

slightest observable degree. We have nothing to fear should a comet pay us a visit. It will not swallow the earth, but the earth, or rather the air, will assuredly swallow it, should it come so near. Nay, if it should visit Birmingham in its entirety, we have little doubt that, either as a large bolus or a few small pills, any one of us might swallow it, and be none the worse for the operation.

The motions of comets are as singular as their physical constitution. They are the no-or-do-wells, the very mad caps of the skies; reeling about in "most admired disorder," always in trouble but hurting no one but themselves. The planets all move in one direction, and nearly in the same plane, and the orbits which closely resemble concentric circles. Not so the comets. They move in all directions, and in all planes, and often cross the orbits of the planetary bodies. Their paths are elliptic or hyperbolic. If the former they are periodic in their appearance; if the latter, they appear but once. They come like shadows, and they so depart. Tillis name is legion; hundreds have been catalogued, and thousands, probably millions, are at this moment wandering in space. We do not often see them, and for obvious reasons; most of them are telescopic, and all of them visible but for a short time. It is only when near the sun that they reflect sufficient light to be visible; and only when they are approaching to or receding from that luminary, can we observe them. As they approach, they become lighted up with great brilliancy; as they recede, they fade away, and after a time the faintest telescope fails to reveal them. When the sun is in the sky their light is too feeble, except on rare occasions, to make them evident; and hence, in general, it is only when the sun is below the horizon, and yet the comet not far distant from it, that they can be seen. These conditions obtaining but for a short time, a comet, which takes centuries to make one journey round the sun, may only be visible for a few evenings. When most distant from the sun their motion is slow, when near it, inconceivably rapid. The comet of 1843 passed so near the sun as to be within one-seventh of the sun's radius from its surface. At that position it travelled with a velocity of 366 miles per second. Oh, that it could have revealed to us the glories of that fleet journey! Think what it was to be within one-seventh of its radius from the sun's surface! Think of the sun appearing, as it would do there, almost five thousand times as big as it appears to us! Think of a heat, probably a thousand times hotter than that of molten iron! Let the memory of that comet be honoured through all time.

The discovery of the periodic returns of some comets was made by our countryman, Dr. Halley, who foretold that one would appear in 1759. A comet had been seen in 1456, 1531, 1607, and 1682, periods differing by about seventy five years, and he concluded that these appearances were but the return of the same comet. It so, it would appear again in 1759. It did, and again in 1825, and may be expected again in 1911. The periods of comets' revolutions are as irregular as their other characteristics. Encke's comet has a period of little more than three years; Biela's nearly seven years; others move in longer periods; the comet of 1811 requires, as it is believed, 3000 years to make its journey.

This, much respecting comets in general. What about the particular comet which has called forth these remarks? A few words will sum up all that can be said about it. A large comet was seen in 1556, and is supposed to be the one which appeared in 1264. It is only from the descriptions, which we have, that the identity of the comet is assumed. If the belief that the comet of 1556, was that of 1264 be well founded, then its period being about three hundred years, its return may be expected within the next year or two. But mark the uncertainty of the whole question. The comet of 1556 may not have been the same as that of 1264; in which case we shall look in vain for the expected visit. If it be, and if nothing has so affected it as to change its elliptic into a hyperbolic path; in which case it would never return; and such a change in a comet's path has been observed—and if by keeping clear of the promoter planets, it has got into no trouble, then it will probably return, as near as can be guessed, in 1858. And if, in spite of all these "ifs," the comet does come, what shall we see? A huge meteor, with a tail stretching half way across the heavens? Possibly so, but not certainly; for the mutations to which these celestial will-o'-the-wisps are subject are very numerous. It may come in a very humble guise, and those who now fear it may view it with contempt. To men of science it will be welcome come in what form it may. In its return, it will bring

them news, certain, if vague, of the distant regions in which during the last three centuries it has wandered. It will help them forward one step at least in the solution of the sublime problems which engage them; and give them one claim more to the respect of those who, as yet, unhappily for themselves, yield to the gibberish of a charlatan the ready ear which they deny to the voice of wisdom.—*Birmingham Journal.*

The fund subscribed for sending out the discharged artisans of Woolwich arsenal to Canada has been found sufficient with the £1,000 given by Government to send out every man and his family.

