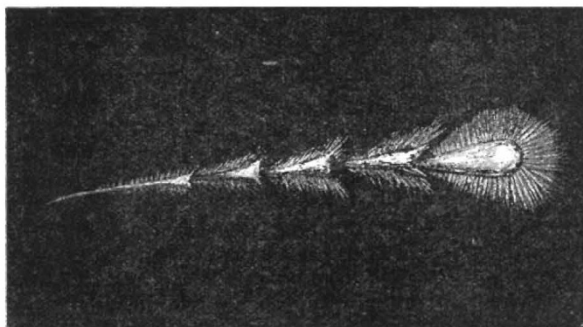


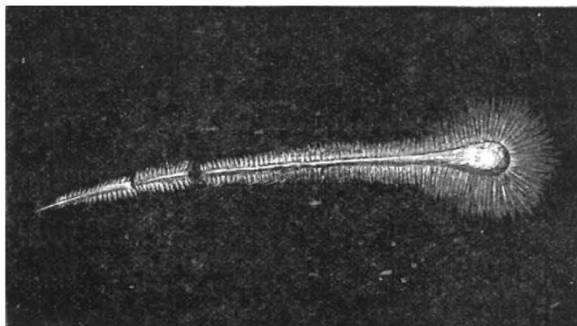
A MAGNIFICENT METEOR.

WE have received from Mr. C. Weatherall Baker (who writes from Penang) the following notes on a magnificent meteor seen from the s.s. *Prometheus* in longitude 62° E., latitude $10^{\circ} 20'$ N., at 10.40 p.m. on Friday, April 6, 1888:—

"It rose from the north by west horizon, and, passing behind a small cloud, travelled in a south by east direction, being at one period of its transit immediately above the ship. Sketch A represents the meteor when in that position. It traversed the whole arc of 180° , and was visible from first to last with the exception of the time when it was behind the small cloud before mentioned, the transit occupying about 30



A.—View as seen directly over ship at 10.40 p.m.



B.—View as seen shortly after appearing.

seconds. When directly above the ship, the head appeared as near as possible the size of the moon when at its height, and the tail streamed out as in the sketch, to a length of about 15 diameters of the head. It was a brilliant white, and threw shadows on the deck as dense as those caused by the moon at the full. Sketch B represents the meteor as it appeared a few degrees above the horizon on its upward course, and on reaching the same distance above the south by east horizon it was simply a dull red ball with no tail whatever. Captain J. K. Webster, of the s.s. *Prometheus*, who has had many years' experience in most parts of the world, tells me that he has never seen a meteor in any way equalling this one for size or brilliancy."

NOTES.

THE Council of the Royal Meteorological Society have issued a circular requesting that photographs of lightning may be sent to them. In response to a similar appeal last year, about sixty photographs of lightning-flashes were received from various parts of Europe and America. The Council remind photographers, amateur and professional, that the photography of lightning does not present any particular difficulties. "If a rapid

plate, and an ordinary rapid lens with full aperture, be left uncovered for a short time at night during a thunderstorm, flashes of lightning will, after development, be found in some cases to have impressed themselves upon the plate. The only difficulty is the uncertainty whether any particular flash will happen to have been in the field of view. A rapid single lens is much more suitable than a rapid doublet; and it is believed that films on paper would effectually prevent reflection from the back. The focus should be that for a distant object; and, if possible, some point of landscape should be included to give the position of the horizon. If the latter is impossible, then the top of the picture should be distinctly marked. Any additional information as to the time, direction in which the camera was pointed, and the state of the weather, would be very desirable."

THE Kew Bulletin for June contains, besides an account of the manufacture of quinine in India, papers on "Job's Tears" (the round, shining fruits of a grass widely distributed in tropical countries, and used by the Karens for the decoration of clothing); on China grass or Ramie, the fibre of which, if it could be extracted and cleaned at a cheap rate, would have great economic value; and on a new botanical station at Lagos, which promises to exercise a very favourable influence on the industrial development of the West African colonies.

SOME time ago the Agassiz Association appointed a Committee to arrange for a seaside meeting during the present summer. This Committee, according to *Science*, proposes that the meeting shall be known as the "Agassiz Seaside Assembly." Its membership is to consist of such persons as shall send their names to the secretary before the opening of the assembly, or such as shall be elected members according to by-laws adopted afterwards. It is intended that the organization shall be made permanent. A six-days' session will be held this year, at Asbury Park, N.J., provided suitable accommodations can be secured at that place in the month of August. The subjects to be discussed this year will be principally botany and entomology, under the direction of such practical specialists as can be secured. The work is to include several field-day excursions with experienced guides.

THE heat in India lately has been unprecedented, in consequence of the delay of the monsoon. On June 24, when the Calcutta Correspondent of the *Times* despatched a telegram on the subject, the temperature was the highest that had ever been registered. Professional business was almost entirely suspended, and trading operations were greatly hampered. Many persons had suffered from heat-apoplexy and sunstroke, some cases having terminated fatally.

A *conversazione* was given yesterday evening by the President and Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians, at the College. The President of the Society of Telegraph-Engineers and Electricians, and Mrs. Graves, have issued invitations for a *conversazione* in the galleries of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours on Tuesday, July 10.

A REMARKABLE new series of compounds of silicon tetrafluoride with organic derivatives of ammonia have been prepared by Messrs. Comey and Loring Jackson, of Harvard. Many years ago, Gay Lussac and Thénard discovered that silicon tetrafluoride formed with gaseous ammonia a singular compound, $2\text{NH}_3 \cdot \text{SiF}_4$; this substance, which is comparatively stable in air and distinctly crystalline, is decomposed by water with formation of ammonium fluoride and silicofluoride and deposition of silicic acid. The American chemists now show that a very large number of substituted ammonias form similar compounds, and give an interesting description of the methods by which they have isolated the most important members of the series. Aniline forms two such compounds, the most stable being represented