

and Himyaritic civilizations once adjoined one another, and that their overthrow marked the triumph of the Beduin children of Ishmael. Since Mr. Doughty's travels, Prof. Euting and M. Huber (who was afterwards murdered by the Hharb Arabs) have visited Medain Salihh and Teyma, and carried away with them a large number of valuable inscriptions. One of these, on a stêlé discovered at Teyma, is now in Paris.

It is interesting to find Mr. Doughty confirming the statement that the final *n* of classical Arabic is still pronounced in the Nejd. His remarks on the diseases prevalent among the natives are also curious, though it is difficult to believe that the ophthalmia from which he had himself suffered is due to drinking cold water before going to bed. Everyone, however, who has had much experience of the Beduin will agree with the character he gives of them. The Egyptians have a proverb: "He who shows a Beduin the way to his door will have long sorrow"; and the traveller is unfortunate who is compelled to intrust himself to their tender mercies.

A. H. S.

OUR BOOK SHELF.

Charts showing the Mean Barometrical Pressure over the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. (London: Published by the Authority of the Meteorological Council, 1888.)

THESE charts are issued in the form of an atlas, and deal in a very complete manner with the barometer means and range of all oceans. The months for which separate charts are given are February, May, August, and November, which have been selected to represent the mean values for winter, spring, summer, and autumn respectively in either hemisphere. In addition to the large charts, which give the material in considerable detail, there are four index charts, on a smaller scale, which exhibit for the same months the isobars, or lines of equal pressure, over the entire globe. These are followed by four charts, on the same scale, showing the range of barometrical pressure. The observations have been derived from logs and documents deposited in the Meteorological Office; logs and remark-books of Her Majesty's ships, furnished by the Admiralty; published narratives of various voyages, and various published results of other nations; also observations at coast stations and islands obtained from all available sources. The number of observations obtained from the Meteorological Office logs for these several oceans are: the Atlantic Ocean, 339,300; the Indian Ocean, 162,000; the Pacific, 88,300.

The barometrical means are given in large figures for areas of 5° of latitude by 5° of longitude, and for the benefit of those who require the material in greater detail smaller figures are given to show the means for areas of 2° of latitude by 2° of longitude, the several means being obtained from the daily averages. The range to the nearest tenth of an inch for each 5° area is placed over the mean for that area, and the number of observations under it; so that the charts not only supply the navigator with all the detail he is likely to require, but afford opportunity of the values being combined by other compilers with material of a similar nature. The isobars are given for each tenth of an inch, and the free use which has been made of the barometrical values for the coast stations greatly enhances the degree of dependence of the several lines. To facilitate the use of the charts for the navigator, the observations are corrected for a constant altitude of 11 feet above the sea, and are reduced to 32° F., but are not corrected for gravity; a table is, however, given on the face of each chart to facilitate this correction.

The general charts which give the isobars of the globe show very conspicuously the prevalence of high-pressure areas in each ocean in each of the four seasons. Change is of course shown in the distribution of pressure, but there is the same tendency to the persistency of high reading. It is seen that these areas oscillate and alter somewhat in intensity with the season, but there are many characteristics in common. The northern Indian Ocean, which is much more surrounded by land, is, however, an exception, the high pressure being situated over the northern part of the ocean, in November and February, and decreasing southwards; whilst in May and August the pressure is lowest in the north and increases southwards, this change being intimately related to the monsoon winds. The charts of range show well the influence of season, the largest differences occurring in the winter months in each hemisphere. In February the range to the west of the British Islands is 2.0 inches, whereas in August it is only one-half as great. The effect of latitude on the amount of range is very evident, the values near the equator being very small. These charts, which have been compiled by Nav.-Lieut. Baillie, R.N., are considerably in advance of any previous work of a similar nature, and will materially aid in explaining the general circulation of the wind over the globe, barometric pressure and wind being so intimately co-related.

Commercial Mathematics. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1888.)

THIS volume is the continuation of a series of books on commercial education, and specially adapted for candidates preparing for the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board. Arithmetic is first dealt with, the first chapter consisting of an account of the decimal system in France. Moneys, weights, and measures, of Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Russia, are next discussed, followed by numerous examples; and the first part concludes with a chapter on "Exchange." Algebra is the subject of Part II, which extends as far as quadratic equations, including involution and evolution, and a chapter on the methods of testing algebraical results. The examples are very numerous throughout, and the book ought to be much in demand by the above-mentioned students and others. The volume concludes with a list of results of the various examples.

A Wanderer's Notes. By W. Beatty-Kingston. In Two Vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1888.)

FOR about thirteen years Mr. Beatty-Kingston acted as a newspaper correspondent, and in this capacity he had to visit many centres of life on the Continent. In the present volumes he offers a selection from the innumerable pen-and-ink sketches taken during his "multifarious peregrinations." The work, we need scarcely say, has no strictly scientific interest; but it is fresh and amusing, and will no doubt give pleasure to many a reader who has never had an opportunity of seeing the places described in its lively pages. The author is particularly successful in the chapters devoted to Germany, where he seems to have had exceptional means of making himself acquainted with the characteristics of the various classes of the community.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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The "Sky-coloured Clouds" again.

THESE clouds have reappeared. Last night was the first occasion I have noticed any very distinct display of them