Minor Contributions and Notes.

Reply to Recent Statements by M. Deslandres.

I regret exceedingly the necessity of discussing a question of priority, but the repeated statements of M. Deslandres leave no alternative. My reply, however, will be brief.

I am quite content to leave the question of priority in the use of the spectroheliograph to the judgment of those who are acquainted with the facts. In 1894 the French Academy of Sciences awarded me the Janssen medal for the construction and use of the first successful spectroheliograph. In the statement of the reasons for the award (Comptes Rendus, 119, 1894) no reference is made to M. Deslandres. This might reasonably be considered to settle the matter. However, if confirmation of the opinion of the Academy was needed, it has since been supplied by the award of the Rumford, Draper and Gold Medals of the American Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Sciences, and the Royal Astronomical Society, respectively. In each case the first successful application of the spectroheliograph was named as the principal reason for conferring the medal.

Although M. Deslandres did not use a spectroheliograph until more than a year after my first successful work with this instrument at the Kenwood Observatory, his observations of the spectra of the calcium flocculi were commenced in 1891, almost simultaneously with my own investigations of these spectra. Before 1893, when he also obtained a spectroheliograph, which he has since used with marked success, M. Deslandres devoted special attention to a study of the K line in successive sections of the Sun’s disk. The spectrograph employed for this purpose was moved a short distance between each exposure, but the exposures were made when the instrument was at rest, and the resulting photographs are photographs of spectra. This method is extremely useful, as it gives the means of determining the motion of the calcium vapor in the line of sight at many points on the disk, and in the chromosphere and prominences surrounding the Sun. But a spectrograph thus employed is in no sense a spectroheliograph, although a wide second slit limits the spectral region photographed to the K line and a few lines in its immediate neighborhood.

1 See Bulletin Astronomique, August 1905, and various papers in the Comptes Rendus.