interest in the subject as discussed both locally and in Parliament. Last week he visited St. Mary's Loch, and took pains to compare it with its very various reputation. He was prepared to find it an oozy swamp, fed by a moorland drainage of bogs and peat mosses.

A true poet is credited with seeing clearer and telling better than other people can, and in this case the credit is fairly earned by Sir Walter Scott, poet laureate of Scottish scenery. In the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" we read of "Fair St. Mary's silver Wave." In "Marmion,"

Nor fen nor sedge
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge.
Abrupt and sheer the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink,
And just a line of pebbly sand
Marks where the water meets the land.

In plain prose your correspondent saw as follows:—St. Mary's Loch, a practically inexhaustible natural reservoir; in a district pastoral, not moorland. The surface of surrounding hills and flats, formed of loose rock, shingle, or gravel, with sprinkling of light earth, the very type of natural draining to prevent or exterminate bog, morass, and swamp. Not a trace of peat, except peat-reek odour from Tibbie Shiell's chimneys. Tibbie burns peats got from exceptional points high among the hills. The various feeders of the loch run in pure as water can be. That the loch, bedded in a shingly, gravelly flat, and surrounded with bare, smooth, lawn-like hill-slopes, should appear to contain brown-tinted water, arises from three concurrent causes. First, the extreme purity of the water; second, the tawny-brown hue of aquatic growths, enveloping the shingle under water, by transmission; third, the pipe-clay whiteness of the dry shingle on the beach, by contrast. From the first-stated cause the water varies in apparent tint according to the bottom hues. Aside from chemical analyses, the relative physical features at once decide St. Mary's Loch to excel the famous Loch Katrine as a water source.

The Edinburgh people are about to celebrate the centenary of Sir Walter Scott. His evidence, before cited, and the occasion, may serve to excuse the spontaneous testimony of

A STUDENT OF NATURE

Sun Spots and Earth Temperatures

I NOTICED lately the deduction by Mr. Stone of a connection between Wolf's solar spot periods and the earth temperatures at the Cape of Good Hope: and now Professor Smyth, at Edinburgh, recalls to our attention the fact that his own investigations had, a year ago, led him to a similar conclusion.

Will you permit me to call attention to a further discussion of this subject, as contained in a short article, published in Silliman's "American Journal of Science." The compilations were mostly made in February, 1869, and afford interesting confirmation of the results, which I suppose to have been deduced by Messrs. Smyth and Stone.

CLEVELAND ABBE,
Director Cincinnati Observatory,
Meteorologist to the Signal Office

Washington, May 6

Bessemer Bombs

ALLOW me through the medium of your columns to call the attention of scientific men to the significant inference which, it appears to me, is to be drawn from the formation of "bombs" in the Bessemer process, incidentally described by Mr. Williams in a recent number of NATURE.*

These "bombs" are minute hollow spherules; the smaller are for the most part perforated. These minute hollow spherules are formed of liquid incandescent matter, the smaller showing the true form—perforated spheres.

The point to which I wish to direct the attention of Mr. Williams and other scientific men is this:—May we not have here an experiment which supplements those ingenious ones of M. Plateau on revolving liquid spheres? Mr. Williams will perhaps kindly examine some of the most perfect of these bombs, and let us know whether he sees trace of revolution in their formation. I believe he will find such evidence, and that the revolution is about the perforation.

C. E.

Brighton

* See NATURE, vol. iii. p. 410.

THE STRASBOURG MUSEUM

A BRIEF notice of this Museum may not at this time be devoid of interest. It occupies ten large rooms in the Academy House of Strasbourg. Two rooms are devoted to Comparative Anatomy, and eight to the Zoological, Geological, and Mineralogical collections. One large hall is exclusively devoted to a collection of species indigenous to Alsace, and here its flora and fauna, both fossil and recent, will be found well represented. The large hall of Mammals contains about 2,000 specimens belonging to between 600 and 700 species, among which may be noticed a fine series of Felidæ, including two specimens of the rare *Felis pardina* of Portugal. Among the Ruminants are a grand specimen of the *Ovis nivicola* of Kamtschatka; four specimens of *Tragelaphus* from the mountains of Constantine, a large series in all stages of growth of the *Antelope rubicapra* from Switzerland, the Carpathians, and the Pyrenees; *Capra semlaica* of the Nilgherries; six specimens of *C. agagrus* from Kurdistan, of which two are magnificent adult males and the others females and young; *C. walee* from Abyssinia, male and female; nine specimens of *C. hispanica* from the Sierra Nevada; seventeen of *C. ibex*, representing it in all its ages and in all states of wool; not to mention excellent specimens of *C. pyrenaica*, *C. caucasica*, *C. altaica*, and *C. sinaica*; indeed, it may be doubted if there is in any Museum a more complete collection of this interesting group. Of the Antelopes the Museum also possesses a grand series, and the attention in this corner of the hall will be at once attracted by the case of Reindeer, containing eight perfect specimens, representing the wild race of Norway, the domesticated animal of Lapland, and the varieties from Siberia, Greenland, and Labrador. There are also beautifully stuffed specimens of the European and American Bison, and among the Cervidæ we noticed a most interesting little variety from Corsica of *Cervus elaphas*.

Among the Rodents the Collection of Hares and Rabbits from all parts of the world is very fine. The Collection of Madagascar Lemurs is nearly complete. There are also fine specimens of *Colobus ursinus* and *C. valleriosus* from the Gaboon, and a skeleton of the female Gorilla; one of the largest specimens known of the Walrus, and an immense series of Phocidæ from the North Seas. We have omitted to mention two nice specimens of *Chlamydomorphus truncatus*.

The Bird Galleries are very extensive, and contain upwards of 5,000 species and nearly 14,000 birds. The Collection of Vultures is very rich; *Gypætus barbatus* from Switzerland, Pyrenees, Sierra Nevada, the Atlas, and Abyssinia; *Aquila pelagica* from Kamtschatka. Of Strix there are about 200 specimens and 60 species. The Birds of Paradise are represented by perfectly fresh specimens of *Semioptera Wallacei*, *Paradisea alba*, *Craspedophora magnifica*, male and female; *Astrapia nigra*, male and female; good specimens of both species of *Cephaloptera*; *Turacus giganteus*; *Anas Stelleri*, male and female; *Alca impennis*, a very old specimen. Passing by the grand series of Pelicans, of Grouse we record magnificent specimens of *Oreophatis derlyanus*, *Lophalektor Macartneyi*, male and female, *Balaniceps rex*, &c.

The Reptiles and Fishes occupy two large halls.

The Entomological Collection is very fine; a portion of it is exposed to the public in one of the halls; but the greater part is kept in the Cabinet Room. Nothing can surpass the beauty and freshness of the collection of Alsace Insecta. The collection of Coleoptera numbers about 8,000 species.

The Palæontological Collection is arranged according to the geological formations; and one must remark a magnificent example of *Teleosaurus Chapmani*, 12 ft. long; a grand mass of *Pentacrinus fascicularis*, 5 ft. by 3, and containing 15 individuals established on a mass of oysters.