

resembling one of those local fogs which every one has seen, and which may give to a valley or even a slight depression the appearance of being snowed up. It occurs when the sea is colder than the atmosphere, and the latter still and heavily loaded with aqueous vapour. Under these circumstances, a layer of air immediately in contact with the water is chilled below the dew point and becomes misty, while that above remains transparent: the upper surface of such a fog, which is only a few inches thick, being seen by the reflected light of the sky" ("An Engineer's Holiday," vol. ii. p. 314).

The temperature of the sea on the night in question was 70° F., while that of the air was 79°, an unusual amount of difference in the Arabian sea. Water, brought on deck by a bucket, showed no signs of milkiness, though crowded as usual with various phosphorescent organisms. DAN. PIDGEON.

The Long House, Letherhead, September 24.

#### Luminous Clouds?

I OBSERVED a phenomenon at the Lizard, on the night of September 10, which is new to me, but what I presume is meant by luminous clouds.

At 10.48 p.m. several others and myself saw a large patch of what looked like luminous mist suddenly appear just to the south of the constellation Perseus. It only lasted a very short time, but quickly reappeared accompanied by another which extended from near the extremity of the first to the higher part of Cassiopeia. The longer axes of these patches were in one line nearly east and west, and low down in the west in this line produced, appeared and reappeared a similar patch. Shortly afterwards a similar patch appeared with its longer axis on the same line almost at the zenith. The line of direction of these clouds formed a small angle with the Milky Way. I may state that the sky was quite clear except for a bank low down in the north, and that the light of these clouds was sufficient to attract attention although one was not looking in their direction, and although they were so high in the sky. Several fugitive patches appeared in the west at short intervals, and at 0.10 a.m. (11th) a very bright patch was to be seen in the north-east. Just afterwards the patch in the west reappeared, and with one or two short interruptions and, at first, considerable variation of intensity, remained until close on 1 a.m. The position remained, as far as I could see, constant, and at about 0.30 a.m. I fixed its position by means of a flag-staff and the top of a wall, and on the following day I took the bearings by the theodolite. The lower edge of the cloud was nearly straight and horizontal, and the angles are for the centre of this lower edge. They are as follows: N. 28° 12' E. (mag.), elevation 7° 18'.

I thought that if any one is collecting information on the subject, a report from the extreme south and west might be useful, especially as I was able to get the bearing pretty accurately.

I may add that the aurora of the evening of the 9th was well observed throughout Cornwall, though I do not know that I can give much information that would be of value with respect to it.

ARTHUR P. JENKIN.

Trewirgie, Redruth, September 13.

#### "Crannoges" in Estuaries.

I FIND in NATURE of September 15 a notice of certain remains near Dumbarton as the only known specimens of "crannoges" in tidal water.

The farm-house of Cranny, in the townland of the same name, parish of Inver, County Donegal, Ireland, is supposed to stand on an artificial island in a tidal estuary, that of the Eany, or Eidhneach (meaning Ivy) River. The mound is now surrounded by a masonry revetment.

Opposite it, on the right bank of the same estuary, is a low mound which seems artificial, and lower down the old church of St. Natalis stands on another.

I have nothing to propound, but the ground may be worth examining. I have known it for many years, and think all three "crannoges." There is some printed record, not now before me, of the discovery of wooden framework on the right bank of the Eany, in glebe land.

W. F. SINCLAIR.

Chelsea, September 16.

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#### Transference of Heat in Cooled Metal.

Lorsque je vous ai écrit le 30 Juin dernier pour vous prier d'appeler, dans votre estimable journal, l'attention sur un phénomène de *conduction de chaleur dans une barre*; je pensais parler d'un phénomène *bien connu ainsi que je le disais dans ma lettre*. Je désirais simplement provoquer de la part de quelques uns de vos lecteurs, soit des recherches, soit des enquêtes analogues à celle que j'avais fait de mon côté auprès des artisans et ouvriers; mais je n'avais nullement la prétention de signaler un phénomène *nouveau*. Le premier physicien qui en ait parlé est à ma connaissance M. Izarn, professeur de physique au lycée de Clermont-Ferrand (France), et qui est connu par bien d'autres travaux. Voyant qu'on a l'air de m'attribuer la découverte de ce phénomène, je vous serais très reconnaissant si vous vouliez bien détromper les lecteurs de votre journal et remettre les choses au point. HENRY BOURGET.

Observatoire de Toulouse, Septembre 13.

#### Horn-feeding Larvæ.

READING the correspondence in NATURE on larvæ in antelope horns, reminded me of an experience in India. I was on a shooting trip near the Niti Pass in May, and bought a sheep for food from a native. Within five minutes of it being killed its horns were removed from the head, and it was found that they contained each some dozen maggots, white, and about half an inch in length. The horns had not been perceptibly perforated, and seemed quite sound. This fact may be well known, but I give it for what it is worth.

G. G. TRAIHERNE.

#### "Purple Patches."

IN NATURE of November 12, 1896, there appeared a letter asking for some explanation of certain purple patches frequently noticed by the writer (A. Pedder) on roadways and pavements, especially at Bath. There were but three replies, two of which suggested "copying-ink" pencils as responsible.

The following notes, made recently in Derbyshire by myself, seem so nearly to fit the case that I venture to think a cause such as here described, or one closely allied, might explain some at any rate, of the cases mentioned. Here are the verbatim notes:—

"29/8/98.—At Axe Edge last Wednesday I noticed on a coal-pit ventilating shaft (Thatch Marsh Colliery) on the moor certain deepish blue masses on a ledge near the base. Some masses brighter blue, others nearly black. Under a lens appeared to contain horny parts of larvæ and many small seeds. They are probably the droppings of birds. They leave a bluish stain on the stone.

"To-day I noticed the same on some pieces of stone on the road to Goyt's Bridge, a steep, rocky road.

"30/8/98.—Visited Axe Edge shaft again. There were no fresh deposits on it. This may be due to almost continuous rain the last four days; but the stains are still there. Also found deposit on one or two stones round shaft and on a piece of wooden staging. They were very plentiful, especially on the tops of the six posts of this staging, where one would expect birds to settle chiefly. The colour and stains were just the same—some reddish purple and some bluish purple. The colour is thus evidently due only to the excreta (?), and not to the body on which deposited. The seeds appear reddish, and it seems likely that the colour is due to them. (Bilberries are plentiful on the surrounding moor.)"

"1/9/98.—The seeds are identical with bilberry, and on extracting the excreta with cold water a claret-red colour is obtained, which leaves a greenish-blue stain on paper."

Dulwich.

F. SOUTHERDEN.

#### Re-Blossoming of Horse-Chestnut.

THERE is at present (September 20) a tree in South-End, Hampstead, showing a bunch of fresh green leaves and a well-formed spike of flowers. Some years back (1893, I think), another tree, in the same plantation, put forth leaves and blossom in September.

J. J. W.