

As to figuring fragments of bones, I did all that my limited knowledge of mammalian osteology would permit in identifying the common mammals, and in giving a list of them as other writers have done in similar investigations. Possibly Mr. Dickens may here find a fruitful field for investigation, in which he may establish the recent nature of the deposits. I cheerfully proffer to him a large accumulation of fragments of bones in Tokio waiting to be put together!

His comparison of the Omori pottery with Banko will greatly amuse any one at all familiar with Banko, or its associate forms, Hansuki, Otogukuan, Miki, Bashodo, Tokonabe, or their imitators either ancient or modern.

His review being thus occupied with a series of misstatements, he naturally finds no room to discuss my evidences of cannibalism or platicnemic tibiae.

Finally, his ungenerous complaint of my well-merited compliment to the Japanese printers and binders who made the pamphlet, illustrates a lamentable but too common trait of the ordinary Briton in Japan, namely, that which manifests itself in a childish delight at the failures of the Japanese and in sneers at their successes.

EDWARD S. MORSE

Salem, Mass., U.S., March 25

Wallace's "Australasia"

MR. EVERETT appears surprised that he should have to make any corrections in my brief account, in the above-named work, of Borneo and the Philippines, countries in which he has resided and travelled for many years. My surprise is that he has not been able to make far larger and more important corrections. Residents abroad soon acquire a mass of local information, and naturally think that what has been long familiar to themselves must be well known in England, forgetting that books on such subjects are written at long intervals, and when written rarely contain all the information up to date. I am exceedingly thankful for any additional facts or corrections for a new edition of the book, but I do not acknowledge to "errors" in the omission of facts which were not to be found in any books in English libraries at the time I wrote. I will make a few observations on the chief points in Mr. Everett's letter.

1. As to the accuracy of the maps I am not responsible, as Mr. Everett might well have supposed in a series of works issued in Mr. Stanford's name. The fact that Palawan and Mindanao are now as completely Spanish possessions as Luzon, is, I think, quite new to British readers.

2. I certainly omitted the mention of *Tupaia* among the Philippine mammals by an oversight. In giving a general sketch of the peculiarities of Philippine zoology I should, however, again omit Palawan from consideration, as that island is zoologically more nearly connected with Borneo. In the absence of all other information about Palawan, I took my account chiefly from Crawford's "Descriptive Dictionary." He mentions the frizzled hair of the natives, and deer among the wild animals; and as deer abound both in Borneo and the Philippines, their *absence* in Palawan requires proof rather than their presence.

3. The detailed range of the rhinoceros and wild cattle in Borneo has not yet, that I am aware, been given by any writer. My general statements, though imperfect, do not seem very far from the truth.

4. As to what Mr. Everett styles my "extraordinary statement" about the "Idaan" and "Milanow" tribes, I founded it on Mr. Spencer St. John's book. He says (vol. i. p. 396) of the Idaan—"They were a dark, sharp-featured race, intelligent-looking, and appeared in features very much like the Land Dyaks of Sarawak." While of the Milanows he says (i. p. 46) "some are clothed like Mahomedans, others like Dyaks, to which race they undoubtedly belong." As the Milanows live at the mouths of rivers, while the Idaan live inland, I cannot see the "extraordinary" character of the statement that they "correspond" to the division of Land and Sea Dyaks usually made in the Sarawak territory. This does not imply that there are no differences of language, customs, &c., but rather that there are such differences; but if there are radical *physical* differences they were evidently not known to Mr. St. John, whose long residence in Borneo and great opportunities for acquiring information entitle him to be considered an authority.

It will be seen that Mr. Everett's new matter is very scanty, and I should not have thought it worth while to do anything more than make use of it, were not his letter written in a somewhat critical spirit, which I think he would not have adopted

had he known the great difficulty of obtaining accurate information on the innumerable subjects that have to be treated in a book of so wide a scope as "Australasia," and dealing with countries which have been as yet imperfectly described. Like some other critics, too, he forgets that general statements for popular information, which must be comprised within a few lines, cannot always be made strictly accurate without becoming vague, and thus ceasing to convey any definite ideas.

ALFRED R. WALLACE

The Comet 1861 I.

IN the course of some work on comets lately communicated to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, in which I show reasons for believing that a planet more distant from the sun than Neptune is at present in the position R.A. 11h. 40m., N.P.D. 85°, or thereabouts, I was led to the conclusion that the comet 1861 I., visible to the naked eye, should have been in perihelion three times before the last appearance. The period of the comet has been calculated to be 415.4 years. It ought therefore to have been visible in the years 1445, 1031, 615. Comets were observed in 1444, 1032, 617. It will be interesting to many readers of NATURE to know that these are identical. They were all observed in July or August, and were all seen to pass close to β Leonis. The following accounts of them have been given:—

A.D. 617 (i).—"In Ju'y a comet with a tail 3° or 4° long was seen near β Leonis."—(Ma-tuoan-lin.)

A.D. 1032.—"On July 15 an extraordinary star appeared in the north east. It approached β Leonis."—"Compendium Historiarum," 730.)

A.D. 1444.—"On August 6 a comet 10° long was seen to the east of β Leonis; it became longer day by day till August 15, when it entered the sidereal division of α Virginis."—(Biot.)

The longitude of β Leonis is 169°, its latitude 13° N. If the earth were to remain fixed in its position for July 15 it would see the comet 1861 I. pass through the point whose longitude is 169° 30', latitude 13° N. If the earth were in the position of August 6 the comet would pass through a point whose longitude is 177° and latitude 13°, or to the east of β Leonis, and moving towards α Virginis. Thus these four apparitions are the same comet; and the meteor-shower of April 20, hitherto considered to depend on the comet 1861 I., cannot be considered to agree in period.

GEORGE FORBES

Anderson's College, Glasgow, April 2

A Feat of Memory

THE following feat of memory seems to be worthy of record in your pages. It is new to the writer, though by no means uncommon over here.

Like the country itself, many institutions in the United States run to size in a way apt to astonish the dwellers in our "tight little island." So it is with hotels. Thus at some of them many hundreds of persons are simultaneously dining in one room. At the entrance, the hats, &c., of the guests are deposited with a person in attendance to receive them. He does not check or arrange them in any particular order, and he invariably restores them, each to the right owner, as they emerge from the dining-room. The difficulty of the feat naturally depends on the number of hats in charge at the same time. The most remarkable case which has come under the notice of the writer is at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, New York. There the attendant, who is on duty several hours a day, has sometimes as many as five hundred hats in his possession at one time. A majority of them belong to people whom he has never seen before, and there is a constant flux of persons in and out. Yet even a momentary hesitation in selecting the right hat rarely occurs. The performer at the above hotel says that he forms a mental picture of the owner's face inside his hat, and that on looking at any hat the wearer's face is instantly brought before his mind's eye. It would be interesting to test how far this power is possessed by an average unpractised person when put in the right way of doing it. While many of our ordinary recollections are not visual, at least not consciously so, it appears probable that most cases of extraordinary memory consist in an unusual power of making and retaining visualised impressions. Mr. Galton's interesting paper in NATURE (vol. xxi. p. 252) on "Visualised Numerals" goes a long way to show this to be so in mental arithmetic. Systems of artificial memory tend towards the same point; for they may be roughly described as mainly resting on the systematic