

volume containing three courses of lectures on astronomical biography by Prof. Oliver Lodge, F.R.S. The work will be fully illustrated, and will bear the title "Pioneers of Science."

AT the monthly meeting of the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, held on July 13 last, as we learn from the Melbourne *Argus* of July 14, Messrs. Luehman and French read a note and exhibited the skin of a tree-climbing kangaroo from Northern Queensland, new to science, to which they gave the name of *Dendrolagus muelleri*. This remarkable marsupial has a body about two feet in length, with a tail somewhat exceeding two feet. The disproportion between the fore legs and the hind legs is not nearly so great as that of the ordinary kangaroo and wallaby; the toes are strong and curved, to enable it to climb tall and straight trees, on the leaves of which it exists. This tree-kangaroo is more nearly allied to the species which was discovered a few years ago in Queensland than to the two species from New Guinea. The specimen described was got from a straight tree, about ninety feet above the ground.

In his letter on "Dredging Products" (NATURE, August 13, p. 344), Mr. Alex. Meek, writing from Shetland, gave a short *résumé* of localities where *Actinotrocha* has been found. As the south coast of England was not mentioned, Mr. W. L. Calderwood writes to call attention to a paper by his predecessor at the M.B.A. Laboratory, Plymouth, Mr. G. C. Bourne, published in the *Journal of the Marine Biological Association*, vol. i., No. 1. After mentioning the occurrence of *Tornaria*, Mr. Bourne goes on to say:—"Actinotrocha, the larva of *Phoronis*, is common. . . . Several specimens of larval *Amphioxus* were taken in the tow-net towards the end of October." In vol. ii. No. 1, Mr. Garstang also has a note on the occurrence of the adult *Phoronis*. *Actinotrocha* has again appeared several times during the present summer.

M. IMFELD, the Swiss engineer, who has been engaged to examine the nature of the summit of Mont Blanc for the construction there of M. Janssen's proposed Observatory, recounts in a Zürich journal the difficulties he is experiencing in his preliminary survey. M. Imfeld is staying with eight workmen and two doctors at M. Vallot's Observatory, which has an altitude of 4400 metres, and thence they proceed daily to the summit, where they work for several hours a day in the endeavour to ascertain the depth of the snow for the purpose of getting the necessary foundation for the building. M. Eiffel has expressed the opinion that the construction of an Observatory will only be possible if the snow does not exceed a depth of 12 metres. M. Imfeld states that they have encountered traces of a ridge of rock 18 to 20 metres below the summit, and covered with about 1 metre of snow. They have therefore commenced to make a series of lateral tunnels on three sides, at a distance equal to 12 metres below the summit, to ascertain if the ridge extends to that height. Progress is necessarily slow. Most of the men are suffering from *mal de montagne*. Some, however, who are engaged at M. Vallot's cabin are able to work almost as long as in the valley, and they also eat and sleep well. In spite of two coke stoves, the thermometer of the cabin never rises above zero; even ink freezes, and water boils at 83°, and they cannot properly cook meat. For a day or two they were disturbed by violent storms.

MARTINIQUE has been visited by a terrible cyclone, the most violent that has been known in the island since 1817. It lasted four hours, and was followed by an earthquake; and many lives were lost. According to the latest information received in Paris from Martinique on Monday last, the number of persons known to have perished was 340; but that did not include the sailors lost in numerous shipwrecks along the coast and at sea. Besides the persons killed, very many were injured by the falling buildings, trees, and stones. All along the coast houses were

completely demolished. The town of Morne Rouge is said to be a total wreck, and Fort de France is almost entirely destroyed. Much suffering prevails among the population.

MESSRS. L. REEVE AND CO. have in preparation a new work on the British Fungi, Phycomyces, and Ustilaginæ, by George Masee, Lecturer on Botany for the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching; a work on the British Hemiptera Heteroptera, by Edward Saunders; a new work on the Lepidoptera of the British Islands, by Charles G. Barrett; and a new work on the physiology of the Invertebrata, by Dr. A. B. Griffiths.

MESSRS. WHITTAKER AND CO. are about to publish "A First Book of Electricity and Magnetism," by W. Perren Maycock. The work is intended for the use of elementary science and art and engineering students, and general readers.

MESSRS. CASSELL AND CO. are issuing, in monthly parts, a new and revised edition of Sir R. Stawell Ball's well-known "Story of the Heavens." The first part has just been published.

THE additions to the Zoological Society's Gardens during the past week include a Common Fox (*Canis vulpes*), British, presented by Captain H. S. Tunnard; five White-eared Conures (*Conurus leucotis*) from Brazil, presented by Mrs. Arthur Smithers; four Leopard Tortoises (*Testudo pardalis*), three Angulated Tortoises (*Chersina angulata*), a Galeated Pentonyx (*Pelomedusa galeata*), a Hoary Snake (*Coronella cana*), a Robben Island Snake (*Coronella phocarum*) from South Africa, presented by the Rev. G. H. R. Fisk, C.M.Z.S.; two Alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*) from Carolina, presented by Mr. Charles Downs; a Gold Pheasant (*Thaumalea picta* ♀) from China, presented by Mr. R. Hudson; a Pig-tailed Monkey (*Macacus nemestrinus* ♂) from Java, two Water Vipers (*Cenchrus piscivora*) from North America, deposited.

## SOCIETIES AND ACADEMIES.

### PARIS.

Academy of Sciences, August 17.—M. Duchartre in the chair.—On a new blow-pipe, by M. Paquelin.—On "cyclic systems," by M. A. Ribaucour.—New researches on the solar atmosphere, by M. H. Deslandres. (See Our Astronomical Column.)—On the enormous velocity of a solar prominence observed on June 17, 1891, by M. Jules Fényi. M. Trouvelot has previously recorded a remarkable luminous outburst that occurred on the sun on June 17. The position-angle of the group of prominences observed by M. Fényi was about 282°. At one time the velocity of one portion of the group reached the high value of about 850 kilometres per second. And another portion was elevated through about 72' 2" in 210 seconds—the mean velocity being at least 485 kilometres per second. It is therefore concluded from the observations that matter can be projected from the sun into space with a velocity sufficient to prevent its falling back again.—Mechanical determination of the series of atoms of carbon in organic compounds, by M. G. Hinrichs.—On the arterial system of Isopods, by M. A. Schneider.—On the growth of the shell of *Helix aspersa*, by M. Moynier de Villepoix.

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