

India, and I trust Dr. Hunter and Mr. Phil Robinson will excuse my saying they are both wrong *re* this name.

These hill-men have histories, if we could only get at them. This I find by having traced forty-six villages (now nine or ten different clans) as being offshoots of "Sang-nu," east-south-east of Sibsagar. Twenty-five generations ago they began to spread.

Sibsagar, Assam, May 5

S. E. PEAL

#### Atmospheric Dust

ON Thursday, April 24, showers of discoloured rain fell at Inglewood, Sandhurst, Castlemaine, Kyneton, Daylesford, and the districts adjacent, that is to say, over an area of more than 2,500 square miles in extent. The heaviest showers—called by all who were out in them "showers of mud"—occurred at 7 o'clock p.m. and near midnight. The leaves of trees and shrubs, roofs of buildings, fences, and everything on which it could rest were more or less covered with red mud. The weather at Sandhurst for some ten days prior to this occurrence had been dry, and for a long period there had been a drought in New South Wales and in many parts northward. At several places in Victoria and New South Wales violent dust-storms occurred on the morning of the 24th immediately preceding the commencement of the rain. Some of the mud, of a bronze colour, collected by Mr. Edward Hurst of Sandhurst, was found by microscopical and chemical examination to be composed of quartz, oxide of iron, and mica; some taken from the rain-gauge stand at the School of Mines was, when dried, an almost impalpable powder of a pale reddish chocolate colour. It was seen to consist of ferruginous quartz and minute particles of black oxide of iron; and a smaller quantity collected at my private meteorological observatory—about three-quarters of a mile distant—was paler in colour, and consisted of quartz (much of it iron-free), alumina, sesquioxide of iron, and white and reddish-yellow mica. A small proportion of it was attractable by the magnet. The water collected in the rain-gauges when agitated was reddish-brown in colour, and the proportion of sediment was very large, leaving no room for doubt that the dust was brought down by the rain. Its composition and the times at which it fell lead me to believe that it came from the north and had travelled far.

R. BROUGH SMYTH

School of Mines, Sandhurst, Victoria, Australia,

May 1

#### The "Red Glow" after Sunset

BEING out on Sandymount Strand last night, whence the western sky may be well observed, I noticed, about 8.45 p.m., the "red glow" over the yellowish sky where the sun had set. It was quite as distinct as during certain evenings at the end of last year.

J. P. O'REILLY

Royal College of Science for Ireland, Stephen's Green,  
Dublin, June 12

#### The Earthquake

AS communications on this subject are still being received by NATURE, and as the records for London and its immediate vicinity have been few, it occurs to me to note the following facts:—At the time of the earthquake I was sitting in my study here. There are several heavy insect-cabinets in the room, and a loud "groan" proceeded from one or more of them, indicating "settling" from some cause or other. Furthermore, the door of the room would not lock on the evening of that day, although the lock had moved freely down to then. And a clock in a bed-room was found to have stopped without any apparent cause at the hour indicated for the earthquake; but as the discovery was not made until late in the evening, it was not possible to decide whether the stoppage had occurred in the morning or evening. As no sensation was *felt*, these matters would have held no significance had it not been for the news in the evening papers of that day.

R. McLACHLAN

Clarendon Road, Lewisham, S.E., June 13

#### Intelligence in Animals

THERE is at Walham Green a daily illustration of intelligence in a donkey which may interest those of your readers who collect such facts. Old Bob the waterman has been known for so many

years that it is impossible to say how many. He is one of the few surviving carriers who take round for sale water in a tub on wheels, which is drawn by a donkey. Bob, the tub, and the donkey are one of the institutions of Walham Green. Years ago Bob used to guide his donkey to the pump near the church and then drive him round to his customers. How long the donkey was learning his rounds I do not know. Three years ago Bob used one shaft as a sort of movable crutch, and seemed to trust much to his donkey to go the right way. Now he appears quite blind, for a few days ago he was noticed going into the yard where the pump stands, when the donkey stopped. He asked a boy what his donkey had stopped for, and was told that a cart was in the way. It is interesting to note that the donkey conducts by his own intelligence all the business of water distributor, while Bob has sunk to the condition of mere pumper and of money collector attached to and led by the shafts, which latter duty might be done by an intelligent dog. M.

#### ADOLPHE WURTZ AND HIS CHEMICAL WORK

BY the death of Adolphe Wurtz on May 12 last, the world, and especially the scientific world, has lost one of its brightest and most energetic leaders,—a successful leader indeed, through perhaps the most difficult period of chemical history—the earliest years of the development of our "modern chemistry." His loss is felt all the more acutely, coming as it does so suddenly and so close upon that of his master and friend, Dumas, whose mantle had fallen upon him.

Charles Adolphe Wurtz was the son of a Protestant clergyman, and was born on November 26, 1817, at Wolfshheim, near-Strasburg. He studied in the University of Strasburg in the Medical Faculty, in which he took the Doctor's degree with honours in 1843. He came to Paris in 1844, where he soon attracted the attention of Dumas, and after occupying several positions successively at the Ecole Centrale and the Faculty of Medicine he became Professor at the Institute Agronomique of Versailles, and in 1853 succeeded to the duties of Dumas and Orfila as Professor at the Faculté de Médecine.

Wurtz united in himself all the better qualities of the Gallic and Teutonic character, in his activity of mind and untiring perseverance in the search for truth. He was elected a member of the Academy of Medicine in 1856, and in 1865 was awarded the prize of 20,000 francs for his chemical researches. He became Dean of the Faculty in 1866, and Professor at the Sorbonne in 1878, in which year also he gave the Faraday Lecture at the Royal Institution; the subject of which was the condensation of gases, and his hearers on that occasion will not readily lose the impression of his earnestness and vivacity, especially on the appearance of the liquefied gas (ammonia), and his exclamation, "Voilà! voilà le liquide," &c.

His earnestness of purpose, conjoined with a most genial manner and expression, gave him very great influence over those students who worked with him; and a long list of names might be given of students who have done good service to the science under his guidance and encouragement.

But he not only encouraged the students who came to learn under him, but strove to spread a knowledge of science amongst the mass of the public, in which task he was eminently successful.

In addition to his onerous duties as professor, Wurtz was in 1881 elected permanent Senator, and rendered most valuable services to his country as recorded in his Reports of Commissions on the trichinosis outbreak and on scientific education.

While there are chemists the work and example of Adolphe Wurtz will serve as a beacon and guiding light to still wider and more important facts in our science.

The Royal Society's Catalogue of Scientific Papers contains a list of no fewer than one hundred and four papers to which the name "Adolphe Wurtz" is alone