I was told by a local medical gentleman, who had visited the spot, that some eleven or twelve trees had been struck among the hills under peculiar circumstances. The snow was lying so deep at the time that the place was well nigh inaccessible, and owing to want of leisure and the continued severe weather, I had no opportunity of visiting the wood in question until a few days ago. I then ascertained from a farmer living 150 yards south-east of the spot, that the trees must have been struck simultaneously.

Between 9 and 10 P.M. on the 15th a flash of lightning, followed by loud thunder, was seen by him in the north and clear of the wood altogether; besides, the interval between flash and peal showed it to be at a comparatively great distance. The man, being an invalid, never slept, when about 12.45 A.M. on the 16th a blinding light immediately followed by a tremendous thunder-clap made him think his own house was struck. The next and last flash and peal occurred a quarter of an hour afterwards at a considerable distance away to the west.

The effect of the lightning on the trees was observed from the window on the following morning, and as the spot was daily visited by the inmates of the house for the purpose of drying clothes, there could be no doubt but the damage had been done during the previous night. All the fourteen trees, varying from six to nine inches in diameter, and not visibly higher than the immediately adjoining ones have lost the bark over a width of one half to one inch, and the wood is slightly split.

Buckie, Banff, N.B., May 12

G. W. CAMPHUIS

Intellect in Brutes

IN connection with recent correspondence in your columns, it has occurred to me that the following remarkable instance of reasoning in an animal might be of interest to your readers.

In 1877 I was absent from Madras for two months, and left in my quarters three cats, one of which, an English *tabby*, was a very gentle and affectionate creature. During my absence the quarters were occupied by two young gentlemen, who delighted in teasing and frightening the cats. About a week before my return, the English cat had kittens, which she carefully concealed behind book-shelves in the library. On the morning of my return I saw the cat, and petted her as usual, and then left the house for about an hour. On returning to dress I found that the kittens were located in a corner of my dressing-room, where previous broods had been deposited and nursed. On questioning the servant as to how they came there, he at once replied, "Sir, the old cat taking one, one in mouth brought them here." In other words, the mother had carried them one by one in her mouth from the library to the dressing-room, where they lay quite exposed. I do not think that I have heard of a more remarkable instance of reasoning and affectionate confidence in an animal, and I need hardly say that the latter manifestation gave me very great pleasure. The train of reasoning seems to have been as follows: "Now that my master has returned there is no risk of the kittens being injured by the two young savages in the house, so I will take them out for my protector to see and admire, and keep them in the corner in which all my former pets have been nursed in safety."

G. BIDIE

Government Central Museum, Madras, May 3

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

THE anniversary meeting of the Royal Geographical Society was held on Monday last, Sir Rutherford Alcock, vice-president, in the chair. From the Council report it appears that there is no diminution in the number of Fellows, notwithstanding the losses from various causes. From a financial point of view, the Society continues to prosper, its assets being set down at over 37,000*l.*, exclusive of its valuable map collection and library, both of which have received large accessions during the past year. It will be interesting to practical geographers to learn that considerable progress has been made with the revision of the classified register of maps and the preparation of an alphabetical catalogue of all the maps in the Society's collection and publications, and especially that the new catalogue is being prepared with a view to its being subsequently printed. We are also informed that a case containing a set of traveller's instruments, such as

the Society recommend, has been placed in the map-room. At the conclusion of the report the royal medals were presented to Count Schouvaloff, the Russian ambassador (for Col. Prejevalsky), and General Sir Lintorn Simmons, R.E., G.C.B. (for Capt. W. J. Gill, R.E.), after which came the presentation of the Public Schools' Prize Medals, the award of which we have already recorded, and some interesting remarks on the teaching of geography, by the Rev. G. Butler, headmaster of Liverpool College. The Hon. G. C. Brodrick announced the subject for next year's examination would be "Western Africa, from the Sahara to the Congo, and as far eastwards as Nyangwé." The Earl of Northbrook was elected president, and among the new members of council are General R. Strachey and General Sir H. L. Thuillier, late head of the great Trigonometrical Survey of India, both of whom are well known as scientific geographers. The Society being without a president, the annual address on the progress of geography was delivered by Mr. Clements R. Markham, the senior secretary. The chief items of news are that Lieut. R. C. Temple, of the 1st Gurkhas, has constructed a map of a large tract of previously unknown country between Candahar and Dehra Ghazi Khan, and has promised to furnish an account of the region, and that Mr. Whitely is about to attempt an examination of the mysterious Mount Roraima and its neighbourhood, in the interior of Guiana. In conclusion, Mr. Markham called attention to the shortcomings of the Admiralty in the surveying department, expressing a hope that they might be induced to send out a properly equipped surveying-vessel to the southern part of the east and west coasts of Africa, "which have not been sounded since the days of Capt. Owen, half a century ago."

M. SOLEILLET, who recently tried to reach Timbuctoo, has arrived in Paris, and gave, on Monday, an address before the Société d'Études Maritimes et Coloniales, in the large hall of the Société d'Encouragement. M. Soleillet is in very good health, and no trace of his illness is now visible. He speaks highly of the negro population and the Sultan of Segou, where he spent more than three months as peaceably as in any French town, without any other escort than a single servant, a sergeant of the Senegal Rifles. The Niger at Segou-Sokkhorra, more than 2,000 miles from its mouth, is about 300 yards wide. The access is very easy for traders. M. Soleillet will devote his future exploration to the determination of the best track for the trans-Saharan railway. He contrasted the good will of the negro population for the French with the hostility exhibited towards Europeans in the Sahara.

FROM *Globus* we learn that the long sojourn of the Russian troops in Bulgaria and Rumelia has been fruitful of results to geographical knowledge. The Russian staff have been active in carrying out a series of astronomical and geodetic observations, so that a fairly complete network of triangulation has been accomplished, which will enable cartographers to lay down with fair accuracy a very considerable number of places in our maps. Something like 1,000 points have been thus taken, most of them geodetically, but a considerable number astronomically. The chief results are expected to be published by 1880.

THE steamer *Nordenskjöld*, Capt. H. Sengstacke, formerly chief officer of the *Germania* on the second German Arctic expedition, sailed from Malmö, under the Russian flag, on May 12, for Behring Strait, *via* the Suez Canal. On board are Prof. Grigorieff of St. Petersburg, and Baron von Danckelman of Leipsic, to whom are intrusted the duties of zoologist and physicist respectively. The object in view, as our readers know, is to visit the mouth of the Lena, and, if necessary, render assistance to Prof. Nordenskjöld. The expedition is not