FRANCE.—In the sitting of the Municipal Council of Orleans two days ago, the Mayor stated that the city possessed a precious relic, which had excited the attention of Mgr. Gillis, Roman Catholic Bishop of Edinburgh, namely, the heart of Henry II. king of England, who died at Chinon in 1180, and was buried at Fontevault. This heart, which had been enclosed in lead, was taken out of its case during the Revolution, and passed into the hands of a collector of curiosities, and afterwards became the property of the city. The Mayor, thinking that Mgr. Gillis would be happy to restore to his country this relic of one of its kings, proposed "that the Municipal Council of Orleans should authorize the Mayor to deliver to the Bishop of Edinburgh, to be offered by him to the English Government, the heart of Henry II., king of England." The proposition was agreed to unanimously.

DESTRUCTION OF A CALIFORNIA EMIGRANT TRAIN.—The Leavenworth, Kansas, correspondent of the *Missouri Democrat*, writes under date of June 18: "I send you information of the horrible massacre and destruction of an overland emigrant train to California, of which intelligence has just been received here. The train which consisted of seventeen waggons, when about one hundred miles west of Fort Kearney, was attacked by a party of Sioux or Cheyenne Indians who murdered every person in it—men, women and children—burned the waggons, and drove off the cattle. The number of persons on the train is said to have been about twenty."

Surely Sugar must come down.—The crop of Porto Rico is said to be a million of pounds more this year than in 1855—of Molasses 220,000 gallons more—and of coffee 300,000 lbs. more.

Editorial Miscellany.

JOHN ENGLISH.

We noticed last week the death of JOHN ENGLISH, Editor and part proprietor of the *Acadian Recorder*, newspaper. Mr. English had been a member of the printing and Editorial fraternity for 34 years, nearly as long a period as ourselves, and we believe there are just four or five in Halifax of the large number who may be said to have begun the world together, who survive now to say so. Looking back upon the many bodily and mental conflicts inseparable from such a life, we may with safety say that it requires a very sound constitution to have entered so deeply into them as some of us have done, and to have stood it so long and so well. The wonder is, that Mr. English, with a rather susceptible temperament, and as we understand, a delicate organization, had not long ere this succumbed to the trying realities of his position.

The *Acadian Recorder* which came into possession of Messrs. English & Blackadar, at or about the time of the decease of its former proprietor, Phillip Holland, soon thereafter manifested a most improved appearance in typography, an excellence which it has ever since maintained. Of its politics we have no desire to speak. It is attributed to the decreased that his opposition to the liberal government, on whose side he had previously been, was caused by disappointment at his not being offered the situation of Queen's Printer. The *Recorder* certainly contributed to damage their cause. As Mr. English was a Roman Catholic, it is likely enough also, that his opposition may have been tinged by the knowledge that the Liberals were tired of the political pressure of his creed. It is but just so far to his consistency, to say, that although no longer an ultra-liberal, he never cordially advocated the Conservative cause, and seemed prompt enough to condemn in either, what did not accord with his own peculiar notions and ideas.

The body of the deceased gentleman was followed to the grave on Sunday last, by a large number of his friends and acquaintances; and after the wearing toil of a printer's and editor's life, we can imagine no more fitting wish or hope for one who has escaped its troubles, than the sentence chanted over it by the priest and choir in St. Mary's Chapel—"Requiescat in pace,"—not merely the calm

and forgetfulness of death; but in the peace of a glorious immortality.

