Thirdly, it is said that meteorologists and astronomers would welcome months with equal numbers of days, and no doubt they would, one and all, if they could order everything to perfection. But apart from the labour that would be involved in preserving the continuity of the climatological record, involving the translation of one calendar into the other, think of the confusion that would arise in making comparisons between two systems which both have the same names of months! We should be perpetually having to think and specify whether it is the old *January* or the new *January* we are considering, and so forth. It would be just as though, when the new barometer unit the *millibar* was instituted to replace the *inch*, the name "*inch*" had been retained for the new division. Far better would it be to have an entirely new set of calendar names so that the old names would retain their habitual meanings. It is always open to astronomers and meteorologists to invent a system for any special technical purpose for which it may be required; but probably not many of them would take the narrow view and wish to disorganise the world on that account.

This country can, when it likes, be very much to the fore when issues of real importance are involved; but with a sane respect for tradition it is scarcely likely to countenance interference with a system of time-measurement the correction of which by Pope Gregory XIII. was designed to hold good for a very long period ahead.

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January 27.

Time Relations in a Dream.

I WAS much interested by Dr. Atkins's letter in *NATURE* of January 27, p. 117, about time-rate in dreams, and more especially by what he says of the metallic nature of the sound as heard in the dream. This fits in with an observation I made a couple of years ago when I was in lodgings close to a bell-tower. It happened that for other reasons I was not sleeping well at the time, and was frequently waked by the bell ringing hours and quarters. It always seemed then of much higher pitch when I heard it in a dream, or even when I was just awake enough to recognise the source of sound, than when I was fully awake. Several times I could follow the same sound repeated during my transition from sleep to waking, and then found that I really heard the upper notes of the bell in their true pitch, the lower notes being completely blocked out.

Though I have since been able to verify this interpretation nearly to my own satisfaction, I should be glad if any one else could confirm it in any way, as, in the nature of the case, it is difficult to be certain of one's judgment. Can the physiopsychologists help towards an explanation, assuming I am right?

H. F. BIGGS.

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Oxford, January 29.

The Ascent of Elvers in Egyptian Waters.

IN connexion with Dr. Schmidt's article on the "Breeding Places and Migrations of the Eel" (*NATURE*, January 13, p. 51), it may be of interest to give the results of further observations upon the arrival and ascent of elvers in Egyptian waters. The records were made at the pumping-station mentioned in Dr. Schmidt's article. The station is exceptionally favourable for such observation, since skilled observers were (and are) present day and

night (in connexion with other fishery work) throughout the year. There can be no doubt, therefore, that when elvers were reported absent there were in fact none to be seen. Since the pumping-station ceases to work early in the summer, this fact may bring the ascent artificially to an end; but, as a rule, there are signs that the main run is over before the pumps stop. The numbers transported are given as an indication of the extent of the "runs."

All the early "runs" consist of transparent elvers; from the middle of April onwards about 50 per cent. are pigmented.

The observations are as follows:

1919-1920 Season: No observations prior to January 20, 1920, on which date transparent elvers were abundant and remained so until April 15, when the pumps stopped working. Reappeared in large numbers on the nights of July 2, 3, and 4. Total transported, 6,260,000.

1920-1921 Season: First observed December 15, 1920 (also on some date in Lake Menzaleh, near Port Said); remained few till January 30, when they appeared in large numbers for two nights only; then disappeared completely until April 7, when they were present for three successive nights. Appeared again April 19-May 24, when pumps ceased working. Total transported, 1,797,000.

1921-1922 Season: First observed on November 11, 1921, in small quantity till January 20, 1922; remained abundant till February 20, 1922; disappeared till March 23, continuing in decreasing numbers until April 10, when pumps stopped. Total transported, 2,484,000.

1922-1923 Season: First observed October 25; remained in small numbers until December 4, when they were abundant for two nights; remained few in number to date, January 24, 1923.

From the above, it may be observed:

- (1) That elvers may make their first appearance at a given place nearly two months later in one year than another.
- (2) That the dates of first appearance in Egypt are the same as those recorded for the West of Ireland, France, and Spain—say, 1500 miles nearer the suggested centre of dispersal in the Western Atlantic.
- (3) That the main "runs" occur in the same months (February-April) in rivers as widely separated geographically as the Severn, the Po, and the Nile, notwithstanding the very different climatic conditions obtaining in these months in the last-named region.

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Transcription of Russian Proper Names.

IN order to conclude the discussion which followed my proposal to use letters of the Czech alphabet for the above purpose (*NATURE*, April 29, 1922, p. 552)—a proposal which was opposed by Lord Gleichen and Mr. J. H. Reynolds and defended by Messrs. Druce and Glazunov (*NATURE*, November 11, p. 635, and October 14, p. 512)—I tried to find out the opinion of the Academy of Petrograd about this matter. At last, only recently, I have succeeded in obtaining from one member of the Russian Academy of Sciences a copy of a publication: "Memorial book of the Imperial Academy of Sciences for 1914—published March 20.—S.-Peterburg 1914." This contains on p. 180 a "Transcription of Russian Proper Names, approved by the Imperial Academy of Sciences (accepted in the Conference at the meeting of December 2/15, 1906)." To this table six notes are added containing rules concerning the cases in which