

# SCIENCE

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, PUBLISHING THE OFFICIAL NOTICES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1901.

A DECADE OF NORTH AMERICAN PALEOBOTANY. 1890-1900.\*

## CONTENTS:

<i>A Decade of North American Paleobotany</i> : PROFESSOR D. P. PENHALLOW .....	161
<i>Determination of the Sun's Distance from Observations of Eros</i> : PROFESSOR W. W. CAMPBELL...	176
<i>On the Nature of the Solar Corona, with some Suggestions for Work at the Next Total Eclipse</i> : PROFESSOR R. W. WOOD .....	179
<i>Chicago Section of the American Mathematical Society</i> : PROFESSOR THOMAS F. HOLGATE.....	181
<i>Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters</i> : FRANK CHAPMAN SHARP .....	181
<i>Scientific Books</i> :—	
<i>Ormond on the Foundations of Knowledge</i> : PROFESSOR R. M. WENLEY. <i>Cohnheim's Chemie der Eiweisskörper</i> : PROFESSOR LAFAYETTE B. MENDEL. <i>Notter's Treatise on Hygiene</i> : DR. W. H. PARK.....	182
<i>Scientific Journals and Articles</i> .....	186
<i>Societies and Academies</i> :—	
<i>Geological Society of Washington</i> : DR. F. L. RANSOME AND DAVID WHITE. <i>Biological Society of Washington</i> : F. A. LUCAS. <i>Philosophical Society of Washington</i> : CHARLES K. WEAD. <i>The Las Vegas Science Club</i> : T. D. A. C. <i>New York Section of the American Chemical Society</i> : DR. DURAND WOODMAN .....	187
<i>Discussion and Correspondence</i> :—	
<i>Note on Vegeto-electricity</i> : I. THORNTON OSMOND. <i>Scientific Expedition to Iceland, Greenland and Labrador</i> : DR. R. A. DALY .....	191
<i>Current Notes on Meteorology</i> :—	
<i>Report of the Chief of the Weather Bureau; West Indian Hurricanes; The Monthly Weather Review</i> : PROFESSOR R. DEC. WARD.....	192
<i>Botanical Notes</i> :—	
<i>Botanical Opportunities in Washington; Central Massachusetts Forests; Chrysanthemum Rust</i> : PROFESSOR CHARLES E. BESSEY .....	193
<i>The National Observatory Question</i> .....	195
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i> .....	196
<i>University and Educational News</i> .....	199

THE history of paleobotany constitutes a record of the most persistent and painstaking efforts to unravel a series of great facts which have been left by the wayside of time through an untold period of the earth's history, and to interpret them with reference to their true significance in the life of this planet.

Although attention had been directed to the phenomena of plants preserved in the crust of the earth essentially with the first discovery of coal, their occurrence did not excite very marked interest until the latter part of the seventeenth century—the observations of that time being made from the standpoint of the curious in nature, rather than from an appreciation or even suggestion of their scientific value, and it was not until 1709 that the first meritorious attempt to describe them in a scientific spirit was made. From then on through the remainder of the eighteenth century, a very considerable literature accumulated, and the infant science passed through what Ward has so very aptly called the 'twilight of its development,' while very nearly a full century passed before Schlotheim published the results of those studies which must be taken

\* Address of the President of the Society of Plant Morphology and Physiology, given before the Baltimore Meeting, December, 1900.

MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to the responsible editor, Professor J. McKeen Cattell, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

# Science

**13 (318)**

*Science* **13** (318), 161-200.

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