

hair. This is a peculiarity of many of the crosses between Indian and African. I need but mention the Cafusos, who, according to Tyler, "are remarkable for their hair, which rises in a curly mass, forming a natural periwig, which obliges the wearers to stoop low in passing through their hut doors."

The word *playa* is not mentioned in the Century Dictionary, although, according to the *Popular Science Monthly*, vol xxii., p. 381, it "has been adopted by geologists as a generic term, under which the various desiccated lake-basins of the West may be grouped."

Although the *cæse*, or *platinum-needle* or *loop*, is the most important tool of the bacteriologist, both of these words have been omitted. The word *cæse* is, of course, German, but is now much used in English books.

The common names, and often the scientific names, of well-known plants have been omitted. The *Amorphophallus titanum*, a vegetable wonder of the Arum family, discovered in Sumatra in 1878 by Beccari, is not mentioned under its generic or common East Indian name of *Krubut*, although both of these appear under *Rafflesia*, the generic name of a remarkable plant which grows with it.

The word noctilucous is defined in the Century Dictionary, but the word noctilucence, a term sometimes applied to the light emitted by the *Noctiluca*, is omitted, although phosphorescence is the more common, but perhaps less accurate, term.

Many of the definitions are inaccurate and unsatisfactory. From the following definition of Carib, one would conclude that they are all of a "native race" and that none are living in the Caribbean Islands at the present time: "One of a *native race* inhabiting certain portions of Central America and the north of South America, and *formerly* also the Caribbean Islands." According to the latest Handbook, in British Honduras, there are 2,200 Caribs who, "although to all appearance of true African origin, being a black and woolly-headed people, are a mixed race of the aboriginal Caribs, with a large percentage of African blood." A few true Red Caribs and some Black Caribs still live in the Windward Islands. The true Caribs are not natives of Central America. They inhabited the northern part of South America and the Caribbean Islands, and, according to Dr. Brinton, their original home was south of the Amazon. JOHN GIFFORD.

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#### A Peculiar Occurrence of Beeswax.

In *Science* for June 16, 1893, Mr. George C. Merrill, of the U. S. National Museum, has a request for information under the above heading concerning some beeswax forwarded to him from Portland, Oregon. He describes it as having all the elements and characteristics of beeswax, but says, "such it would have unhesitatingly been pronounced but for certain stated conditions relating to its mode of occurrence."

He says it occurs in the sand along the beach, at quite a depth in places, and in a fragment of sandstone, etc., and further says: "Tradition has it that many hundred years ago a foreign vessel (some say a Chinese junk) laden with wax was wrecked off this coast. This at first thought seems plausible, but aside from the difficulty of accounting for the presence in these waters and at that date of a vessel loaded with wax, it seems scarcely credible that the material could have been brought in a single cargo in such quantities nor buried so deeply over so large an area."

The first difficulty Mr. Merrill seems to encounter is the presence of a vessel of that supposed nation on our coast at so early a date. This should give him no difficulty whatever, for Hon. Horace Davis, of California, in an article before the American Antiquarian Society, April, 1892; Charles Walcott Brooks before the California Academy of Sciences, March 1, 1875, and Professor George Davidson, of the U. S. Coast Survey, for thirty years or more last past, have all been calling attention to the hundreds of known wrecks of Japanese (not Chinese) junks cast on the American shores, from Behring Sea to Peru, by the "Kuro Shiwo," or black stream of Japan.

In both the articles mentioned above you will find an account of the "beeswax junk" and so much information concerning it

that Mr. Merrill's doubts will be dissipated; if not, Professor Davidson, in the "Coast Pilot of California, Oregon and Washington Territory," 1869, describes this very junk and the very beeswax in question.

Mr. Merrill's informant, however, seems to have fallen into an error as to the quantity and locality of this wax; for no such quantities were ever found as those mentioned in *Science*; in fact, the story is this: At some recent—but prehistoric—time a Japanese junk loaded with beeswax was thrown ashore at or near Clatsop beach, Oregon, and the cargo was scattered along the sands and buried therein, where it is found even today in small quantities and that is all.

Mr. Merrill's letter to *Science* is published, he says, "in the hope of gaining more information on the subject," and I will be fully repaid if through the instrumentality of this note he shall have obtained that information.

Many Japanese wrecks have been thrown ashore on our coast, of which we have authentic information, all the proof of which has largely been collected by the eminent gentlemen quoted above.

JAMES WICKERSHAM.

Tacoma, Washington, June 26.

#### Color Perception: A Correction.

I HASTEN to send this note of correction to my paper on "Distance and Color Perception by Infants" in *Science*, April 28—an error brought to my attention by a friend. In Tables I. and II. of that article (p. 231) I have taken the proportion of "acceptances" to the entire number of cases (the ratio  $\frac{A}{N}$ ) after adding up the simple numbers for each color at all the distances. It is evident that the resulting percentages are wrong as representing comparative results for the different colors, since there are not an equal number of cases for each same color at different distances, nor for the different colors at each same distance. The proper method is, of course, to compound the percentages representing the relative attractiveness of each color at each distance. This gives the values (for  $\frac{A}{N}$ ) in Table I.: Blue, .78; red, .75; white, .78; green, .68; brown, .43; and in Table II.: Newspaper, .76; color, .71. This brings white up to the level of blue and red. The same correction should be made for the values  $\frac{R}{n}$ , but in the result it is immaterial.

I wish to add, also, that I do not consider the results relative to the individual colors of much value, since the cases are so few. The experiments had to be broken off unexpectedly. I published the tables mainly to illustrate the working of the method of experimenting. For this reason I did not enter in my article into side considerations, such as color-brightness, fatigue, etc., which were duly provided for in the experiments themselves. I hope to discuss such points in the fuller treatment of the monograph on the infant's active life which I am preparing.

J. MARK BALDWIN.

Princeton, N.J., June 30.

#### Birds that Sing in the Night.

I have read with a great deal of interest the notes under this head as they have appeared in *Science* from time to time. While some species have been mentioned that I have not heard, there are also some not mentioned which are night singers in central Iowa, where I have spent many years studying the birds in their various moods and conditions.

The first in point of beauty of execution is the wood-thrush (*Turdus mustelinus*). Not only does he sing in the night, but his song is given at shorter intervals and more earnestly than during the day. It is rarely that he sings at high noon, unless the day be dark and wet. Nor does he sing all night long; from midnight until after two, there is only an occasional burst of song or none at all.

Second in point of regularity and persistence is dickcissel (*Spiza americana*). Not only does he sing at short intervals all