

with a smaller one growing out from the bottom or root close to the sun's limb. There was another tongue of flame a little to the right, which appeared to be detached from the larger flame and also from the sun's limb.

On September 20, 1872, I saw a red flame which went up a little distance from the sun's limb and then divided in three. Close to this, on the edge of the sun's disc, was a group of nine small spots, and a large space was covered with faculae. The flame—which was of a deep red colour—did not appear to be projected against the sky, but upon a very delicate purple background.

No coloured glass was used in either of these observations, but a sheet of letter paper was held between the eye and the telescope which was removed the instant the sun was brought into the centre of the field of view.

R. LANGDON

The Huemul

IN the number of NATURE for July 24, p. 253, I see it is stated that "the Chilian Exploring Expedition has discovered a specimen of the Huemul, an animal that has been altogether lost sight of."

The late Earl of Derby received a female specimen of this animal from Port Famine, in the Straits of Magellan, described and figured by me in the Proc. Zool. Soc. 1849, p. 64, t. xii., as *Cervus leucotis*, which is now in the Derby Museum at Liverpool. Mr. Bates has sent to the British Museum a male and female of the Huemul, which were obtained by Don Enrique Simpson in a valley of the Cordilleras, lat. 46 S. These specimens have been described, the horns of the male figured, and the history of the animal given in detail by me, under the name of *Huamela leucotis*, in the Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist. 1872, x. p. 445; 1873, xi. p. 214, and p. 308.

The animal, like all the American deer, differs from the stags of the Old World in having no tarsal gland.

British Museum, July 24

J. E. GRAY

Colour of the Emerald, &c.

IN the valuable and important paper given on this subject in NATURE (July 24), the writer has not made it quite clear what kind of emerald was experimented on.

Taken in conjunction with the beryl, it may be assumed that reference is intended to the green beryl, a silicate of alumina and glucina, commonly called emerald, from its colour; but the name of emerald is also applied to green varieties of corundum, which is crystalline alumina.

It would be interesting to understand fully the distinction of colour constituents.

July 25

A. H.

Parasites of the House Fly

SOME of your readers may not be aware that the common house fly is at this time frequently found with from one to twenty parasites on its body. To such I recommend the observation of them as an interesting microscopical study. They are usually on the under part of the fly and can be seen with an ordinary lens of high power.

Regent Street, July 23

A. R.

Bees and Aphides

IN his interesting communication respecting the relations supposed to exist between *Trigona* and *Alambractis*, Dr. H. Müller appears to have overlooked the Abbé Boisier's observation (Kirby and Spence, "Introduction to Entomology," 7th edition, p. 384) that hive-bees will collect the honey-dew excreted by Aphides. I have also observed the same habit in humble-bees.

Kilderry, Co. Donegal

W. E. HART

Flycatcher's Nest

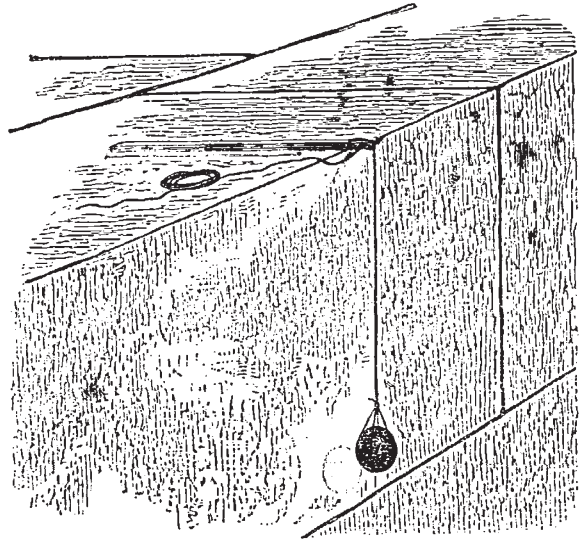
SOME flycatchers have built their nest *inside* a temporary shed erected for the masons at present employed upon the rebuilding of Llanfrefcha Church. The nest is now full of young ones, and the old birds fly in and out of the shed with perfect confidence, carrying food to them, and quite regardless of the carving and sawing going on close to them.

July 16

ELIZABETH H. MITCHELL

Relics of the Pyramids

GLANCING over a number of your periodical I find depicted (vol. vii. p. 147) a grey granite ball, recently discovered in the Great Pyramid, and surmised to be an ancient Egyptian weight. It does not seem to have struck the author of the article that this ball could be anything else than a standard weight, but the description he gives leads me to assign to it quite a different use.



I believe it to be a naturally formed granite pebble, selected on account of its nearly spherical form, for a mason's "plumb-bob." The small white spots of lime found on the ball were probably the result of its impact against the narrow cement joints whilst the masonry was in progress and the mortar not yet set.

The bronze hook and cedar rod may have formed part of the same tool, which possibly resembled the accompanying sketch.

Mangalore, June 20

E. H. PRINGLE

FISH DISTINGUISHED BY THEIR ACTION

AS the trained eye of a constant resident in the country enables him to recognise the various species of birds that cross his path by their flight, irrespective of their form and colour, so the observer of fish as they wander at will in the tanks of a large aquarium soon learns to invest them with an additional marked individuality imparted by their mode of action. In some instances these distinctive characters are instructive, as illustrating the varied mechanical principles on which locomotion is effected, while in others they are highly valuable as affording accessory means of discriminating the zoological affinities of the different races and species.

Commencing with the Plagiostomous order, we find in the two primary sub-groups, including respectively the Sharks and Rays, that progression is effected on very distinct principles. With the *Selachoida*, or shark tribe, the fish move by the even, powerful swaying from side to side of the largely developed and unsymmetrical caudal fin and whole posterior part of the body, the other fins remaining quiescent and being merely subservient as balancers. Descending to the species we find again that each form exhibits a peculiarity of action distinct from its congeners, and one which readily enables us to discriminate between them. Thus in the Smooth Hound, *Mustelus*, the pectoral fins are so largely developed that their balancing powers are highly augmented; comparatively slow motion of the caudal extremity suffices to propel the fish through the water, and the whole body being flexible, it pro-