for some days at first, when I made very special inquiries, I found that no rain had fallen within 100 miles of Madras. It may perhaps be worth mentioning that from the 8th to the 14th we have had the strange phenomenon of a bright green sun at sunrise and sunset, the sun appearing as a rayless globe, at which you could easily look, and yet so sharply defined that sunspots could be well seen with the naked eye. On the 22nd again, two days after the electricity had gone to positive, the green sun reappeared, and has now changed to a sort of golden green. I do not say that there is any connection between the two, but they seem worth mentioning together. I have got a large number of observations which I will reduce as soon as possible, and send to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, but there is no use doing this till things return to their normal state. It is worth pointing out that observations made at intervals of six hours might have entirely failed to find the negative electricity. I usually, for convenience, take observations at 9 a.m., before leaving for college, and the next would be at three, and both these are always positive. I have not got the exact scale of my electrometer, but I find that 100 Daniell's cells give only 24 div. of a deflection, I am very much disappointed that I have not got my new instrument yet. Had I had it I would have been able to get simultaneous observations carried on at Madras and at a place forty miles to the west, which might have given valuable results. My present instrument, though working better than before, needs constant recharging. For example, at noon yesterday the earth reading was 1750, and at six this morning it was only 1440.

C. MICHIE SMITH

Christian College, Madras, September 26

Unusual Cloud-Glow after Sunset

YESTERDAY evening a most extraordinary sunset effect was seen here, which made a deep impression on all who observed it. The sky was nearly clear when the sun set at 4.18, and the air transparent. A few cirrocumulus fleeces became lighted up with a pink and then with a deep red colour immediately after sunset. A very peculiar greenish and white opalescent haze now appeared about the point of the sun's departure, and shone as if with a light of its own, near the horizon. The upper part of this pearly mist soon assumed a pink colour, while the lower part was white, green, and greenish-yellow. About 4.35 the sky from near the horizon towards the zenith had begun to turn to a brilliant but delicate pink, and some pink cirrus-like streaks stretched apparently horizontally towards the south-east. The coloured portion of the sky spread out like a sheaf from the horizon, and apparently consisted of a very high, thin filmy cirrus disposed in transverse bands or ripples, close together, and very delicate in form, outline, and tint. Below the pink, and between it and the point where the sun had set, remained the very curious, opalescent, shining, green and white vapour, hanging, as it were, vertically, and changing very little during many minutes. The borders of the pink sheaf were definite, and finely contrasted with the deep blue sky. As darkness came on, the pink glow seemed to increase in brightness, and at five o'clock cast a fine weird light over the hills. The moon was now bright in the south-east, and began to cast dark shadows. About five the colour slowly receded from the part nearest the zenith towards the horizon, and as it retired left a clearly visible filmy ripple of cirrus of a faint gray tint. At 5.25 the greater part of the colour was gone, and the cloud remained bright only near the horizon. At 5.32, however, it began to grow again, and in a short time (5.40) the whole extent of the film was again glowing bright pink, producing a most striking effect in contrast with the silvery moon, dark sky, and bright stars in the north and east. The pink light then slowly withdrew towards the horizon, remaining bright and deep coloured low down till 5.50. At 5.58 the last pink disappeared. The whole phenomenon from first to last was in the highest degree peculiar and striking. It was remarkable, first, for the interval which elapsed between the time of sunset and the time at which the cloud became bright, next for the light, filmy character of the cloud, thirdly for the bright green glow near the place of sunset, fourthly for the small transverse ripple form of the cloud, fifthly for the permanence of shape and immobility of the cloud, sixthly for the very long endurance of the coloured reflected sunlight after sunset, one hour and forty minutes, and seventhly for the second illumination, which began more than an hour after sunset. It was certainly due to cirrus or a higher kind of cloud, because (1) parts of the illuminated

sky stretched in long streaks southwards, and the glow remained long in these streaks, resembling very high cirrus; (2) when the light left the sky the first time, the part which had been illuminated remained visible as silvery gray cloud ripples, before the second after-glow rekindled it, and (3) because the colour became very gradually darker as time went on, and because the recessions of light both times were towards the place of sunset. A similar very high cirrus had also been specially marked long after sunset on November 8, and about the time of sunrise on November 9. The night following this rare display was exceedingly clear and fine. This evening (November 10) the light, high cirrus, all but invisible in full daylight, with its delicate ripples, assumed the pink tint about fifteen minutes after sunset, showing the upper air to be in the same abnormal condition as yesterday, and the phenomenon was feebly repeated. It would be interesting to ascertain the approximate height of cirrus on which sunshine remains one hour and forty minutes after sunset at this time of year.

