

At the commencement of the new year we shall begin to recede. Next midsummer will find us as far from the sun as possible; then we shall draw in again, arrive next autumn where we are this autumn, and commence anew the cycle of changes I have indicated. Though these changes amount to millions of miles, yet they are at the utmost only a small fraction of the sun's distance. To superficial observation the sun always seems the same size, and hence there can be no great relative changes in its distance. There is no difficulty in understanding what is meant by the average distance of the sun. To express the idea with precision we may borrow the language of mathematics, and say that the distance from the earth to the sun consists of two parts—a large constant part and a small periodical part. The important problem, and the difficult problem, is the measurement of the large constant part.

PAPUANS.—Papua is a splendid field for our cotton manufacturers, as at present the only clothing worn is a waistcloth by the men, and a short grass petticoat by the women. Both sexes tattoo their bodies more or less grotesquely, and considerable proficiency in decorative art is sometimes displayed. A Papua swell must be a pretty sight. He has very small feet, and he ornaments his ankles with strings of shells. He braces in his waist tightly with black cord plaited with gold colored straw; he adorns his hair with bright red flowers and berries; and he surrounds his neck with a red shell necklace, from which depends a boar's tusk. His face is painted red on one side and black and white on the other; while, from the ligatures and bracelets on his arms, the graceful pandanus leaf, curiously embroidered, flows far behind. The women are said to be well formed and often pretty when young; they mix freely and on equal terms with the men, except that they have to do the bulk of the heavy work. Their dwellings are of peculiar construction, are invariably built on piles, and a number of them are connected together by a continuous platform of poles and bamboos.—*Chambers' Journal.*