

It is rather a big undertaking to make a photographic chart of the heavens, but it is to be done during June and July by a circle of international observers. The Astronomical Congress of Paris has settled all the necessary arrangements, and the work promises to be admirably carried out everywhere except in two countries—Chili, disturbed by the war; and Brazil, where a new observatory is being built at Rio Janeiro. It will be a remarkable achievement.

The ability of the fire-fly and the glow-worm to produce light without heat still excites the envy of electricians. Of the energy supplied by gas and oil for lighting purposes more than 99 per cent is given out in heat. Even in the electric arc-light the waste is 90 per cent, and in the incandescent lamp 94 per cent. Professor Hertz is trying to emulate the insects, and he sees no reason why he should not succeed. He hopes to develop a new source of light without heat by means of electrical vibrations. May he succeed. Light without heat would be a great thing, second, perhaps, to obtaining electricity direct from coal without the intervention of heat.

In another column we publish Major Grant's letter to the *London Times*, which will be found interesting. Whatever may be thought of the Manipur affair as a whole, there is but one opinion as to the valor and skill of the young officer who held Thobal against overwhelming odds, and who has had the Victoria Cross bestowed upon him, as well as been promoted to a captaincy and brevet major. The Victoria Cross is the most highly esteemed of all the distinctions conferrable by the Sovereign; it is open to all to attain, from the highest to the lowest, and it has seldom, perhaps never, been ill bestowed. The Order of the Bath is also a much coveted distinction, but it is usually reserved for elderly officers.

Many a joke is cracked at the expense of the "scissors editor," but the dignity of his office is recognized by the *New York Journalist* which says: "After all, the true test of a newspaper's real value is not the amount of original matter it contains, but the average quality of all the matter appearing in its columns, whether original or selected." We agree with this. It is quite as much the province of a newspaper to cull good things for its readers, and collect and condense matters of wide original interest, as to supply nothing but original matter. The quality of this work is the test of worth. The paper that takes care to exclude, even from its jokes, anything low or underbred, will be the paper that will gain the approbation of those whose opinion is worth having.

The Royal Agricultural Society of Great Britain intends to make experiments in testing the efficacy of a mixture of sulphate of copper and lime in checking the potato disease. The mixture has been used by the French under the name of Bouillie Bourdelaise, and has been found efficacious in checking the ravages of mildew on many plants, and there is evidence as well to show that it checks the potato disease and the peronospora which attacks the tomato. The solution of copper is mixed with a little lime—practically limewater—and is sprayed over the plants and under the leaves when they are wet with dew in the morning. When we think of the dire consequence of a failure in the potato crop, especially in Ireland, we ardently wish that some cure for it would speedily be found.

It is often said that electric light is injurious to the eyesight of persons working or reading by it, and the incandescent light has had many libellous remarks made about it on this account. The truth of the matter is, that very little common sense is exercised, and people who ought to know better use the light much too close to them—thinking probably, if they think at all, that because the lights give out scarcely any heat there is no danger in having them on a level with their eyes, or only about a foot from them. It is in this way that thoughtless persons injure their eyes, and cast discredit on one of the greatest improvements of the age. Electric lights, properly placed and shaded, could not be in any way injurious—in fact we are sure that they must be better in every way than gas or oil lamps, for they do not burn the air or give out any smoke or odor, and are always clean.

The Chilian war is attracting the world-wide attention of naval men. The interest centres upon the practical working of torpedo attacks, and the best way to manage them or to repel them. The *Broad Arrow* says a torpedo attack is fatal if properly conducted and improperly met, but that after the experience in Chili, torpedo attacks must apparently henceforth allow a larger discount for miss-fires than has hitherto been given. The deadly character of a true shot has none the less been demonstrated. A plan for improving the general training of blue-jackets in torpedo practice, recently arranged in England, has now been supplemented with the statement that evolutions for the torpedo flotilla at home and abroad are to be held annually. As torpedo warfare is only in its infancy, and it is only by experience that the best manner of using both boats and missiles can be discovered, it is to be hoped that the increase and improvement in the training will bring forth good results. War is costly, in every sense of the word, and torpedo warfare is particularly so, but it is probable that with the knowledge of the frightful effects of this engine of destruction nations will be careful how they awaken the dogs of war.