F. A. R. RUSSELL

Dunrozel, Haslemere, Surrey, November 10

Shadow-Beams in the East at Sunset

THE phenomenon of beams of shadow meeting in the east at sunset, treated of in the pages of NATURE some months since (at which time you did me the honour of inserting a letter of mine), was beautifully witnessed here to-day and yesterday. Both days were unusually clear; there was, nevertheless, a "body" in the air, without which the propagation of the beams could not take place. Yesterday the sky was striped with cirrus cloud like the swaths of a hayfield; only in the east there was a bay or reach of clear blue sky, and in this the shadow-beams appeared, slender, colourless, and radiating every way like a fan wide open. This lasted from 3.30 to about 4.30. To-day the sky was cloudless, except for a low bank in the west; in the east was a "cast" of blue mist, from which sprang alternate broad bands of rose colour and blue, slightly fringed. I was not able to look for them till about 4.30, when the sun was down, and they soon faded. I have not before seen this appearance so far north, but on the south coast, where I first saw it, I think it might often be witnessed. It is merely an effect of perspective, but a strange and beautiful one.

Stonyhurst College, November 12

GERARD HOPKINS

The Java Eruption

THE accompanying paragraph may be of interest in connection with the Java catastrophe. I may mention that from the 28th of last month, when I first noticed it, there has been an exceptional red glow after sundown, and a strange green tint in the sky, while till the last few days the moon has had a distinctly green tint; this green tint has been noticed in many parts of India.

F. C. CONSTABLE

Karachi, October 16

A FLOATING LAVA BED.—Sir,—It may be interesting to some of your scientific readers to know that the steamship *Siam*, on her voyage from King George's Sound to Colombo, on August 1, when in lat. 6° S., 89° E., passed, for upwards of four hours, through large quantities of lava, which extended as far as could be seen (the ship was going eleven knots at the time). The lava was floating in a succession of lanes from five to ten yards wide, and trending in a direction north-west to south-east. The nearest land was the coast of Sumatra (distant 700 miles), but as there was a current of fifteen to thirty miles a day, setting to the eastward, the lava could not have come from there, and I can only imagine it must have been an upheaval from somewhere near the spot. I may mention the soundings on the chart show over 2,000 fathoms. There was a submarine volcano near the spot in 1879.—EDWARD ASHDOWN, Commander, P. and O. steamship *Siam*. (*Sind Gazette Bulletin*, October 12.)

Towering of Birds

WHEN shooting in Fife-shire last October I fired at a partridge at a distance of about forty yards; the bird flew on for a short distance, and then began to rise, not in the manner in which a towering bird generally ascends, but soaring as if it did so voluntarily. After rising to the height of 100 or 150 yards very much after the fashion in which some hawks soar, its flight was suddenly deflected downwards obliquely for a considerable distance,

when it swerved, and came towards the ground in a different direction, alighting as though it were in possession of its natural powers, some hundreds of yards from the place whence it rose. On going to the spot where it had settled, it was found to be alive and crouching in the long grass. The keeper ran in and placed his hand on it, when the bird struggled and tried to get away; he killed it seeing that it was wounded. On examining the bird immediately after I found that it had been struck by two pellets of No. 6 shot, one of which had penetrated the pectoral muscle, but had not injured the cavity; the lungs and other viscera were uninjured. The other pellet had entered behind and below the left eyeball, and, passing forward, had emerged on the other side, passing above the upper mandible. The brain was uninjured, but the lower part of the left eyeball was cut and distended with blood. There was no other injury. No doubt the shock had confused the bird, and caused its strange flight, which, though upward, was very different in its character from that of ordinary towering where the lungs are perforated, and unconsciousness is the result of the circulation of non-aërated blood.

J. FAYRER

Meteors

PERMIT me to point out to Mr. J. M. Hayward (NATURE, Nov. 8, p. 30) that his observation of the large meteor of November 4 possesses no scientific value, inasmuch as he has omitted to mention the important features of its appearance. The time is given as "just now" (or November 4), and the broad path of fire which this fine meteor discharged upon its course must have been situated *somewhere* in the south-east, for your correspondent states he saw it "on turning to the south-east."

I had endeavoured to show in NATURE of the preceding week (Nov. 1, p. 6) that these delightfully vague forms of expression as applied to meteors are wholly inadequate, and, as such, cannot receive any attention at the hands of those who investigate these phenomena.

Had Mr. Hayward given us the essential details of his observation, it might have proved very valuable, for a large meteor (perhaps identical with the one he refers to) was observed at many places on the night of November 4. As recorded at Chelmsford, Bath, and Bristol the paths were:—

Time.	Mag.	From	To	Observer.
1883. h. m.		α δ	α δ	
Nov. 4...10 14...	= 9 ...	8 S. 20	355 S. 30...	H. Corder, Chelmsford.
Nov. 4...10 12...6 x 7	33 S. 6 ...	9 S. 23...		J. L. Stothert, Bath.
Nov. 4...10 12... > 7	36 N. 1½...	16 S. 19...		W. F. Denning, Bristol.

The several estimates of brilliancy are very discordant, but the time and paths agree so closely that there is little doubt the observations refer to the same meteor.

