

in North Russia, Dr. Wettstein declaring it impossible to connect it with known Phœnician characters.

IN the January session of the Swedish Anthropological Society H. Torell gave the results of an interesting comparative study of the Esquimaux and Japanese. The anatomical and ethnographical resemblances are so striking that they give additional strength to the theory of the settlement of America from Asia by the way of Behring's Straits.

H. V. SCHLAGINTWEIT-SAKÜNLÜNSKY publishes, in connection with his report on the botany of the Himalayas, presented before the Berlin Academy of Sciences, an interesting comparison between the snow limits of the great Asiatic mountain chain and those of the Swiss Alps. The Himalaya range shows a snow limit at the height of 16,600 feet on the northern side, and 16,200 feet on the southern side. That of the Kuenlun range varies from 15,100 feet on the northern side, to 15,800 on the southern. The snow limit of the Alps shows an average height of 9,000 feet, 8,900 feet on the northern side, and 9,200 feet on the southern.

IN the last session of the Austrian Meteorological Society, Prof. A. von Obermayer read a paper on the nature of fogs, strongly advocating the theory regarding them as minute drops of water, the specific gravity of which is overcome by the friction between the particles of air, according to Stokes's hypothesis.

IN a communication in the *Daily News* of January 25, in reference to the Cairo Geographical Society, by the Alexandria Correspondent of that paper, some interesting details are given of papers read on the Eastern Sudan and on Darfur.

THE use of rock crystal for normal scientific apparatus has recently been advocated by S. Stein, of Bonn, in a communication to the German Chemical Society. For scale-beams and scale-pans it is especially adapted, as it is entirely unaffected at ordinary temperatures by acids, bases, or the gases and moisture present in the atmosphere, while possessing nearly the same specific gravity as aluminium—2.65—and being comparatively unelastic. It is equally practicable for standards of measure, longitudinal as well as circular. Discs to be used for telescopes, theodolites, quadrants, &c., if cut at right angles to the chief axis, show an almost absolute unchangeability of form. The smallness of the coefficient of expansion renders it also eminently well fitted for normal thermometers, where accuracy and not cost is the chief requisite.

COMMANDER CAMERON having been invited by the Geographical Society of Paris to deliver a lecture on his journey across Africa did so at an extraordinary meeting held by the Society in the large hall of the Sorbonne, on January 26. The place, although fitted to accommodate 2,000 people, was crowded to inconvenience. On Saturday a banquet was given to Commander Cameron by the Fellows of the Geographical Society, about 200 being present. The President of the Republic was represented by his first aide-de-camp, the Marquis D'Abzac, and the Minister of Public Instruction by his general secretary, M. Watteville, who delivered to Commander Cameron the University gold palms and diploma. The knife and fork used by Livingstone in his African travels, and which had been purchased by MM. Rambaud, the large French traders established in Zanzibar, and presented to the Geographical Society of Paris, were used by Cameron. A magnificent album of the portraits of all the persons present at the banquet will be sent to Commander Cameron. MM. Hachette and Co. are preparing a magnificent French edition of Cameron's work.

AT the session of the Berlin Academy of Sciences on January 25, Prof. Du Bois-Reymond gave a report of the investigations

carried on in connection with the Humboldt foundation intrusted to the Academy. At present two travellers are supported by the funds—Dr. Hildebrandt, who is studying the snowy regions of the Kilimanjaro Mountains in Eastern Africa, and Dr. C. Sachs, engaged in researches in Brazil on the nature of the electricity of the electric eel.

A PIECE of burnt stone resembling a piece of partially burnt slate coal, with white sparkling specks on it, fell at Ecclefechan on the evening of the 2nd January. Two men, walking on the Glasgow road, heard a noise behind them, and on turning round they found the stone referred to embedded in the ground to the extent of half-an-inch or more. One of them attempted to lift it but got his hand burnt. The stone, which measures about four inches by two, and weighs nine ounces, took twenty minutes to cool. A volume of smoke proceeded from it.

A FEW years since, M. Delacour, sub-director of the Danish Meteorological Institute, invented the so-called phono-telegraphic system. Since then he has carried on an extensive series of experiments, the cost of which has been defrayed by the Danish Government, with the view of perfecting the new system. The results of his investigations were displayed a few days since to a company of electricians and members of the Danish Parliament. As is already known this system is based upon the application of vibrating currents, tuning-forks of the same number of vibrations per second being brought within the influence of current at both ends of the wire. M. Delacour made use on the above occasion of twelve different pairs of tuning-forks, all of which were connected at the same time with a single telegraphic wire. He was then able to send simultaneously twelve messages by means of the tuning-forks as well as one by the ordinary method, and most satisfactorily solved the problem with regard to the use of a single wire for the forwarding of numerous messages at the same time.

PROF. ANTON KERNER, author of the "Means of Protection in Flowers against Unwelcome Visitors" (*NATURE*, vol. xv. p. 237), has lately received from Charles Darwin the following characteristic epistle:—"Allow me to express to you my heartiest thanks for the pleasure experienced in reading your work. You have opened up an entirely new field of research, and explained many things which were previously enigmas to me. I find that I have fallen into many mistakes, in the preparation of my last book, when touching upon the subject which you have considered so fully."

THE last number of the *Jahrbuch der k. k. geologischen Reichsanstalt* (vol. xxvi. No. 3) contains a very valuable elaborate paper by K. M. Paul—"Grundzüge der Geologie der Bukowina"—with a map on a scale of 1 : 280,000, reduced from that of the Geological Survey, and embodying the results of the survey, made during the last four years, together with the data furnished by former explorations. The southern, hilly corner of the Duchy is occupied by an island of crystalline rocks, bordered on one side by a zone of mesozoic limestone (Dyas and Trias). A broad zone of the so-called Carpathian sandstones (Neocomian, Gault, and Upper Chalk, and probably Eocene) follows, as is generally the case at the northern slope of the Carpathian, and crosses the land in a north-western direction. Further to the north-east we see a broad district covered with Neogene formations (Lower and Upper Mediterranean, and Garmathian stages), diluvial deposits, and loess, which district meets with the Galician plains to the west, and the Podolian to the north.

THE geological structure, and especially the volcanoes of the southern parts of Luzon (Philippines) are the subject of an interesting note by Dr. Drasche, being a preliminary report upon his recent travels in the interior of the island, which appeared in Tchernak's *Mineral. Mitth.*, 1876, Heft 3. The note is