

SCIENTIFIC INTELLIGENCE.

SPOTS ON THE SUN'S DISK.—To those who are in possession of a telescope of only moderate power these are objects of interest. The sun's face is at this time covered with a considerable number of them. They appear to be arranged in clusters. The largest cluster of these maculae are on his northern limb, and form an irregular oval, the darkest and largest spot being to the right, and the whole being surrounded by a fainter shadow, or penumbra. Of course the eye of the observer must be protected by a darkened glass attached to the eye-glass of his telescope.

IMPROVEMENTS IN LIGHTHOUSES.—Our attention has been directed to a model of an improved method for distinguishing lighthouses from each other which has been invented by Mr. George Wells, a gentleman for many years connected with the Admiralty department of Somerset-house. The invention is one of those which, from its very simplicity, makes us wonder how it is we have never seen it applied to practice before; but, from this simplicity, it is eminently calculated to fulfil the object it has in view, that of preventing the possibility of sailors mistaking one light for another—a fruitful source of shipwreck. Mr. Wells' invention consists in the addition below the ordinary light of a chamber, surrounded by ground glass, on which is painted (so as to be visible either by day or night) the first letter of the name of the light house. To our mind the great superiority of this above all other distinctive marks consists in the fact, that the initial letter appeals immediately to the memory, while, with coloured or revolving lights, some time must necessarily be lost in thinking what lighthouses certain signals are connected with; and this delay, though perhaps but a few seconds, may be, in too many instances, fatal. We wish Mr. Wells every success in his humane endeavours, and trust the adoption of his invention may be the means of saving many a valuable life. In connexion with the model, we noticed also a new mode for lighting, consisting of an improved means of ventilation, coupled with a new reflector of very great power—this part of the invention being by an eminent engineer of the present day. The model was exhibited at the *conversazione* of the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers, where it excited considerable interest. We understand

Mr. Wells has also exhibited it before the Board, who, it is said, are now considering the subject.—*London Patriot*.

The first volume of an important work on Geology has been published by the French Geological Society. It is entitled, "Histoire des Progresses de la Géologie de 1634 à 1845; par le Vicomte d'Archiac." There will be three volumes more.

A new planet was discovered by Mr. Graham, at Markree, Ireland, April 25, last. It appeared like a star of the tenth magnitude, and is supposed to belong to the group between Mars and Jupiter.

GEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY.—Not far from the right bank of the Nicolaïfskaia, in the government of Tobolsk, in Siberia, a rich mine of stones has been discovered in the midst of the establishment for the washing of auriferous sands. These stones present a perfect resemblance to diamonds, except that they are a trifle less heavy and less hard, although harder than granite. Specimens of the stones have been deposited in the Imperial Museum of Natural History at St. Petersburg, and Russian mineralogists propose to call them *diamantoides*.—*Galignani's Messenger*.

From the observations of Admiral D'Urville it would appear that the waters of the Mediterranean do not follow the rate of descent of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. He estimated the mean temperature of that sea below 200 fathoms, at 6.5 degrees, and this from the fact of having obtained that temperature at the depth of 1,000 fathoms. If this be so, it leads to an interesting inquiry, whether this may not be in consequence of the vast internal fires that are known to prevail in the countries that surround it.—*Scientific American*.

About twenty little carvings in ivory, which were discovered lying on some of the bassi-relievi brought from Nineveh by Mr. Layard, have been added to the national treasures in the British Museum. They are on a small scale—about 4 inches by 2½; the greater part of them resembling more strictly Egyptian types than Assyrian. They are well carved, in low relief.

Iron Mines of great richness have been discovered in Algeria, some of which have been partially worked by the Romans.