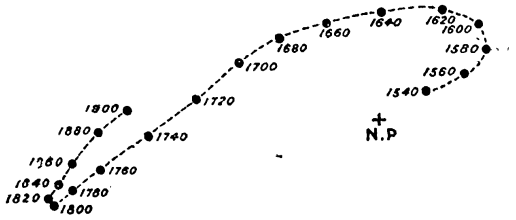
In the table for London it will be noted that there is a maximum declination E. about 1580, zero declination about 1660, maximum declination W. about 1810, since which date it has been returning eastward. For Baltimore there was a maximum declination W. about 1680, a minimum declination about 1800, since which date it has been again increasing westward. The diagram (fig. 1) will perhaps show more clearly the path of the point of intersection of the two magnetic meridians. The curve for the period between 1540 and 1640 is drawn



+ Baltimore

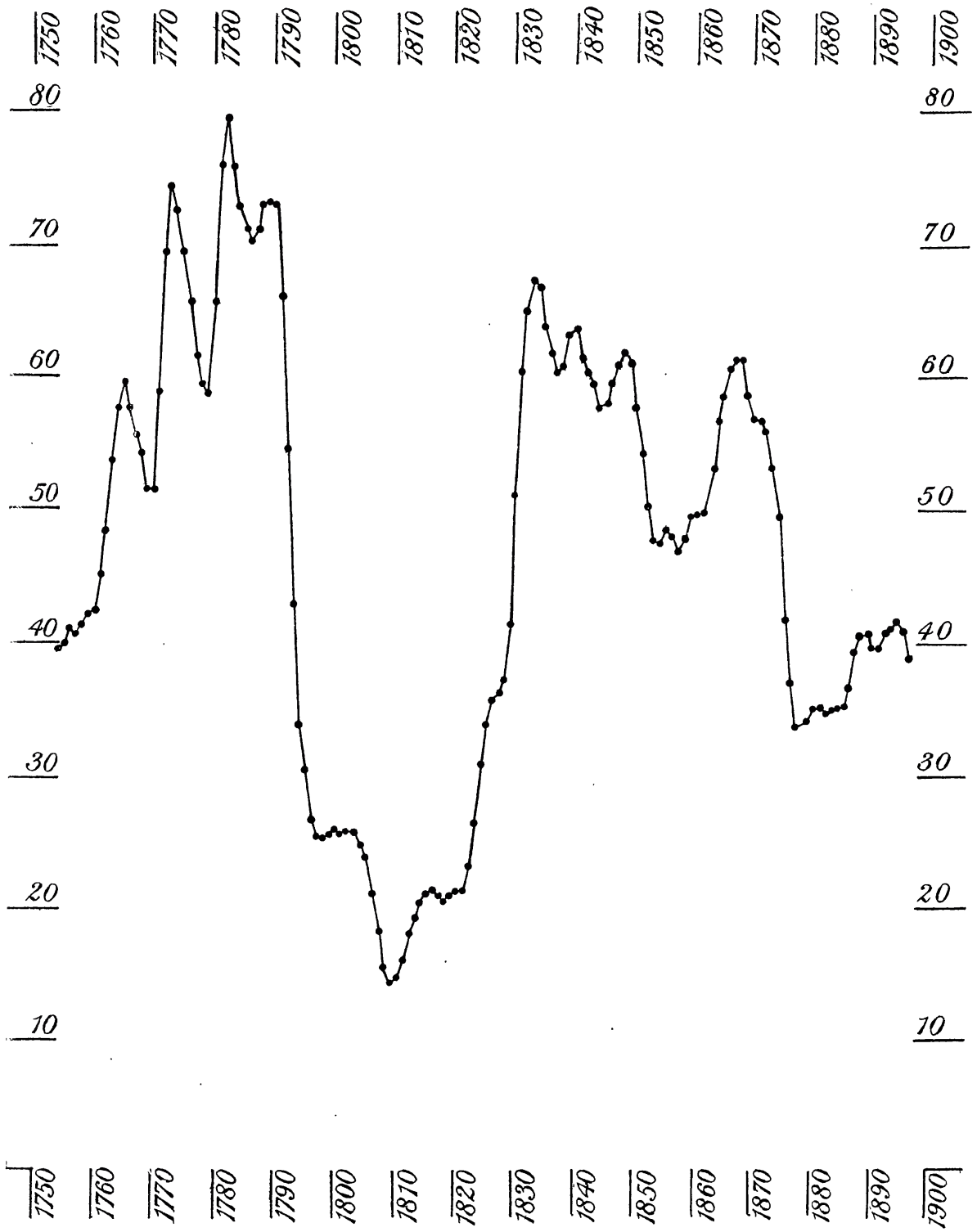
+ London

FIG. 1.

on the supposition that the needle at Baltimore varied then in the same manner as it did during the period of observation.

