

It is in Anglesey, where Sir Norman Lockyer observed a tendency in the monuments to ante-date the solstice, so to speak, that we find definite arrangements of fairs confirming his findings.

Information on the point, from the monuments and the fairs or festivals, is as yet incomplete. I am only trying to coordinate some of it. A court used to be held every three weeks in the parish of Llangeinor, Glam. The Roman notice of the Comitia extended over three market-days. Banns must be published on three Sundays.

Concerning the winter solstice celebrations, one is reminded of the Boy Bishop of Salisbury, a choir-boy elected as bishop on St. Nicholas' Day, December 6, who was allowed to bear the title until Holy Innocents' Day, December 28, just three weeks. The Christmas festivities used to be continued in Pembrokeshire for three weeks. The Government in the time of Charles I. prohibited the playing of cards, &c., at Gray's Inn during the year, "except on the twenty days of Christmas holidays only."

I cannot help thinking that a three weeks' interval is provided for in the orientation of some churches. As a rule, the older churches are oriented to May or November; then come churches oriented to the equinox. I find N. 76° or 77° E. and N. 80° or 81° E. to be rather common orientations.

Since writing the foregoing, I have looked up some Welsh calendar lore. Provision seems to have been made for the various three-weeks' intervals suggested by the fairs. There appear to have been four Lents, as they may be called. The source of my information is Dr. Gwenogvryn Evans's report on a Peniarth MS., which he dates "after 1484" ("Report on Welsh MSS.," vol. i., pp. 406-7). Dr. Evans gives only the beginning of each item in the MS.

There was a "pask bychan," little Easter, connected with the Feast of St. Hilary, January 13, which is just three weeks before the February festival of the May-year, February 4. January 13 is also St. Elian's Day, and at Llanellian, Anglesey, the Gwyl Mabsant, or patronal wake, used to be prolonged for three weeks.

Then there was the "pask" (Easter) proper. Mention is also made of the "pask kynharaf," the earliest Easter, though the report on the point is tantalisingly brief. As Easter proper ends the ecclesiastical year, the "earliest Easter" may very well be connected with the August festival of the May-year, August 8, as suggested by the fairs.

Then comes the "grawys ayaf," winter quadragesima. It is connected somehow with the Feast of St. Linus, and that is all I can gather from the report. St. Linus' Day is November 26. Though the word "grawys" is a shortening of "quadragesima," perhaps it is here applied to the shorter interval of Advent. It certainly corresponds with the latter. It is worth noting, however, that January 13 is some forty days from the beginning of the winter "grawys."

Thus we have three "pasks" or Easters mentioned, and the word "grawys" used twice. I suspect that there were four of each, corresponding with the four seasons of the year, and the four Gorseddus of the Bards

JOHN GRIFFITH.

Women and the Chemical Society.

WE venture to ask for the hospitality of your columns in order to make a statement of some importance in view of the announcement made by the president of the Chemical Society of the large majority of the fellows who are in favour of the admission of women to the society (Proc. Chem. Soc., 1908).

Four years ago a memorial was presented to the council of the Chemical Society praying for the admission of women to the fellowship of the society. This memorial bore the signatures of nineteen women, all of whom were lecturers or demonstrators in chemistry in university colleges or actively engaged in original chemical investiga-

tions. The council at that time was unable to take any steps in the matter, but promised that the memorial should not be lost sight of in any further action that might be taken (Proc. Chem. Soc., 1905, xxi., 103).

The question having been raised again by the presentation of a petition signed by 312 fellows in June last, we communicated in July with our co-signatories of the 1904 memorial, and with other women of equal repute as chemists, in order to ascertain how many women at the present time desire the privileges afforded by fellowship of the Chemical Society.

We have received replies from twenty-eight women, all of whom are of similar standing and possess similar qualifications to those of the original signatories, expressing their interest in the present movement and their intention of at once becoming candidates for admission to the fellowship of the Chemical Society if the council should reach a favourable decision in this matter.

From rumours that have reached us, there appears to be some uncertainty in the minds of some fellows of the society as to the number of women who are prepared to avail themselves of the first opportunity of seeking the fellowship, and we hope that the publication of the above statement will remove all misunderstanding on this point.

IDA SMEDLEY.

M. A. WHITELEY.

November 9.

Mercury Bubbles.

I REMEMBER seeing mercury bubbles, like those described by Mr. J. G. Ernest Wright in NATURE of November 5 (p. 8), sixty years ago, when I was a junior student at the Royal College of Chemistry under Hofmann. In the basement laboratory was a tap delivering water under considerable pressure from a cistern on the roof, and it was a favourite experiment to take a basin half full of mercury and water and to turn the tap suddenly on it. The rush of water carried down air into the mercury, and great bubbles of the metal rose, floating on the surface of the water. I do not remember seeing bubbles as large as 22 mm. in diameter, but frequently they were as large as ordinary marbles.

I cannot recall any publication of the phenomenon, but there must be many chemists living who can corroborate what I have described.

WILLIAM CROOKES.

November Meteors.

THAT memorable and suggestive epoch, the middle of November, has again arrived. At midnight the well-known stars in the "Sickle of Leo" exhibit themselves in the east and suggest meteors galore to the expectant observer. The conditions are not favourable this year, for the parent comet returned in 1899, and must now, with the denser region of its meteoric swarm, be at an immense distance from the earth. The probability is, therefore, that we shall only encounter a tenuous part of the stream, and that a few straggling Leonids will illumine our skies on the nights following November 14 and 15, but the meteors may be much more numerous than expected, as they have been in certain previous years.

The moon will be near her east quarter, and situated in the same region of sky as the radiant at the important time, so that her light will offer some impediment in regard to the fainter meteors.

It will be desirable to maintain a watch of the sky on the mornings of November 15 and 16, and to record, not only the number of meteors visible, but the apparent paths of the brighter ones. An important end is served by securing duplicate observations of individual objects, and thus enabling their real paths in the atmosphere to be computed. Apart from this the annual observation of a meteoric shower, whether rich or feeble, is necessary in learning its history, for even negative results concerning its return may be really valuable, though the spectacular effects are disappointing in the extreme. With particular regard to the Leonids they are never wholly absent, being