

effects of stress on the physical properties of matter lead me to infer that the critical tension will be lower the higher the temperature.

HERBERT TOMLINSON

King's College, Strand, October 31

#### The Resting Position of Oysters

As your correspondent, Mr. J. T. Cunningham, expresses a doubt as to the evidence on which the current belief of conchologists is founded that oysters rest on the convex valve, I beg to inclose a cluster of three, brought to me among others from Torbay this morning. They are all attached by their convex valves, and confirm the descriptions of Messrs. Woodward, Jeffreys, and Huxley.

Mr. Cunningham's Sertularia and Thuiaria go to prove that he has seen oysters from the Firth of Forth that rested on their flat valves. This is easily accounted for. Solitary, unattached oysters, resting on the sea-bottom, would easily, from their peculiar form, be turned over by wave-currents (if exposed to them); or they might fall on their flat valves when thrown overboard by dredges as too young for market. In either case, once overturned, they would be powerless to regain their natural position.

With regard to the Pectens, Mr. Cunningham does not specify the species found covered, as to the convex valves, with Balanus, &c. In two such common sorts as *P. maximus* and *P. opercularis*, we find in the one the under-valve more convex, in the other the upper valve. In each case the mollusk rests on the same valve.

ARTHUR R. HUNT

Torquay, October 27

#### Salmo salar and S. ferrox in Tasmania

In your issue of October 29 is a communication from Mr. Saville Kent, in which he "concludes that no true salmon has yet been established in the lakes and rivers of Tasmania. The fish of large size which abound in the great lakes and other large sheets of water are really essentially the same as the great lake trout, *Salmo ferrox*, of Great Britain."

Respecting the salmon, although very possibly Mr. Kent has not yet seen a true one in Tasmania, such does not absolutely prove their absence. In the *Field* of last May I drew attention to an undoubted salmon smolt, 9 inches long, which was sent home from Tasmania by Mr. Robins, on January 3, 1880, and is now in the national collection.

As regards the great lake trout, I observed in the *Proceedings* of the Zoological Society, January 15, 1884, that the original stock of British fresh-water trout from which ova were procured to send to Tasmania, were solely obtained in Hampshire and Buckinghamshire, localities where the great lake trout is not found, unless it is merely a variety of the brook trout.

The late Mr. W. Arthur, whose recent death at Dunedin will prove an irreparable loss respecting these investigations, sent me two specimens in ice in July 1883. One was a male, 32½ inches long, the other a female, one inch less. I remarked that "these two beautiful specimens of trout are so exceedingly similar to so-called lake trout, that any ichthyologist who believed in the numerous species of this fish, and was unaware from whence they came, would undoubtedly term them *Salmo ferrox*."

Whether Mr. Saville Kent in the note in question considers the great lake trout, *S. ferrox*, a distinct species from the brook trout, *S. ferio*, seems left to the reader to surmise. Should he be correct in his identification (as I believe him to be), then the great lake trout has been raised from the eggs of the small brook trout, showing it to be merely a variety which, under favourable conditions, will attain to a large size.

FRANCIS DAY

Cheltenham, October 30

#### A Right-footed Parrot

If my memory does not deceive me, Mr. Romanes asked some months ago for an account of any peculiarities shown by parrots, in which case you may be able to find a corner for the following incident:—

Last Sunday I gave our parrot—an ordinary grey bird—the hardest walnut I could find, as when busy cracking the shell she is less noisy. After struggling for a long time in vain, at first on the perch and then on the bottom of the cage, holding the walnut as usual with the right foot, she changed feet, whether because the right foot was tired or not I cannot say; but now

utterly failed to make the walnut reach her beak. Time after time the walnut was raised above the bird's head, rather over the neck. At the same time she was unable to stand steady, but fell over and rested on her right wing. After about a dozen fruitless attempts, and by the time every one in the room was shaking with laughter, she flung the walnut down with a shriek and returned to her perch.

C. V. BOYS

#### The New British Myzostoma

SINCE recording the discovery of an encysting *Myzostoma* on the Comatulæ of Milford Haven (*NATURE*, August 27, p. 391) I have examined a large number of other examples of *Antedon rosacea* from different British localities; and I have found *Myzostoma*-cysts or other modifications of the pinnule-joints on individuals from Torquay, Cumbrae, Arran, and Oban, while in one or two cases the arm-joints are also affected. Prof. A. C. Haddon has kindly sent me some Comatulæ which he dredged last summer in Berehaven, County Cork, and in Dalkey Sound, County Dublin, and I have found slightly malformed pinnules in one individual from each locality, though there are no traces of definite cysts. It is clear, however, from what has been said above, that this encysting *Myzostoma* has a tolerably wide distribution in the British area; and I shall be very glad to hear of its discovery on Comatulæ from other localities than those which I have mentioned.

The cysts are fairly conspicuous on the Cumbrae specimens (dredged by Mr. Sladen), though nothing like the size of those which occur on the Crinoids of more tropical seas; and I suppose that this is the cause of their having so long escaped the notice of the many naturalists who have dredged at this locality. Now, however, that attention has been directed to them, it is quite possible that they may be discovered at Roscoff and at various localities in the Mediterranean, where *Antedon rosacea* is equally abundant.

P. HERBERT CARPENTER

Eton College, October 31

#### Tertiary Rainbows

THE following extract from my journal may be of interest with regard to the subject of "Tertiary Rainbows":—

"May 5, 1885.—Extraordinary display of rainbows at 4.30 p.m. on Grand Trunk Railway between Kingston and Montreal. Six bows in all were seen. The primary was flanked on the inside by four bows quite near, and on the outside at some distance by a fifth."

The bows were all quite distinct, but of course of decreasing brightness in passing from the primary inward. They were noticed by several persons besides myself.

W. L. GOODWIN

Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, October 15

#### "Furculum" or "Furcula"

DR. SCLATER in his letter to *NATURE* (vol. xxxii. p. 466) calls attention to a very interesting point in regard to the use of the word *furculum*, asking, as he does so, for its authority. Not only are the eminent anatomists—Balfour, Huxley, and Rolleston—mentioned by him, authorities for it, but the majority of anatomical writers, both of the Continent and Great Britain; they having also lent their influence, through custom, to the introduction of this word. In this country the same holds true, and the use of the term *furculum* for *furcula* receives the support of such high authority as Marsh ("Odontornithes," p. 58, Fig. 14.f.) and many others.

Dr. Sclater further states that he has failed to find its use sanctioned by any dictionary. For the large dictionaries of the language this no doubt is true, but in quite a number of works upon anatomy that present us with a "glossary of terms," we find the word *furculum* given, and not *furcula*, as, for instance, see "Elements of Zoology," by M. Harbison, Head Master, Model School, Newtownards, and "Handbook of Vertebrate Dissection," Part II., by Martin and Moole. More than this, *furculum* is the only word given in certain scientific dictionaries, as Dunman's "Glossary of Scientific Terms," London, 1878, and published by D. Appleton and Co., New York, 1879.

I find myself also in the same category, deserving the censure of your correspondent, and agree with him entirely in the incorrect use of the word *furculum* for *furcula*, or still more properly