

that the spot on which the celt was found should be within thirty yards of the site of a Roman building discovered by me in 1864. Gurnet Bay, April 9
E. J. A' COURT SMITH

Arctic Temperatures

In your article on the Austrian Polar Expedition (vol. xi. p. 397), it is stated that in January "the warm S. and S.W. winds always brought great masses of snow, and produced a rise in the temperature amounting to 30°–35° R. in a few hours." 32 R. = 72 F.

Such enormous fluctuations of temperature are unparalleled in any other part of the world, and it seems quite impossible that they can be due to any drift of warm air. I would suggest that they are probably caused by the wind tearing up the frozen surface of the sea, and liberating the heat of the unfrozen water below. Dr. Kane, when wintering in Smith Sound, once met with such a rise of temperature, and he says that open water was near. This explanation of the phenomenon is supported by the fact you mention in the same article, page 398, that in the summer the temperature was remarkably constant. The same cause could not act during summer, for the air is not then much colder than the unfrozen water.

There is no doubt of the power of a storm of wind to tear up a very thick sheet of ice.

JOSEPH JOHN MURPHY
Old Forge, Dunmurry, Co. Antrim, March 30

AÉRONAUTICS

M. GASTON TISSANDIER has just finished the analysis of carbonic acid contained in the air collected during his recent ascent (vol. xi. p. 429). He found at Paris 37 cubic centimetres per 100,000; at a height of 2,700 feet, 27; and at a level of 3,300 feet, 30. The difference of altitude between the two aerial stations being too small to justify drawing any conclusions he will shortly make another ascent with the same balloon to an altitude of 24,000 feet.

M. Godard made an ascent in the balloon *Saturn*, from Bayonne, on March 29, at half-past five, and was drifted over the Pyrenees. The trip was difficult, as the balloon was loaded with snow and hail, and all the ballast was thrown over in order to keep the balloon afloat. The cold was intense, and the wind very strong. The landing took place at Azul Mayor, a small country town east of Pampeluna, at half-past seven, the distance run being 120 kilometres. The grapnel having been broken, the aeronaut and the three passengers were severely hurt. This is the first time that any balloon has crossed the Pyrenees. The *Saturn* followed the French valley of the Nive and the Spanish valley of Baztan on the southern side. An interesting observation was made when crossing the culminating point of the pass. The Larratéce Neguya was surrounded by cirro-cumulus, which resisted the force of the wind and seemed an obstruction in the way of aeronauts, who found it necessary to throw out a certain quantity of ballast, and to reach an altitude of 6,600 feet, in order to cross that sea of motionless clouds. A strong hissing noise was heard when travelling over them; whether it was produced by the friction of the air on the peaks or on the masses of electrified vapours, can only be decided by another experiment conducted scientifically.

On April 4 two ascents were made almost simultaneously. M. Triquet ascended from the Place du Trône, Paris, and landed at Montreuil, 20 kilometers from his starting-point, forty minutes afterwards, having run in an E.S.E. direction. M. Duruof ascended from Cahors, in the Lot, and landed at Catres, in the same department, having run 22 kilometers in sixty-five minutes, but in a N.N.W. direction. Both balloons having ascended at the same moment, moved at right angles.

I have reason to believe that a number of ascents will

be made simultaneously from La Villette gasworks, and the several tracks compared with each other. Some interesting facts may be elicited by these comparative trips.
W. DE FONVIELLE

ARCTIC GEOLOGY*

II.

Cryolite of West Greenland Coast.—At Evigtok (*ivik*, Eng. grass), twelve miles from Arksut (Eng. leeward), in 61° 13' lat. and 48° 9' W. long., the mountains rise to a height of more than 2,000 feet, enclosing a sort of basin, with an area of more than a square mile, the bottom of which is covered with grass and *Salix arctica*, four feet in height, and other plants. This is much frequented in summer by the Greenlanders, who catch large numbers of capelins and cod, which frequent the coast in shoals, as well as the *Salmo arcturus*, Linn. (the *Lodde* of the Norwegians). Weights used in this fishery, taken by Danish missionaries to Copenhagen at the beginning of the century, were found to be composed of cryolite, which led to the discovery of two veins of that mineral in the gneiss at the head of the bay, which has since been worked by Mr. Tayler, F.G.S. The white cryolite bed is about eighty feet in width, dipping south with the planes of the gneiss in which it occurs. Near its higher portion there is a large quantity of galena, worked in 1854, which gave 82½ per cent. of argentiferous lead, containing forty-five ounces of silver to the ton of ore. Fifteen feet from the surface the cryolite was of a dark colour, so that it is probable that the black cryolite in the higher vein is merely less decomposed, and not bleached. The Greenlanders value the white variety most, which they call orksoksiksæt (*orsoké*, blubber), from its soft greasy appearance and feel; they gradually pound tobacco leaves placed between two pieces of it, the resultant powder consisting of half of cryolite dust, which they consider superior to any European snuff.†

Large quantities of cryolite are now imported to Copenhagen, the mines being worked by Messrs. Thomsen, of that city. Mr. Qualye reports that pieces of gneiss and trap are found imbedded in the cryolite, and states that the mines are filled with snow and ice during the winter, work being carried on by fifty men from May to October; 5,000 tons are raised yearly. Cryolite, except at Miask, in Siberia, does not occur out of Greenland.

Cryolite is a fluoride of sodium and aluminium, and is composed, according to Mr. Evan T. Ellis, of—

13	per cent. of aluminium,
34	" " sodium,
53	" " fluorine.

In Denmark, it is largely used in the manufacture of soda, which is procured by mixing it with lime and applying heat, 100 tons of cryolite yielding forty-four of caustic soda. It was introduced into Philadelphia by the Pennsylvania Salt Company, who imported 8,000 tons in 1867. By mixture with silica a very beautiful glass is produced, capable of being moulded. Cryolite was used by Deville as a flux in the manufacture of aluminium, the process of extracting aluminium from it was first used by Mr. Dick in 1856, but its use has since been abandoned in favour of bauxite. The fluoride of calcium is sent to Paris to be used in glass etching.

Associated with the Greenland cryolite brought over

* Continued from p. 449.

† Giesecke, *Edin. Phil. Jour.* vol. vi. 1822; J. W. Tayler, *Quar. Jour. Geol. Soc.*, 1856; *Chemical News*, 1868, p. 8, &c.; *Proceedings Amer. Pharm. Soc.*, 1868. See Rink's Memoir on Greenland, published by the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences, 1853, p. 71; L. Jacobsen's "Et Aar i Grønland, 1862"; and Lieut. Bluhme, in the Danish magazine *Fra alle Lande*, vol. i.