

them came a Celtic, and finally a Gothic invasion. As Scandinavian archæology grew into a science, and the remains discovered were seen to fall into a stone, a bronze, and an iron series, the three groups collected were, in obedience to the previously existing historic theory, respectively labelled Finnish, Celtic, and Scandinavian. Now, it happened that the first *two* obviously prehistoric skulls found in Scandinavia were of the round type, on which circumstance a learned person (Retzius, if I remember rightly), jumped—in characteristic nineteenth-century style—to the conclusion that the *whole dolmen race* was round-skulled. Never was a more monstrous generalisation built on a miserable collection of two particulars. There are known to exist in museums about 80 skulls attributed to dolmen men, some of which are, perhaps, of questionable origin. These crania are of every conceivable type, being, in fact, identical with modern churchyard skulls. No one pretends that their form is short, or Celtic, or Finnic; and some authorities allege that they are mostly long. These facts are notorious enough in the North. They were ventilated at the late Copenhagen Archæological Congress, and it was not denied on any side that the stone age skulls would suit modern Danes and Swedes. The short skulled stone man is in fact gone the way of the basilisk and the Vital Force, and it is time for him to take his departure from the authoritative scientific teaching of Great Britain.

Professor Huxley appears to believe that the Northern Bronze, or Iron Man, was long skulled. Although this view is quite unsupported by facts, it may be backed by an argument from the domain of the Higher Criticism. In the Museum of Rosenberg are casts of the so-called Gold Horns, the originals of which precious runic articles were stolen nearly 70 years ago. One of these horns bears the inscription—"Ek hleva gastim holtingam horna Favido," which every runologist can read easily enough. But no two runologists agree even approximately in their versions, so that no date can be given to the horns from inferences built on the style of the inscription. However, Professor Steenstrup has pointed out that some figures of men engraved on the horns have heads of a longish appearance, which conclusive fact tells in favour of Professor Huxley's dolicephalous doctrine, although some learned Danes consider that the skulls represented on the horns were obviously Oriental and not Scandinavian.

According to the highest Copenhagen authorities, there is no ground whatever for the assertion that modern Scandinavian skulls are of the long type. It is equally incorrect to say that Scandinavians are fair-haired and blue-eyed  
Copenhagen

G. STRACHEY

#### The Anglo-Saxon Conquest

In an interesting paper, quoted at p. 661 of NATURE, Prof. Rolleston dwells upon the proportion of short-lived male skeletons, found in Anglo-Saxon interments, as contrasted with the older character of the Romano-British interments, deducing therefrom a conclusion as to their respective longevity. The writer appears to have forgotten that the youth of Romano-Britain had for many generations been forcibly expatriated—drafted abroad to feed the armies of Imperial Rome.

A. HALL

#### Analogy of Colour and Music

MR. W. S. OKELY accuses me of having criticised his letter "far too hastily," and writes that he does *not* compare the *diameters* of Newton's rings with one another, but their *cubes*. On referring to his letter in NATURE for Feb. 10, I read as follows:—"Professor Zannotti, of Naples, gives for the *diameters* of the rings from red to red, the cube-roots of the numbers 1,  $\frac{8}{27}$ ,  $\frac{27}{64}$ ,  $\frac{64}{125}$ ,  $\frac{125}{216}$ ,  $\frac{216}{343}$ . The intervals between these, taken successively, are  $\frac{8}{27}$ ,  $\frac{18}{125}$ ,  $\frac{16}{243}$ ,  $\frac{9}{648}$ ,  $\frac{10}{15625}$ ." Your readers can now judge whether my failure to apprehend Mr. Okely's measures was due to my undue haste or his obscurity of expression. When Mr. Okely speaks of my "doubting the accuracy" of Professor Zannotti and M. Biot, he is drawing entirely on his own imagination; what I *did* doubt was the value of the deductions drawn by Mr. Okely from their figures. I *now* doubt his power of distinguishing between external facts and those evolved from his own moral consciousness.

Trin. Coll. Cambridge, May 4

SEDLAY TAYLOR

#### Colour of the Sky

YOUR correspondent "H. A. N." will find some interesting remarks on the blueness of the sky in Professor Tyndall's "Glaciers

of the Alps" (p. 257, &c.), and one or two additional notes in my "Alpine Regions," p. 150. With regard to the colour of the sky at great heights, I can inform him that in fine weather the blue becomes deeper as one ascends, as has been noticed by many persons accustomed to mountain climbing. The most striking instance that I have seen was during an ascent of Monte Rosa, 15,217 feet. On this occasion the colour was so deep as almost to approach a black, as deep as or deeper than the richest hues of *Gentiana acaulis*. This intensity of colour was only very conspicuous during the last few hundred feet of the ascent; and in expeditions to mountains of nearly the same height I have not often seen it approached, never surpassed. Mr. Hincliff in his "Summer Months among the Alps," p. 111, calls attention to the same phenomenon on Monte Rosa, and very appositely quotes Shelley:

The sun's unclouded orb  
Rolled through the black concave.

T. G. BONNEY

#### The Royal Society

I CANNOT but think that the list of candidates recommended by the Council for election into the Royal Society published in your last number will be read by the outside world with considerable surprise. I look in vain in it for the names of two men, at least, of world-wide reputation, and well known as no mere *dilettanti* in their respective sciences, who were among the candidates, while the names of others are found there, which are on everybody's lips with the thought, What have they done to merit the scientific distinction which is looked on by every lover of science as almost an opening of the gates of paradise? Is it possible for us outsiders to learn anything of the considerations which govern the election?

NOT AN F.R.S.

#### The Origin of Species and of Languages

ALTHOUGH the origin of languages is due, doubtless, to the gradual variation, selection, and combination of a few primary sounds, partly emotional, partly imitative; yet the process differs essentially from the Darwinian in one all-important respect—that it is carried on by the countless efforts of *rational* beings. No irrational animal, though capable of uttering emotional sounds that are quite intelligible to its fellows, and though in some instances capable of imitating both natural and articulate sounds in a remarkable degree, has ever formed a language, simply because it wants reason. Therefore the analogy, in so far as it really holds, seems to tell against the Darwinian theory, in as far as that ascribes the origin of species to *reasonless* variation and selection.

To me this seems a most important consideration. But I cannot trespass further on your space.

Stirling

WILLIAM TAYLOR

#### TAUNTON COLLEGE SCHOOL

THE educational scheme which occupied much of the late Lord Taunton's attention during the last years of his life, but of which he only saw the beginning, has now come into practical working. Under ordinary circumstances the development of an ancient Grammar School into a modern Public School would merely pass as one of the now frequent symptoms of advance in English higher education. Thus the removal of Bishop Fox's foundation (A.D. 1522) to a fine range of buildings outside Taunton, would hardly demand notice here. Our readers, however, whose attention was taken by Mr. Tuckwell's paper on Science Teaching in Schools (NATURE, No. 1), will see that the application of his system on a much enlarged scale is likely to affect considerably the position of science in the West of England. While calling public attention to the admirable educational arrangements of this particular school, we wish to remark on science teaching in schools in general, with regard to two points which we observe to be often misconceived by the very teachers and parents whom they especially concern.

First, as to the amount of other work displaced by the introduction of Physical Science as one of the regular parts of the school course. In the mediæval system,