A Rain of Fishes.

DURING a recent thunder-storm at Winter Park, Fla., a number of fish fell with the rain. They were small fish from two to four inches long. It is supposed that they were taken up by a water-sput from Lake Virginia, and carried westward by the strong wind that was blowing at the time. The distance from the lake to the place where they fell is about a mile.

JOSEPH LECONTE.

Among the Publishers.

MACMILLAN & CO. have published a brief biography of the late English anatomist, William Kitchen Parker, written by his son T. Jeffery Parker. It begins with an account of his birth and early life on his father's farm, and then of his schooling and apprenticeship, first to an apothecary and afterwards to a surgeon. With his strong inclination for biological studies, it was natural that he should choose medicine as his profession; but it is evident, as indeed his biographer admits, that he had no great love for his profession and only moderate success in the practice of it. His prime interests in life, apart from his family, were two things not often found in conjunction at the present day, science and Wesleyan religion; and he seems to have been equally devoted to both and to have found no incompatibility between the two. In biology he was largely self-taught; but a few discerning friends saw that he was capable of important original work, and assisted him in the prosecution of such work. He became a member of the Zoological Society and afterwards a fellow of the Royal Society; but the position that proved the most useful to him was the Hunterian professorship of anatomy and physiology in the Royal College of Surgeons, because it not only gave him the opportunity to lecture on his favorite subjects, but also added to his otherwise moderate income. His principal scientific work, his researches on the skull, is described in some length in this book, and there are brief notices of his other studies and a bibliography of all his published works. His principal fault as a scientific writer, his son thinks, was his complicated style; his topics being arranged in a disorderly way and his sentences hastily constructed. Yet biologists will doubtless echo the words of the Royal Society that he was "an unworlily seeker after truth ... whose beneficent influence will ever be felt in a wide-spread and advancing science."

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Science.

they seem smaller, and since distant objects also seem smaller, they will seem more distant.

There are two objections to this explanation. 1. The accommodation is for the distance of the real object, as is proved by the distinctness. Why, then, should the object seem farther? 2. Again, distant objects seem smaller only because their retinal images are smaller; but this is not so in the case under consideration.

In justification of his view, Mr. Bostwick says that "in monocular vision an object appears distant or near according as the eye is fixed respectively on something nearer or something beyond it." I am familiar with the fact here referred to, but in this case the appearance of greater or lesser distance is so imperfect that it can hardly be called estimate. It may seem farther or nearer almost at will. It is a matter of fancy, not a sober certainty of rational judgment. In fact, there is no ground for forming any judgment.

Although Mr. Bostwick speaks of his estimate of the distance of the phantom as "distinct," yet I cannot but think that, for want of complete dissociation of the axial and focal adjustment of the image the image is not quite sharp; and that, if he got the same sharp, realistic image which I get, he would see the distance as I see it. Of course, there is no disputing about how things seem to different observers any more than there is about tastes; but nevertheless, there are some things which are normal and reducible to intelligible law, and some not. Mr. Bostwick's case may be abnormal, but I think probably not. I well know how illusive binocular phenomena are. He will, I am sure, pardon me for thinking that with more practice in experiments of this kind he will come to see things as others see them.

BERKELEY, CAL., MAY 27.

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First inserted June 19, 1891. No response to date.

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