While practising at cricket to-night (May 18), in splendid light, I observed at 7.58 (railway time) a very brilliant meteor cross the sky obliquely from a point considerably north of the zenith to the south-east. Its movement was very slow, and it shone with a brilliant intense white light, which was concentrated in itself, and did not leave a train behind it like the meteor of March 18, 1893, which I had also the good fortune to see.

It got gradually smaller and smaller, and just before disappearing broke up into three or four pear-shaped portions. During its course, although the massy head was always brilliantly white, the little tail varied in hue, crimson and a rich ultramarine blue being most noticeable.

I immediately timed it, and found that it was about 13 seconds in view, which I thought a very long time indeed.

From diagrams made on the same evening, it seems that the meteor moved from a point 40° from the zenith, and some 15° west of north to a point about 30° east of south at an altitude of 30°. JAS. G. RICHMOND.

Muirkirk, Ayrshire, May 30.

P.S.—The *head* when first seen had an apparent diameter about $\frac{1}{8}$ that of the sun, and when last seen $\frac{3}{8}$ sun's diameter. It rolled across like a ball with a very short tail, until it broke up, when the distance from the head to the tail of the last pear-shaped portion was about $3\frac{1}{2}$ sun's diameter.

Iron Crows' Nests.

REFERRING to the note by Mr. McMillan, in your issue of May 3, it may be of interest to some of your readers to know that we have in this museum a crow's nest from Rangoon entirely made of iron wire such as is used in fastening the corks of aërated water bottles. The donor, Mr. Joseph Dawson, of the Public Works Department, Rangoon, stated in his letter at the time that "wire nests are hardly a novelty in this country, as they can always be obtained from high trees in the vicinity of aërated water factories." The nest in question has a piece of hoop-iron about three or four inches long woven into it; but with that exception it is entirely composed of the small wire, and is about a foot in diameter. J. MACNAUGHT CAMPBELL.

Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow, May 28.

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ARMY EXAMINATIONS.

IN the *Times* of Wednesday, 23rd ult., there was a brief account of the report lately presented to Parliament by the committee appointed in 1893 "to enquire into the entrance examinations (in non-military subjects) of candidates for commissions in the Army, and to advise whether any modification of the existing arrangements is desirable."

The syllabus of subjects and marks recommended by the committee is as follows:—

CLASS I.—(*All may be taken up.*)

	Marks.
1. Mathematics	3000
2. Geometrical Drawing...	1000
3. French or German	2000
4. English...	1000
5. Freehand Drawing	500

CLASS II.—(*Any three subjects may be taken up, but for Woolwich one of the three must be Chemistry and Heat.*)

	Marks.
1. Pure Mathematics	2000
2. Applied Mathematics...	2000
3. German or French, as alternating with the same group in Class I.	2000
4. Latin	2000
5. Greek	2000
6. English History	2000
7. Chemistry (inorganic) and Heat	2000
8. Electricity and Magnetism and Light ...	2000
9. Geography, Political and Physical, and Geology	2000
10. Biology...	2000

Certain recommendations as to the fusion of the Woolwich and Sandhurst examinations, the admission to the Army of Queen's cadets, Militia candidates, and University candidates are also made.

In regard to the question of marking for physical exercises and development, which has lately been strongly advocated, it is advised that these subjects should not be marked in these competitions. It seems to be thought, however, that though the physique of our officers has been *well maintained* under the competitive system, yet a small proportion of cadets have been admitted who were not quite up to the necessary standard, and it is recommended that the medical examination should be made somewhat more stringent.

The two changes of greatest importance which have been advised by the committee are, briefly, as follows—

(1) That an elementary knowledge of chemistry and heat shall be made practically obligatory for Woolwich.

(2) That Latin shall be transferred from Class I. to Class II.

There is also a minority report on certain points, viz., on the suggestion of a complete fusion of the competitions for Woolwich and Sandhurst, and on the proposal to transfer Latin to Class II. This is signed by three of the nine members of the committee, and one of these three also signs a separate note in which he dissents from the addition of geography to No. 9 of Class II., and of biology to Class II. as a new subject, and makes certain proposals to meet the special needs of Woolwich (which he admits) that would certainly fail to effect their proposed purpose.

On May 29, this report, and especially the two recommendations relating to science for Woolwich, and to Latin, were vehemently attacked by the *Times* in an article in which the report was denounced as such an one as "might have been framed by a committee of crammers," so far as their probable effect is concerned, rather than by a committee which is unanimous in subscribing to the principle laid down in 1869-70, that the examinations should be designed "with special reference to the curriculum adapted at the most advanced of our public schools, and with the express intention of enabling the competitors to come straight from one of those establishments to the examination-hall without having occasion to resort to any intermediate place of study." And again in a later paragraph, as a mere attempt by a portion of the committee to show themselves modern and advanced at all hazards by replacing the dead languages by the new sciences—Latin by chemistry—which latter subject is pronounced to be the most easy of all to cram in face of the statistics, produced by the Civil Service Commissioners and printed with the report, which show the subject to be above the average in discriminating power—that is to say, one in which teachers have not succeeded, by cramming or in any other way, in raising the marks of the least apt to or near the level of those of the more apt.

The *Times* has not hesitated to accuse the majority of the committee of disregarding the evidence before them, but has itself committed this fault. Its case is indeed mainly founded on such disregard of the facts. By coupling together two changes which stand upon entirely different footings it creates the impression, and is itself apparently under the impression, that the committee was divided on both the above proposals. Nothing is plainer in the reports than that this was not the case.

From the same cause, a reader would gather from the *Times* that science is recommended as an obligatory subject for all Army candidates, whereas nothing of the sort has been proposed.

Then it ignores the fact that the opinions of head masters as expressed to the committee were almost entirely in favour of giving more weight to science in the case of Woolwich candidates. And finally, it seeks to give weight to the opinions of the minority of