

ingly conducted in preference to other lines of transit. The variety in the appearance of the electric spark taken in different gases may be ascribed partly to different degrees of heat evolved, but chiefly to specific properties of the gas itself with relation to the electric forces. These properties appear also to give occasion to diversities in the form of the pencil or brush, which takes place when the discharge is incomplete, and is repeated at short intervals, according to the shape of the conductor on either side, and according to the species of electricity conveyed. The diverging, converging, bent and rami-fied lines presented in these different forms of electric discharge, strikingly illustrate the deflexions and curvilinear courses taken by the inductive actions which precede the disruption; these lines being not unlike the magnetic curves in which iron filings arrange themselves when under the action of opposite magnetic polarities.

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March 8, 1838.

FRANCIS BAILY, Esq., V.P. and Treas., in the Chair.

Colonel Andrew Leith Hay, K.H., who had at the last Anniversary ceased to be a Fellow from the non-payment of his annual contribution, was at this meeting re-elected by ballot into the Society.

A paper was read, entitled, "Proposal for a new method of determining the Longitude, by an absolute Altitude of the Moon," by John Christian Bowring, Esq. Communicated by John George Children, Esq., F.R.S.

The method employed by the author for determining the longitude by the observation of an absolute altitude of the moon, was proposed, many years ago by Pingré and Lemmonier; and the principal difficulty which stood in the way of its adoption, was its requiring the exact determination of the moon's declination reduced to the place of observation. This difficulty the author professes to have removed by supposing two meridians for which the altitudes are to be calculated: and the only remaining requisite is the accurate determination of the latitude, which presents no great difficulty, either on land or at sea. Examples are given of the practical working of this method; showing that if the latitude of a place of observation be obtained within a few seconds, the longitude will be found by means of a single observation of the altitude of the moon.

A paper was also read, entitled, "An Inquiry into a new Theory of earthy Bases of Vegetable Tissues," by the Rev. J. B. Reade, M.A., F.R.S.

The author, after briefly noticing the results of some of his experiments described in two papers which appeared in the Philosophical Magazine for July and November, 1837, and also those of Mr. Robert Rigg in a paper read to the Royal Society, next adverts to the theory of M. Raspail, detailed in his *Tableau Synoptique*, and *Nouveau Système de Chimie*. In opposition to some of the views enter-

tained by the latter, he finds that in the bark of the bamboo and the epidermis of straw the silica incrusting these tissues is not crystallized, but, on the contrary, exhibits, both before and after incineration, the most beautiful and elaborate organization, consisting of an arranged series of cells and tubes, and differing in its character in different species of the same tribe, and in different parts of the same plant.

The observations of Mr. Golding Bird, contained in the 14th number of the Magazine of Natural History, New Series, are then referred to; and the author states in confirmation, that, by employing caustic potash, the siliceous columns may be removed from the leaf of a stalk of wheat, while the spiral vessels and ducts, which form the principal ribs of the leaf, as well as the apparently metallic cups which are arranged on its surface, remain undisturbed. He proposes, therefore, to substitute, in the description of vegetable tissues, the term *skeleton*, instead of that of *bases*, whether saline or siliceous, of those tissues.

March 15, 1838.

FRANCIS BAILY, Esq., V.P. and Treas., in the Chair.

Captain Thomas Best Jervis, E.I.C.S., and Travers Twiss, Esq., were elected Fellows of the Society.

The reading of a paper, entitled, "Experimental Researches in Electricity," Thirteenth Series, by Michael Faraday, Esq., D.C.L., F.R.S., &c., was commenced:

March 22, 1838.

FRANCIS BAILY, Esq., V.P. and Treas., in the Chair.

A paper was read, entitled, "Description of a new Tide-Gauge, constructed by T. G. Bunt, and erected on the Eastern bank of the River Avon, in front of the Hotwell House, Bristol, in 1837." Communicated by the Rev. William Whewell, M.A., F.R.S.

The principal parts of the machine here described, are an eight-day clock, which turns a vertical cylinder, revolving once in twenty-four hours; a wheel, to which an alternate motion is communicated by a float rising and falling with the tide, and connected by a wire with the wheel which is kept constantly strained by a counterpoise; and a small drum on the same axis with the wheel, which by a suspending wire communicates one 18th of the vertical motion of the float to a bar carrying a pencil which marks a curve on the cylinder, or on a sheet of paper wrapped round it, exhibiting the rise and fall of the tide at each moment of time. The details of the mechanism, illustrated by drawings, occupy the whole of this paper.

A paper was also read, entitled, "On the Régar or Black Cotton Soil of India," by Capt. Newbold, Aide-de-Camp to Brigadier-Ge-