ays of meeting of the third annual conference of th
mic Society of Scotland, at Dunkeld, have bee
o October 17, 18, and 19.

Scientific and Literary Review for September, 187
notice of the Spined Soldier-bug as a *newly-discovered*
the Colorado beetle. In the "Fourth Annual Repo
oxious, Beneficial, and other Insects of the State
1872)," Mr. Riley speaks of this insect as "now
am for its efficiency in thinning out the ranks of on
st." Mr. Riley also figures two other Hemiptera of
Scutelleridæ as enemies to this beetle—the Ring-banded
ug and the Dotted-legged Plant-bug (*Euschistus punc*

from Naples has been received announcing an increase
Mount Vesuvius. The glow of fire in the crater is
that it can be distinctly seen from Naples at night.

number for August 9 we briefly noticed the ascent
Mons. Wiener of the mountain Illimani, one of the
f not the highest—of the Bolivian Andes, which forms
object from the city of La Paz, and was formerly
on the authority of Mr. Pentland) to have an altitude
s than 24,200 feet. M. Wiener, however, makes its
y 20,112 feet, while Mr. Minchin, as we have already
places its altitude at 21,224 feet. If the latter cal
orrect, Mons. Wiener has, we believe, not only made
st ascent which has been made in the Andes, but has
greater altitude than has hitherto been reached on the
of Asia, and in Asia has only been beaten by Mr.
who some years ago got to a height of 22,300 feet in
As the recorded ascents to the height of 21,000
xtreme few, we shall be glad to hear further par
specting Mons. Wiener's exploit, and more especially
he experienced much exhaustion through the rarefaction
. Practised mountaineers who have climbed to a
17,000 to 18,000 feet have been of opinion that even
ltitudes there is a very important and perceptible dimi
the bodily powers, and think it probable that the
25,000 or 26,000 feet will be found to be about the
ch will ever be reached on foot. As a set-off to this
e may mention the facts that hunters in the Himalayas
pursue their game at heights exceeding 20,000 feet
experiencing any notable inconvenience from the low
ic pressure, and that natives living on the base of
d, near Teheran, often ascend to its summit to gather
rom its crater without any great difficulty. The height
ountain, there is reason to believe, also exceeds 20,000
ough it has never been accurately determined. If
severe work can be done with impunity at such ele
it seems not unreasonable to suppose that much greater
night be attained by men who had previously accus
emselves to life at high altitudes. Aeronauts, anyhow,
ed that life can exist at 30,000 feet above the level of
nd that at 25,000 feet, and upwards, one may positively
rtable if sufficiently warmly clad. That such is the case
ntly remarkable, for "travellers in the air" have to
comparably more rapid variations of pressure and tem
han mountain-climbers. Mr. Glaisher, on his memo
nt on September 5, 1862, left the earth at 1 P.M., and
in an hour shot up to a height of 30,000 feet. At
he temperature of the air was 59°, and at its greatest
t was [illegible] one degrees lower! Mountaineers expe
such extreme variations as these. They rarely ascend
idly than 1,000 feet per hour, never so much as 15,000
fter, and become to some extent acclimatised as they
pwards. On the whole we are inclined to think that

man will not rest until he has at least attempted to reach the loftiest summits on the earth, though we will venture to assert that it will be long before anyone crushes down the snow on the summit of Mount Everest.

SINCE we last noticed the progress of the great Government Map of Switzerland several further instalments of it have been issued. In all 108 sheets have been published out of the 520 which will compose the map. Amongst the more recently published sheets the following will especially be found useful by English travellers in Switzerland:—La Chaux de Fonds, Thun, Engelberg, Wassen (embracing the Titlis district), Guttanen (with the basin of the Gauli glacier), and St. Mauritz (giving the country round Pontresina). The whole of the sheets as yet published are most admirably drawn, and reflect the highest credit on those who have been concerned in their production; and the celerity with which they are issued makes us desire that a little more life could be infused into our own topographical departments.

PETERMANN'S *Mittheilungen* for October will contain a long paper, embodying the results of considerable research, on the German and Latin Elements among the Population of the South Tyrol and Venetia. A new map of a large portion of Costa Rica will show the results of the surveys of Gabb, Collins, and Martinez. A letter from Dr. Schweinfurth describes his journey through the Arabian Desert of Egypt, from Heluan to Keneh, between March 28 and May 18 of this year. He has obtained, besides important topographical data, much valuable information as to the geological and botanical conditions of the region.

