

### Historic Natural Events.

Sept. 28, 1876. Tornado at Cowes.—A rapidly revolving whirlwind, looking like a waterspout or huge funnel, point downwards, approached the south-west shore of the Isle of Wight between Blackgang Chine and the Needles. It passed north-eastwards across the island and reached Cowes between 7 and 8 A.M., doing damage estimated at £10,000 to £12,000. Corn, light articles, and even bricks were dropped on vessels in the Solent, and on the mainland south of Titchfield.

Sept. 29, 1210. Tay Flood.—Cant, in his notes to the Muses' Threnodie, says: "So violent was the torrent that the whole town [of Perth] was undermined, the houses levelled, and many persons of both sexes lost their lives. The Royal Palace [of William the Lion] did not escape. The King's youngest son, John, with his nurse, were carried down the river and drowned, with about fourteen of the Kings domesticks."

Sept. 29, 1538. Formation of a New Volcano.—Monte Nuovo is a conical hill, 440 feet in height above the sea-level, and lies about 8 miles west of Naples. For two years before the eruption that formed it there had been frequent earthquakes in the district that increased in frequency and reached their maximum on Sept. 27-28, 1538. The next day a fissure opened in the ground, from which scoriæ, lapilli, dust, and mud were ejected and, falling round the fissure, gradually formed a hill similar to many others in the district. The eruption died down in about a week, most of the hill having been formed during the first two days.

Sept. 29, 1915. Hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico.—The most intense hurricane in the history of the Gulf of Mexico struck the coast of Louisiana on Sept. 29. At Burrwood, La., the wind reached a velocity of 140 miles per hour in a gust, the highest ever recorded in the Gulf. In New Orleans nearly every building was damaged and several were totally destroyed, and some neighbouring towns and villages were completely wrecked: there were a number of shipwrecks, and the loss of life amounted to 275. This loss would have been far heavier but for the warnings issued by the U.S. Weather Bureau; in fact the greatest individual catastrophe, at Rigolets, resulted from the complete disregard of specific advice.

Sept. 29, 1927. Rainbow Phenomena.—About 4 P.M. seven distinct rainbows were seen simultaneously near Campbeltown in Kintyre. The three interior bows were the brightest, especially the third.

Sept. 30, 1513. Rockfall in Ticino, Switzerland.—A fall of rock from the Pizzo Magno dammed the lower part of the Val Blenio in Ticino. The waters of the river Brenno accumulated behind this dam and drowned the village of Malvaghe, including its campanile 130 feet high. The dam broke on May 20, 1515, and the valley was entirely devastated, 400 houses destroyed, and 600 persons killed. When the flood reached Lake Langensee immense waves were formed and several shipwrecks occurred.

Sept. 30, 1555. Flood in London.—Holinshed records that "on the last of September by occasion of great wind and rain that had fallen was such great floods that the Kings palace at Westminster and Westminster Hall was overflowed with water".

Oct. 1, 1250. Storm in North Sea.—This gale was very violent in the southern North Sea. It is said that the sea flowed twice without ebbing and the noise of the waves was heard a great distance from the shore; at night it appeared to burn as if on fire. Many ships were wrecked, and at Winchelsea, besides the damage to bridges, mills, and dykes, three hundred houses and

some churches were drowned owing to the height to which the waters rose. Enormous damage was done in Holland and the marshes of Flanders, where the rivers, choked back by the rise of the sea, overflowed their channels.

Oct. 1, 1899. Whirlwind over Wiltshire.—During the passage of a barometric depression from south-west to north-east across England, a whirlwind or tornado about 2.15 P.M. travelled from south-south-west to north-north-east through Wiltshire, the track having a length of nearly 20 miles but a breadth of only about 100 yards. Many trees were uprooted and a great deal of damage done to buildings.

Oct. 3, 1780. West Indian Hurricane.—A violent hurricane developed to the south of Jamaica on Oct. 2 and travelled northwards across Jamaica, Cuba, and the Bahamas. On Oct. 6 and 7, in about 28° N., 74° W., it wrecked Admiral Rowley's squadron of eight or nine vessels and so moved away to the north-west, doing further damage to a squadron off Cape Henry. The wind and the inrush of the sea entirely destroyed the town of Savanna-la-Mar in Jamaica and several ships were left stranded on dry land; the *Princess Royal*, in fact, was afterwards used as a house. The ground half a mile inland was submerged to a depth of ten feet. The dead lay unburied for weeks, and a pestilence carried off many of the survivors. In the town of Lucea only two houses remained standing, and near Montego Bay four men-of-war were lost.

Oct. 4, 1526. Hurricane at Porto Rico.—According to Dr. Juan de Vadillo, "on the night of Oct. 4 there began on the island of Porto Rico such a storm of wind and rain, here called a hurricane, as to destroy the greater portion of the city of San Juan and to do great damage to the estates in the country by overflowing the rivers".

Oct. 4, 1869. "Saxby's Gale."—In 1868 Lieut. Saxby, a British naval officer, basing his prediction on the supposed influence of the moon, foretold a great storm on Oct. 5, 1869, but without specifying the locality. The storm, accompanied by a very high tide, which crossed New Brunswick, Maine, and Nova Scotia on Oct. 4, was popularly hailed as a verification of this forecast and remembered as "Saxby's Gale".

### Societies and Academies.

#### LONDON.

Institute of Metals (Annual Autumn Meeting at Southampton), Sept. 9.—D. Hanson: The use of non-ferrous metals in the aeronautical industry (Autumn Lecture). The present state of aerial transport is in large measure due to the development of suitable alloys and their use in aircraft construction in large quantities. The non-ferrous alloys are strong for their weight, and also possess the advantages that they can readily be used as die-castings, forgings, stampings, and so on, and lend themselves readily to methods of standardised production. Perhaps the most notable feature in regard to aluminium alloys is the extent to which heat-treatment is employed in developing their useful properties. The use of magnesium alloys is of more recent origin, but is rapidly extending. Improvements in melting and casting methods, as well as the discovery of new alloys, have contributed to this extension, and the application of the processes of heat-treatment in suitable instances will probably lead to further improvements.

Sept. 10.—Ernest A. Smith: Rolled gold; its origin and development. The paper deals briefly with the history of the rolled-gold industry from its begin-