

altered its appearance in any appreciable way, I ask whence comes the continuous magnetic supply?

Again, when a lady has had for a great many years a cedar work-box which has never failed in its characteristic odour, it is a natural question to ask, whence comes the smell? The statement in books, both of physics and physiology, is that something material is given off from the wood which alights on the olfactory membrane of the nose. This is purely gratuitous, as the statement is without a shadow of proof, the box being to all appearances in no way diminished in size or otherwise altered. If the hypothesis, for it is nothing more, fails, how does the case differ in principle from that of radium? S. W.

Normally Unequal Growth as a Possible Cause of Death.

I HAVE found from a good many years' experience that it is frequently difficult to assign any definite cause of death to the lower Vertebrata which die in the Zoological Society's Gardens from time to time. The examination of a large example of the Japanese salamander (*Megalobatrachus japonicus*), which lived for a good many (nineteen) years here, and measured some three feet in length, has suggested to me a rather curious and truly "natural" cause of death—if my inferences be correct. The animal showed no obvious signs of disease in any organ. Judging from its length it must have been old, for a specimen three feet long is asserted to have been at least fifty-two years old (*vide* Gadow, Cambridge Natural History, "Amphibia and Reptiles," p. 99). Comparing this specimen with one some twenty inches in length I found that the size of the heart, as of the other organs, was, as might be expected, actually larger, but that all the subdivisions of the heart were of the same proportions in the two animals. But in the course of a dissection of the heart it was plain that the two series of valves, which lie respectively at the anterior and at the posterior end of the pylangium, were so small, relatively speaking, that, when forced backwards by the pressure of blood in the entire conus arteriosus, they would not meet in the middle line. On the other hand, in the smaller salamander the three valves in question were in the first place situated closer together than in the large animal, being nearly in actual contact, and in the second place their size was so great in relation to the diameter of the pylangium that they would—or, I should rather say, could—meet after the systole of the ventricle. The fact is that these valves do not appear to grow *pari passu* with the general increase in size of the heart and the conus arteriosus. My own observations as to the small size of the valves in the large example are quite in accord with those of Hyrtl (*Cryptobranchus japonicus*, Vindobonae, 1865), who dissected an animal two and a half feet in length, and figures the valves, incorrectly as I believe in some particulars, but correctly in representing them to be of small relative size. It might be suggested, therefore, that the imperfection of the circulatory mechanism necessarily caused by the condition of the valves would lead to serious disturbances, and perhaps to death. If so the animal has a term put to its life by the mere fact that, while the heart grows with the increase in bodily size, the semilunar valves of the conus arteriosus do not.

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Can Carrier-pigeons Cross the Atlantic?

COULD any of your readers give me an answer to this query? It is stated in the London *Standard* (April 20, *circâ*) that this feat was accomplished in 1886, when three out of nine American carrier-pigeons set free in London returned to their home-huts. I have hitherto been unsuccessful in getting the authority for this particular experiment. From the points of view of bird migration and of seed dispersal, it is a query of considerable importance.

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21 Henleaze Gardens, Westbury, Bristol, September 21.

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A TECHNICAL SCHOOL FOR THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND.

THE difficult problem of catering for the educational needs of remote and isolated rural districts has been dealt with practically in this country by such enlightened benefactors as the Countess of Warwick in her school at Bigods, near Dunmow, in Essex, which has been carrying on its useful work for some five years, and which is now about to be made still more strictly into a school of agriculture, so as to bring it into harmony with the requirements of the district and of the counties which it serves. Lady Warwick's sister, the Duchess of Sutherland, has faced the still more difficult problem of providing a technical school for the Highlands of Scotland, and a preliminary account of the first scheme was given in these columns at the time of its inception (*NATURE*, vol. lxx. p. 106, December 5, 1901). The work thus set going by Her Grace was formally inaugurated on September 8 by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Secretary for Scotland, at a public ceremony held for the purpose of laying the memorial stone. The building, the design of which is by Mr. Dick Peddie, of Edinburgh, is already several feet above its foundations, and is situated on the picturesque slope of a hill overlooking the little town of Golspie, on the shore of Dornoch Firth, and within two miles of the beautiful grounds of Dunrobin Castle, the Scottish home of the Sutherlands. The main features of the educational scheme, as set forth in the statement published in our first notice, have been adhered to, but the details of a curriculum suitable for requirements of such a very diverse nature as have to be met in this remote Highland district can only be worked out by actual experience—it will be a case, as Lord Balfour said at the meeting, of *solvitur ambulando*. How diverse these conditions are will be realised when it is pointed out that the industries which have to be catered for are agriculture, almost entirely of the "crofting" type, textiles and dyeing, small mechanical trades and handicrafts, and fishing.

The ceremony on September 8, rendered picturesque by the surroundings and by the great gathering of some 2000 people from the neighbourhood and from all the towns and villages served by the Highland Railway from Inverness northwards, was opened by the singing of the Hundredth Psalm, and by a prayer for the success of the undertaking by Archdeacon Sinclair. The gathering was in itself a memorable one, the Duke of Sutherland, who presided, being supported by the Duchess and their family, by the Duke and Duchess of Portland, Mr. Andrew Carnegie and his partner Mr. Henry Phipps, Mr. R. B. Haldane, K.C., M.P., Prof. Meidola, by representatives of nearly all the leading Scottish families, by Members of Parliament, Provosts and Sheriffs, the Principals of the Scotch universities, the chairman of the governors of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College, the conveners of the county councils, and by educationists of every class, including professors and inspectors of schools. Mr. James Macdonald, W.S. of Edinburgh, the hon. secretary of the school committee, had made himself responsible for the organisation of the meeting, which was in every way successful. After the laying of the stone, Lord Balfour said in the course of his speech:—

"This is to be a school for Sutherland and these other counties (Caithness, Ross and Cromarty). It is not only to be accessible to Sutherland and these other counties, as any other school might be, but it is a school expressly designed for the needs and wants of the district in which we are met. Its curriculum will be based on a careful study of the condition of things as they now exist, and will have, as the promoters