

shall be supplied in the next volume; those who take the trouble to note such *omissa* are the truest friends we have.

I, Savile Row, W.

E. C. RYE

[The writer of the review claims to know something of the difficulties the editor of the *Zoological Record* refers to, with which "*haud ignarus mali*" he sympathises, and still he clings to the idea that it might be expedient for the editor to keep his young team in hand, but in thus suggesting a uniformity in practice, nothing was further from his thoughts than an unfriendly criticism. As to the accentuation of the *d* in *infra*, he quite agrees with the editor that he would find the fact he mentions in an "old Ainsworth," but no modern writer now ever thinks of using an accent on Latin words under any circumstances, and hence the query. As to *Kalispongia*, Wright, being spelt with a *K* and not a *C*, though the subject is a tempting one for comment, yet a controversy on it would hardly be suited for the columns of NATURE, but surely the editor will draw a distinction between an attempt to preserve a uniformity in the style of the several records, and an insistence on authors being uniform in their spelling of generic names.]

#### A Museum Conference

MR. PATON'S suggestion about a museum conference is an admirable one, although I think that it should not be confined to officials only. The time has come when an Association for the Promotion and Systematic Arrangement of Museums must be formed. I trust, therefore, that those competent to do it will take the matter up and produce some practical result.

J. ROMILLY ALLEN

#### The Tay Bridge Storm

IN his interesting letter on the above subject (NATURE, vol. xxi. p. 443) Sir Ralph Abercromby remarks that "there is a good deal of evidence to show that where the velocity of the [cyclone] centre is very great, the strength of the wind for any given gradients is increased, or at all events becomes more squally and gusty;" and again (p. 444) that the Tay Bridge storm "was exceptionally squally and gusty, doubtless owing to the unusually rapid rate of its motion." I am far from wishing to be understood to impugn the accuracy of these remarks, but I would say that the law which is indicated in them has, if I mistake not, escaped general observation, and I believe that meteorologists will be grateful to Sir R. Abercromby, than whom no one can be found better able to do so, if he will point out the evidence on which it rests.

It is, I think, generally admitted that in traversing the continents both of Europe and of North America storms have on some occasions a greater velocity of propagation than has been recorded in the British Isles; and it seems possible that an increment in the quality of "gustiness" may be produced in an air current by its passage over a very extensive surface whose friction coefficient is large. But this scarcely seems to throw light upon the relation, mentioned by Sir R. Abercromby, between the gustiness of the wind for a given gradient over a particular and very limited area, and the velocity of propagation of the wind-system across that area.

The relation between the strength of the wind and the steepness of barometrical gradient is somewhat complex, and has not even yet received complete study. The relation between the strength of the wind and the velocity of propagation, or rate of progress of a storm, is a more intricate and obscure subject, and I believe that any facts which tend to elucidate it will be of considerable value, especially if this second relation can be shown to be independent of the first.

W. CLEMENT LEY

March 12

#### Strange Arithmetic

IN the March number of the *Contemporary Review* is an article by Dr. C. B. Radcliffe, entitled "A Sequel to the Pedigree of Man," in which some most startling theories are propounded. As an appendix to this article, he gives several tables intended to prove that the mean time of high spring-tide throughout the world is about six o'clock (morning and evening). For this purpose he gives the time at a considerable number of stations, and the very large discrepancies led me to inquire how he arrived at his results. This he does by adding the times together, and dividing by the number of places! It is surely

clear that any miscellaneous selection of times treated in this manner *must* give a result somewhere near six.

His first table shows a result of 6h. 9m., but if you take his figures, and number the hours from morning to evening, instead of noon to midnight (that is, call six twelve, and twelve six), the result is 6h. 27m., or on our hypothesis 27 minutes past noon! The proper way of treating the figures would be to show at how many places the tide is high during each hour, and the annexed table shows that it is utterly impossible to fix any mean time. If all Dr. Radcliffe's theories rest on such hollow proofs as this, they are certainly worthy of little attention.

Hour.	Table I.	Table II.
1 <sup>1</sup>	3	0
2	3	3
3	4	2
4	9	2
5	1	3
6	4	3
7	7	1
8	5	1
9	0	7
10	2	2
11	2	6
12	2	2

No. of places 42 ... .. 32

Chester, March 6

E. S.

#### Fertilisation of the Grape Vine

THE season is favourable for an examination of the floral development of the vine, and I recommend an inspection of the flower of that plant to all who are curious. For my own part I shall be glad if any one who has remarked more than is obvious will tell us something about it, for the flower is certainly remarkable. On examination it is seen that each little knob, which at first sight seems to be the young grape, is, in fact, a little green cap, which, when lifted off, discloses a group of stamens closely surrounding the pistil. To all appearance this cap—which is all that represents the flower (in the common acceptation of the word)—must effectually prevent anything like cross-fertilisation. Apparently it becomes detached below and is thrown off as soon as the stamens, which continue to support it, lose their vitality, and not before. It is, indeed, not easy to conceive any other so simple an arrangement, by which, whatever of fertilisation is necessary, can be ensured being done at home. It seems as if by this arrangement every flower *must* fertilise, though there were not another within miles, and *cannot* be fertilised by any other but itself, though it be one among thousands.

Collingwood, March 14

J. HERSCHEL

#### EXPLORATION IN BORNEO

HERR CARL BOCK has successfully accomplished his journey across Borneo—from Koetei to Bandjermassing—arriving at the latter place on the last day of 1879. The journey was commenced on November 21, from Tangerang, the residence of the Sultan of Koetei, who promised to accompany Herr Bock, but did all in his power to dissuade him from going. From hence the route was up the Mahakkan River, to the village of Moara-Kaman, where the mosquitoes were so troublesome that a retreat was almost determined on. On the 24th the largest Malay village in the interior was reached—Kotta Bangoen, containing more than a thousand inhabitants. The whole of the lower part of the Mahakkan is occupied by the Malays, the Dyaks dwelling only on the smaller tributaries, or towards the source of the main river. In this neighbourhood there is abundance of rattang gutta, or edible birds' nests, and bees' wax, to obtain which the Malays go in parties of twenty or thirty into the forests for fear of the Dyaks. Owing to the great drought of last year in this district, the whole forest is leafless, a very unaccustomed sight in the tropics, and as a result the birds had all deserted it, or at least none were to be seen. At this village, as well as at

<sup>1</sup> That is, 1.0 to 1.59 (morning or evening).