The American Association for the Advancement of Science.—

The Science of Astronomy: Professor Asaph Hall............... 1
Popular Science: Professor W. S. Franklin .......................... 8
Incomplete Observations: Professor H. A. Weber ................. 15

Scientific Books:—
Leverett on Glacial Formations and Drainage Features of the Erie and Ohio Basins: Warren Upham .............. 22

Scientific Journals and Articles:—
Societies and Academies:—

Discussion and Correspondence:—
President Schurman on the Educational Requirements for Professional Study: Professor Alonzo Engelbart Taylor. The 'Squid from Onondaga Lake, N. Y.': Dr. A. E. Oertmann. Kallima Butterflies: Nat. Sci. 29

Shorter Articles:—

The Bishop Collection of Jade and Hard-stone Objects ............... 35
Scientific Notes and News ........................................... 36
University and Educational News .................................... 40

Friday, January 2, 1903.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The Science of Astronomy.*

I take for the subject of my address the science of astronomy, and propose to give a brief historical sketch of it, to consider its future development, and to speak of the influence of the sciences on civilization.

The science of astronomy is so closely connected with the affairs of life, and is brought into use so continuously and in such a systematic manner, that most people never think of the long labor that has been necessary to bring this science to its present condition. In the early times it was useful to the legislator and the priest, for keeping records, the times of public ceremonies and of religious festivals. It slowly grew into the form of a science, and became able to make predictions with some certainty. This was many centuries ago. Hipparchus, who lived 150 B.C., knew the periods of the six ancient planets with considerable accuracy. His periods are:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Planet</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Error x 100</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>874.6698</td>
<td>+ 0^4.0007</td>
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<td>Venus</td>
<td>224.7028</td>
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<td>Earth</td>
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<td>Mars</td>
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<td>Jupiter</td>
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*Address of the President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington meeting, December 29, 1902.