

Notes and Comments.

At the meeting of the Boston Scientific Society on Tuesday, Mr. E. F. Sawyer announced the discovery by him of a new variable star in Aquilla, the position being: Right ascension 10 hours, 22 minutes, 38 seconds; declination, minus $7^{\circ} 17.9'$. The variation is from 6.4 magnitude to 7.3, with a period of seven days. The position is 27° south of Eta Aquilæ, a variable which ranges from 3.5 to 7.4 and which was discovered 102 years ago. This also has a period of seven days.—*Boston Advertiser*.

THE question of how to secure degreering powers for the teachers of university rank in London is likely to receive an unexpected solution by the admission of University College, London, to the Victoria University as one of its constituent colleges. The Senate of University College is understood to have taken action in this matter, and if the council of the College agrees to make the application we may expect to see the Victoria University strengthened by the accession of the chief London College, while degrees in art, science, and medicine will be accessible to the students of University College through examinations arranged and conducted by the professors of the College.—*The (London, Eng.) Schoolmaster*.

THE modern Greeks are, in one respect at least, aiming as high as the ancient Greeks; they are beginning to conquer the world—the world at any rate of the East—by culture. A correspondent of the *Journal des Débats* gives some account in this connection of the great advance which higher education in Greece has made of recent years. There are 33 "gymnasia" in the kingdom, 200 secondary schools, and 1,717 primary schools. These are all public. Among the private educational establishments the first place must be given to the Society for the Higher Education of Women, in connection with which a lycée for girls was established a few years ago, with a staff of 76 teachers and 1,476 pupils. Greeks send their girls there from all parts of the East. Education is very liberally endowed in Greece, and the sums which Greeks settled in foreign countries send home for this purpose are very large. One result, of course, is that the Greeks are almost entirely in possession of the learned professions in Turkey. Illiteracy, too, is rare in the kingdom. In the most out-of-the-way hill countries you will see little scholars (says the correspondent from whom we are quoting) reading their Plutarch's "Lives."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

SOME of the remarks made by the Bishop of London, when distributing the prizes to the students of the city of London college have a wider application than to the occasion that called them forth. "There was,"

said Dr. Temple, "a very great advantage in the kind of education a man got when he was simply guided by rules made for him; there was a great advantage in the definite precision with which he went forward step by step, but there were other advantages in the kind of education which a man chose for himself when he adapted everything to his own needs and inclinations. In the latter case there was that kind of spontaneity in study, which, more than anything else, added grace and finish to what was done by the mental powers, and lived in the man's mind through all his subsequent life; continuing, even after study had been given up, still to bear fruit in the discipline of his mental powers, and in the use he made of them. When a man had chosen his study, he did not need to be helped to his task, but that the mistakes he would otherwise make should be prevented, and that he should be kept from wandering aimlessly about in paths which lead to nothing. The business of the teacher, therefore, was like that of the mountain guide."

SCIENTISTS tell us there is no such thing as cold; that heat and cold are relative terms and that cold is merely the absence of heat. Mathematically expressed, then, heat is a plus quantity and cold a minus one, and, metaphysically speaking, one is a positive entity and the other a negative abstraction. All this is very well, but to a man with frosted ears or acute chilblains it is sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. In like manner scientists assure us that the terms up and down are merely relative, but the man who slips and falls down knows better. No more does it help a man who is stumbling around in the darkness to assure him that there is no such thing as darkness—that it is merely the absence of light. If he peels his nose against an open door or bruises his shin over a dislocated chair, it hurts him just as bad as if darkness were a positive quantity, and in his heart of hearts he believes it is. Recurring to the case of cold versus heat, which just now is one of current interest, we respectfully submit that the scientific definition of the term cold, or the cold term either, has little to do with its practical application. If a scientist's ears are nipped one of these cold mornings, what matters it to him whether they are dephlogisticated or frozen? Whether the result is reached by the withdrawal of heat or the application of cold does not make much difference to the man with the frozen ears. They pain him just as much as if cold were a positive instead of a negative quality. The philosopher who, with the thermometer below zero, should apply his tongue to a street lamp-post or a water hydrant might get a great deal of personal satisfaction by explaining that the mutilation of his tongue was due to a sudden abstraction of heat, but every newsboy and street gamin would know

that it was caused by the cold. If any one thinks there is really no such thing as cold, let him sit on his back fence about midnight to-night and contemplate the milky way for an hour or two. By the time he has resolved a few nebulae into their sidereal elements, he will be apt to conclude that cold is quite as much of a reality as heat.—*Indianapolis Journal*.

It is admitted that the representatives of England in foreign Courts ought to know not only French, but Spanish, German, Italian, and, if possible, the Oriental languages as well. But it is urged that the Foreign Secretary need not know any other language than the English. If this were so he would be absolutely without means of direct communication with the representatives of foreign countries here and would be at the mercy of secretaries and chief clerks. Diplomacy is a social art as well as a matter of business. International relations require an international tongue. In the days which followed the revival of learning, Latin, as the language of the church, the professions, and the men of science and letters in every country, was the natural medium of communication. It is now only used in the state papers of the Pope. Henry VIII, and Elizabeth, and James, and the statesmen of their time, were able to converse in it. The ascendancy of Spain led to the not infrequent employment of the Castilian tongue. When Louis XIV. made France the dominant power in Europe, and nearly every war and treaty was, in one aspect of it or another, a French war and treaty, the French language naturally came into the general use which it has retained. The choice was made by a process of natural selection. French has been polished into an instrument of almost perfect sharpness and precision for the purposes of exact statement and facile intercourse. But with the decline of the French monarchy, the monarchy of the French tongue is challenged. Lord Grenville, in his reply to the overtures for peace which the first Consul addressed to George III., was with the accidental exception already referred to, the first to introduce the English language into correspondence with a foreign nation. Mr. Canning, who was erroneously credited with the authorship of the dispatch, defended the innovation on the ground that though it might be proper to employ the French language in correspondence about the affairs of another State, yet a manifesto as to the policy of England ought to be in English. There is an early precedent for this proper national self-assertion in the case of Sir Richard Fanshawe, who, being sent Ambassador to Spain, on his first audience "delivered his message in English, having first procured his Catholic majesty to be prepared to accept it, and spoke Spanish only in paying his respects to the Queen."—*Saturday Review*.