

20h. 50m.; secondary maxima, September 24, oh. 45m., and September 25, 9h. 50m.

Epoch September 27, 8h., seventeenth order of magnitude. Principal maximum, September 26, 7h. 30m.; secondary maxima, September 25, 20h. 40m., and September 26, 18h. 25m.

Epoch September 28, 15h. 20m., sixth order of magnitude. Principal maximum, September 27, 5h. 45m.; secondary maxima, September 28, 3h. 30m., and 10h. 30m.

There is a considerable amount of meteoric activity in September, the first maximum of importance occurring on September 4, 6h. 10m. The principal maxima that become due on September 6, especially the first of them, and the principal maximum that falls on September 7, 21h. 5m., are of very high intensity. The principal maxima also are interesting that occur on September 13, 10h. 30m., and on the three days September 21-23.

JOHN R. HENRY.

August 26.

A Flower Sanctuary.

SOME of the correspondence in your columns on the subject of the flora of the Cheddar Cliffs seems to assume that the Somerset County Council has a power to "proclaim" the flowers in question, that is, to protect them from being gathered, and that it has not exercised this power. I should be much indebted to any of your correspondents who can show me what power the council possesses to protect particular flowers, or how a bye-law can be framed for this purpose with any chance of its being valid. I think it will be found that, without further legislation, County Councils are powerless to afford the protection desired.

EDW. FRY.

Failand House, Failand, nr. Bristol.

A Point in Geological Nomenclature.

WITH reference to Mr. A. Irving's communication under this heading in NATURE of August 15 (p. 608), the term *Quartär*, as German equivalent of our "Quaternary" or "Post-tertiary," is by no means a speciality of Prof. Credner, but the designation generally accepted by all German geologists since Naumann.

F. von Hochstetter (Vienna) used *Quartär* long before Credner, and it appears in the "Flötzformationslehre," written in 1856 by B. von Cotta, who succeeded Naumann in 1842 at the Mining Academy of Freiberg.

F. GILLMAN.

16 Glebe Road, West Bridgford,
Nottingham, August 17.

BOATS AND LIFE-SAVING APPLIANCES ON SHIPS.

AT the time when the *Titanic* was lost the standing Advisory Committee appointed by the Board of Trade under the provisions of Merchant Shipping Acts was engaged in the reconsideration of the regulations for boats and life-saving appliances. A report had been presented by the committee recommending an extension of the previously existing scale for boats, so as to include the largest passenger steamers; and in the course of the inquiry by Lord Mersey and his colleagues an investigation was made of the causes of an apparently long delay on the part of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade in dealing with that report. Satisfactory explanations were forthcoming; but, in view of the great calamity that

had occurred, it was obvious that the committee must reconsider the whole subject. That action was ordered by Mr. Buxton, and the committee received special instructions, its opinion being requested in regard to existing statutory regulations for boats and life-saving appliances on ships generally, and suggestions being invited in regard to "means calculated to diminish the risk or to mitigate the effects of accidents to vessels at sea."

Obviously a wide field of inquiry was laid open by these instructions; and in order to deal with this task efficiently the committee decided to co-opt additional members. A number of eminent men—shipowners, shipbuilders and professional officers of the great registration societies—were invited to join. Captain Watt, formerly commodore of the Cunard Line, was also co-opted, as his experience in command of trans-Atlantic passenger steamers had been altogether exceptional and had only recently been terminated as captain of the great steamship *Lusitania*. The original committee had been both strong and representative, so that the final report—now published as a Blue-book (Cd. 6353, 1912)—represents the views of men of great experience in the construction, command, navigation and ownership of shipping.

Since the report appeared, criticisms have been bestowed upon the constitution of the committee, which has been thought to have been biased in favour of the shipowners of the United Kingdom. A certain confusion of thought underlies such criticism. The committee was intended to be representative of all classes interested in, and having special experience of, shipping. Its functions are purely advisory; the Board of Trade reserves the right of dealing with all recommendations made by the committee, and the framing of all regulations; and in this manner, as experience has shown, the public interests have been well safeguarded. Moreover, a perusal of the report and of the Minority Reports and Reservations—of which there are five—furnishes no real ground for the criticisms to which allusion has been made.

Apart from its expressions of opinion and its recommendations for future practice, the report is of great value as a summary of facts. Five sub-committees were appointed, and their reports form parts of the main report. The first of these sub-committees dealt with types of boats; the second with wireless telegraphy; the third with steamship routes; the fourth with vessels employed to carry passengers in the home trade; the fifth with statistical information. This last sub-committee consisted solely of the chairman (Sir Norman Hill) and the secretary (Mr. Matthew); and the report really embodies returns (relating to the subjects treated) for which the Board of Trade is primarily responsible, although the comments thereon are probably the work of the chairman—a gentleman whose opinions on shipping questions are entitled to respect. It is impossible in this brief notice even to enumerate the contents of the fifth report; all that can be said here is that the extraordinary degree of safety for life and property