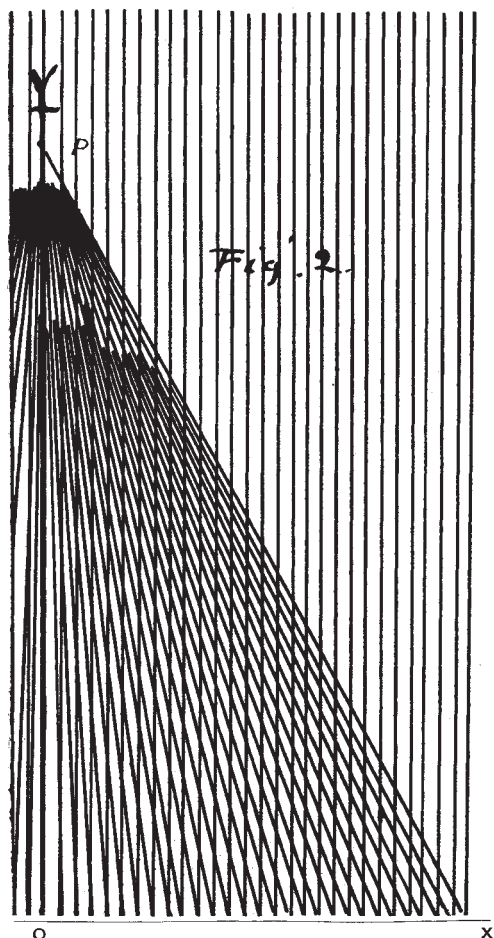


In Fig. 2 the first two families are both well seen in parts, and some of the curves of the third family can be recognised.

We may, if we choose, consider the radiating lines as the perspective view of a series of parallel lines in a plane inclined to X Y.



We then have the case of a row of vertical railings and their shadows on the ground.

In passing a line of such railings when the sun is low, the curves, which appear to travel with the observer, may often be noticed.

A. MALLOCK.

3 Victoria Street, S.W., October 16.

The Indian Forest Service.

I AM very glad to see Prof. Schlich's defence of the Indian Forest Service in NATURE of November 2. I have myself been very closely connected with forest administration in the Bombay Presidency from 1871 to 1894. I may say that I have seen the Department there grow up from little better than chaos into a well-organised corps of spirited and well-trained officers; and there is not one word in Prof. Schlich's letter that I cannot heartily support.

Botanists can hardly be too abundant in India; but if we want good systematic botanists there, we must call them by that name, and either train them specially to that science, or get men so trained in the market.

It is to me surprising that the Indian forest officers have done so much botanical work as they have, to say nothing of the services of several of them to zoology; and it must be remembered that their appointments are even now won at a considerable cost in toil and money, that their pay is not high, and that their duties involve at least as much hard work of body and

mind, as much hardship, and as much risk, as those of any other service in India.

Forestry is not all botany. It may, perhaps, be best defined as the "proper management of hardy life upon large areas." And the man who does that best is the best forester. We have a great many who do it well, and amongst these there will always be some to whom systematic botany is labour of love. But to insist upon any great general proficiency in one of the many subjects that a forester must study, will simply injure the general efficiency of the forest corps; and probably fail in the case of the favoured subject.

W. F. SINCLAIR.

November 3.

Peripatus in the Malay Peninsula.

IN a recent issue of NATURE (October 19) the interesting fact is mentioned of the discovery by the Skeat Expedition of several specimens of *Peripatus* in the Malay Peninsula. Will you allow me to remark that in 1886 I described in the Notes from the Leyden Museum a specimen of *Peripatus* from East Sumatra, found among a lot of insects collected by Mr. Hekmeyer, of our Indian Medical Service. As it was the first specimen recorded from the Oriental region, Prof. Sedgwick, in his elaborate monograph of the genus *Peripatus*, considered the Sumatra species to be somewhat doubtful. The specimens, however, found by Mr. Evans in Kalantan appear to correspond so well with our specimen, as well in the number of pairs of feet (24) as in the colour, that I think a more detailed account will prove the identity of the animals found on both sides of the Malaka Strait.

R. HORST.

Leyden Museum of Natural History, October 30.

A Wooden Ball of Unknown Origin.

ON the shore of the island of Hadod, latitude $68^{\circ} 40'$ about, in Vesteraalin, north of Lofoten, there was found, probably in the autumn of 1897, a wooden ball, $4\frac{1}{2}$ centimetres in diameter, covered by a thin layer of gum. The ball is of fine workmanship, and just able to float in the water. Circles are engraved upon four parts, and form small rhombs over the whole surface; and on two places there is engraved with Latin Majuscles the name *Melfort*. Perhaps some of your readers can say from whence this ball has come. I am writing to the man who has the ball now, to ask him to send it to me.

H. MOHN.

Det Norske Meteorologiske Institut, Kristiania, October 30.

Large Nicol Prisms.

IN the account of Dr. Spottiswoode's physical apparatus, lately given to the Royal Institution, there are allusions to several large Nicol prisms said to have been made by Mr. Ladd and by Messrs. Sisley and Spiller. Although it is no doubt the trade custom to mention only the names of opticians who sell pieces of apparatus, and not of any of those whom they employ to make them, I still venture to hope that in this case, where skill and labour of a very special kind were required, the name of the actual maker of the above-mentioned prisms may not be forgotten. I would therefore respectfully ask permission to give a few particulars as to size, &c., of some of the larger Nicol prisms which I have myself made from blocks of Iceland spar within the last thirty years.

(1) In 1873 Dr. Spottiswoode bought a very fine block of spar from Mr. Tulinius, of Copenhagen (who then owned and worked the spar quarry at Eskifjörður in Iceland). Out of this, which was absolutely flawless, I made a Nicol prism having a clear field of $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches diameter, the length of each side being 12 inches.

(2) In 1874 I made a second prism from the same block of spar just mentioned, and also a third from another piece of spar bought by Dr. Spottiswoode. Both of these prisms had a clear field of $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the length of the sides being $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches. These are now at the Royal Institution.

(3) In 1875 I made a Nicol prism for Mr. Frank Crisp, of $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches field and $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, which he used in a polariscope in conjunction with the first one mentioned above, which he had acquired from Dr. Spottiswoode. These Mr. Crisp sold, and are now in England.

(4) In 1876 I made two more large prisms for Dr. Spottiswoode, one of 3-inch and the other of $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch field, as spar was