I have also traced two sets of muscles on each side of the dorso-lateral walls of the pharynx which apparently aid in the creation of vacuum, thus causing an inrush of blood through the fine channel of the pharynx.

Whether the structure of the pharyngeal armature will play an important rôle in the classification of female *Culicoides* depends considerably on observations on a larger scale; meanwhile, a preliminary observation of this nature, to elicit further observations on the subject, would not be out of place. A detailed and more confirmatory result in this direction will be published elsewhere as specimens of both local and exotic types are forthcoming.

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(Entomologist under the Indian Research Fund Association).
Kala-azar Research Laboratory,
School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene,
Calcutta, Jan. 3.

[1] Adler, S., and Theodor, O., *Bull. Ent. Res.*, **16**, pp. 399-405; 1925-1926.

The False Killer Dolphin.

WITH regard to the occurrence of *Pseudorca crassidens* in Ceylon, to which reference was made in NATURE of Dec. 6, 1930, p. 892, and Jan. 10, 1931, p. 60, the full circumstances were not recorded at the time, owing to a printer's lapse. An account of the stranding of a school of 167 false killer dolphins off the northern coast of Ceylon is now in the press and will be published in the *Ceylon Journal of Science* (Sec. B). This species was previously recorded from Ceylon about forty years ago.

The distribution of this species presents points of exceptional interest. Apart from the few records from the north-west European coast, the known distribution of *Pseudorca crassidens* is not inconsistent with the view that it is a sub-antarctic oceanic form which occasionally wanders northwards in large schools into the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans. Is it not possible to regard the occurrence of this species in the North Sea as fortuitous? I am inclined to this opinion, and regard the three recorded appearances of this cold-water species off the coasts of South India and Ceylon as less remarkable than the comparatively few records from the North Sea.

Whales, presumably from the southern seas, are not infrequently stranded on the Ceylon coast, but precise records of such occurrences are difficult to obtain, owing to (*a*) the ignorance of the fishing population, (*b*) the inaccessibility of a large part of the coast, and (*c*) the rapidity with which a whale carcase disintegrates in the tropics.

Pseudorca crassidens has been described as a common form in certain parts of the southern seas, and I agree with Sir Sidney Harmer that there is little justification for the statement that this species is on the verge of extinction.

JOSEPH PEARSON.
Colombo Museum,
Feb. 4.

An Unusual Ice Formation.

ON the morning of Saturday, Jan. 31, after a frosty night, we discovered in the bird-bath on the lawn a remarkable ice structure. The bath is a circular metal basin, 10 in. in diameter at the rim, with a concave base admitting of a maximum depth of 2 in. of water in the centre. There was a solid mass of ice of not less than 1 in. and not more than 1¼ in. maximum thickness, with a level (though not smooth) surface 8 in. in diameter. From the centre of this rose a pillar of ice, in the form of a triangular prism, 2¼ in. high, tapering slightly downwards and flat-topped. The plan was a nearly right-angled (very slightly obtuse-angled) triangle, the two shorter sides measuring 1¼ in. and ¾ in. respectively: the hypotenuse was slightly curved and irregular, not convenient for measurement. When warm water was poured into the bath, the ice melted in contact with the sides, and the whole could easily be lifted out in one mass, the pillar being used as a handle. Certain appearances suggested that the pillar might be hollow, but I did not break it across, so that must remain doubtful. The combined block of ice was placed in a shaded place and, though melting slowly, retained its strange appearance through the whole of the day.

I am indebted to a number of my colleagues, and particularly to Prof. A. O. Rankine and Dr. H. T. Ellingham, for a very interesting discussion of this phenomenon. The most feasible explanation appears to be that freezing began, as usual, at the margin of the surface of the water, and ice crystals grew inward until the surface was completely frozen except for a triangular area in the centre. At this stage there was a rapid fall of temperature and the water below the surface began to freeze quickly. The expansion accompanying solidification caused the excess of volume to be forced through the triangular aperture, the water freezing as it rose.

A. MORLEY DAVIES.
Arngrove, Amersham, Bucks,
Feb. 10.

Wisdom in Words.

THE caption and the questions of "Inquirer" (NATURE, Jan. 31, p. 166) are salutary. Is he, perchance, a reincarnation of Francis Bacon, who warned future experimentalists of the dangers of idols of the mind created by the speculative Schoolmen?

The modern etymology of the word 'philosophy' has not been accepted by all scholars, including M. Ragon, the French authority, of the last century, on the Egyptian mysteries. He contended that ancient philosophers were scientific workers, and that their philosophy was a real science—not simply verbiage; that 'philos' does not represent here a noun, or mean 'affection': it is the term used for Eros, synonymous with *πόθος*, the universal, creative energy of Nature—the abstract 'desire' or procreative activity inherent in Nature. Hence *philosophia* originally signified knowledge of the energies within objective phenomena; and *philosopher*, one who had assimilated in himself, or personified as it were, creative knowledge or the 'wisdom of creation', and could, therefore, experimentally demonstrate it. The tradition may be true, then, that Pythagoras modestly refused to be called a philosopher!

W. W. L.

William Hyde Wollaston.

I AM collecting materials for a biography of William Hyde Wollaston (1765–1828), and would be most grateful for any documents or other information bearing on him which readers of NATURE could supply. All documents would be carefully handled, and would be returned to the senders as soon as copied.

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Department of Chemistry,
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Feb. 6.