

SCIENTIFIC NOTES.

S. P. Langley, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., has announced a series of prizes and medals to be awarded out of the Hodgkins' Fund for the best treatises in the field of any science, or any art, provided only that they have to do with "the nature and properties of atmospheric air in connection with the welfare of man." The first prize is \$10,000; the second, \$2,000; the third, \$1,000: other prizes will consist of medals. Competition to close July 1st, 1894, save for first prize, which closes December 31st, 1891. Mr. Langley will supply full particulars to any applicant.

By means of patient observations, extending over many years, Schwabe, an amateur, discovered the periodicity of sun-spots. By means of ten years' photometric observation of the asteroids for brightness, Parkhurst, of Brooklyn, N. Y., another amateur, has discovered that the variation in the brightness of the sun during that time has not amounted to as much as one per cent., and that sun-spots, or no sun-spots—all sides of the sun give out essentially the same amount of light.

It is announced that the Warner Observatory will be removed from Rochester, N. Y., to the State University at Boulder, Col., with Dr. Lewis Swift and his son, Edward, as observers. It is now stated that though the observatory itself was the property of Mr. Warner, the well-known 16-inch telescope was and is the property of Dr. Swift.

The Astronomical and Physical Society of Toronto is endeavoring to be of some service to astronomers in general, as well as to those amateurs in Toronto and in Ontario in whose interests it has been actively working for several years. It is trying to bring about, if possible, a world-wide understanding on the vexed subject of changing the astronomical and nautical day so as to commence at midnight, at the civil day does, instead of at noon. To ascertain the opinions of astronomers, the Society, in connection with the Canadian Institute, has distributed nearly one thousand pamphlets containing matter leading up to a question which professional and other observers are asked to answer. It is understood that answers are rapidly coming in from the United States and Europe, and that much interest is being taken in the action of the Society. The course of the Society, in this and other matters, goes far to justify the Legislature in making an annual grant to its funds.

Notwithstanding the heat and drought of spring in the west of Europe, a backward spring was experienced, not only over much of

Canada, and the United States down to the Gulf of Mexico, but also in many parts of the old world. It seems strange to those of us who can think of Palestine only as a warm country, that Jerusalem, during the last ten days of March had snowfall so abundant as to rival the greatest ever known in Toronto in the third decade of March. Seventeen inches of snow fell, impeding traffic in the city and its environs. In the country the effects were not merely inconvenient; many perished through cold and starvation. Twenty-six travellers, lost in the snow, were buried at what was known in ancient times as Shechem. But later heavy snow-falls are recorded. A party of travellers tell of being snow-bound on the Mount of Olives about the middle of April, and from thence looking over at the snow-covered roofs of the Holy City. An inscription a little distance from the Lake of Gennesaret reads "Do not be surprised if you see snow here in April: I have seen it in June." These occasional occurrences of severe weather do not prove that the climate of Palestine is becoming colder. King David complained of the cold at night, and an ancient Scripture, included in the non-canonical books called the Apocrypha, tells how Nehemiah, the governor of the returned exiles, was waited upon by farmers from the neighborhood of Jerusalem to secure relief from the extortionate rates of interest on mortgages which well-to-do Jewish money-lenders were exacting from them, and how, after several days of consultation, they returned home on account of not being able to endure the severe cold.

A naked-eye comet, which will be known as Rordame's Comet, was discovered at 10 p.m. July 8th, at Salt Lake City. It was also independently discovered at 10 p.m., July 10th, at Galt, by Mr. John Goldie, who had not heard of Mr. Rordame's prior discovery. This comet, which about July 20th, was in the constellation Leo Minor, appears in a small telescope as a nebulous object with a hazy and ill-defined tail. Photographs indicate conditions not visible in any telescope, such as the presence of more than one tail, and the existence of a smaller comet travelling either alongside of or within the larger tail, and at the same speed. The stranger is an interesting object, and is being sedulously watched by astronomers, and is well worth the study and contemplation of amateurs. It is moving rapidly to the southeast and is generally supposed to have passed the sun. Its spectrum has been observed and drawn by Mr. A. F. Miller and Mr. Andrew Elvins, members of the Astronomical and Physical Society of Toronto.

BOOK NOTICES.

Later Canadian Poems.—Edited by J. E. WETHERALL, B. A. Royal 16mo, 187 pp. Toronto, The Copp, Clark Co., Ltd.

A beautiful little volume, in blue cloth, in excellent print and the best of paper—it prepossesses the reader. The contents, on perusal, in-

crease his appreciation of the volume. The poems selected are from thirteen of the younger Canadian poets: none of the poems are of earlier date than 1880. The poets from whom selections are taken are William Wilfrid Campbell, Bliss Carman, Archibald Lampman, Prof. C. G.