

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts intended for this or any other part of NATURE. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

Skull of a Neanderthal Type in the Cambridge Fens.

THE manner in which Prof. McKenny Hughes applies the term "Neanderthal" to a human skull recently discovered in the peat of the Cambridge fens (NATURE, April 4, p. 114) will certainly mislead anthropologists abroad and also at home as regards the true nature of his discovery. From the excellent figures which he appends to his article there cannot be the slightest doubt that the skull he describes is a fairly typical specimen of the round-headed race which came into England during the Bronze period.

Far from being of the Neanderthal type, the specimen he describes is as opposite to that type as has ever been produced in the evolution of the human race. It is apparently a short skull, 180 mm. long; the length of the typical Neanderthal skulls is 200 mm. or more. While the proportion of the width to the length is 84:100, in the Neanderthal crania the proportion is about 75:100 or less. The mastoid processes, theinion, the lambda, the joint for the lower jaw, and the lower jaw itself are all of the form we are familiar with in people of the Bronze age, and are totally unlike these parts in Neanderthal man. Even the pronounced supraorbital ridges are of the form and size we frequently see in skulls of the Bronze period, and not at all of the Neanderthal form. The correct designation in my opinion is the discovery of a brachycephalic skull with pronounced supraorbital ridges.

There is one point in which Prof. McKenny Hughes could greatly assist those who are at present studying the remains of ancient man in England. I believe he has in his keeping a human molar tooth which Prof. Boyd Dawkins discovered with remains of the hippopotamus and other extinct animals representative of the early Pleistocene fauna while carrying out excavations in a cave at Pont Newydd, near St. Asaph. That molar is probably the most ancient part of man yet discovered in England, and it would be of the greatest interest to know something of its characters—whether or not it showed those features which we know to occur in the teeth of Neanderthal man. I presume that these characters are absent, otherwise they would certainly have attracted the sharp eye of Prof. Boyd Dawkins. A. KEITH.

Royal College of Surgeons, April 4.

Are Eyes Autophanous?

SEEING the interest which Colonel Herschel's letter (NATURE, January 18) has attracted, and the various animals he has himself observed, it may be useful to record as many animals as possible which exhibit the phenomenon. Going into the aquarium one evening with a reading lamp, I found the eyes of the crayfish (*Jasus lalandii*, M. Edw.) shining like rubies out of the darkness. I soon discovered the correct position in which the source of light should be. Even more brilliant and beautiful are the eyes of the prawn (*Leander squilla*, Linn.), but the colour is more an orange tint.

Amongst fishes the eyes of the barbel (*Galeichthys feliceps*, C. and V.) appear salmon, while those of the two dogfish (*Scyllium africanum*, Gm., and *Mustelus laevis*, Risso) shine silvery. So far these

NO. 2215, VOL. 89]

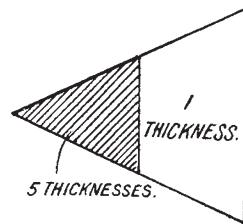
five animals are the only ones in which I have noticed the phenomenon, though doubtless it has been observed in other marine animals, if only the records were forthcoming.

A very simple arrangement would enable the sight to be seen by visitors to public aquaria, and would well repay for the extra trouble of opening for an hour or so on some nights. K. H. BARNARD.

South African Museum, Cape Town,
Cape of Good Hope, March 20.

Centre of Pressure on Triangular Plane Gliders at Small Angles of Incidence.

MAY I direct the attention of those interested in aërodynamics to the fact that the centre of pressure on a triangular plane glider (apex forward) at a small angle of incidence (angle of attack), say 5° to 10° , lies almost exactly at the centre of the length? The good gliding qualities of the ordinary paper arrow (folded from a square or rectangular piece of paper with its c.g. necessarily central) point to this conclusion, which may be further tested by the following form of glider.



Cut out two equal isosceles triangles in thin card or thick paper. Cut one of these into four equal triangles similar to the whole. Paste these four successively on the apex of the other large piece (see figure). When the paste has dried so as not to affect the weight, it will be found that the glider runs quite well with the usual gliding angle for planes of about 1 in 5.

A knowledge of this fact will probably be useful in estimating the righting torques of triangular tails, &c. HERBERT CHATLEY.

The College, T'ang Shan, N. China.
March 17.

Red Water.

AS regards the "red water" from a crater lake in Uganda, referred to in NATURE of April 4, p. 113, I would direct attention to a similar phenomenon which occurs at the great salt lake of Sambhar, in Rajputana. The lake brine contains sodium chloride, sulphate, and carbonate, and when it is quite saturated during the very hottest dry weather a red coloration appears of organic origin. It varies from a delicate roseate hue to a deep claret red, and there is a demand for salt which contains it, because the consumers are accustomed to the colour. H. WARTH.

SIAM.¹

SIAM has a double interest, for not only is it a rich and fertile country, inhabited by a pleasant people who have an undoubted part to play in the world, but it lies between two great Powers, and owes its safety to that fact. *Consule Planco* it nearly caused a war. Now it is a "buffer" State, and it is to the interest of both England and France that it should be strong and progress. It is the only country inhabited by an Indo-Chinese people which is under independent government, and it will be an interesting

¹ "Siam: a Handbook of Practical, Commercial, and Political Information." By A. W. Graham. Pp. xvi+637+plates+map. (London: Alexander Moring, Ltd., 1912.) Price 10s. 6d. net.