The Earthquake of Tokio, April 18, 1889.

READING the report on this earthquake in NATURE (June 13, p. 162), I was struck by its coincidence in time with a very singular perturbation registered by two delicate horizontal pendulums at the Observatories of Potsdam and Wilhelmshaven. These instruments, which represent, with some modification, Prof. Zöllner's horizontal pendulum, were established in March 1889, for studying the slight movements of the ground. The motion of the pendulum, which is left to oscillate freely whenever its equilibrium is disturbed, is registered by the same photographic method as that employed for magnetic observations. The pendulum is in the plane of the meridian, so that any shock, the direction of which is not in this plane, will produce oscillations of the pendulum, diminishing gradually, if it is left undisturbed after the shock. The pillars supporting the instruments are fixed in a depth of 1 metre below the ground of the cellar which was chosen as a suitable place for the erection of the instrument.

During the three months from April to June, the disturbance of April 17, 18h. G.M.T., was the most remarkable which occurred. The following readings of Greenwich mean time, which are best explained by the accompanying figures, are taken from the original photographs; it must, however, be mentioned that the small scale of 11 millimetres per hour does not allow a very accurate determination of time, and that an error of one minute or two is quite probable.

(1) *Potsdam.*—1889, April 17. From 5h. until 17h. 21m., great steadiness of image.

h.	m.	
17	21	First traces of disturbance.
17	39	Beginning of small oscillations.
17	54·3	Motion *suddenly* increases and reaches its maximum at
18	1	Amplitude of oscillation 154 millimetres. The amplitude then suddenly diminishes.
18	43	Maxima of oscillation.
18	58	
19	45	
20	0	Perfect steadiness of image.

(2) *Wilhelmshaven.*—Here, also, the image is perfectly steady until 17h. 30m.

h.	m.	
17	30	Beginning of small oscillations.
17	48–17	51 A short interval of perfect steadiness.
17	51	The movement *suddenly* increased, and as the light is not strong enough to mark the single oscillations, the image disappears until
18	38	when the principal disturbance reaches its end.
18	51	Maxima of small oscillations.
19	6	
19	22	
20	2	
20	7	Perfect steadiness.

If we compare these dates, it seems most probable that the moment which shows a sudden increase of motion, and is best marked on the curves, may be considered as the beginning of the principal disturbance. We thus have—

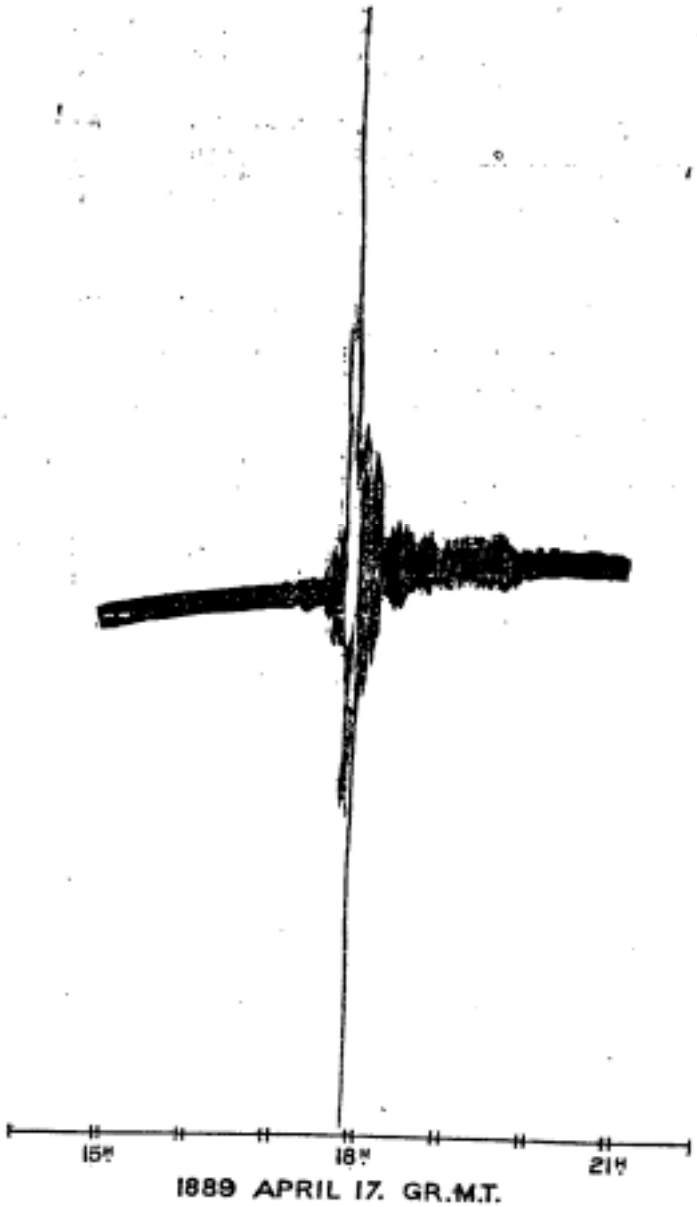
For Potsdam ... ... 17h. 54·3m.
For Wilhelmshaven... 17h. 51m. } Mean, 17h. 52·7m.,

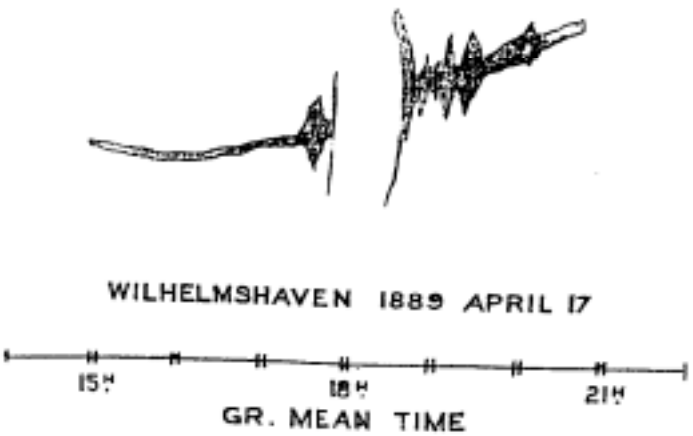
which, considering the error of the readings, may be taken as one and the same moment.

