

of a splendid folio volume, with 30 plates, in which from 1 to 26 contain figures of all the remarkable horns from the Banqueting Hall, and from 27 to 29 represent some of the more interesting of the monstrous horns, while on Plate 30 we have a most extraordinary instance of a pair of horns—one of ten, the other of twelve, points—which had during life got inextricably interlocked with one another. The finest and most characteristic pairs of horns were selected for these photographs, which are by a new process most excellently reproduced on the plates. As a frontispiece to the text we have a photograph of a quaint sketch of the Castle.

About 1861, Dr. Meyer informs us, acting under the direction of Grand Marshall H. von Freisen, a catalogue of the seventy-one horns in the Banqueting Hall, with measurements in inches, was compiled, but unfortunately some of the identifications cannot be regarded as certain. It is strange that, in spite of the great care with which this collection of horns has been kept, there seems to be no record of when and whence the very ancient ones came to Moritzburg. Even the *Archives* of the place are nearly silent about them. Dr. Meyer has in this quite luxurious catalogue done what he could to rescue all that is known about the collection from oblivion, and he promises at some future time to give the history of the remaining two-thirds as a continuation of this work.

OUR BOOK SHELF

Guide to Methods of Insect Life, and Prevention and Remedy of Insect Ravage. By Eleanor A. Ormerod. Pp. 1-167, 8vo. (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1884.)

THE text contains the substance of ten lectures delivered for the Institute of Agriculture. At p. 7 there is an italicised remark to the effect that "*insects always begin life by being produced by a female.*" This may be regarded as an indication of the presumably ultra-ignorant class for whose benefit the lectures were prepared. But we prefer to think that far too low an estimate of the knowledge possessed by our agriculturists has been made, and doubt not that, by a majority of them, the remark will be taken as the reverse of complimentary. The book is exceedingly well got up, and in a very attractive style, and will no doubt become popular (on account of the multitude of illustrations. For the agriculturist purely, it seems to us that it goes either not far enough or too far; it is too "showy" for practical purposes, and often, unwittingly, too abstruse. The copious illustrations are mostly excellent, and many of them are original (among the very few very indifferent figures, that of the "Bee-parasite" may be cited). But the necessity for many of the figures in a book apparently intended for the agricultural class may be doubted, and some have evidently been introduced for effect. That American bogey (or "fraud") the "Colorado Beetle," is honoured by the reproduction of his portrait, and the *Phylloxera* is dismissed with only dishonourable mention. The general information is sound, but occasionally vague, as in the definitions of the terms "larva" and "pupa," and in the apparent assumption that respiration is exclusively effected by the external air being conveyed to the tracheæ by means of *spiracles*. The "Glossary" will no doubt be found very useful to the majority of the readers of the book, but some terms (e.g. "*Telum*") appear wonderfully abstruse, as used in a work in which it was necessary to explain that "*insects always begin life by being produced by a female.*"

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 insure the appearance even of communications containing interesting and novel facts.]

The Remarkable Sunsets

ON Friday, the 11th inst., the weather was very remarkable; it recalled to our minds, though on a smaller scale, the storm of December 12, 1883. In the afternoon, about three o'clock, the wind arose with violence, and great squalls alternated with relative calms. The movements of the clouds were also very curious. Layers of air of different elevation floated in various directions, and the lower very low-hanging clouds which moved at the same level had, at different points of the sky, an unequal and changing rapidity. The wind beneath was, at 6 p.m., west-south-west; the lower clouds came from the west, the more elevated, on the contrary, from the north-north-west, so there is no doubt that whirlwinds blew that day in the upper air. The sun had set with a very fine after-glow, and in the ensuing night and morning there fell, now and then, showers of rain occasionally accompanied by snow and hail. Besides, the night before a magnificent halo had been observed around the moon, so

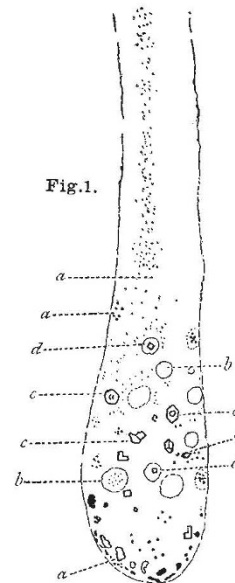


FIG. 1.—Sediment and residue of an evaporated drop of rain, fallen January 12, 1884, on a window-pane. *a a a*, particles of the ash; *b b*, drops of hygroscopic matter; *c c c*, crystals of common salt; and *d d*, drops with salt crystals.

that the presence of ice-crystals on January 11, in the higher regions of the atmosphere, is certain. In consequence of the low temperature, the air in those regions must have had a great density, and so, apparently, there must have been a great chance that the whirlwinds on Friday had moved the heavy, cold air from above downwards.

That this was really the case seems to proceed from the fact that during the night of January 11 and 12 the rain had brought down on my windows the same sediment as that of December 12, though in smaller quantity. The identity of this sediment with the ashes of Krakatoa will now be beyond doubt to any one who has read the numerous communications in *NATURE* on the remarkable sunsets. Why I wish to refer to this affair once more is that at the microscopic examination of the dust of January 12 I found in it a relatively great quantity of complete individual crystals, partly soluble, partly insoluble, in water, which had remained unobserved by me in December.

After having scraped the dust off the window-panes and put it on the slide in a drop of oil, I made a drawing of the crystals