Another fine meteor was seen here on October 26 at 9h. 17m. It gave a succession of four lightning-like flashes. Path from α 288 δ 56° + to α 333° δ 59° +. This was not the only fireball visible that night, for I see by NATURE (November 8, p. 44) that "On October 26 at about 7 p.m. a splendid meteor was seen in the district of Hernösand, Sweden." It appeared "with a blinding white lustre in the zenith and travelling very rapidly down to the horizon." In this case again we have to deplore the extremely vague manner of the description. Had the precise direction of flight been given, it would have been interesting to determine whether this fireball belonged to the same stream as the equally fine one recorded at Bristol on the same night.

W. F. DENNING

Bristol, November 10

THE meteors during October have been numerous, and the most of them proceeded from some point in Auriga. With the exception of about nine days of unfavourable weather, I have seen several meteors night and morning throughout October, but they were generally small and transient. I have counted fifty-two from 10 p.m. of October 3 to 4.30 a.m. of the 4th, many of them large and of several seconds' duration. The largest of these passed slowly from the first bright star on the left of Capella, in Auriga, to a point about 1° below α Cygni. The smallest of them blinked rapidly before the eye in the zenith over the Milky Way, which, this night, was the principal theatre of their display. From 3.30 to 4.30 a.m. I counted forty of the fifty-

two meteors. From 1 a.m. to 4 of October 8 I observed very brilliant meteors. One at 2.25 a.m. darted from about 1° above Capella and disappeared at a point ½° from Phad in the Plough, without exploding and without leaving any trace of light behind. It was as large as Venus. At 2.40 a.m. a very large and brilliant meteor dashed out from a point midway between Capella and the first bright star to its right in Auriga, and sped along above the Pleiades and Aries through the Square of Pegasus, and exploded 3° beyond it, leaving no fire in its wake. October 15, 11.38 p.m., a very unusual meteor sailed slowly from β Ceti to within 1° of Betelgeux, in the right shoulder of Orion. After travelling two-thirds of its journey, it exploded into four, three of which formed the head of an arrow, and the fourth adorned its tail, all the four sending out bright nebulous light behind them. At 2.50 a.m., October 26, a large ball of fire (bolide), apparently seven inches in diameter, illumined the heavens with great brilliancy as it descended from about midway between the third and fourth bright stars on the left of Capella, exploding twice during the last half of its journey, and disappearing just as it reached the moon. It had no tail. It was seen by some of the Paisley night police, and one of them was frightened that it would dash the moon out of the heavens. This bolide had no detonation in either of its two explosions, and the last of it was only about the size of Jupiter. One policeman describes it as a large fiery ball of the size of the full moon, but this is an exaggeration. The extraordinary meteor of October 15, after its explosion, was described by an observer as a well-formed arrow of flaming fire, followed by a ball of fire with a tail. To me it appeared to resemble the head and body of a fish, as well as the form of an arrow.

DONALD CAMERON

Mossvale, Paisley, November 6

ON the evening of Saturday last, at 10.12 p.m., a remarkable meteorite was observed close to Trinity College, Glenalmond, in Perthshire. It presented the appearance of a bright spherical ball, which moved horizontally from east-north-east to west-south-west at a height roughly estimated at 300 feet. When it began to curve downwards it disappeared from view, but it left behind it a luminous trail of great brilliancy, which was seen for fully forty seconds, its brilliancy gradually diminishing till it entirely faded away.

W. BESANT LOWE

Trinity College, Glenalmond, Perth, November 12

"Anatomy for Artists"

I AM quite unable to do as your correspondent "An Art Student" suggests, for the second edition of the above-named book has been just issued. I may add, however, that the reasons which led me deliberately to adopt the plan alluded to in regard to the illustrations of the bones still remain, in my opinion, sound, and I trust that the majority of my readers of the past, present, and future editions have not been and will not be "discouraged" by the effort which I desire them, for their own sakes as students, to make.

JOHN MARSHALL

10, Savile Row, W., November 12

P.S.—It seems that I ought to have two "letters of reference" attached to myself, for I am not "Dr." but "Mr." Marshall.

Earthquake

NATURE on October 25 contained notices of shocks of earthquake which were felt at a quarter to one o'clock on the night of October 19 (11h. 20m. Greenwich M.T.) at Cadiz and other places on the coast of Andalusia. I have information that about 17h. 45m. later these shocks, which were travelling from east to west, had apparently reached Bermudas. In a letter just received from ex-Chief Justice Darrell, dated October 22, he remarks:—"A very unusual event occurred here on the 20th of this month, in a shock of an earthquake, which however was slight; no life was lost, nor serious damage done to buildings; but the shock, which lasted less than a minute, at about a quarter past one p.m. was universally and unmistakably felt throughout the colony. It is said to be only the third time that any earthquake has been experienced in Bermuda in the last forty years." A quarter past one in Bermuda would be about four and a half minutes past five at Greenwich, requiring, if the shocks originated in the same wave, a rate of transmission of about 158 geographi-