Women.

A LATE correspondent of yours is guilty of a species of bad taste, which happily is rapidly becoming extinct. It was once considered both clever and gentlemanly to speak of women as if they belonged to one of the lower orders of animals, but that period has now quite passed by. Remarks of such a kind are hardly ever met with in English publications, and seldom in those of this country within a certain range of longitude. I happened to see it stated lately in a book on etiquette that it was no longer considered good form to make insulting remarks about women, and, when a principle has reached that organ of distribution, it may be considered that it has already become pretty widely disseminated. The change is an agreeable one, not only to women, but also to the rather numerous class of chivalrous-minded men.

If women are not capable of a very high degree of intelligence, it can at least be maintained that they are capable of a higher degree than Americans. An English woman has written greater novels, and a Russian woman has made more important contributions to pure mathematics, than any American man. Neither women nor Americans have had very great incentives to intellectual work hitherto, but it is quite possible to hope that they will both play a more important *rôle* in the future than they have done in the past.

If women are more easily frightened than men, it is as easy to attribute it to a more sensitive organization as to any other cause. Poets and musicians are not as cool and collected in the presence of danger as firemen, nor white men as the American Indians. Many people consider that the delicately balanced nervous organization of the horse indicates as high a degree of development as is to be found in more phlegmatic and thick-skinned varieties of animals.

It is not surprising to find that your correspondent's bad taste is equalled by his bad logic. It is seldom that one finds in so short a space so many pretty specimens of unreason: —

1. The cockroach, when caught between two hot portions of metal, chose to jump down instead of walking over them. If it had broken its neck, and if the metal had not been so hot as to injure it, this conduct would have turned out to be very foolish; but, in fact, the cockroach ran away unhurt. The highest wisdom could not have dictated a more prudent course of conduct, and there is hence no analogy to a case of jumping from a window in unreasoned terror when there are other and better modes of escape.

2. Because an organized being has reached a stage of development where reasonable conduct may be looked for, it does not follow that none of its actions will be instinctive. Both men and women perform many instinctive actions, — a drowning man will instinctively catch at straws, — but that does not prove that they are not endowed with reason in addition to instinct.

3. Your correspondent maintains that what would be instinct in women, and hence proof of a low grade of intelligence, is, in the cockroach, "singularly like the operation of reason." But it is no mark of reason having come into play, that conduct looks intelligent to the outsider. If it were, we should have to attribute reason to the Amœba, which encloses food and not grains of sand, and to the Drosera, which shuts up on bits of meat and not on bits of chalk. The one sure objective test of the action of reason is that different individuals behave differently under the same circumstances, and that test is wanting here. We are expressly told that every one of more than a dozen cockroaches did exactly the same thing. Cockroaches make their constant home by the kitchen range, and there is hardly any source of danger which ancestral experience is more likely to have warned them of than hot metal.

L.

Ancient Scrapers.

A FACT has lately come to my knowledge which may be of interest to archæological students of the ancient stone age, who have frequently expressed surprise that so few of the ancient scrapers, blades, chipped axes, and other cutting implements, show signs of use.

Lieutenant Stoney, Lieutenant Ray, Nelson, Turner, and others have sent to the National Museum a large number of modern Eskimo scrapers, and also many specimens of the implements used in chipping and sharpening their scrapers. The latter are of two kinds: 1. A curved handle of walrus ivory, with short pieces of antler lashed in a groove cut in the front of the handle (this form has frequently been figured); 2. A single cylindrical handle of wood, into one end of which an incisor tooth of a beaver has been firmly fixed. Indeed, one or two specimens consist of a portion of the upper jaw with the teeth in place. This tool is called by all collectors a knife-sharpener. Lieutenant Stoney informs me that during his late exploration in Kotzchue Sound he saw the natives using these implements, and says that they keep them always at hand, and spend much time in touching up the edges of these scrapers and other stone cutting-tools, and that the beaver-tooth sharpener is also employed by the ivory-carvers to keep a fresh edge on their metal knives. The variation in the length of scraper-blades is due partly to the fact that some of them, when new, are over two inches long, and become worn down by constant sharpening until they are reduced to a mere stub. It will be seen from Lieutenant Stoney's observation that it will be difficult to find in Alaska a scraper-blade showing signs of use, the interest of the artisan depending upon his keeping his edge constantly sharp.

O. T. MASON.

Washington, June 25.

Volapuk.

I COPY the titlepage of one and a part of another grammar of Volapük, before me. Hachette & Co. is a London house, as you will see. The Paris house is Le Soudier. "Grammar of Volapük: The Language of the World. For all Speakers of the English Language. Translated and published with the consent of the inventor, Johann Martin Schleyer, by W. A. Seret. Glasgow, Thomas Murray & Sons; London, Whittaker & Co." "International Commercial Language. Abridged Grammar. . . . By Karl Dornbusch. London, Hachette & Co.; Paris, H. Le Soudier."

E. A. HORSFORD.

Cambridge, June 25.

Pineal Eye of Lizard.

THE pineal eye is so well developed in the common pine-tree lizard (*Sceleporus undulatus*) that it may probably seem to warn its owner of the advent of daylight. It is a lenticular, glassy area of the skin of the vertex (about a millimetre in sagittal diameter), surrounded by a yellow border, and having a dark spot in its centre. The dark spot is opaque, caused by a mass of pigment internal to the dermis, set on the extremity of a pineal outgrowth from the brain. The clear area around it is caused by the dermis, which is transparent and free from the pigment which covers it internally in other parts. The eye is covered by an escutcheon-shaped epidermal shield, more transparent in the centre and larger (3 × 3 millimetres) than the normal epidermal scales. The only sign of degeneracy is the central cloudy mass of pigment, like a big cataract.

G. MACLOSKIE.

Princeton, June 25.

The Charleston Earthquake.

I FEEL thankful to Professor Mendenhall for his forcible criticism of the paper relating to the Charleston earthquake, and fully concur with him in his remarks concerning the uncertainty of the data upon which the insoseismals were drawn. This was commented upon in similar vein in the paper under discussion. He cannot complain of them more loudly than we did. The features to which he calls attention (viz., that the curves of high intensity are less sinuous than those of low intensity) had not escaped our attention, and the results of our reflections were these: 1st, The data indicated that the amount of variation of intensity within any zone or annulus generally bears a smaller ratio to the mean intensity of that zone when the mean intensity is high than when it is low (I think this was to be expected, and is intelligible from the nature of the case), hence there ought to be less sinuosity in the inner than in the outer curves; 2d, In order that the amount of sinuosity may be in due proportion in all curves, the density of observation (i.e., number of observations per unit area) should be inversely pro-