THERE is on view at present at the Alexandra Palace an interesting collection of fourteen Nubians with a number of animals, comprising six ostriches, six giraffes, five elephants, twenty-one racing dromedaries, three rhinoceroses, two hunting dogs, two Abyssinian spotted donkeys, four buffaloes, two zebus, monkeys, &c. Some specimens of *Cynocephalus gelada*, which are said to live from 7,000 feet to 11,000 feet high in the Abyssinian hills are expected to follow. The European who organised and accompanied the caravan for Messrs. Rice and Hagenbeck, says that the men from the different tribes speak different patois, so that he very often cannot understand them, and they cannot understand one another. The different districts in which the various animals were captured does not, therefore, seem to be known to the present owners. As to the men, they have been interrogated as to their ages and the tribes to which they belong. There are four Hadendoes aged fifteen, twenty-three, twenty-three, and twenty-five. The characteristic manner of dressing the hair is well seen in the three men, but the lad does not seem to have adopted yet the artificial arrangement. They are all tall, fine men. There are two Hallengas from Cassala, aged twenty-two and twenty-four. The general style of trimming the hair is much the same as of the Hadendoes, but the "fringe" is much longer and stands away from the head more. There are three of the Beni-Amer tribe, one of whom, aged twenty-four, having fallen ill in Paris, had his hair cut off; the "old man," aged thirty-two, wears a close white cap, and he alone of the party can read and write; while the third retains his hair in its original state. Of the remaining six men of the fourteen each represents a different tribe, and they all differ in appearance and style of hair arrangement from those tribes already mentioned. There is a Djalelin, aged twenty-six; a Homran, aged nineteen, who has the three rhinoceroses under his special care, and which follow him and lick his hand like pet lambs; a man, aged twenty-seven, from Amara, near Suakim; and a Takroun, twenty-five, who has twice been to Mecca, the only one of the party who has; and the Bara "boy," who claims to be twenty-one. He has the negro hair and lips, and a very contented look. All the men seem happy, and sing, laugh, smoke, and go through the mimic war, dromedary racing, and their representation of crossing the desert with great delight.

IN a letter to yesterday's *Times* Mr. Henry Jeula, of Lloyd's, gives some interesting data to show that there is probably some connection between sun-spots and the number of wrecks posted each year on Lloyd's Loss Book. His data are for two complete cycles of eleven years, 1855–1876, and the results Mr. Jeula has worked out along with Dr. Hunter. Dividing the eleven years as nearly as the number will allow, into three parts, and taking the percentages of losses posted, Mr. Jeula finds a coincident minimum period of four years at the extremities of the cycle, a maximum period of three years in the centre of the cycle, and an intermediate period of the four years lying between the maximum and minimum periods. Mr. Jeula expresses the hope that the great practical importance of the theory of the connection between sun-spots and weather will lead to a full and exhaustive examination of all the evidence bearing upon it.

THE exhibition of the Photographic Society of Great Britain will be opened by a conversazione on Tuesday evening, October 9, at 5, Pall Mall, East.

IN a paper presented recently to the philosophical faculty at Heidelberg University, Herr Richard Boernstein has published his investigations on the influence of light upon the electric resistance of metals. Mr. Willoughby Smith had found that the electric resistance of selenium, and in a much smaller degree that of tellurium also, decreases under the influence of light. Herr Boernstein has now made the interesting discovery that this property also belongs to platinum, gold, and silver, most probably to all metals, in fact. The electric current, according to Herr Boernstein, diminishes the electric conducting power, as well as the sensitiveness towards light, of its conductor, but after cessation of the current, both gradually return to their former values.

ROCK crystal seems to be growing more and more in favour amongst technical men on account of the stability of its physical properties. At the August meeting of the Bonn Society of Naturalists it was reported that the directors of the Imperial Mint of Germany have recently ordered of Herr Stern, at Oberstein, several absolutely correct normal weights made of rock crystal, which are to be used for the control of gold coins. These weights have the great advantage that it is unnecessary to determine the specific gravity of every weight, and in the case of measures to find the thermal co-efficient of expansion of every measure, as both are as near constant as possible. They have been found the same in all the specimens of rock crystal yet examined, viz., specific gravity at 0° C. = 2,6500 (reduced to water at 4° C.); coefficient of expansion for 1° C., parallel to the axis, 0.00000750 inch, *i.e.*, seventy-five ten-millionths of an inch.

AT the same meeting Prof. vom Rath read a report from Dr. Th. Wolf, the state geologist to the South American republic of Ecuador, on the province of Esmeraldas (the northernmost province of the republic), and on the rain of ashes which, coming from the north-east, *i.e.*, from the volcanic interior, fell along the whole *littorale* of Guayaquil between June 26 and June 30. Dr. Wolf, after giving a general geological description of Esmeraldas (in the auriferous sands of which he discovered platinum), adds the following general remarks:—Of all provinces of Ecuador Esmeraldas is the most uniform in its relief and geological structure. It reaches from the coast of the Pacific to the foot of the Andes. A great part of the province is quite flat, particularly in the north; another part is traversed by low mountains, the highest points of which scarcely reach 500 or 600 meters; the average height of the hills, however, is only 50–70 meters. The province is a magnificent