

to your readers that a screen, whose valuable properties seem even now to be scarcely at all known, should be noted in your columns.

It simply consists of a sheet of French tracing-paper, of a kind which possesses a remarkably dull, non-reflecting surface. With this screen and only an oil-lamp lantern, it is quite easy to show pictures well to a couple of hundred people in a room fairly well lighted—sufficiently lighted indeed to enable note-taking or reference to books to be accomplished with perfect ease—provided that extraneous lights are not placed *behind* the screen.

It was to Mr. George Smith, of the Sciopicon Company, that I was indebted, four years ago, for the knowledge of this fact; which, with considerable lantern experience, I scarcely knew how to believe, until I had myself verified it.

At present, however, the tracing-paper cannot, I believe, be obtained more than three to four feet square.

CHARLES J. TAYLOR

Toppesfield Rectory, Essex, February 17

Fuller's Earth as a Filter

WHERE the *fuller's earth* is dug from the Bedfordshire green-

sand it is held in much repute for its efficacy in removing impurities from turbid water.¹ In addition to the other uses to which it is here applied, dealers take it around through the fen countries, and dispose of it for clarifying the peaty water,² often the only supply obtainable in those districts.

I shall esteem it a favour on the part of the readers of NATURE residing on the Greensand or Oolites of the southern counties to notify if these filtering properties of the Bedfordshire fuller's earth are in any way unique—in so far as they appear withheld from that of other places?—as at Reigate, Bath, &c., where fuller's earth is known to them to be dug.

Bedford, February 23

A. G. CAMERON

The Boomerang in India

IN Gustav Oppert's work "On the Weapons, Army Organisation, and Political Maxims of the Ancient Hindus," the boomerang is mentioned as being among the weapons, especially in Southern India, and made of various materials—iron, ivory, and wood. Are any specimens to be found in our museums here, or would any private persons who may happen to possess any, kindly allow me to inspect them?

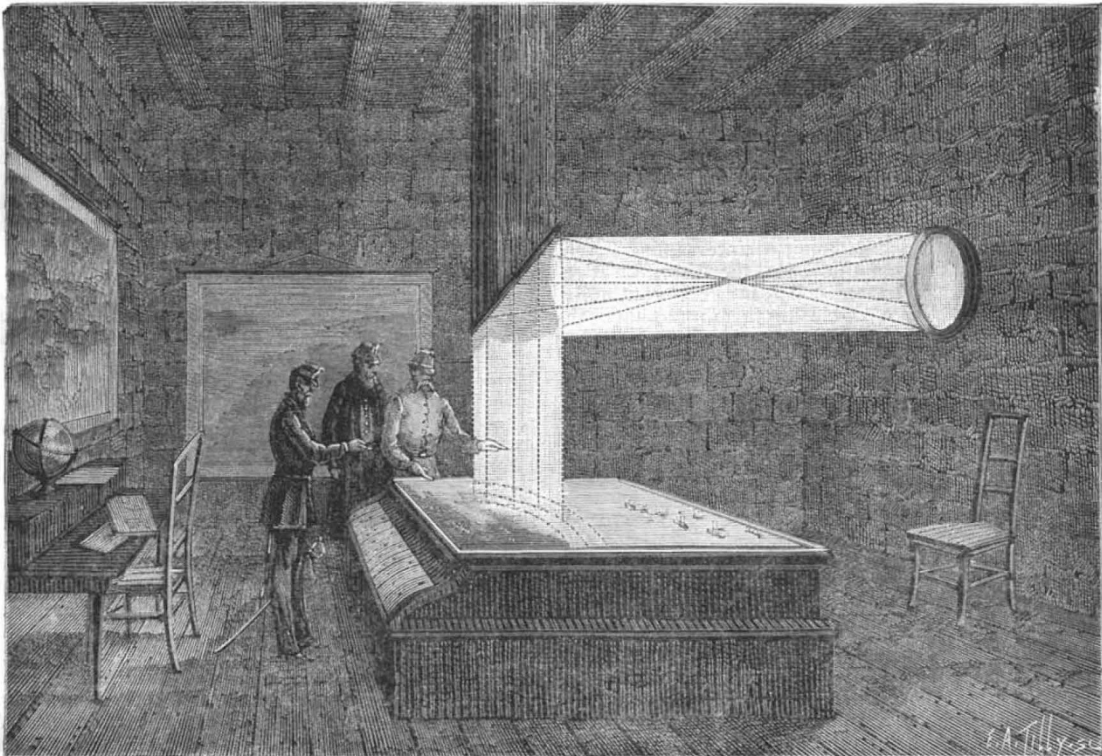
ARTHUR NICOLS

THE CAMERA OBSCURA IN TORPEDO WORK¹

AT the time of the last Austro-Italian war, in 1866, the Austrian Government made the greatest efforts to protect its harbours from an attack of the Italian fleet. Torpedoes were placed in great numbers in the harbours,

and the greatest vigilance was enjoined on all the commanders of such places.

The accompanying illustration represents a novel application of the camera for use at the observing or firing post of a party belonging to the military telegraph. The torpedoes are placed along certain concentric lines, very close to each other, and at a certain depth below the sur-



face of the water, no sign of their presence being apparent. A metallic wire connects each of them with a post of observation situated on the coast at a point sufficiently elevated to permit of the port being seen. According to well-known optical laws, an image of the port is formed on the glass. Black points marked on that image indi-

cates the exact position of each torpedo; these points are all numbered, each number corresponding with that on a particular key of a keyboard. To press one of these keys with the finger is sufficient to place the corresponding

¹ *Geol. Mag.*, February, 1885.

² A brief account of the method in use in the fen districts of Cambridgeshire and Lincoln will appear shortly.

¹ From *La Nature*.