

case when it was wholly in the air, because, to be of any use then, the strokes would have to be so rapid as to be scarcely countable, as is the case with certain sea fowl (notably auks) which use their wings (with a comparatively slow stroke) whilst swimming *under* water, but when flying move them so rapidly that the strokes can either be counted with difficulty or not at all. On watching flying-fish whilst in the air, I noticed a flickering of the fins, indicating what I believe to have been rapid motion.

As Mr. Mitchell's observations, on which he chiefly relies, were made when looking down from the high bows of a steamer, the "waving from side to side" of the tail of the fish, being a lateral motion, was clearly seen, whilst the movements of the side fins would be less easily discernible.

Finally, could the impetus acquired by the fish, when springing from the water, carry it through the air "50 or 100 yards" (Mr. Mitchell's estimate) without the aid of any additional propelling force during its flight? If so, the initial velocity must have been very great.

JOHN RAE

4, Addison Gardens, W., November 27

The "Jeannette" Drift

IN NATURE of November 20 (p. 66) you give an account of the finding of some relics of the *Jeannette*, which have been picked up on an ice-floe at Julianhaab, in lat. 61° N., long. 46° W., near the south point of Greenland, and which must have drifted from the New Siberian Islands in lat. 75° N., long. 155° E., where the *Jeannette* was squashed three years ago. This I consider a most important find with regard to Arctic navigation and discovery. The question arises, How did the ice-floe get to Julianhaab? I propose the following solution. The Siberian Islands bear nearly due north from Julianhaab, and in a straight line up Davis's Strait, Baffin's Bay, Smith's Sound, Lincoln Sea, &c., and across at a distance of about 250 knots from the Pole. I think it most probable that the floe may have drifted through "the unknown," or what Osborn calls "the land of the white bear," the large unexplored area to the west of Banks's Land, and have got into Baffin's Bay through one of the sounds on its west coast—either by Jones's Sound, where the tide runs eastward at the rate of two knots an hour ("Inglefield," p. 77), or by Banks's Strait and Lancaster Sound.

We know that the icebergs come *down* Baffin's Bay and Davis's Strait into the Atlantic, and the floe has had fair success in navigating through a distance of 2700 knots to reach Julianhaab in three years.

I cannot for a moment suppose that this ice-floe has come from the Siberian Islands, *via* Francis Joseph Land, Spitzbergen, Iceland, to Greenland, a distance of 3600 knots, for that course would have been directly *against* the Gulf Stream, in which no floe could last three years, even if it were 26 feet thick, as Inglefield found them in Jones's Sound, or 40 feet thick, as McClure found them in Banks's Strait. McClure found the current west of Point Barrow going 2 knots per hour to the south, evidently making for Behring's Strait, while of the north-west point of Banks's Land the drift was north-east 1 knot an hour, evidently going towards Lancaster Sound.

I therefore conclude that the *Jeannette* relics could not have come westward, they *must* have come eastward, and this proves that there is a course open which is unknown to us.

I would suggest that a number of very strong buoys, capable of resisting ice-pressure, should be set adrift on ice-floes on various parts of the Siberian coast, each numbered indelibly, so that when recovered it could be ascertained whence they started, and their course *might* possibly be ascertained from the Eskimo, who may have seen them, or by other means. This experiment is worth a trial.

R. S. NEWALL

Ferndene, November 30

A Meteor Visible in the Daytime

AT Waterpark, just below Waterford City, about 4 p.m. on October 15, my attention was attracted by a flash of increased light. Looking up, I saw in the south-south-west, about half way between the horizon and the zenith, a bright meteor slowly sailing nearly due west, its apparent size about half that of the full moon, intensely white in colour at the centre, passing into blue at the circumference. It described a low arc, and was in sight for several seconds, leaving a trail of indigo blue with lighter

luminous edges. The meteor disappeared behind some clouds which concealed the sun at a considerable altitude above the horizon.

JAMES GRAVES

November 27

Noon-Glow

WHILE waiting at the telescope shortly before noon this date to note place of sun-spots at meridian passage, masses of cloud formed suddenly in a clear sky overhead, and drifting slowly due south, obscured a peculiarly brilliant sun. No sooner had direct light been intercepted than the upper air above cloud and sun's place appeared filled with the latterly common white glare (as of attenuated peat-smoke highly illuminated), which soon became suffused with the now familiar rose-tint, apparent also between the clouds and on south-south-west horizon, but not beneath the sun on meridian. The sun's apparent meridian altitude being 16°, the superior limit in altitude of rose-tint was 39°; the colouring being monotone throughout, and not to be confounded with that of halos. Fearing ocular deception, as often happens from fatigue of eyesight, I asked an intelligent companion to verify observation, more especially as the diffused white glare at first slightly masked the tinting as compared with that of other "glows." It seems, however, plain that the terms "fore-glow" and "after-glow" no more cover the entire field than the Krakatoan dust.

D. J. ROWAN

Kingstown, November 24

Rosy Glow about the Moon

AFTER watching for some time this evening a lovely twilight in the west, which though bright and luminous was not remarkable for strong colour, I turned toward the south-east, when the moon, now well up, was shining through detached fleecy clouds, and was surprised to see about her a rosy-coloured glow, very like that so often seen about the sun; the nearer clouds, though very high, telling as a cold almost greenish grey upon it. This glow, of course, was much lower in tone than that about the sun, but both in character and extent just like it, and quite distinct, and broader than those prismatic hues often seen about the moon, and called by sailors "cock's eyes" or peacock's-eyes. This was at 4.45 p.m., and as the twilight faded the glow disappeared, from which I infer that it was caused by vapour lying high enough in the south-east to catch some of the very last rays of the sun, but too far east to give a glow in the west.

I see that a correspondent of the *Standard* telegraphed that on the evening of the 25th "a sunset equal in splendour to those of last autumn was seen over the Yorkshire wolds. The predominant hue was a rich crimson." The weather here was cloudy that evening, but between narrow openings in the clouds the sky was the colour of rich painted glass of a ruby-red tint about 4.30 p.m.

ROBERT LESLIE

6, Moira Place, Southampton, November 28

Wild Fowl Decoy

MAY I ask if any of your readers who are interested in wild-fowl decoys will send me the names and positions of any past and present ones they may happen to know or have heard of. I am endeavouring to save the history of decoys from oblivion, and though I have many hundred letters, maps, and sketches connected with this interesting subject, still I may have a great deal of information yet to obtain. I think the subject deserves a standard work, or I would not trouble you.

RALPH PAYNE GALLWEY

Cowling Hall, Bedale, November 24

Prehistoric Man

DURING October last, the sanitary authorities of Gloucester City had occasion to make some excavations in the timber-yard of Messrs. Booth and Co., and in the Bristol Road adjoining this yard, for the purpose of laying down a new sewer. In the course of this operation the workmen disinterred, from a bed of plastic clay, three human skeletons, occupying a position which appears to suggest that the remains in question are probably those of prehistoric man.

Arriving accidentally on the spot some two or three days after the actual find, I learned, to my great regret, that the skulls, two of which had passed through my friend Mr. Wm. Booth's