The beginning of the earthquake of Tokio was observed at 2h. 7·7m. Tokio M.T. The difference of longitude (taken from a map) being 9h. 19·3m. E., we find that the shock occurred at 16h. 48·4m. G.M.T. on April 17, and thus it took 1h. 4·3m. to travel across the body of the earth.

Taking the following longitudes and latitudes—

Tokio	139° 50' E.,	35° 44' N.
Potsdam	13 4 ,,	52 24 ,,
Wilhelmshaven	8 9 ,,	53 32 ,,





and neglecting the ellipticity of the earth, we find the following distances:—

Tokio to Potsdam	8221 kilometres.
Tokio to Wilhelmshaven... ...	8307 ,,

Dividing the mean 8264 by 3858s., we find a velocity of 2142 metres of propagation on the straight line connecting Tokio and a place between Potsdam and Wilhelmshaven, and consequently the shock ought to have been observed at Wilhelmshaven 40s. later than at Potsdam.

The above value of velocity is between the values found by Milne from seismic experiments, viz. 900-1400 metres for different kinds of rock, and by Abbot from the effect of dynamite explosions, viz. 2800 metres. We may therefore safely conclude that the disturbances noticed in Germany were really due to the volcanic action which caused the earthquake of Tokio.

Potsdam, July 5. E. VON REBEUR-PASCHWITZ.

P.S.—I add a list of the most remarkable disturbances noticed during the course of the observations. Unfortunately, the working of the instrument at Wilhelmshaven was often disturbed by the effects of an excessive dampness in the cellar. The time is G.M.T. as above.

1889, April 5.—A day of great steadiness. A small perturbation begins at 9h. (Potsdam) and 9h. 5·4m. (Wilhelmshaven). It is divided by a short time of steadiness, 9h. 11·4m. (Potsdam) and 9h. 16·8m. (Wilhelmshaven).

April 8.—A fine disturbance begins at 16h. 45·6m. (Potsdam) and 16h. 47·4m. (Wilhelmshaven).

April 15.—A day of remarkable unsteadiness; the principal perturbation at both places lasts three hours, and lies between 7h. and 10h. It is impossible to determine a certain phase.

April 25.—A perturbation from 16h. 48m. to 18h. 12m. at Potsdam. No photograph obtained at Wilhelmshaven.

April 28.—An earthquake, consisting of one principal shock, apparently took place at 21½h.; the times noted are 21h. 34·8m. (Potsdam) and 21h. 36·6m. (Wilhelmshaven).

May 21.—A pretty large disturbance at Potsdam, lasting from 10h. 33m. to 11h. 6m., interrupted by a moment of rest at 10h. 42m. No photograph at Wilhelmshaven.

May 25.—Two very remarkable disturbances at Potsdam—7h. 9m. and 10h. 42m.—each lasting 1h. No photograph at Wilhelmshaven.

May 26.—A disturbance noticed at Potsdam, at 9h. 24m. No photograph at Wilhelmshaven.

May 30.—At Wilhelmshaven, two shocks are noticed—8h. 18·6m. and 9h. 24m.—which are probably connected with the English earthquake of this day. Perfect steadiness at Potsdam.

May 31.—A disturbance of earthquake-like appearance. Time of beginning, at Potsdam, 8h. 48m.; at Wilhelmshaven, 8h. 44·4m.; the latter time being rather uncertain, on account of the faintness of the curve.

I hope that one or other of these facts may prove to be of interest to seismologists.

On the Phenomena of the Lightning Discharge, as Illustrated by the Striking of a House in Cossipore, Calcutta.

DURING a heavy thunderstorm which passed over Calcutta about 5.30 p.m. on Saturday, June 8 last, the house of Conductor W. Viney, at Cossipore (a suburb of the city), was struck by lightning, and I have thought that a description of the phenomena connected with it might perhaps be worth placing on record in the columns of NATURE.

I was myself watching the storm from the veranda of my residence about 300 yards distant, and observed that the discharge in question was one of extreme violence. I visited the scene of the accident within a few hours, with Mr. Viney's permission taking the notes from which this account is prepared; and, owing to the exceptional opportunities for observation which obtained in this case, have been able to secure trustworthy statements as to the appearance of the discharge, and further, by inquiry, to satisfy myself upon one or two points which I believe to possess considerable scientific interest.

The house which was struck is large, square, and flat-roofed, and is occupied by three foremen employed in the Government Shell Factory adjacent: it is provided with a lightning-conductor projecting 8 or 9 feet above the roof-level, and situated near to one end of the building, but apparently unconnected with any other portion of the roof. It is possible that a portion of the discharge passed harmlessly away by the conductor, but of this I have no evidence, positive or negative. The lightning entered Mr. Viney's portion of the house by a corrugated iron covered hatchway standing 6 feet high at the corner diagonally opposite