

of Algeria; to M. Bonissent for his work on the Geology of the Département de la Manche; and to M. Boucher de Perthes for his researches on the natural history of man in prehistoric times. A gold medal has also been voted by the Society for the Encouragement of National Industry to M. Alibert, for his discovery of Graphite in Siberia, magnificent specimens of which were shown in the Great International Exhibition of 1862.*—D. T. A.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editors of the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE.

YOUR correspondent Col. Greenwood suggests an enquiry concerning rainless districts. I believe it is quite certain that the North of Africa and the whole of Asia Minor are subject to occasional rains, in a certain sense seasonal, though for the most part, and sometimes for more than one year at a time, in the greater portion of these wide tracks no rains fall. At any rate, there are no periodical rains; and it is rather in contradistinction to such districts, and to distinguish areas where there is no constant precipitation, than as an absolute proposition, that the expression is made use of. Col. Greenwood is no doubt aware that there are other tracts, especially that on the west side of the Andes, where rain is so excessively rare that the inhabitants would regard it as almost a miracle. I remember being told some years ago by a resident at Alicante, on the east coast of Spain, that there had been no rain in that district for more than twenty years. Since then there have been rainy seasons, and it is probable that small showers may have been forgotten; but there are local conditions in that neighbourhood very unfavourable to rain. Perhaps this explanation will satisfy your readers that it may be convenient, and in some sense correct, to call certain large areas 'rainless,' though rain occasionally falls on parts of them, and include others among provinces of autumn- or winter-rains, which are as dry as the former. Certainly Canada and Ireland would not be incorrectly regarded as excluded from earthquake-districts, though a shock now and then may be felt in either country.

D. T. ANSTED.

Impington Hall, Cambridge, August 6, 1864.

VISIT TO SELSEY. From Letter, Aug. 8, 1864.

'LAST week I spent a couple of days (or rather tides) at Selsey in examining some of the Quaternary deposits. They are very curious, but not easy of interpretation, though I had read Godwin-Austen's paper † before going there. I saw the Pholas holes in the Eocene beds, a privilege which fortune has seldom if ever granted, I believe,

* One of the finest specimens of Siberian Graphite brought over by M. Alibert is now placed in the British Museum.

† Geol. Soc. Journ., vol. xiii. p. 48.

to a geologist, they being usually covered up by sand. I also saw, in the Chichester Museum, a rolled elephant's tooth, found somewhere near Selsey, which I take to belong to *E. meridionalis*. I believe the common Elephant of these deposits to be *E. antiquus*. This association of species agrees with that in the Forest-bed at Cromer. I dare say you know that there is a great part of a very fine individual of *E. antiquus* in the Chichester Museum.—Yours, &c.,
O. FISHER.

MALTESE BONE-CAVES. Extract from Letter, dated August 4, 1864, from Dr. A. LEITH ADAMS, Surg. H.M.S. 22nd Reg., F.G.S., &c.

‘NEXT winter I mean to work especially at the *Elephas Melitensis*, and draw up a concise account of the deposits in which the remains have been found, together with a complete summary of all the specimens of the animal yet discovered. I have in my own possession a goodly collection already, mostly brought together by dint of very hard work, comprising some eight or nine specimens of teeth of different individuals; an upper jaw with teeth in place; portion of a tusk, 8 inches long by $6\frac{1}{2}$ in greatest circumference, composed of beautiful ivory; vertebræ; a scapula; fragments of long bones, &c. No doubt these islands (Malta and Gozo) have been re-elevated. We find all their large Mammalia, such as the *Hippopotamus*, &c., either in breccias, in fissures, or in stony soils at low levels in hollows and depressions, where, from the sub-angular fragments (many scored deeply, and a few well-rounded and even polished, are distributed throughout the red earth in gaps and hollows, the bigger stones being at the bottom), it is clear that in all probability they had been washed by the sea downwards as the land was rising or sinking. I look to the situations of the alluvial gravels as significant; more especially as the denudation of the soil is complete everywhere on slopes; and, excepting in hollows and sheltered nooks, there is certainly no alluvial deposit in the island (I mean *in situ*: man has carried it to any height).

‘No doubt our Elephant is distinct; my collection shows that; as I have teeth of all ages almost. They are much fractured, however, and have evidently been knocked about a good deal. One skeleton was found *in situ*; that is, so far so that I collected parts from the

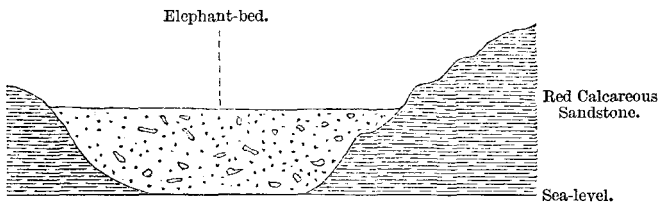


Fig. 1.

tail-bones to the skull on a cutting along the face of a bank about three yards in length. The abundant remains of the animal in one hollow, of the above shape (fig. 1), in the "Calcareous Sandstone" are