

average stature of Europe. It is to be feared this estimate, based on somewhat small numbers, is too favourable. The impression gained on returning to England after a tour in Scandinavia is scarcely that of the superiority of the English physique. The probable explanation is that the majority of the recorded observations in this country has been made in rural districts, while the actual majority of the population has been subjected to urban influences.

During the last few years a large number of measurements of children in our large towns have been made in connection with the study of school hygiene, and afford data for comparison with the series obtained in Stockholm by Axel Key, and it may be noted that at all school ages the Swedish children show a distinct superiority both in stature and weight. Indeed, the British children present averages very nearly the mean between the Swedish and Italian averages, which would agree well with the view that both Teutonic and Mediterranean races are represented among the present-day English in about equal proportions.

A final feature of great interest recorded in Dr. Deniker's work is the distinct increase in stature which has taken place during the last half-century among several of the European populations, chiefly those which have participated in the general amelioration of social conditions and improvements in hygiene without being to a great extent subjected to urbanising influences.

Further investigations into national physique are urgently needed from the economic and public health standpoint, as well as to elucidate the problems of the systematic anthropologist. It is to be hoped that in time a detailed survey of this country may be undertaken, and that the results may be available for subsequent volumes of Dr. Deniker's comprehensive and illuminating work.

#### ARTHUR LISTER, F.R.S.

BY the death of Mr. Arthur Lister, F.R.S., which, as announced in our issue of July 23, took place at his residence at Leytonstone, Essex, on Sunday, July 20, the science of cryptogamic botany has sustained a severe loss. The deceased gentleman, who was a J.P. for his native county, was the son of the late Mr. J. Jackson Lister, F.R.S., of Upton Essex, where he was born in the year 1830. He was a brother of Lord Lister, and in 1855 married Susanna, daughter of the late Mr. William Tindall, of East Dulwich. From an early period of his career Mr. Lister devoted himself to the study of the Mycetozoa, a group formerly classed with the fungi, but now, largely owing to his researches, allowed to rank as a group of equal value by itself, characterised specially by the peculiar mode of development of its members. In addition to numerous separate papers on the subject in the journals of various scientific societies, Mr. Lister wrote the valuable "Monograph of the Mycetozoa," published in 1894 as one of the well-known British Museum catalogues. Since the date of its appearance this thick green volume, which is illustrated by a large number of plates and text-figures in black and white, remained the standard work on the subject. By the lapse of time it had, however, as a matter of course, become out of date, and, until incapacitated by failing health, Mr. Lister, aided by his daughter, was engaged on preparing a new and enlarged edition.

The issue of this work, as we have been kindly informed by the keeper of the botanical department of the Museum, will not be stopped by the demise of

the senior author, Miss Lister having undertaken the task of bringing it to completion single-handed. The new edition will be far superior to its predecessor in the matter of illustrations, these including a number of plates reproduced by the three-colour process from Miss Lister's sketches.

In addition to cataloguing the species in the Museum collection, Mr. Lister gave in the original edition of this work a valuable account of mycetozoa development and physiology. Mr. Lister joined the Linnean Society so long ago as 1873, serving on the council from 1891 to 1896, and as a vice-president during the last year of this term of office. In 1898 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

#### NOTES.

ON August 5, 1858—fifty years ago—the work of laying the first Transatlantic cable was completed, and telegraphic communication was established between Great Britain and America. As is well known, the cable failed to transmit after a few weeks, but the practicability of connecting the two countries electrically had been demonstrated, and the jubilee of this enterprise cannot be passed without a word of congratulation.

COUNT ZEPPELIN started in his airship from Friedrichshafen at 6.45 a.m. on August 4, and after passing over Bâle, Strassburg, and Karlsruhe, reached Mannheim at 2.40 p.m. A descent was made near Oppenheim at 6 p.m., and the journey was continued at 10.15 p.m. The airship passed over Mainz at 11.0 p.m., and then headed up the Rhine for the homeward journey, reaching Mannheim at 1.45 a.m. on August 5, Eppingen at 4 a.m., and Stuttgart at 6.20 a.m., where, according to the latest telegrams, it broke away from its moorings and caught fire during a storm, and disappeared into the air, Count Zeppelin being safe.

The Paris correspondent of the *Times* reports that the Russian Government has offered a prize of 50,000 roubles (5000*l.*) for a flying machine competition which is to take place next year at St. Petersburg between July 1 and August 15.

The annual meeting of the French Association for the Advancement of Science was opened at Clermont Ferrand on August 3, when the gold medal of the association was presented to Sir William Ramsay, K.C.B., F.R.S.

The President of the Board of Trade has appointed Lord Rayleigh, F.R.S., Prof. J. J. Thomson, F.R.S., Dr. R. T. Glazebrook, F.R.S., Sir John Gavey, C.B., and Mr. A. P. Trotter to be the British delegates to the International Conference on Electrical Units and Standards which is to assemble in London on October 12. Mr. W. Duddell, F.R.S., and Mr. M. J. Collins, of the Board of Trade, will act as secretaries to the British delegates, and Mr. F. E. Smith and Mr. C. W. S. Crawley as assistant secretaries.

At the meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh on Monday, July 20, Dr. R. H. Traquair, F.R.S., vice-president, in the chair, the following prizes were presented in accordance with the award of the council:—(1) the Keith prize for the biennial period 1905-7 to Dr. Alexander Bruce, for his paper entitled "Distribution of the Cells in the Intermedio-lateral Tract of the Spinal Cord," published in the Transactions of the society within the period; (2) the Neill prize for the triennial period 1904-7 to Mr. Frank J. Cole, for his paper entitled "A Monograph on the General Morphology of the Myxinoid Fishes, based