

east, on the 11th. About 3.30 p.m. the upper edge of a dark, very lofty haze cloud, stretching almost straight from alt. 15° in the south-south-west, to about alt. 20° in the north-west, was fringed with prismatic colours, in parts thrice repeated, separating the dark haze cloud from a bright white haze, like that often seen of late near the sun, which itself was nearly setting. The luminous haze was widest, about 5°, above the sun, and was also, but far more faintly fringed, with a hazy blue sky above. It lasted until 4.20, but at 4.10 the dull cloud was a deep violet, and the bright haze a steel blue. They both seemed to disappear in the dusk, but the bright glow reappeared about 4.40 p.m.

On both occasions the phenomenon lasted long after sunset, and the cloud was quite distinct from the feathery cirri on which, if near the sun, one so often sees prismatic effects. On the 11th the two small oblong clouds affected had the colours in regular bands, in one round a dark, in the other round a bright centre, reminding one of Newton's rings.

J. EDMUND CLARK

York, December 15

The "New" Volcanic Island off Iceland

KNOWING the interest which, from their association with the later years of the Gare-fowl's existence, I have long taken in the islets lying off the south-west point of Iceland, Prof. Lütken has most kindly sent me a copy of the Copenhagen newspaper *Dagbladet* for the 7th of this month, containing an article by Capt. C. Normann of the Danish Royal Navy, in command of the ship *Fylla*, during her recent scientific voyage to Greenland, a distinguished officer and an eminent authority in Arctic matters. The article is long—too long for my powers of translation—but, with the friendly help of a Danish young gentleman of this University, I have mastered it, and find it exceedingly entertaining. It treats of the island which, as already announced in these columns (vol. xxxi. p. 37) and elsewhere, is said to have been lately thrust up, as other islands have before been known to be upthrust (at least temporarily) in that volcanic neighbourhood. According to the statement of Mr. Consul Paterson (*loc. cit.*) it is said to have been first observed by the lighthouse-keeper at Reykjanes on July 29; and it would seem that news of its apparition speedily reached Reykjavik; but unfortunately, says Capt. Normann, there was then no ship there available to make search for it. Rather less than a month later, however, the *Dupleix* and *Romanche*, of the French navy, arrived at that port, and the commander of the former, animated with the laudable desire to determine the position of the new island, and if possible to effect a landing upon it, resolved to do so in the course of his homeward voyage, and, with that intent, set out after a short delay. To the surprise of all at Reykjavik, he, as he subsequently informed the French Consul there, could find no trace of the object of his search on August 24. On the departure of the *Dupleix*, however, the commander of the *Romanche* dispatched two of his officers, equipped with proper instruments, by land to Reykjanes, thence to take the bearings of the new island. On August 26 they undoubtedly saw an island corresponding in position with what they expected to see, and reported accordingly to Reykjavik, where Capt. Normann's *Fylla* had arrived on the 25th, on her homeward voyage. The Danish commander, equally enthusiastic in the cause of scientific discovery, accordingly left Reykjavik early on the morning of the 27th, and soon after mid-day his ship was off Reykjanes, whence he pursued a course along the northern side of the bank from which the Fowlskerries emerge, seeing nothing of the new island, it is true, but that time the weather was thick. However, he passed cautiously (as well became a navigator in water liable to volcanic upthrusts) along the whole range, and even beyond the furthest of the emerged skerries—the Geirflugadrágr or Grenadeerhuen, when it began to grow dark, and also to blow. Next morning he turned back, running still along the northern side of the bank. It was clear and beautiful weather, and the rock just named, as well as Eldey or Melsækken, the innermost of the range, stood out in bright sunshine. Breakers marked the position of the old Geirflugaskér, which sank beneath the waves in 1830, and the neighbouring coast of Iceland, as well as the inland fells, was plainly visible, but nothing in the shape of a "new" island was to be seen. So he came back to about midway between the Meal-sack and Reykjanes—the lead giving a depth of eighty fathoms of water. Thence, thinking that after all there might be some mistake in the reported position of the island, he put his ship's head about,

and ran along the southern side of the bank. But again was he disappointed, for no new island met the anxious gaze of all on board.

It remains to be said that a day or two later the *Romanche* came to the same spot, but alas, nothing new was to be found—not even a pumice-stone by which, as Capt. Normann remarks, all decent volcanic islands are expected to indicate their position, even when submerged. Still, the form of the "new" island went on gratifying the vision of the lighthouse-keeper at Reykjanes; and, as Mr. Paterson has told us (*loc. cit.*) it was seen by him through a telescope on September 9. I do not for a moment doubt that both he and previously the officers of the *Romanche* saw what was pointed out to them as the "new" island; but, from all that has been said before, and from my own knowledge of the locality, gained during a two months' stay at Kykjuvogr and the neighbourhood in 1858, neither do I doubt that Capt. Normann is perfectly right in asserting that the supposed "new" island is a very old friend of mine—the Geirflugadrágr or Grenadeerhuen before mentioned—the outermost of the emerged Fowlskerries, and our best thanks should be given to that gallant and scientific officer for dispelling the mystery.

ALFRED NEWTON

December 14

Overpressure in Schools

I HAVE carefully read Dr. Gladstone's article on over-pressure. Over-pressure is due more to the action of inspectors and teachers than to the requirements of the Code; e.g. a teacher in my district has a first class in an infant school, the children being all about six years of age. Owing to the unusual brightness of the children and their regular attendance, the teacher has had no difficulty in training her class in the three R's for first standard work, which, under ordinary circumstances, they could not do until they were a year older and in a higher class. What is the result? An inspector visits that school, finds the children can do much more than is required by the Code, and, without reflecting *how* this has been accomplished, he gives a good report for that class. The following week he visits another school in the same neighbourhood and examines a similar class; these children, he finds, are not so far advanced as those examined the previous week, and therefore he makes a less favourable report, thinking that the teaching-powers are not so good, although the children have really been quite as well taught, and are fully up to the requirements of the Code. When the report comes to the latter school, the teacher cannot understand how it is that the class has not gained the report it deserved, until by and by she hears indirectly what has been accomplished at the school previously examined. Then she says, "If they can do it at that school, we can do it here." Hence *over-pressure*. If inspectors did not examine beyond the Code, teachers would not train children for a higher standard than the Code requires.

Dr. Gladstone says, "Teachers used to be paid partly from the Government grant, and thus had a pecuniary incentive to press forward the feeble so as to insure a pass." That is quite true, but teachers will be found in the future to be quite as anxious as they were in the past as to the results of the examinations. They know quite well that now the salaries are fixed, and do not depend on results, it would be said directly that they did not take the same interest in their work as formerly if perchance the schools passed a less favourable examination, and on this point they are keenly sensitive.

Dr. Gladstone advocates "varied and appropriate occupations in infant schools." It is no doubt very monotonous for little children to be kept closely to the study of the three R's, but there are very few who really like the Kinder Garten as taught in our infant schools, unless it be the Kinder Garten games: it is *not* play, but hard work for such little ones to do. It is impossible for the work to be taught successfully when a teacher has too large a class under her control; in Belgium an assistant mistress has a class of fifty children with a pupil teacher to help her, and then no doubt Kinder Garten can really be carried out with beneficial results to the children, but in the London Board schools, where an assistant teacher has seventy or eighty or even more in her class *without help*, how is it possible to obtain good results? If Kinder Garten is to be taught with success there ought to be a Kinder Garten mistress appointed by the Board to teach it to the children, and I think there are very few teachers who would not agree in this. Of course it would entail extra expense, but it would be an expense more beneficial to the