

Atmospheric Electricity.

EXTRACT from pages 15 and 16 of the "Report on Atmospheric Electricity," by Professor J. D. Everett, M.A., D.C.L., Queen's College, Belfast; published by authority of the Meteorological Council, London, 1878 :—

" 28. The late ARCTIC EXPEDITION was furnished with two of Sir William Thomson's portable electrometers, which were committed to the charge of Captain Parr of the "Alert," who has furnished a report of the results obtained.

" Observations were taken at Disco and other places further north, from July 9th to November 22nd; the first observation at the winter quarters of the ship being on September 9th. The potential observed was almost always positive, and does not appear to differ materially from what is observed in temperate climates. The observations, however, are too scanty to furnish a very exact comparison. The electrometer with which the observations were made was broken on November 22nd, and Captain Parr was never able, either before or after this accident, to make any use of the other electrometer.

" 29. The most notable circumstance connected with these observations was the difficulty of getting a sufficiently good earth-connexion, owing to the non-conducting quality of the snow and ice; a quality which became more marked as the temperature fell. On October 26th, with the thermometer at 12 below zero Fahrenheit, the ice was found to give a sufficiently good earth for the measurement of difference of potential between the earth and a point in the air, although it had been found insufficient for the operation of charging the Leyden jar. On November 22nd, with the thermometer at -37° F., it was found insufficient even for the measurement of difference of potential; and it was in the attempt to remedy this want by a connexion with the ship's cable that the accident occurred which destroyed the instrument."
