

of Algeria; to M. Bonissent for his work on the Geology of the Département de la Manche; and to M. Boucher de Perthes for his researches on the natural history of man in prehistoric times. A gold medal has also been voted by the Society for the Encouragement of National Industry to M. Alibert, for his discovery of Graphite in Siberia, magnificent specimens of which were shown in the Great International Exhibition of 1862.*—D. T. A.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editors of the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE.

YOUR correspondent Col. Greenwood suggests an enquiry concerning rainless districts. I believe it is quite certain that the North of Africa and the whole of Asia Minor are subject to occasional rains, in a certain sense seasonal, though for the most part, and sometimes for more than one year at a time, in the greater portion of these wide tracks no rains fall. At any rate, there are no periodical rains; and it is rather in contradistinction to such districts, and to distinguish areas where there is no constant precipitation, than as an absolute proposition, that the expression is made use of. Col. Greenwood is no doubt aware that there are other tracts, especially that on the west side of the Andes, where rain is so excessively rare that the inhabitants would regard it as almost a miracle. I remember being told some years ago by a resident at Alicante, on the east coast of Spain, that there had been no rain in that district for more than twenty years. Since then there have been rainy seasons, and it is probable that small showers may have been forgotten; but there are local conditions in that neighbourhood very unfavourable to rain. Perhaps this explanation will satisfy your readers that it may be convenient, and in some sense correct, to call certain large areas 'rainless,' though rain occasionally falls on parts of them, and include others among provinces of autumn- or winter-rains, which are as dry as the former. Certainly Canada and Ireland would not be incorrectly regarded as excluded from earthquake-districts, though a shock now and then may be felt in either country.

D. T. ANSTED.

Impington Hall, Cambridge, August 6, 1864.

VISIT TO SELSEY. From Letter, Aug. 8, 1864.

'LAST week I spent a couple of days (or rather tides) at Selsey in examining some of the Quaternary deposits. They are very curious, but not easy of interpretation, though I had read Godwin-Austen's paper † before going there. I saw the Pholas holes in the Eocene beds, a privilege which fortune has seldom if ever granted, I believe,

* One of the finest specimens of Siberian Graphite brought over by M. Alibert is now placed in the British Museum.

† Geol. Soc. Journ., vol. xiii. p. 48.