The path of the magnetic pole, as this intersection of the magnetic meridian may perhaps be called, would seem not to be a mere revolution round the geographical pole, but to be more like the swing of a pendulum. Evidently there are nodes or points where the direction of its motion changed about 1580; between the years 1640 and 1680, when it was moving rapidly and was at the same time near the north pole of the Earth; and about 1800.

When other pairs of stations in Europe and America are



PROF. WOLFER'S "RELATIVE SUN-SPOT NUMBERS" SMOOTHED FOR THE "ELEVEN-YEAR" PERIOD.

taken, the curves traced by the intersection of their magnetic meridians is of the same character as that shown by the two selected.

Sun-spots were first discovered in the year 1610, and since that period we know of two striking cases of prolonged solar quiescence. The first was the most pronounced, and lasted from about the year 1640 to about the end of the century, during which period but a single spot now and then appeared even at times when the Sun should have been most active. The "eleven-year" cycle seemed obliterated, and an almost unbroken solar calm prevailed. Auroræ were notedly absent.

The second period of solar quiescence was remarkable, but not so complete. The "eleven-year" cycle could still be plainly traced, but for several succeeding maxima the solar activity was much below the normal; and this was emphasised by the great activity that preceded and followed the period of semi-quiescence. The accompanying diagram, which gives Wolfer's relative spot numbers cleared of the "eleven-year" cycle, will show this plainly (Plate 13). During this period of solar quiescence auroræ were also deficient.

We have, of course, no means of saying what was the state of the Sun's activity earlier than 1610. At that period spots were abundant, but the stationary position eastward of the magnetic declination needle in the years 1580–1600 may also have been marked by a period of quiescence in solar activity and in auroræ.

Prior to 1600 there seems to have been a change in the law of secular change. Mr. L. A. Bauer (in his "Magnetic Tables and Isogonic Charts for 1902") has found both for Rome and for Fayal Island, in the Azores, that there is a marked difference for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries between the curve as given by the present apparent law of secular change and the full curve as deduced from observations obtained by the aid of early "compass charts."

There is no material for discussing the secular change of any of the magnetic elements in the southern hemisphere, neither are there observations of dip or magnetic intensity for a sufficient length of time in the northern; and these are necessary for a full discussion of the question. As it is, I have been obliged to assume for London and Baltimore that they are uninfluenced by local magnetism, or at least that such local magnetism does not affect the law of secular change. Of this there is no evidence for or against.

To sum up. The ordinary sun-spot cycle has twice been disturbed within the period of observation by long-continued calms. The first and most remarkable took place in the latter half of the seventeenth century; the second at the commencement of the nineteenth. These two periods of solar calm appear to have been answered on the Earth by corresponding periods of absence of auroræ. There was thus sympathy between solar

quiescence and terrestrial magnetism. When the movement of the north "magnetic pole" is considered it appears that at these two very epochs it was passing through two critical points of its path—the first when it was at its nearest approach to the geographical pole, the second when it was at its greatest elongation from it.

The Aurora and Magnetic Disturbance.

By William Ellis, F.R.S.

In a paper that appeared in the *Monthly Notices* of the Society for 1899 December, on the relation between magnetic disturbance and the period of solar-spot frequency, I showed from the observations of the fifty years 1848 to 1897 at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, the general relation existing between the period of solar-spot frequency and the frequency of magnetic disturbance in the progression from Sun-spot maximum to Sun-spot minimum, and again from Sun-spot minimum to Sun-spot maximum; and further pointed out that, in addition, there existed in the frequency of magnetic disturbance an annual inequality that has no counterpart in the march of Sun-spot frequency. In a following paper appearing in the *Monthly Notices* for 1901 June, I compared this seasonal variation in the frequency of magnetic disturbance at Greenwich with the variation in frequency of the *Aurora* in the same locality, showing that in both phenomena there existed maximum epochs at or near the equinoxes, and minimum epochs at or near the solstices. I now desire to pursue the question a little further.

As regards the *Aurora*, although in our latitude there is, as mentioned, maximum of frequency at the equinoxes and minimum of frequency at the solstices, this condition undergoes modification in higher latitudes, the winter minimum becoming less pronounced as higher latitudes are approached, until it altogether disappears. In the recently published *Catalog der in Norwegen bis Juni* 1878 *beobachteten Nordlichter*, J. Fr. Schroeter has combined the work of Tromholt for Norway and Rubenson for Sweden, and formed abstracts that give, separately for each one of five latitudinal regions over Scandinavia, the monthly frequency of the *Aurora* as found from observations, many thousands in number, made during the years 1761 to 1877. And from a paper by Mr. R. C. Mossman "On the Aurora Borealis in London," contained in the *Journal of the Scottish Meteorological Society*, third series, vol. xi. p. 58, corresponding information is to be found for other positions south of the above. To these I have added the monthly frequency of magnetic disturbance at Greenwich and Paris. The various numerical results are given in the annexed table, in each case in percentage of the total frequency.