

SCIENTIFIC INTELLIGENCE.

An Academy of Sciences has been established at Vienna. It was opened Feb. 2, and is under the presidency of the Archduke John. Several members of the Royal Family, the great officers of State, and the diplomatic corps, were present at the opening.

SOUND VISIBLE!—In this age of wonders, what will the world think when we assure it that a method has been discovered and matured by which *sound will be made visible to the human eye*, its various forms and waves demonstrated to sight, and the power to discriminate between the tones of one musical instrument and another be as complete as to observe the action of water when disturbed by any material cause. The experiments, we believe, are likely to be ere long repeated in the Royal Society. The exhibition of effects on fine sand has probably led to this astonishing issue.—*Literary Gazette*.

IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENT UPON THE DAY LAMP.—The Rev. W. Thorp produced at the meeting of the Geological and Polytechnic Society of the West Riding, Yorkshire, at Huddersfield, a most important desideratum, by which it is hoped the lives of the poor operatives employed in our coal mines may be more effectually preserved. The chief improvements in Mr. Thorp's lamp are, that it gives *five* times as much light as the old lamp, by means of an *argand burner*, and thus doing away with the plea for neglecting it, and a principal cause of all the accidents. The removal of the *gauze frame* from the lamp to obtain more light is perfectly safe, under all circumstances, and remedies every one of the defects which existed in the old one.

THE CUMING COLLECTION OF SHELLS.—It is not perhaps generally known that one of the most splendid collections of shells in the world is at this moment in the possession of a private individual in London. The gentleman who has made and possessed it is Mr. Hugh Cuming; and it consists of upwards of 19,000 species or well-marked varieties, from all parts of the world. Of many of the species and varieties there are several specimens, making in all about 60,000 shells. Not only is every specimen of this vast collection entire, but in every other respect—such as form, colour, texture, and other characters—the shells are most perfect. We have the authority of Professor Owen for stating that “no public collection in Europe possesses one-half the number of shells that are now in the Cumington col-

lection.” This vast museum has been entirely collected by the energy and perseverance of its possessor. “Not restricting,” says Professor Owen, “his pursuit to the stores and shops of the curiosity-mongers of our sea-ports, or depending on casual opportunities of obtaining rarities by purchase, he has devoted more than thirty of the best years of his life in arduous and hazardous personal exertions—dredging, diving, wading, wandering—under the Equator, and through the temperate zones, both north and south, in the Atlantic, in the Pacific, in the Indian Ocean, and the islands of its rich Archipelago—in the labour of collecting from their native seas, shores, lakes, rivers, and forests, the marine, fluviatile, and terrestrial mollusks; 60,000 of whose shelly skeletons, external and internal, are accumulated in orderly series in the cabinets with which the floors of his house now groan.”—*London Athenæum*.—[This splendid collection is offered to the British Museum for £6000. We hope it will be promptly secured.]

The administration of the Museum of Natural History in Paris has confided to M. Jules Marcon a scientific mission to North America, with the view of exploring, in a geological and mineralogical sense, the provinces of the United States, the Rocky Mountains, Oregon, and California. M. Marcon will be absent, it is intended, three years.—*Id.*

The gold medal of the Astronomical Society of London was not awarded last year, in consequence of the conflicting claims of Messrs. Adams and Leverrier, in reference to the discovery of the new planet. This year, “the number of worthy and recent astronomical labours is so unusually large, that the Council felt it impossible to proceed, and also felt that something should be done to commemorate the glory of the epoch, as well as the men who have distinguished themselves and it. An unusual testimonial was therefore awarded—consisting of an inscription printed on vellum—to twelve promoters of astronomy.—MM. Adams, Airy, Argelander, Bishop, Ernest, Hauren, Hencke, Herschel, Hinde, Leverrier, Lubbock, and Weisse.

Lieut. Maury, Director of the National Observatory at Washington, states that there is a warm stream which arrives on the north-west coast of America, apparently from the coast of China. Its rate of speed appears to be about sixty miles per day.