sylvestre should have put the editor on his guard; the reference to Fuchs which he gives shows clearly that some *Allium* was intended, and tracing the synonymy through Bauhin to Linnæus, we find that *A. vineale* is the species meant. Even apart from this evidence, it is obvious that the "sellers of simples" who substituted another herb for *Teucrium Scordium* would have selected one that had a similar smell, and not one like the *Colchicum*, which has no such odour. Mr. Mowat rightly identifies the "gosegresse" of the "Sinonoma" (p. 41) with *Potentilla Anserina*; but it is hardly accurate to say that it is "generally cleavers" (*Galium Aparine*). The "Dictionary of English Plant-Names" shows that the *Potentilla* is at least as frequently called goosegrass nowadays; and it is the "Gosgres" of the Old English Medical MS. printed in *Archæologia*, vol. xxx. (p. 408)—a glossary containing many plant-names which have been too little noticed. "Caputpurgium, *i. stafisagria*," is not *Pedicularis*, as glossed by Mr. Mowat—a plant supposed to favour the growth of lice—but the Staves-acre, which has been used for destroying them since the days of Pliny. Similarly "*Calendula, i. solsequium*," is not *Caltha*, but the Marigold, *Calendula officinalis*; this is made quite clear by the description under *Kalendula*, which may be cited as an example of the capital diagnoses which the glossary contains. "*Kalendula est herba crescens in hortis portans florem rubeum vel croceum de quibus floribus faciunt sibi juvenulæ coronas, solsequium idem.*"

To make a glossary of this kind useful to other than English-speaking students, the plants should be identified with their Latin as well as by their English names. Even in America, the mention of the cowslip would suggest, not *Primula veris* but *Caltha palustris*. Mr. Mowat says (quite correctly) that "pigle, pagle, paigle seems to be the regular old name for cowslip"; and he seems to imply that the entry "pigle, *i. stichewort*," may also refer to *Primula veris*. But a previous entry, "*Lingua avis, i. stichewort, i. pigle*," is quite sufficient to confirm the natural conclusion that by stichewort *Stellaria Holostea* (which is still commonly so called) was intended; and this plant is called pigle by Gerard in his appendix of "names gathered out of ancient written and printed copies, and from the mouthes of plaine and simple countrie people." Under "*Serpillum*" we find the name "pelestre," which Mr. Mowat queries "palustre?" but this is a form of *Pellitory*, already given on p. 34—"Piretrum, pelestre idem"—the name "Piretrum" showing that *Anacyclus Pyrethrum*, not *Parietaria*, was intended; the *Anacyclus* also figures in the Glossary under the name of "Dentaria," in allusion to its former use in toothache. An instance of the insufficiency of English names is given in the gloss of "*Umbilicus veneris, i. penigresse*," as "penny-grass, pennywort"; it is of course *Cotyledon*, not *Hydrocotyle*, which is here meant, though the vernacular names are common to the two plants.

In most cases, however, where Mr. Mowat has given a modern synonym, it is correct; but I do not quite understand why only comparatively few plants are identified, as the identifications are by no means confined to cases of special difficulty. Some very obvious explanations are duly set forward, while in more doubtful cases help is often not forthcoming.

In the volume of Plant-Names which I hope to prepare for the Early English Text Society, I shall try to identify as far as possible all the plant-names, both English and Latin, with their modern scientific equivalents. This will be a tedious work, and one in which mistakes are certain to occur; but a foundation will then have been laid for the future production of a comprehensive work on English plant-names which shall take in all, from the earliest to the most recent. When such a work comes to be done, the great value of collections like this of Mr. Mowat will become apparent.

JAMES BRITTEN

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- [The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]
- [The Editor urgently requests correspondents to keep their letters as short as possible. The pressure on his space is so great that it is impossible otherwise to ensure the appearance even of communications containing interesting and novel facts.]

The Analysis of the Tuning Fork

MR. HERMANN SMITH, in a letter in *NATURE* last week, commenting upon my paper read before the Physical Society on June 10, of which you gave a short report, offers some very cogent experiments in support of the evidence I have endeavoured to give, that the tuning-fork does not communicate its sonorous vibrations to a sounding-board through a *ventroid*, as we find generally accepted upon the theory of Chladni. In remarks upon my paper at the Physical Society, Lord Rayleigh suggested that this matter could be demonstrated by cutting a tuning-fork out in both ends of a long steel bar in the manner I had done, for an experiment, in one end only; we might then observe if sonorous vibrations would be communicated through either of the prongs of the double fork, at the opposite end to that set in vibration. In the following week I constructed such a fork, and I found that either of the non-vibrating prongs, when the opposite ones were set in vibration, would form a perfect stem to the fork, and communicate sonorous vibrations just as well as a single stem. In this case it will be seen that the prongs, which may be considered to form the stem, lead directly to the places on the fork pointed out as its nodes by Chladni. It appears, therefore, evident that a node may communicate sonorous vibration to a sounding-board.

After reading my paper Dr. Stone told me in conversation that he had constructed a tuning-fork with a rod projecting at right angles to the open space between the prongs, and directly from its stem, and that this rod communicated sonorous vibrations from the fork to a sounding-board nearly as perfectly as the direct stem. This modified form of fork I also made by screwing a stem into my experimental fork, which was made in the end of a flat steel bar. I found it to act as Dr. Stone had stated. These experiments appear further to show that sonorous vibrations are communicated through nodes to sounding-boards. If we may apply this principle to stringed instruments, we must look rather to the bridge than the transverse motion of the string, as the communicator of the sonorous vibrations which produces the note. I may say that the discussion of Chladni's theory was not the object of my paper, the purpose of which was to show that the sonorous vibrations forming a note are possibly compounded of vibrations of much smaller amplitude than generally assumed, which was perhaps better demonstrated by other experiments.

W. F. STANLEY

The Mount Pisgah (U.S.) Stone Carvings

THE number of *NATURE* dated June 15 (p. 160) contains some statements relating to the curious stone carvings discovered by Mr. M. S. Valentine in the neighbourhood of Mount Pisgah, North Carolina, and now exhibited by him in Europe. Before leaving the United States, Mr. Valentine brought his specimens to Washington, in order to have them examined by Prof. Baird, the Director of the United States National Museum, and by myself. I am therefore enabled to express an opinion concerning them. Having been for many years in charge of the largest