

a branch of anatomy. But his great distinction was as a lecturer, and here his success was for a time unequalled. Like other teachers of the time, he had the advantage of introducing a great deal of comparative anatomy, physiology, and histology (so far as it was then known) into his lectures on human anatomy. He must have been gifted with great natural eloquence, and disdained none of the tricks of oratory. His biographer gives a wonderful account of the clothes he wore when lecturing, in what seems to have passed for "full dress" in Edinburgh about 1830, but also informs us that "the richest costume would hardly have availed had not the silvery tongue been brought into play." Knox never drew diagrams, and equally rejected the help of ready-made drawings for his class, nor did he ever use notes. Above all, he thoroughly enjoyed his work. He left little written that is likely to preserve his fame. His translation of Milne-Edwards' "Zoology," by which he is perhaps most widely known at present, is a bad specimen of his inferior work. The history of his life, besides its interest as the record of an able man's remarkable success and as remarkable failure, is of importance from the light it throws on the study of anatomy in this country, on Scottish university politics, and on methods of scientific teaching; so that the intention of the present work is more praiseworthy than its execution. P. S.

Strange Dwellings: being a Description of the Habitations of Animals. By the Rev. J. G. Wood, M.A., F.L.S. (Longmans & Co., 1871.)

MR. WOOD'S works are well and favourably known as presenting the study of Natural History in its most attractive form to the young. The present work is not new, being abridged from his "Homes without Hands," which obtained, some years ago, a deservedly large amount of popular favour; and even in its original form it consisted of course mainly of selections from accounts given by travellers and naturalists. It is, however, extremely well suited to place in the hands of any boy or girl who is already fond of reading about strange animals, or whom it is desired to interest in the study of nature. We find in it accounts of the curious trap-door spider of Jamaica, the bower-bird of Australia, with its remarkable edifice of twigs and shells, the mud wasps of Guiana, the repulsive-looking aardvark of South Africa, the weaver bird and tailor bird, and many other animals of singular habits, and illustrated with woodcuts, which combine with the lively style of the text to make the volume a very attractive one.

The Duke of Edinburgh in Ceylon: a Book of Elephant and Elk Sport. By John Capper, *Times* correspondent. Illustrated with chromo-lithographs. (London: Provest & Co., 1871.)

THIS book is sufficiently described by its title, being a record of the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to Ceylon last year, and of his success in the colonial sports of elephant hunting and elk hunting. It appeals to two sections of the public, those who eagerly seize upon every incident connected with the mode of life of any member of our Royal family, and those who are equally eager after any description from life of sport in those countries where wild beasts worthy of a hunter's rifle abound. We may quote the following as an instance of the perils encountered by our Prince in navigating the Cingalese rivers. "The stream was teeming with life. Fish of all varieties and sizes sprang into the boats as they paddled along, one of them finding its way into the Prince's coat pocket" (loyal fish!); "on all sides could be heard the snapping of alligators' jaws as tiny fish were caught in the monsters' mouths. The party had proceeded about a mile down the stream, when one of them, leaning down and resting his head on the gunwale of the boat, was startled from his quiet rest by the apparition of an alligator's gaping jaws, which made a direct snap at his head, fortunately missing

it, but seizing, in place of it, the barrel of the rifle held in the hands of the Prince's English attendant, who was seated next to him, and which the monster nearly wrenched out of his hand, splashing the water about, and drenching every one in the canoe." Is the *Times* correspondent quite certain that alligators are found in Ceylon?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his Correspondents. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

Lunar Halo seen from Two Stations

I HAVE presented to the French Institute at its last sitting a copy of *NATURE*, January 26, with the sketches of a halo seen from Liverpool by two different observers from two stations at a little distance. It is the first time, as far as my knowledge goes, that we have had two different sketches of the same phenomenon. The difference is very considerable indeed, as a *paraselene* was seen by one of the observers, and not by the other. It would be very important to ascertain what was the exact situation of each of them, and I should be glad if you can take the trouble to ascertain it by an inquiry through your paper. When I return to England I will ascertain the circumstances of the observation, which may lead to some definite conclusions on the form and altitude of floating snow during the night of the 4th January.

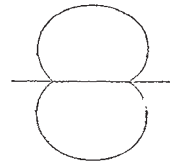
In my note to the French Institute, I say that, unquestionably, reflexion or refraction took place on several faces of crystalline snow, and each observer saw the refraction or reflexion on a particular face of crystal, placed conveniently for observation. So that double observation is very valuable, as affording a direct proof of the correctness of the explanations given by Mariotte, and others after him, of these magnificent appearances.

According to Mariotte's theory, the presence of a *paraselene* in one of the observations with the halo of 22° shows the presence of prismatic crystals, the faces of which must be hexagonal. The second appearance should, according to my opinion, show that these crystals were terminated by small pyramids, and the other observer perceived the halo reflected on the oblique face of these crystals. As he saw two or three halos almost concentric, it must be supposed that one of them was due to the upper pyramid and the other to the lower.

Very probably the air was not disturbed by any wind, and elongated crystals were falling very slowly, or rather floating, owing to the smallness of their dimensions, which possibly may have been a small fraction of $\frac{1}{100}$ inch.

I send you these suggestions only to direct further inquiries, and I make no pretension to exhaust the subject, which is very interesting.

I myself observed on Thursday, February 12, what is not quite unworthy to be noticed, as showing how inexhaustible is the field opened by Nature to her inquirers. The sun was setting when I arrived at St. Pierre le Calais with my friend Alexandre Lille. I noticed the disc was distorted, the two partial suns being almost alike, and of a red colour. This appearance was



certainly owing to the air not being of a uniform density. Two different streams were separated by a horizontal surface. The truth of this supposition was very easily ascertained, as two different kinds of clouds were flying in two different directions. Neither of them was heavy, and the distinction was very admirably made by the sun itself, which soon disappeared, leaving a rosy tint behind him. The lower clouds first presented a rosy colour, but soon became dark, and the upper clouds in their turn took the beautiful colour which the others below were just losing. The horizontability of the surface separating the two streams of air was a proof of great quietness in the atmosphere, and the night was magnificent, as well as the following day.

W. DE FONVILLE