that May offers any special inducement to meteoric observers, but some very interesting showers are visible. In the early part of the month there are the Aquarids, supposed to be connected with Halley's comet. At about the middle of May the Coronids are often active from radiant at about  $231^{\circ}+27^{\circ}$  (near  $\alpha$  Coronæ) and  $246^{\circ}+31^{\circ}$  ( $\xi$  Herculis), and at the close there are the  $\eta$  Pegasids from  $330^{\circ}+26^{\circ}$ , maximum on May 30.

There are many other showers from Hercules, Draco, Libra, Serpens, Scorpio, &c. Fireballs are tolerably numerous during the month, and they are apparently directed from a number of different radiant.

This epoch is likely well to repay investigation, as it has never been amply studied in past years. More observations should therefore be obtained, so that the leading showers of the present day may be ascertained.

Though the majority of streams are probably of annual occurrence, a few of them are undoubtedly periodical, giving perhaps only one pretty rich exhibition once in a long series of years. The latter class of shower would escape notice unless observations were maintained with great assiduity and regularity. As an instance of a rich periodical shower of this kind, I may mention that on 1879 August 21-25 I witnessed the flight of fifty-six bright meteors from a radiant at  $291^{\circ}+60^{\circ}$ , near the star  $\alpha$  Draconis, but though I frequently endeavoured to re-observe this display, it never returned except under a very feeble aspect.

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## NOTES.

THE annual conversazione of the Royal Society will be held at Burlington House on Wednesday next, May 8.

SIR JAMES DEWAR, F.R.S., has been elected a foreign member of the National Academy of Sciences, Washington.

THE Société chimique de France will celebrate its fifty years' jubilee by special meetings on May 16-18.

REUTER messages from Messina report that a violent eruption of Stromboli occurred at 10 p.m. on April 27. It was accompanied by a strong shock of earthquake, which shattered windows and caused other damage in the vicinity. The cable between the Lipari and Stromboli islands has been broken.

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THE Meteorological Committee has appointed Mr. Ernest Gold, fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, superintendent of instruments in the Meteorological Office, to the readership in dynamical meteorology established for three years from October 1. The readership is constituted from funds contributed by Dr. Arthur Schuster, F.R.S., and is tenable, under certain conditions, at any university in the United Kingdom.

THE exposition which is to be held at Berlin in connection with the fourteenth International Congress for Hygiene and Demography, on September 23-29, promises to be an interesting one. The fight against infectious diseases, principally colonial and tropical diseases, hygiene work of the State and municipality, especially the care of infants, provision of good drinking water, removal of waste, and the hygiene in schools, will be represented by many exhibits. In consideration of the importance of hygiene to private and public life, it has been resolved to keep open the exposition, which is to be held in the "Reichstag," to the end of September.

THE Destructive Insects and Pests Bill was read a second time in the House of Lords on Monday. The Bill is intended to grapple with several matters of importance to the agricultural world, and in particular with the disease called the gooseberry mildew. It provides that the Board of Agriculture may make such orders as are thought fit to prevent the introduction or spread of any particular insect, fungus, or other pest destructive to agricultural or horticultural crops, or to trees or bushes. The Bill gives the Board power to regulate the landing of plants and to authorise the removal or destruction of any diseased plant. Local authorities are empowered to pay compensation for any crops or trees so destroyed.

At a special general meeting of the Geological Society, to be held on Wednesday, May 15, a new section of the bye-laws, providing for the election of women as associates, will be considered and voted upon. The first clause of the proposed new section reads as follows:—"Any woman who has distinguished herself as a geological investigator, or who has shown herself able and willing to communicate to the Society original and important geological information, or who has exercised signal liberality towards the Society, and is desirous of being elected, provided she be a British subject, or be domiciled in the British dominions or their dependencies, may, subject to the provisions hereinafter contained, be elected an Associate, the number elected being limited to forty."

At the second National Poultry Conference, to be held at Reading on July 8-11, the discussions have been arranged under six sections, dealing respectively with poultry farming and production, breeding, hygiene and disease, women and the poultry industry, education and research, and commercial subjects. Among papers to be read at the conference we notice the following:—the Mendelian laws and their application to poultry breeding, by Mr. C. C. Hurst; hybridisation experiments with Ceylon jungle fowl (*Gallus stanleyii*), by Dr. J. Llewellyn Thomas; the economic values of external characters, by M. Louis van der Snickt; parasitic liver disease in poultry, by Prof. F. V. Theobald; the influence of heredity upon the diseases and deformities of poultry, by Dr. H. B. Greene; methods of instruction in poultry-keeping, (a) in the United Kingdom, by Mr. F. W. Parton, (b) in Australia, by Mr. W. H. Clarke; results of experimental work, (a) in the United Kingdom—(b) in America, by