

*Nebraska; its Advantages, Resources, and Drawbacks.* Illustrated. By Edwin A. Curley. (London: Sampson Low and Co., 1875.)

MR. CURLEY acted as the Special Commissioner of the Field to the emigrant fields of N. America, and the present work appeared originally, we believe, as a series of papers in that journal. Mr. Curley has evidently done his work as Commissioner thoroughly, and the present volume is an almost exhaustive account of Nebraska from an emigrant point of view, and we would strongly recommend all intending emigrants to study it carefully. The author sets forth with perfect impartiality all the advantages and disadvantages of Nebraska as a field for emigration, with the result that for those who can command a small capital, and are able and willing to do the necessary work, there is every chance of success. Mr. Curley describes the Geography of Nebraska, and has two chapters of statistics. There is a chapter on the Climate, two chapters on the Surface Geology, and one on the Wild Fruits of Nebraska, by Prof. Aughey. In a series of chapters the author describes in considerable detail the principal districts of the State, and has chapters on Timber and Fuel, the Pastoral Capacities of the State, Co-operative Colonisation, and Land. Indeed, the work seems to contain answers to every inquiry that an emigrant is likely to make, down even to routes, steamship lines, and fares. It is illustrated with many well-executed woodcuts, lithographs, maps, and plans; and even those who have no intention of emigrating will find it pleasant and instructive reading.

*A Series of Twelve Maps for Map-Drawing and Examination.* By Charles Bird, B.A., F.R.A.S., Science Master in Bradford Grammar School. (London: Stanford, 1875.)

THE twelve maps are Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America, England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, India, and Australia. They are simple outlines, showing the courses of the chief rivers, the run of the mountains indicated by black lines, and the situation of the principal lakes. The maps, instead of names, are covered with a large number of figures which refer to a copious index at the end. The intention is, that after the student has become thoroughly familiar with the situations of the principal mountains, rivers, towns, and other features of a country, his knowledge should be tested by his being required to fill in, in these or similar skeleton maps, the names corresponding to the figures furnished or pointed out by the teacher. It is also intended to provide a handy method for drawing maps. We believe that if judiciously used, the method here indicated will be of good service for both purposes. The maps are well drawn, and, so far as we have tested them, accurately constructed.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

#### Observation of Cirrus Cloud

I HAVE just received from the Meteorological Observatory at Upsal, Sweden, a number of blank forms (with instructions in English) for observations of the directions of the cirrus cloud. Copies of these forms I shall have much pleasure in supplying to anyone who may be willing to make observations of these clouds, the systematic and extensive observation of which is, as you pointed out in a recent number of NATURE, of such importance in numerous meteorological inquiries.

ALEXANDER BUCHAN, Secretary

Scottish Meteorological Society, Edinburgh, Nov. 2

#### Mr. Mallet's Paper on Prismatic Basalt

IN a paper published in the *Geological Magazine* for September last, and entitled "Note on Mr. R. Mallet on the Prismatic

Structure of Basalt," by Mr. Scrope, that author conceives he has found a refutation of the explanation which I have given of the production of the transverse joints in prismatic basalt in my paper on the subject published in the *Philosophical Magazine* for August and September 1875, and Proc. R. S. 158, 1875. For this he appeals to the features presented by the transverse joints in a group of three prisms stated to be from the Giant's Causeway, existing in the hall of the Geological Society of London. In one of these three prisms it is stated that the convex surfaces of the two top joints point in opposite directions, so that the upper articulation "is found to be biconcave in the fashion of a double concave lens. In another of the prisms the convex surfaces of the joints point downwards, while in the third the convex surfaces point upwards."

I will assume that these three prisms occupy the same relative position with respect to each other vertically that they did when *in situ*, and that Mr. Scrope's description of the jointing is exact, which, however, is not the case; *e.g.*, the top surfaces of the three prisms are not alternately concave and convex, but all are concave, though in different degrees. The entire length of the prisms referred to is about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet, and the group must have been taken from a mass cooled both from above and below. The phenomena presented by the joints of these prisms do not conflict with the views which I have enunciated. The prisms referred to have come from some portion of the original mass in which occurred the dividing plane between that part cooled from the top and that cooled from the bottom, as is proved by the existence in one of the columns of a joint having surfaces curved in opposite directions; such plane, in fact, passing transversely through the articulation said to be in the form of a double concave lens. Other adjacent prisms may have their joints, within a limited vertical height above or below this plane, either convex upwards or downwards, for the slightest differences in the conductivity or in the conditions and rates of cooling, will suffice either to depress or to elevate in them, by a greater or less degree, the plane already spoken of. It is also not difficult to see that several alternations in the directions of the concave and convex surfaces may occur in the neighbourhood of the meeting plane of cooling in opposite directions, where, as in the case of other divergent or opposite heat waves, more or less confusion in normal structure must occur.

I have not examined the group myself, nor should I care to appeal to such fragments either in refutation or support of any theory. Mr. Scrope's imaginary refutation appears to resolve itself into a confirmation of the exactness of my views, and is the product of his imperfect grasp of the physical conditions involved in the question which he undertakes to discuss. That Mr. Scrope has got but a very incomplete grasp of my views as to the production of the cross-joints in prismatic basalt, is evident from the inaccurate language in which he professes to describe that portion to which he refers, as may be seen by those who take interest enough in the subject to compare his note with my paper (*Philosophical Magazine* for August and September 1875), and more especially from p. 134 to p. 205.

Oct. 18

ROBT. MALLET

#### Plagiarism

MAY I ask you to allow me a very small portion of your space to anticipate a charge of plagiarism which might otherwise be made against my work on Cave-hunting, by the readers of the article in the *Leisure Hour*, entitled "The Early Geography of the British Islands, by Henry Walker, F.G.S., July 1874," which I now see for the first time.

In this article there is a map (p. 423) so exactly like my own that it is obvious that one is copied from the other, and it might be believed (it has been suggested) that mine was taken without acknowledgment from Mr. Walker, since his was published in July, and mine in October, 1874.

The facts are as follows:—In October 1871 I published a map in the *Popular Science Review*, and this is reproduced, with certain details left out, by Mr. Walker, without allusion to my previous publication. I reprinted my map of 1871 in "Cave-hunting."

Now, I would willingly and heartily allow any map of mine, in which the labours of others are combined with my own, to be used by others without acknowledgment; but that in consequence of this I should be open to the charge of plagiarism, as in this case, I do not feel justified in letting pass without a word as to the facts.

W. BOYD DAWKINS

City of Melbourne s.s., off San Francisco, Sept. 16