

chloride, $C_6H_5_2CHCl_2$, reacts with magnesium diphenyl in an interesting manner, forming without extraneous application of heat triphenylmethane, $(C_6H_5)_3CH$, and magnesium chloride.

NOTES from the Marine Biological Station, Plymouth.—The *Actinotrocha* larva of *Phoronis* has now made its appearance in the floating fauna. The Radiolaria mentioned last week, though still present, have become much less numerous; the tow-nets have this week been crowded with *Rhizosolenia*. The Siphonophore *Muggiea atlantica* is abundant, and the medusæ *Saphenia mirabilis* and *Amphinema Titania*, with swarms of small *Obelia*, have also been observed. The Nauplii of *Sacculina* are plentiful, and among Mollusca the larvæ of *Ægirus punctilucens* and the larva *Cirropteron semilunare* of M. Sars (possessing a four-lobed velum) have been observed. The Polyclad *Leptoplana tremellaris* is now breeding; and young metamorphosed specimens of the Opisthobranch *Oscanius membranaceus* have been taken with the dredge on the bottom.

THE additions to the Zoological Society's Gardens during the past week include a Bonnet Monkey (*Macacus sinicus*) from India, presented by Mrs. H. Leavitt; a Blau-bok (*Cephalophus pygmaeus*) from South Africa, presented by Mr. J. E. Matcham; a Yellow Baboon (*Cynocephalus babouin*) from West Africa, a Banded Gymnogene (*Polyboroides typicus*) from East Africa, a White-necked Stork (*Dissura episcopus*) from East Africa, presented by Mr. Thomas E. Remington; a European Tree Frog (*Hyla arborea*) from Europe, two Fire-bellied Toads (*Bombinator igneus*) from Europe, and a Spotted Salamander (*Salamandra maculosa*) from Europe, presented by Mr. Hood; eleven Garden Dormice (*Myoscus quercinus*) from Spain, forty-eight Glossy Ibises (*Plegadis falcinellus*) from Spain, and four Marbled Ducks (*Anas angustirostris*) from Spain, presented by Lord Lilford, F.Z.S.; a Rose-crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua moluccensis*) from Moluccas, presented by Lady Sudeley; two Ypecaha Rails (*Aramides ypecatra*) from South America, presented by Mr. F. H. Chalk, a Boa (*Boa constrictor*) from South America, and two Great Bustards (*Otis tarda*) from Spain, deposited; and a Wapiti Deer (*Cervus canadensis*) born in the Menagerie.

OUR ASTRONOMICAL COLUMN.

HONORARY DISTINCTIONS.—From the current number of *L'Astronomie* we gather that M. Janssen, director of the Observatory of Meudon, has been made a Commander of the Legion of Honour. Messrs. Callandreaux and Bigourdan, assistant-astronomers at the Paris Observatory, have received the distinctions of Officers of Public Instruction, and MM. Camille Flammarion and Jordan and Hermite, of the Institute, have received from the King of Greece the Cross of the Commander of the Order of the Saviour.

A METEOR.—An observer, writing to us from Westgate-on-Sea, gives the following account of a meteor seen there on the evening of August 27:—"At about 8.40 p.m. I saw a very brilliant meteor here. The trail, as far as I could judge, must have commenced somewhere about the star β Sagittæ, but the most brilliant part of it was accurately noted as lying between two points, one being half-way between α and γ Aquilæ and the other being about a third of the distance (from η) between η and δ of the same constellation. The meteor may be described as "rapid," and its direction of motion was south. The most striking feature of this observation was the length of time (about six minutes) the trail remained visible in the heavens, and its subsequent change of shape. At first it appeared of a bluish-white colour and was very bright, its path describing practically a straight line; but about four minutes later it had dimmed very considerably (the same colour being maintained), but the trail was no longer straight but distinctly wavy, giving one the idea that the meteoritic dust particles must have encountered some air currents travelling at right angles to its length."

A BEQUEST TO ASTRONOMY.—By the will of Mr. Arthur Leake, late of Ashby, Ross, Tasmania, a sum of £10,000 was put by for the purpose of founding a school for the practical teaching of astronomy in one of the Australian universities, colleges, or leading schools. It was stipulated that a part of such teaching should consist of lectures illustrated with diagrams and instruments, and the sum of £3000 could be spent in purchasing the necessary equipment. From the proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania (issue 1 June, 1893) it appears that there is a little difficulty in determining the best means of using the bequest. Mr. H. C. Russell, F.R.S., C.M.G., has drawn up a scheme for the proposed school which has much to commend it. He points out that Hobart offers special advantages of climate and position for the Leake Observatory, and suggests that £1800 should be spent in purchasing a photographic astronomical telescope, to be used for work in connection with the photographic chart. It is proposed that the University of Tasmania shall establish a school of astronomy and the observatory, and that the lecturer in mathematics and physics shall also teach astronomy, and have general control and direction of the observatory, for which he should be paid from the Leake fund £100 per annum in addition to his salary from the university. An observatory assistant is provided in the scheme with a salary of £200 per annum. The sum of £50 a year is set down for photographic plates, chemicals, &c., bringing the total annual expenditure up to £350, which is the interest on £7000 from the Leake estate. When Mr. Russell's paper was read, in August, 1892, an opinion was expressed that it was unnecessary to "import an astronomical expert in order to give the instruction in astronomy, and to superintend the observatory," and that the duties of the observer might be combined with those of the Government meteorologist. With this feeling the following resolution was passed:—"The Royal Society of Tasmania having placed itself in communication with the Council of the University with the view of formulating a scheme for securing the benefit of the Leake bequest to the colony of Tasmania, the Premier be requested to refrain from making any permanent appointment to the office of meteorologist pending the result of such conference."

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

DR. NANSEN has telegraphed from Yugor Strait, at the entrance to the Kara Sea, on August 3, the message reaching the Vardö telegraph office on August 23. A good voyage had been made to Nova Zembla, the only unpleasant episodes being the occurrence of fogs and contrary winds. On the 27th ice was encountered in lat. $69^{\circ} 50' N.$, long. $50^{\circ} E.$, about ten miles north-east of the Island of Kolgueff. Dr. Nansen forced his way through the ice, the *Fram* proving a splendid ship for the purpose, and reached Yugor Strait on the 29th, making a run of 250 miles in two days. The coal-ship, which was to have been waiting at Yugor Strait, had not arrived, but having sufficient coal on board Dr. Nansen intended to sail into the Kara Sea on August 3, rather than risk delay by waiting. He took on board "thirty-four splendid sledge-dogs." Little ice was reported in the southern part of the Kara Sea, a southerly wind having driven the pack northward. If the ice does not turn out worse than reported, Nansen hoped to reach the New Siberian Islands before the end of August, and if he does so he considers success almost certain. The *Fram* will touch at the Olonetz River, near the Lena delta, if there is time, and send farther news.

THE geography of South America has recently been receiving great attention from German travellers and officials in the various South American republics. In a recent number of *Petermann's Mitteilungen*, Richard Payer describes a journey from Lima across the Andes and down the valley of the Ucayali to the Amazon. In the course of it he visited an interesting Tyrolese colony at Pozuzo, which he found in the course of extinction, after thirty years' hard struggle on the part of the colonists to maintain a footing in their remote and isolated settlement. Dr. Brakebusch has from time to time published portions of the material he has been collecting for an exhaustive account of the physical geography of the Argentine. He divides the country from the crest of the Andes to the valley of the Parana into successive zones—snowy summits and cliffs, high-level sand-dunes formed from glacial debris, scree, alpine pastures, low-level sand-dunes, salt flats, forests, and pampas.