

which the pendulum frame is tilted, the numbers contained in column 5.

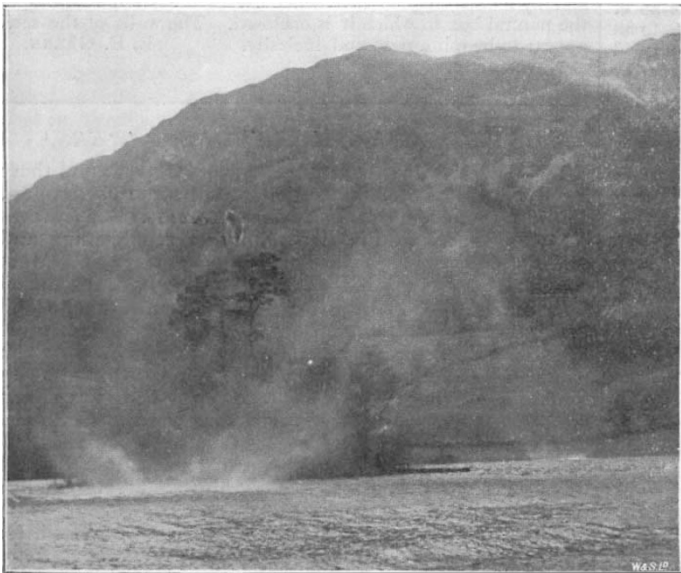
Unfortunately, between August 30 and September 4, the record is incomplete, some fifty hours having been lost by the photographic paper repeatedly running so much to one side as to stop the clock. This difficulty, it is hoped, has now been overcome.

THOMAS HEATH.

Royal Observatory, Edinburgh, October 26.

Whirlwind on "Rydal Water."

SOME friends and myself were staying at Lowwood Hotel, Windermere, for a few days, and on Friday, October 16, we were walking by "Rydal Water," on the opposite side from the road, when we noticed a very curious and most unusual effect on the water, caused by a sudden very heavy squall of wind, which seemed to come from two directions at one time, creating a "whirlwind," and raising the water and spray on the lake fully 100 feet high or more. There were eight or ten of these disturbances during the time we stayed (probably about twenty minutes), and I was fortunate enough to have my hand-camera with me and to photograph the largest of them, which came sweeping down the lake towards the island (near the



Whirlwind on "Rydal Water," and smaller one in distance, October 16.

centre), and finally broke on the shore with a boom like a cannon, which threw the debris, &c., at the side into the air quite 40 feet high. I have seen small whirlwinds strike on various lakes, but never anything of the magnitude of this. Thinking the incident might be of interest to you, I send you a photograph to make what use of you like.

Had a small boat or ordinary Windermere yacht been caught in one of these whirlwinds, she must have been swamped.

HENRY J. C. ANDERSON.

Rodono, Great Crosby, near Liverpool, October.

The "G" Section of the British Association.

PERHAPS I may be allowed to make a few remarks concerning the above Section, and the strictures passed on October 22 upon its work, by the writer of the report in your columns. The writer is not singular in his criticisms, for others representing the scientific and practical sides of engineering also speak from time to time in a disparaging way, both of the subjects themselves, which are dealt with under the head of Mechanical Science at these annual gatherings, and of the methods of dealing with them.

I am not in any way concerned in defending the present state of things, but I would point out that no one yet seems to have

suggested any really better general plan of carrying on the business of the Section. The writer in your columns indicates, for instance, that the week should be devoted to discussions such as that upon the fracture of railway rails, or the report on tidal influences. While admitting the value of these two communications, and others of a similar kind, there appear to be serious objections to limiting the work of the Section entirely to such matters, which work, I venture to think, your reporter entirely mistakes in its relation to technical societies. These societies, such as the Institutions of Mechanical Engineers, of Naval Architects, of Electrical Engineers, of Mining Engineers, and the Iron and Steel Institute, specialise their work, and deal often in a different way with quite different subjects. Now the British Association affords a common meeting ground for all interested in these and other branches of applied science, and, indeed, for many who may not have any special knowledge of any branch at all. Hence papers, or even lectures, upon which discussion is admitted and invited, dealing with dock works (which surely it is quibbling to exclude from the range of mechanical science), electric railways, the Tower Bridge, waterworks, not to say of armour and ordnance, of wreck-raising, of motor-carriages, &c.—in all of which an account was given of progress in applied science—seem to form an important part of the work of the Section. Indeed, those authors who took the trouble to prepare illustrations, lantern slides, and models to make their subject clear and interesting, or even, if you like, "popular," deserve the hearty thanks of those present.

It might perhaps be a good thing to make some division in the day, so that the scientific papers and discussions which, to be frank, frequently empty the room, might be taken early before a certain hour, after which papers of a more popular character might be announced for reading and discussion.

As for trade articles, it might be fairly argued that new inventions not coming under that head—even scientific instruments, for example—have generally no value or interest at all; and the Committee of the Section seem always to try and ascertain, before accepting a communication of this sort, if there is sufficient novelty and scientific interest to warrant its acceptance; and in this matter, the "morality" of the Section need not be higher than that of technical societies. Indeed, if advertisement were a ban to acceptance, a good many of the authors themselves at most of the Sections would be hopelessly rejected. The "touting circular" referred to, if indeed it can be called such, was given out by one of the secretaries to only a portion of the meeting, and the remaining copies withheld when his attention was called to the contents. It is scarcely right to intimate that this sort of thing ever occurs except as a rare accident.

H. S. HELPS-SHAW.

Walker Engineering Laboratories, University
College, Liverpool, October 26.

P.S.—Mr. Johnson, of Derby, is mentioned in mistake for Mr. R. E. Johnston, Engineer of the Joint London and North-Western and Great Western Railways.

Suggested Reef Boring at the Bermuda Islands.

THE issue of NATURE containing the notice of the failure of the Royal Society boring expedition has just reached me, so I hasten to call attention to the great value of the Bermudas as a permanent home for a scientific station, and where borings might be readily conducted at any convenient time. A glance at the map will show that the fauna of the deep sea, of coral reefs, the avifauna of the ocean, and a complex meteorology, may all be studied at one and the same station, and in close proximity to New York and Halifax.

Could the Smithsonian Institution or the Royal Society be induced to take the matter up, it would seem to be an easy matter to organise a station, as the funds required are not large.

The town of St. George's very probably would give a dock with house attached, and possibly the colony a small sum annually. If the Universities of America would take an interest in the matter, the enterprise might be immediately pushed along