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IF, in the compass of a short article, I did not allude to the controversy which followed the attack made by Dr. Hobson (*NATURE*, vol. xlvii. p. 175, 226) on Dr. Wallace's method of estimating the age of the stratified series, it was because I thought, as I do still, that the honours of that controversy rested entirely on the side of Dr. Wallace.

There is no fallacy in Dr. Wallace's argument, but a strange misconception on the part of Dr. Hobson, which arises from his consistent disregard of the word *maximum* as prefixed to the estimated total thickness of stratified rocks. It is obvious that stratified systems cannot have a *maximum* thickness everywhere over the whole 57 million square miles of the land surface. As a matter of observation, a system attains its maximum thickness over a very limited area, and over a large part of the 57 millions of square miles of land surface it has no thickness at all, or, in other words, is entirely absent. If "maximum" could be made to mean the same as "average," no doubt Dr. Hobson's contention would hold, but those who have made use of a maximum in estimating the age of the stratified series have observed a strict distinction in the application of the two terms.

Rathgar, April 9.

W. J. SOLLAS.