WE stated about a fortnight or three weeks since, that we had seen the Comet, both with the naked eye, and through a powerful spy glass. We were not singular in our observation—a good many persons were of the like opinion with ourselves, their attention having been directed to the same object, which presented a similar appearance for several nights together; and altho' all may have been mistaken, for the atmosphere though clear was rather peculiar at the time, and continued so for several days and nights, there is a possibility that the celestial stranger so long looked for, may have paid its periodical visit. Paragraphs in several papers about the same time were corroborative of the idea. The following is still more so:—

The comet has been seen in various localities, near the U. S. Major. It presents a round, nebulous mass of light, slightly concentrated, of about two minutes of an arc in diameter. It passed the nearest point to the earth on the 8th instant. It was then twenty million of miles from our globe. It has since been receding.—*State of Maine.*

LATEST FROM EUROPE.

A Telegraphic despatch received at the Merchants' Exchange Room on Wednesday, reports the arrival at New York, on the previous evening, of the R. M. S. *Arabia*. The intelligence by this source is to the 27th ult. Subjoined is the gist of the despatch:—

Bradstuffs steady. Flour firm, but without change in prices. Wheat steady. Corn dull. Sugar dull, with a decline in London markets of one shilling per cwt. on previous quotations. Tea firm. Consols 93. No political news of any interest.

FIRE!—The alarm of fire at two o'clock on Wednesday morning was occasioned by the burning of a store on the premises of the Halifax Gas Company. The Firemen and the Military, with their engine, were speedily on the spot, and by great exertions confined the conflagration to the building (totally consumed) in which it originated. The fire at its inception presented a very alarming spectacle. Had the flames extended to the Company's works much loss of life would have resulted. Too much credit cannot be given to all parties in attendance for the very prompt manner in which the flames were got under. Every precaution was taken by Capt. Caldwell to prevent the conflagration extending to the Royal Engineers' Yard, adjoining. In working the brakes of No. 5, (Etna) engine, Capt. Caldwell came near meeting with a severe accident, his trumpet, which was completely compressed, alone saved his hand from being crushed. As usual, the Military and the Firemen worked together in the most cordial manner. The loss, probably £1,500, we learn, covered by insurance in the several offices in this city.—*Chron.*

On Friday last, when the Lady of the Military Secretary, and Miss L-Marchant were enjoying the benefit of a drive round the suburbs, the horse took fright, and galloped off at a furious rate; but, most fortunately, Mr. Thos. Leahy was in the garden at the time, and perceiving the animal start, and calling him in, they rushed to the road, and succeeded in stopping him; the vehicle was, however, crushed, and the ladies were thrown to the ground. They were immediately taken up, and every assistance rendered which was in Mr. Leahy's power; and we are happy to learn Mrs. L-Marchant only received a slight contusion on the forehead, and Miss L-Marchant some bruises. Had not Mr. Leahy been present, the consequences, no doubt, would have been sad and fearful.—*Id.*

SUBURBAN IMPROVEMENTS.—The property, (Lydiard's) on the western side of the Common, adjoining the residence of J. E. Starr, has been purchased by Dr. C. Cogswell, for the sum of £1520. Dr. Cogswell, we learn, intends making extensive improvements on all the property fronting on that side of the Common.—*Journal.*

FATAL ACCIDENT.—The *Liverpool Transcript* reports the death of Mr. J. Gre. Sarr, of La Haye road, in consequence of being crushed by a falling tree. He lived only a few minutes after being extricated by his son. Mr. Le Ges was a native of Toulouse, France, and was taken prisoner in the French ship of war "La Bon Citoyenne," by H. M. S. "Le Imperieuse." Brought into Halifax he was placed on Melville Island until the close of the war, when he hired with the late John Perrote, Esq. as a gillier at La Haye, where he married and settled.—*Chron.*

NEW BRUNSWICK LEGISLATURE.—The recent session was closed on the 1st inst. by the Lieut. Governor, with the following Speech:—

Mr. President, and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:
Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly.
The attention which you have given to the public business demands my acknowledgments. I thank you for the supplies you have so readily granted.
Mr. President and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:
Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly.
I am enabled to relieve you from the performance of your legislative duties, and I trust that success may attend you in the avocations to which you will now return.