The popularization of the army is one of the great desiderata of the day in England. Sentiment has a great deal to do with making a regiment popular, and the authorities are beginning to find it out. A few years ago the Highland bonnet was actually done away with, because it was con-

sidered, and really is, ridiculous, uncomfortable, expensive and unsuitable for service. A popular outcry, supported by the very highest authority in the kingdom, was at once made over its abolition, so that the Minister of War reversed his decision, and the Highland bonnet was restored to its honored position which may now be considered unassailable. A proposition has now been made to abolish the bearskins of the Guards, the authorities arguing that as they cost £5 a piece they ought to be done away with. The War Office gave way so far as to tolerate sentiment in the case of the bonnets, and it might find that in the case of the bearskins the same course would be advisable. The bonnets mean recruits and so do the bearskins. A cultivation of sentiment would appear to be the wisest course for the authorities to pursue, for sentiment has a good deal to do with the administration of the army. Very few men are free from a certain pride and satisfaction in the trappings of office, and while any particular part of military equipment holds a place in the affections of the people it would be short-sighted policy to abolish it.

The departure of Lieutenant Peary, of the U. S. Navy, in command of an expedition to North Greenland, has an additional interest from the fact that Mrs. Peary accompanies her husband. The party left New York three weeks ago in the *Kite* and proceeded to North Sydney, where a sufficient supply of coal was taken on board. The *Kite* left North Sydney for Greenland on Saturday week last, with all on board well. The party is composed of a number of scientific men, who on reaching Whale Sound will split into two parties, Peary's people going into winter quarters at that place, and the others, representing the Academy of Natural Sciences, will proceed to explore the Greenland coast between Disco and 77 degrees north latitude. Peary's party will proceed north in the spring in search of the northern boundaries of Greenland. Lieut. Peary believes that the ice cap, with which Greenland is covered, and which is at least a mile thick in some places, will probably be smooth on the surface, especially in the interior of the country. He will travel on sledges, and thinks that twelve or twenty miles can be made in a day. Mrs. Peary will remain at the winter quarters with a servant while her husband goes north. It is to be hoped that this expedition will not end in disaster, and that the wished-for geographical knowledge may be safely gained. Lieut. Peary makes the trip on his own account, and carries with him photographic apparatus, which will doubtless be a great aid in recording his discoveries and observations. The *New York World* said of the expedition that it had set out for the arctic regions much more simply equipped as to material things than any of the more pretentious expeditions of the past have been, but much better equipped with the wisdom of experience. Mr. Peary proposes to take his time and follow a route known to exist, and his plans are made with special reference to the getting back.

The *New York Examiner* a short time ago made an attack on the veracity of several oft-quoted proverbs. It took as an initiative the couplet which we all are so familiar with:

Early to bed, and early to rise,
Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.

and then proceeded to trash the poor little distich for being a flippant instance of proverbial un wisdom and humbug. The adage, it said, is only a terse and witty generalization of the experience of a pastoral community, where to succeed it was necessary to work from sun-up to sun down, and that it has no application whatever to town-life. The criticism is a humbug, not the proverb. Man's natural time for sleep is during darkness, and the use of artificial light has been all that has rendered possible a change in our sleeping hours. It is ridiculous to say that man, at least as regards his health, would not be as well off as otherwise if he should adhere to natural rules in these matters. This can be easily seen by analogy. We should like to know who would say that the human race is more healthy than the brutes! Our average health is far worse than theirs; all owing to our unnatural and very artificial modes of living. We owe we are the gainers in some ways, but persist in saying that we are most unmistakably losers in the matter of physical hardness, which is a great item towards making life pleasant. Our contemporary says that the wealthy and wise men of towns are men who work late and rise late. This proves nothing. In the first place they have to adapt their resting time to the present preposterous hours of work (almost the whole of God's day, and often part of the night also, is spent in toil), therefore it might almost be said that we have no men engaged in the elevating scramble for money who do not make their hours of rest conform to those of business. We are unfortunately in a groove in this respect, and a complete translation of the period of labor to an earlier hour would be the only way of rising out of the rut. We would then hear that all the wealthy and wise men "went to bed with the lamb and rose with the lark." As the present time for recreation is during the last part of the day, or rather in the night, we must make up by sleeping in the morning, and, while such is the state of affairs, a love of sleeping long after sunrise is the result, and we personally possess that love to a large degree. We would never, though, for that small reason, condemn the proverb. A broad way of looking at the subject is this: when we habitually go to bed late, we rise late, and when we habitually take our rest early we are enabled to awake early; in either case, to say the least, the requisite amount of sleep is obtained. What the *Examiner* has said of the apothegm is, to use a slang phrase, nothing but rot. As a general rule proverbs set forth homely truths; but of course they cannot be equally applicable to all cases.

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