obvious promise of continuance, until I was compelled to stop work. This curve also gives a poor impression of the great strength of the action. The β -rays seem to have had the upper hand in the case of pitchblende, just as the α particles had in that of thorium.

As an amateur I do not feel able to take the matter beyond this point. Accurate laboratory methods with the help of qualified assistants might give important results.

RICHARD HOWLETT.

Park House, Walton-on-Thames, August 1.

Aged Sea Anemones.

IN 1904 Dr. J. R. Ashworth and I published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (vol. xxv., p. 1) observations on aged individuals of *Sagartia troglodytes* then and still in the possession of Miss Jessie Nelson in Edinburgh. After eight years these anemones are still in excellent health, having been in captivity for considerably more than half a century. In one respect I fear that we did them an injustice, namely in attributing cannibalism to them, the error being probably due to the observation of the birth of young from a parent the tentacles of which were not fully expanded. Recently I chanced to notice a young *Sagartia* attached to a small piece of seaweed floating free in the aquarium. A slight agitation of the water was sufficient to bring the young anemone in contact with the tentacles of one of the patriarchs of its own species. They immediately closed round it and a small part of the disk became emarginate. The greater part, however, was not sensibly affected, and the mouth remained closed. In less than two minutes the folded-in tentacles uncurled and the young anemone was thrust away with some force. It then came in contact with the tentacles of a second old *Sagartia*, and exactly the same thing occurred. Neither the young one nor the tentacles that had held it were apparently affected in any way. Immediately after the first old *Sagartia* had released the young one, I dropped on its tentacles, in the region which had temporarily been affected by contact with the latter, the body of a small isopod. The isopod was seized in exactly the same manner that the young anemone had been seized, but the movements soon spread to other tentacles, the mouth gaped open, and the isopod was swallowed. In other individuals of the same species I have noticed that small masses of food, such as this little isopod, remain apparently unobserved if dropped gently on to the disk within the tentacles without touching them, but that if the tentacles are then touched and in the movements that ensue come in contact with the food lying neglected on the disk, its presence is apparently realised and it is swallowed.

N. ANNANDALE.

1 Marchhall Crescent, Edinburgh, July 30.

On the Nature of Stromatoporoidea.

IN a letter to NATURE (July 18, p. 502) I stated that the Palæozoic Monticuliporæ were siliceous sponges with a supplementary calcareous skeleton.

An examination of the Stromatoporoidea—classified in the standard text-books (Zittel, Geikie, Steinmann) under Hydrozoa and Polyzoa—has led me to the conclusion that these fossils also are siliceous sponges. For I have found, both in the Hydractinoid and Milleporoid groups of Stromatoporoidea, siliceous spicules of a kind related to, but not identical with, those of *Merlia* and *Monticulipora*. Frequently it is difficult to find the spicules, and it is not surprising that they have hitherto escaped observation. They are mostly microscleres of the sigma type, and require a magnification of about 1000 diameters to see clearly. Some care is necessary not to mistake edges of flakes of calcite for spicules.

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The "Caunopora" tubes, at least those which I have examined in several typical Stromatoporoidea, are not corals, as generally supposed, but tubes of a Chætopod worm. The supposed tabulæ are merely an expression of the segmentation of the Annelid. In some instances the worm is fairly well preserved, and the acicula abundant.

To return to Monticulipora, I find that some typical species of Favosites, Chætetes, and Rhaphidopora are siliceous sponges with supplementary calcareous skeletons of the Monticulipora type.

R. KIRKPATRICK.

British Museum (Natural History).

The Earthquake in Turkey on August 9.

THE recent earthquake, reported as felt in Constantinople, and as very destructive near the Sea of Marmora, has left its mark on the photographic traces of our unifilar and bifilar magnetographs, but not on the vertical force balance; and, contrary to expectation, the disturbance is more pronounced on the unifilar than on the bifilar curve. The Milne seismograph failed to record the time of the maximum disturbance otherwise than that it occurred either between 1.44 and 1.45 or between 1.47 and 1.50 a.m. on August 9, during which intervals the oscillations of the boom overstepped the recording limits. The time as registered on the magnetograms is 1.45 a.m., and this, as the true time of greatest earth oscillation, would lead us to expect an origin nearer to us than the Sea of Marmora.

W. SIDGREAVES.

Stonyhurst College Observatory, Blackburn.

A Flower Sanctuary.

I AM afraid that Sir Herbert Maxwell's suggestion that the plants of Cheddar pink offered for sale had been raised from seed cannot be accepted.

The *Thalictrum* referred to is *Thalictrum minus*, which is still abundant in the Gorge. As regards the Welsh poppy, it is good to know that this beautiful plant has increased its range; but, if by evil chance some dealer should exterminate it at Cheddar, visitors who love to see it growing there would derive small comfort from the knowledge that it continued to flourish in many other places. I hope that the appeal to "proclaim" these Cheddar plants will not fall on deaf ears.

FRANK H. PERRY-COSTE.

Higher Shute Cottage, Polperro, Cornwall,
August 10.

Striated Flints from the Chalky Boulder Clay.

FOR some time past I have been examining flints from the Chalky Boulder Clay of Suffolk, and have been struck by the almost entire absence of striæ upon them.

When striæ are present to any noticeable degree they are generally developed on the comparatively soft cortex of the flints, while where the stones have been broken and the hard interior exposed the scratches are not to be seen.

This appears to me to point to the conclusion that the glacial action which is held to have been the cause of the Boulder Clay and the striations on the flints could not have been of a very intense order, and therefore very different from that obtaining at some period prior to the deposition of the Suffolk Red Crag, the stones found at the base of this deposit often exhibiting the most definite and deep striæ *all over their flaked surfaces*.

Also I find in the Chalky Boulder Clay stones which show a small "island" of striated cortex left in the centre of a flaked surface, and this flaked surface is