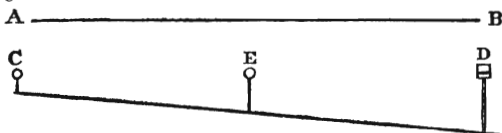
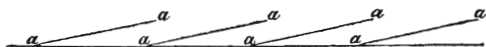


SIR,—As you have thought proper to refer to me in your last weeks' issue as having failed to submit as tamely as you could have wished to the monstrous decision to which you had arrived in the matter between Mr Wallace and myself, you will not, I presume, hesitate to afford me an opportunity of attempting to show what a gross perversion of facts was embodied in those remarks. It was upwards of a week ago that I told you and Mr Wallace that I would be the first to denounce the conduct of my own brother throughout the length and breadth of England, if he were to depart one jot from the path of the strictest honour and rectitude. No man living ever yet dared to charge me with acting unfairly in any matter in which I was engaged. Mr Wallace has had from the outset unlimited authority to conduct this survey in any way he pleased. You were nominated by him; Mr Coulcher, the second referee in your absence, was a perfect stranger to us both. Mr Carpenter, my referee, had been entirely unknown to me, even by name, till within a few weeks of the time fixed for the survey. You make some invidious remarks as to his knowledge of "Parallax's" experiment. What in the world do you mean? After the author has been lecturing all over the country for nearly thirty years, and when the whole edition of his book is sold out, with the exception of two dozen copies, and scores of the leading press of the kingdom have reviewed his opinions, who but an unborn (*sic*) ass can pretend ignorance of the statements therein made? You dare not deny that in offering my challenge I set up myself against the world. Mr Wallace is supported by the united testimony of every engineer, surveyor, and astronomer on the face of the earth; yet, in spite of them all, in spite of Mr Coulcher's oath, and in spite of your decision, I offer again, as I have done three times before, to make the sum £1000 a side, instead of £500 as at present. This Mr Wallace has not had the courage to accept, or you to acknowledge. Yet you expose yourself to the derision of the whole world by asserting that the diagrams and the reports of both referees "have proved to your satisfaction the curvature, to and fro, of the Bedford Level Canal (six miles) to the extent of five feet more or less." And you have the audacity to charge me with want of fairness because I do not choose to interpret those diagrams and read those statements of Mr Carpenter directly the reverse of what they state. I have Mr Wallace's engagements before me at this moment in his own handwriting. He engages to show a continued curve from either end to end—that his centre staff or staves should be at least five feet higher than those on either side. Now I demand of any engineer in the kingdom, do those diagrams prove that he has done it? I abide by those identical diagrams, made and drawn by your own workmen on the authority and according to the instructions of both referees. It is not in your power to alter them if you wished it. There they stand, and shall remain, as lasting testimonies of the truth of my assertion that the surface of water is as flat as any billiard table in the metropolis. The following will illustrate my interpretation of those diagrams.

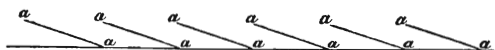


A B represents what I assert to be the dead flat of the canal. C E D represent the view given at either and both ends of the six-mile survey, as shown unmistakably by your own diagrams in last Saturday's FIELD.

If the canal had been sixty instead of six miles long, this is the view they would have had, taking the sight every three miles forward :



Then, again, on going over the land or the water backwards, the apparent incline would be simply reversed, thus :



Are you, or is any man in the possession of his senses, insane enough to call these apparent inclines a "curve," or a "curvature?" If, as Mr Wallace agreed, the middle staff was to be the highest of the series, he has utterly failed to show it, in consequence of the incontestably awkward fact that the more distant staff was higher still. Whichever way you looked, there was this perplexing dilemma of a graduated incline from the point of sight. If the telescope had been placed forwards or backwards, to the right or to the left, there was the incline, leaving the observer, instead of being "always on the top," always in a hollow, with the more distant sight on an apparent elevation! And this you and Mr Coulcher and Mr Wallace dare to call "a curvature," and assert that I have lost my money. No, Sir; at your peril touch it, and I will serve you both with a writ on the following day for conspiring to obtain money on false and fraudulent pretences.

JOHN HAMPDEN.