

Akelle. These strive to replace the Mpungwe. To the north, towards the Mundah River, the Osekiani, the Mbenga and Mbuschu tribes are met with, which occupy the whole area of the Bay of Corisco. All these tribes speak different languages and differ in their manners and customs.

The colony of Gaboon consists of three little villages inhabited by Europeans—Plateau, Glass, and Baraka (or Libreville). They are situated about a mile from one another. The French Government house, offices, and barracks, as well as the Catholic Mission house and four or five factories are at Plateau; eight or ten English and German factories are at Glass, and the Anglican Mission house is at Baraka. Each factory forms a complex of houses by itself, all comprised in an inclosure; there is generally the dwelling-house of the colonist, the sale rooms or shops, a store-house, a kitchen (always built separately), a house for the workmen, and a shed for canoes and boats. The houses are built of wooden planks imported from Europe, and all have a verandah. The roofs are covered with mats, which are impenetrable even to the most violent rain. The only house built of stone is the Government house.

Dr. Lenz now gives minute details on the political condition of the colony as well as of the work and progress of the religious missions, and concludes his sketch by an elaborate account of the commerce of the place.

In the above we have given but a scanty outline of Dr. Lenz's sketch of Gaboon. Our readers may judge of the interest of the whole work when we state that there are thirteen other chapters equally elaborate and crowded with details. Our space will not permit us to enter further upon the subject, and we must confine ourselves to the mere statement of the contents of the other chapters. Thus we have one on the Cape Lopez colony, then the Ininga, the Fan, and the Abongo tribes, are treated in turn, the Fan being remarkable through their being cannibals and the Abongo through their extraordinarily small size, which entitles them to the appellation of a "tribe of dwarfs." A general description of the commercial conditions of West Africa follows, and we then come to some animated pictures of elephant and other hunting. The next chapters treat of the superstitious beliefs of the various tribes, of the free state of Liberia and the Croo Coast. A journey from the Okande land to the Osaka tribe and thence to the Aduma and the Banskaka is described in the three following sketches, and the two last ones are dedicated to a description of the Ogowe Lakes and the town of St. Paul de Loanda. We can recommend Dr. Lenz's book most heartily to all lovers of geographical and ethnographical science who are familiar with the German language.

#### 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. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

[The Editor urgently requests correspondents to keep their letters as short as possible. The pressure on his space is so great that it is impossible otherwise to ensure the appearance even of communications containing interesting and novel facts.]

#### The Average Flush of Excitement

I WITNESSED a curious instance of this on a large scale, which others may look out for on similar occasions. It was at Epsom,

on the Derby Day last week. I had taken my position not far from the starting-point, on the further side of the course, and facing the stands, which were about half a mile off, and showed a broad area of white faces. In the idle moments preceding the start I happened to scrutinise the general effect of this sheet of faces, both with the naked eye and through the opera-glass, thinking what a capital idea it afforded of the average tint of the complexion of the British upper classes. Then the start took place; the magnificent group of horses thundered past in their fresh vigour and were soon out of sight, and there was nothing particular for me to see or do until they reappeared in the distance in front of the stands. So I again looked at the distant sheet of faces, and to my surprise found it was changed in appearance, being uniformly suffused with a strong pink tint, just as though a sun-set glow had fallen upon it. The faces being closely packed together and distant, each of them formed a mere point in the general effect. Consequently that effect was an averaged one, and owing to the consistency of all average results, it was distributed with remarkable uniformity. It faded away steadily but slowly after the race was finished. F. G.

#### Lunar Crater

ON April 1 last I saw, between Landsberg and Rheinhold, a small but very remarkable crater, which does not appear in Schmidt's map. It is situated east of a line joining the centres of the above craters, and at rather more than a third of the distance from the former to the latter. Either closely adjoining, or in the position of the small crater, there is an isolated hill within the angle of a forked ridge as shown by Schmidt, who must, undoubtedly, have noticed the crater if it existed at the time of his observation. Might it be that the hill seen by him subsequently opened out as a crater? I remarked neither the hill nor the ridge, but these, like many of Schmidt's objects, might be above my telescopic power, so I cannot say whether the crater is identical with the hill or not. Nearer Rheinhold there is a smaller crater not in Schmidt, who, however, shows a similar one that I failed to see not far off to the south. This may be only a case of misplacement in the map.

JOHN BIRMINGHAM

#### A Remarkable Meteor

A REMARKABLE meteor was seen in Western Australia on February 1 this year. The following account has been forwarded to me by Mr. S. Worsley Clifton, Collector of Customs at Freemantle:—

"A small black cloud on a clear day appeared in the east, travelling not very swiftly towards the north-west, which burst into a ball of fire with an apparent disk the size of the full moon, blood-red in colour; it left a train of black or dark-coloured vapour across the heavens which was visible for three-quarters of an hour. No sound was heard, sky perfectly clear, and thermometer 100° F. in the shade."

ROBT. J. ELLERY

Observatory, Melbourne, April 16

#### Disease in Salmon

THERE has lately been much correspondence upon the subject of a disease affecting the scales of the salmon, and I chanced to come upon the passage which I inclose to you in an old book, the fly-leaf of which bears the autograph of a Duke of Richmond, the one, I imagine, who was at Brussels in 1815. I am not a scientific naturalist, and it is quite possible that this passage is familiar to those who are conversant with such subjects; but thinking it better to err on the side of superfluity than that of carelessness, I trouble you with it.

W. WALKER

May 26

Extract from Rev. C. Cordiner's *Letters to Thos. Pennant, Esq., on Antiquities and Scenery of the North of Scotland*. Lond. 4to, 1780.

I here beg leave to introduce a memoir, relative to an insect attendant on the salmon which came up this river (the Devron), communicated to me by an ingenious friend.

The foul salmon, of which a drawing has been already sent to Mr. Pennant, was caught February 10, 1776. When brought into the house the colours upon this fish were remarkably lively. The general appearance was that of a reddish brown; but the