XXIII. On meteorological nomenclature

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the arc $47^{\circ} 20'$, while M. LAPLACE's Elements are $\cdot 01469$ and $46^{\circ} 48'$.

Diam.	Depression.			Diam.	Depression.		
	NICH. 1809.	LAPL. 1810.	LP. C. C. 1776.		NICH. 1809.	LAPL. 1810.	LP. C. C. 1776.
·8	·00118	·00128		·3	·02906	·02965	·036
·7	·00224	·00244		·25	·04067	·04117	·050
·6	·00416	·00462	·005	·2	·05502	·05798	·067
·5	·00805	·00868	·007	·15	·08621	·08538	·092
·45	·01106	·01174		·1	·14027	·01394	·140
·4	·01522	·01591	·015	·05	·29497		
·35	·02098	·02165	·025				

A. B. C. D.]

XXIII. *On Meteorological Nomenclature.* By P. J. BROWN, Esq.

To Mr. Tilloch.

SIR, — W^{ANT} of leisure has prevented my perusing, till this evening, Mr. Forster's paper on the nomenclature of clouds published in your last number, and I regret being compelled to differ in opinion from a person for whose talents I have so much respect. In every department of polite literature, with the exception of scientific nomenclature, I feel decidedly hostile to the late fashionable introduction of exotic words*: the writings of Swift, whose language must be admired by every lover of pure English, have fully proved the adequacy of our mother tongue, for every purpose of general composition: but it should be recollected, in adopting scientific terms, that science is not a native of any particular country; but a citizen of the world who will always be protected and fostered in every state alive to its own interest and glory: it is consequently evident that the language of science should be, to as great an extent as can be accomplished, intelligible to all.

Consider the state of chemical knowledge when the illustrious Lavoisier composed his excellent nomenclature: can it be supposed that the acquisition of that most pleasing and useful science would have become so general, if, instead of adopting

* Addison's excellent and humorous paper in the Spectator, No. 165, is as applicable to the present day, as it could possibly have been to the time of the battle of Blenheim: how many dispatches during the late war would have left half London ignorant of the fate of a battle, had not the guns told them in more intelligible terms that our brave countrymen had gained the victory!

terms easy to be comprehended by all persons of moderate education, he had runnaged the old neglected Norman-French for a set of uncouth epithets which would have *posed an antiquary*? Suppose that the still more illustrious Linnæus, instead of his most admirable, comprehensive, and comprehensible terms, had published his *Systema Naturæ*, his *Genera* and *Species Plantarum*, with a scientific nomenclature extracted from the barbarous radicals of the Swedish language, can it be for a moment thought that the study of nature, and consequent expansion of the human mind, would have been so universal as it happily has been?

In illustration, let us consider the languages of botany and mineralogy: a person possessing no more knowledge of the learned languages than is necessary for the proper comprehending of our own, without being able to translate a single line of Virgil or Horace, may (from the universal adoption of the Linnæan phraseology) in a very short time be able to take up the Flora of almost any country, and stroll with its author through paths of flowers; now investigating the scanty herbage of the northern regions, and then revelling in the magnificent productions of New Holland or the Cape. Mineralogy on the contrary, whose connexion with chemistry, whose durable productions abounding with beauty, brilliancy, and the most correct geometry, would, under more favourable circumstances, have been studied with delight, is comparatively neglected; and may not the neglect be in a great measure attributed to the jargon with which it is incumbered? a jargon unintelligible to any but the Germans, from whom it sprung, and the few who have degraded themselves by their conversion into Germanised Englishmen! Had the state of chemical and mineralogical knowledge been the same in the time of Linnæus as it is at present, he would most probably have occasioned the extensive cultivation of the latter, by bestowing on it a language brilliant and exact as its own native crystals; whereas the student is now enveloped in a fog, dark and impenetrable as the recesses from whence those crystals are derived.

If Mr. Forster's meteorological observations were intended for the information of his countrymen only, and were made known to them through a medium the circulation of which was confined to the limits of our own isle, there could be no objection to his conveying instruction in the terms he proposes; but when it is recollected that your valuable Magazine most deservedly attracts the attention of those citizens of the scientific commonwealth who reside abroad*; I should hope that, on reconsidering the

* Mr. F. admits the propriety of Mr. Howard's nomenclature in descriptions in Latin, or which are to go abroad: the latter is actually the case with

the circumstance, it will appear to him as unadvisable to force a set of Saxon terms upon our fellow-labourers on the continent, as it would be in ourselves to injure our masticating apparatus, by ineffectually endeavouring to become masters of the German mineralogical dissonance †.

I by no means wish this to be considered as the commencement of a controversy, but as containing a statement of the opinion of one whose want of knowledge is, perhaps, only equalled by his regret that his knowledge is not more extended.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

Old Brompton, Feb. 12, 1816.

P. J. BROWN.

P. S.—The snapping of sulphur when held in the warm hand, as noticed by your correspondent J. F., is a property which has long been known: it is mentioned by several authors to whose works I have not the opportunity of immediate reference; but I can venture from memory to refer to the lesson on Sulphur in Lagrange's Manual of Chemistry: for J. F's ingenious observations on the subject he has full credit.

with those inserted in your Magazine: and with respect to the difficulty of impressing on the minds of mere English readers, names derived from the Latin, it is presumed that the term *cumulus* will as readily convey the idea of a heaping up, or accumulation (*ad cumulus*) of clouds, as the proposed one of *stackencloud*: indeed, if new terms must be acquired, the trifling additional difficulty (*should any exist*) will be no impediment to those stimulated by a desire to learn.

† As many of your young readers who are pleased with the study of mineralogy may not have entered into its investigations five years ago. I shall consider no apology necessary for recommending to their perusal Mr. Chenevix's "Reflections on some Mineralogical Systems," published in your xxxvth and following volumes. In volume xxxvth, and last paragraph of page 379, I would suggest a manuscript reference to be made to vol. xlii. page 25, where Professor Stromeyer's Observations on the Composition of Arragonite will add force to Mr. C.'s arguments; by removing the only objection of any weight which remained opposed to the system of M. Haüy. Newton incurred the ridicule of the pseudo-philosophers of his day, by arguing *from theory*, that diamond ought to be inflammable, and that water itself should also contain much inflammable matter. Those whose ridicule he experienced had long rested in their graves, when the brilliant discoveries of modern chemistry proved the correctness of his assertion. Can M. Haüy's principles need a more honourable comparison? They pointed out to him that arragonite *ought* to differ from carbonate of lime; the most celebrated chemists of the early part of the 19th century were long unable to detect the difference; it is at length discovered, to the immortal honour of the French philosopher, and I trust to the sad discomfiture of the partisans of *external characters and mineralogical instinct*.