

*Maidens*," which is simply an abbreviation for *Nineteen Maidens*.

The following quotation from Diodorus Siculus (Book II. chap. iii. Booth's Trans., page 139), who flourished about forty-four years B.C., will be an historical confirmation of what I have above stated:—

"Amongst those who have written old stories much like fables, Hecataeus (born 549 years B.C.) and some others say that there is an island in the ocean over against Gaul (as big as Sicily) under the Arctic pole, where the Hyperboreans inhabit, so called because they lie beyond the breezes of the north wind; that the soil there is very rich and fruitful, and the climate temperate, inasmuch as there are two crops in the year."

This description does not apply to the whole of the island referred to, but represents Mount's Bay, its most south-western extremity, and we may therefore conclude that those from whom Hecataeus and the others derived their information were the Phœnician traders who for centuries previously frequented Mount's Bay for tin and fish, and who imagined all Britain to possess the same rich soil and mild climate as Mount's Bay where still "there are two crops in the year." But to proceed with the quotation:—

"They say that Latona was born there, that they worship Apollo above all other gods, and the inhabitants demean themselves as if they were Apollo's priests, who has there a stately grove and a renowned temple of a round form, and that there is a city likewise consecrated to this god. The sovereignty of this city and the care of the temple (they say) belong to the Boreades."

This city and this "renowned temple of a round form" are doubtless those of Old Sarum and Stonehenge, the inner oval of which, immediately around the altar, consists of precisely nineteen stones (see the plate in Dr. Stukeley's "Stonehenge," page 20). But the four temples of the sun above described of nineteen stones each, placed upright "in a round form" to represent the cycle of nineteen years, are not mentioned by Diodorus, as they were probably deemed not worthy of notice after alluding to the renowned temple of Stonehenge. The passage concludes as follows:—

"They say, moreover, that Apollo once in nineteen years comes into the island, in which space of time the stars perform their courses, and return to the same point, and therefore the Greeks call the revolution of nineteen years 'the great year.'"

Plymouth, August

R. EDMONDS

#### Nebula in Andromeda

LAST night the nebula in Andromeda was observed here. The stellar-like nucleus was distinctly seen. It appeared to be of a reddish-yellow colour as contrasted with that of the nebula. We think that a change has certainly taken place, no such stellar-like centre having previously been seen in the nucleus. The stellar point was examined with a small prism held between the eye-piece and the eye. A continuous spectrum was seen. Dr. Boeddicher and I were both convinced that there were considerable inequalities in its light, and independently formed the impression that there was at times a bright band or line in the green. The colour of the stellar point appeared much the same as that of Aldebaran.

ROSSE

Observatory, Birr Castle, September 8

#### Sunsets

IN July of this year I spent a short time in the Schwarzwald of Baden. For more than a week the sky was cloudless day and night, yet the heat was not oppressive. The sunsets were beautiful beyond description, and the after-glows magnificent. One evening in particular will always remain impressed upon my memory. It was that of July 26, and the place was a few miles from the town of Neustadt, nearly in the centre of the forest. Wonderful effects began to appear so soon as the sun touched the crest of the western hills. But these were as nothing compared with what followed. The moment the luminary had disappeared behind the hills long streamers began to radiate high up into the heavens, and for a time, as the daylight diminished, they increased both in length and intensity, rivalling any description or figures of the Arctic auroras that I have ever seen; at the same time the most vivid and ever-changing glow lit up the whole western heavens. The scene lasted more than an hour, and its effect was heightened by, and perhaps partly due to, a nearly full moon, which rose from behind a slight dip

or pass in the hills on the eastern side of the valley. The inhabitants of the Schwarzwald are indubitably phlegmatic, and not easily moved to excitement; but this display of celestial pyrotechnics was too much for them, and at a small roadside inn the carters and others who were enjoying their beer inside turned out *en masse* to witness it. I am not a strong admirer of Turner's pictures, but, in comparing nature with art, one idea came uppermost—the scene was "Turneresque."

Lewisham, S.E., September 3

R. McLACHLAN

#### Pulsation in the Veins

MR. HIPPISEY will find a very simple way of showing pulsation in the veins, as well as in the arteries, by fixing a long bristle or thread of sealing-wax over the vessel by means of a little tallow. The end of the lever will vibrate and produce all the movements of the sphygmograph. This method was adopted by Mr. Wilkinson King nearly fifty years ago, and the instrument styled by him the sphygmometer. In his paper in the Guy's Hospital Reports for 1837, "On the Safety Valve Function of the Right Ventricle of the Heart," will be found much valuable matter and discussion about venous pulsation.

August 29

S. W.

#### Red Hail

VU l'intérêt que peut offrir la coloration de la grêle, j'espère que vous voudrez bien insérer ces quelques lignes dans votre journal: "La grêle colorée en rouge, observée par Mr. Mullan et dont il est question dans le No. 812 de ce journal, n'est pas un fait isolé. On a observé un cas analogue en 1880, le  $\frac{2}{14}$  juin, en

Russie. Les grêlons de cette chute-là étaient intéressants sous plus d'un rapport. Leur forme se ramenait à trois types: parallépipède, cylindre, sphéroïde très-aplati et muni de cavité aux bouts de la petite axe. Certains de ces grêlons étaient percés de part en part, le long de la petite axe, ce qui leur donnait l'apparence des anneaux. Certains des grêlons étaient colorés en rouge-pâle, d'autres avaient la couleur bleu-pâle, mais pour la plupart les grêlons étaient gris ou blanc. L'observateur, M. Lagounowitch, crut avoir remarqué que la couleur était liée à la forme des grêlons. Je cite ces faits et j'en propose l'explication dans ma brochure, 'Sur l'Origine de la Grêle.'"

THÉODORE SCHWEDOFF,

Professeur de Physique à l'Université d'Odessa

Odessa, le  $\frac{15}{27}$  août, 1885

#### On the Terminology of the Mathematical Theory of Electricity

MR. SUTHERLAND's letter on terminology (*NATURE*, vol. xxxii. p. 391) leads me to suggest to Mr. Scott the employment of the term *low-pressure* for depression in his weather forecasts sent to the newspapers. It is nearly as easily pronounced and written, and will not have such a tendency to mislead the general public as to there being a depressing of the air where it really ascends.

HENRY MUIRHEAD

Cambuslang

#### THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION

Aberdeen, Monday

THIS place has evidently been astir for days in anticipation of the present meeting. Already are the directions necessary for visitors finding their way to the various sections put up in conspicuous places in Union Street and the neighbourhood of Marischal College. The accommodation in the fine building for reception rooms, committee rooms, reading, sectional, and other rooms, seems, so far as can be judged at present, everything that could be desired. It is evident that the Local Committee have been working in earnest to make the second Aberdeen meeting a success, and their efforts have been heartily supported by the citizens and country people. Up to Saturday 1000*l.* worth of tickets had been sold to local people alone, and many more will be sold between this and Wednesday. Of old members of the Association 750 have already written that they intend to be present