time from one to three inches thick, and the water is, of course, a saturated brine. It is interesting to note, however, that it does not correspond in composition with the water from the ocean. Like the Dead Sea, the lake contains an excessive quantity of calcium salt.

The interior of the crater basin is crusted in many places with deposits of carbonate of calcium, proving that it was at one time occupied by a highly calcareous water, probably of high temperature. I have given in connection with the results of my analysis, which extends only to the constituents present in large amount, an analysis of concentrated sea-water from the salt works of Kakaako, and an average of a number of analyses that have been made of the waters of the Dead Sea. These latter sometimes contain a larger proportion of solids than the average figure, but in no analysis that I have seen has the quantity been as large as that found in the water of Aalia Paakai.

Constituents.	Water of the Salt Lake.	Water of the Dead Sea.	Concentrated sea-water.
	Grains per gallon.	Grains per gallon.	Grains per gallon.
Chloride of sodium ...	6989	5137	13239
Chloride of calcium ...	7742	2077	Absent
Chloride of magnesium	7790	8235	3779
Bromide of magnesium	99	208	57
Sulphate of magnesium	Absent	Absent	2478
Sulphate of calcium ...	34	58	22
Chloride of potassium	156	736	534
Total solids... ..	22,810	16,451	20,109
Weight of one wine gallon (approximate)	73.044	68,900	72,180

Honolulu, October 16.

A. B. LYONS.

Meretrix, Lamarck, 1799, versus *Cytherea*, Lamarck, 1806.

IN the notice of Mr. Newton's "List of Mollusca," in NATURE of October 29 (vol. xlv. p. 610), I read as follows:—"Many old favourites have been thus relegated to obscurity, whilst fresh names, dug up from some forgotten corner, have, by the law of priority, taken their places. Thus, *Meretrix*, Lamarck, 1799, takes the place of his better-known *Cytherea* of 1806, the latter having been applied by Fabricius, in 1805, to a dipterous insect."

The Dipteron *Cytherea obscura*, Fab. 1805, was described nine years later than *Mutio obscurus*, Latreille (1796), which is the same species. Meigen, in his principal work (1820), acknowledged the priority, and the insect has been called *Mutio* ever since. As the typical species is the same for both genera, there is no chance whatever for *Cytherea* to be resuscitated, and it may well remain as the name of the Mollusk. I most heartily agree with the opinion of the reviewer, that "it would be an immense gain if every name proposed to be altered had to pass through a regularly-constituted committee of investigation before it was accepted and allowed to pass current." In such a committee, besides priority, two other paramount scientific interests should be consulted, and they are—*continuity* and *authority*.

C. R. OSTEN SACKEN.

Heidelberg, November 1.

A Plague of Frogs.

I HAVE just read with great interest the letter in NATURE of the 5th inst. (p. 8), signed R. Haig Thomas, *à propos* of frogs entering his cellar.

During the past seven years I have resided in three separate lodgings (no two being within half a mile of the other), each having a small garden at the back surrounded by a solid wall. The lowest of these was about 5 feet, and in two cases the walls were quite bare. In the third case there were creepers on both sides. But in all three cases has one frog suddenly made its appearance, and always during very wet weather. To account for their entrance has completely puzzled me.

B. A. MUIRHEAD.

Pall Mall Club, Waterloo Place, November 8.

NO. 1150, VOL. 45]

Red Light after Sunset.

THERE was at Lyons, N.Y., last evening, a magnificent display of red light similar to the sunset glows which attracted so much attention a few years ago. The entire western sky was of a deep lurid red, resembling a conflagration, for three-quarters of an hour or more after sunset.

M. A. VEEDER.

Lyons, N.Y., October 30.

Topical Selection and Mimicry.

WILL you permit me to make a few remarks on Dr. A. R. Wallace's review of my book ("On the Modification of Organisms") which appeared in your journal on April 9 last (vol. xliii. p. 529)? I cannot disguise from myself the fact that in attempting any reply I labour under great disadvantages: first, in having to combat the statements of such a high authority as Dr. Wallace; and secondly, in writing as I am from the Antipodes, my reply cannot reach your readers for at least three months after the publication of the review in question. Nevertheless there are two statements made by him which demand some notice from me.

The first is that I have misrepresented Darwin's views on the question of natural selection. My reply to this is distinct and emphatic. The references to Darwin in my book are absolutely correct: there is no misrepresentation; there is no misquotation. In every reference to Darwin's views I gave the page and the edition from which the quotation was taken. In writing my book I was perfectly aware how important it was to start with a clear understanding of what Darwin meant by the term natural selection, and I was at the utmost pains to quote his exact words in every reference I made to him. It is not my fault if Darwin did not give a clear or consistent definition of natural selection, or that he confounded cause with effect, as when at one time he defined natural selection as "the struggle for existence," and at another time as "the survival of the fittest." I can therefore with the utmost confidence refer your readers to the book itself in confirmation of what I here state.

Dr. Wallace has also been good enough to give, as a sample of my "teaching," a part of a sentence of mine on the subject of mimicry. He says your readers "may estimate the value of Mr. Syme's teaching by his explanation of mimicry, which is, that natural selection has nothing to do with it, but that insects choose environments to match their own colours. He tells us that these extraordinary resemblances only occur among insects that are sluggish, and that 'to account for the likeness to special objects, animate or inanimate, we have only to assume that these defenceless creatures have intelligence enough to perceive that their safety lies in escaping observation.'"

Now I did not state that these extraordinary resemblances occurred only among insects; what I said was that they occurred "chiefly" among insects. I am aware that, judging from Dr. Wallace's stand-point, I may have disposed of the subject of mimicry in a somewhat off-hand way, and for the simple reason that I regarded mimicry as a subordinate branch of the more important subject of protective coloration, which I had treated at some length; and in adopting this course I was taking as my guide Dr. Wallace himself, who has elsewhere stated that "the resemblance of one animal to another is of exactly the same essential nature as the resemblance to a leaf, or to bark, or to desert sand, and answers exactly the same purpose" ("Natural Selection," p. 124, 2nd edition). So far, then, I may presume that I am in good company. To understand what I said about mimicry, therefore, it is necessary to know my views on protective coloration. Protective coloration I regarded as, in certain cases, the result of heat and light acting on the pigment cells, and, in other cases, the result of what, for want of a better name, I may call topical selection—that is, the selection by the animal of its environment. Obviously, this environment would be a cover or background which would enable the animal to escape observation, as by that means many animals, especially such as are not possessed of great speed or great powers of flight, might elude their enemies, or, if Carnivora, might steal upon their prey unawares. No doubt there is something captivating in the idea of a universal cause to which every change in the organic world may be referred; but it is surely contrary to the rules of right reasoning to invoke the aid of a greater force than is necessary to account for a given result. This is what the Darwinist does, however, in order to explain the phenomena of protective coloration and mimicry. It is well known, however, and it has been pointed out by Dr. Wallace himself, that certain