

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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### Strawberry Cure for Gout.

THE season of strawberries is at hand, but doctors are full of fads, and for the most part forbid them to the gouty. Let me put heart into those unfortunate persons to withstand a cruel medical tyranny by quoting the experience of the great Linnæus. It will be found in the biographical notes, written by himself in excellent dog-latin, and published in the Life of him by Dr. H. Stoeber, translated from German into English by Joseph Trapp, 1794. Linnæus describes the goutiness of his constitution in p. 416 (*cf.* p. 415), and says that in 1750 he was attacked so severely by sciatica that he could hardly make his way home. The pain kept him awake during a whole week. He asked for opium, but a friend dissuaded it. Then his wife suggested, "Won't you eat strawberries?" It was the season for them. Linnæus, in the spirit of an experimental philosopher, replied, "*tentabo*—I will make the trial." He did so, and quickly fell into a sweet sleep that lasted two hours, and when he awoke the pain had sensibly diminished. He asked whether any strawberries were left: there were some, and he eat them all. Then he slept right away till morning. On the next day he devoured as many strawberries as he could, and on the subsequent morning the pain was wholly gone, and he was able to leave his bed. Gouty pains returned at the same date in the next year, but were again wholly driven off by the delicious fruit; similarly in the third year. Linnæus died soon after, so the experiment ceased.

What lucrative schemes are suggested by this narrative. Why should gouty persons drink nasty waters, at stuffy foreign Spas, when strawberry gardens abound in England? Let enthusiastic young doctors throw heart and soul into the new system. Let a company be run to build a Curhaus in Kent, and let them offer me board and lodging gratis in return for my valuable hints.

F. G.

### Distant Sounds.

WHEN the Prince of Wales reviewed great squadrons at the Jubilee review, only one gentleman from Wimbledon, and myself, recorded hearing the salutes near London. I think it worth while, therefore, to note that what seemed to be the thumping sound of heavy guns was to be heard here to-day, from half-past five to a quarter to six p.m., Greenwich time; and even *felt* in the chest.

Some of your other correspondents may be able to tell where the guns—if guns—were fired. The importance of the subject seems to require no remark from me.

I sit in a one-storied building, as far remote from street noises, perhaps, as is possible in London, except in one or two great private gardens, or in the parks. No road is within fifty feet of me; and I know all my neighbours' noises, and have been used to the sound of old-fashioned guns up to 1894.

W. F. SINCLAIR.

102 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, London, S.W., June 2.

### THE JUBILEE OF SIR GEORGE GABRIEL STOKES.

THE close of the present Easter term coincides with the end of the fiftieth year of the tenure by Sir George Gabriel Stokes of the Lucasian Professorship at Cambridge. Born in 1819, the same year as our Sovereign, he entered Pembroke College the year of Queen Victoria's Accession. In 1841 he took his degree as Senior Wrangler, the earliest of the wonderful group of Cambridge mathematicians—Stokes, Cayley, Adams—who occupied that position in three successive years. It has been one of the most pleasing features of the recent Jubilee that Mr. H. Cadman Jones, who was second to Stokes both in the Mathematical Tripos and in the contest for the Smith's Prize, has been able to come to Cambridge to offer his congratulations to his old friend and competitor.

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In the long history of the University several chairs have been held by the same professor for more than fifty years. Prof. R. Plumtre, of Queens', was Regius Professor of Physic from 1741 to 1793; Thomas Martyn, of Sidney Sussex, was Professor of Botany from 1761 to 1825; and Adam Sedgwick held the Woodwardian Chair of Geology from 1818 to 1873; but this is the first time in the history of the University that the occasion has been officially celebrated.

In the course of his long life Sir George Stokes has been first Secretary and later President of the Royal Society. He presided over the British Association in 1869. He represented the University in Parliament from 1887 to the dissolution in 1891, and was created a baronet in 1889. He has received the Rumford and the Copley medal from the Royal Society, and is a D.C.L. of Oxford, a LL.D. of Cambridge, Edinburgh and Dublin, and a ScD. of Cambridge. Amongst the numerous honours which have been showered upon him from abroad, he is a Knight of the Prussian order "*Pour le Mérite*," a distinction he shares with but four or five at most of his countrymen.

This is not the place to enumerate or appreciate the vast volume of published work which Prof. Stokes has produced within the last fifty years. A quarter of a century ago one of his most distinguished pupils, Prof. Tait, attempted in these pages to give some account of the magnificent series of papers we owe to Sir George. The portrait which accompanied Prof. Tait's article is still strikingly like the original; it seems strange that five-and-twenty years should have left so little trace in those finely-moulded features.

The celebration of the jubilee commenced with the delivery of the Rede Lecture by Prof. Cornu, of the École Polytechnique of Paris. The subject of the lecture was "*The Wave Theory of Light, its Influence on Modern Physics*." The endowment of this lecture was left to the University as long ago as 1524 by Sir Robert Rede, Lord Chief Justice in Henry VIII's reign, and this is the first time that it has been delivered by a foreigner. Prof. Cornu spoke in French, and both the brilliancy of his matter and the charm of his elocution made a deep impression on his audience. Prof. Cornu, in mentioning the works of Newton, Young, Clerk Maxwell, Rayleigh, Kelvin and Stokes, paid a splendid tribute to those mathematical studies which have ever been the chief glory of Cambridge.

Sir George Stokes's College, Pembroke, entertained a distinguished company at dinner on Thursday evening. The delegates from the various Universities and learned Societies were present, and many of the former members of the Society assembled to do honour to their most distinguished graduate. As it was necessary for the company to adjourn at nine o'clock to the Fitzwilliam Museum, there were no speeches, but the health of Sir George was drunk amidst a scene of rare enthusiasm.

The Fitzwilliam Museum is admirably adapted for the purposes of an evening reception. Lit up by electric light, the walls of its spacious galleries hung with pictures, and its floor covered with a crowd dressed in the robes of the various institutions that had sent delegates, it presented a most brilliant spectacle. The guests were received by the Vice-Chancellor, supported by his Esquire Bedells. During the course of the evening a bust of Sir George Stokes, executed by Mr. W. Hamo Thornycroft, was presented to Pembroke College, and a replica was at the same time given to the University. Lord Kelvin, on behalf of the subscribers, presented the busts, and in doing so he remarked that the assembly was taking part in the celebration of a great man and of natural philosophy in the University of Cambridge—natural philosophy in the broadest sense of the term, of which foundations had been laid by Sir George Stokes that would render the nineteenth century memorable in future