

On the 18th March last a new comet, called the Wells Comet after its discoverer, was first observed. This interesting comet has been for some time visible to the naked eye, and now its tail can be distinctly seen. On the evening of June 4th, and a few nights afterwards, the whole of the body may be seen to best advantage. On June 19th, this comet's perihelion will occur—when it is nearest to the Sun, but even then its distance from the Sun will be very great, 5,000,000 miles or so. After its perihelion it will fade away until by the end of the year it will be beyond the range of the strongest instrument.

Jumbo, the celebrated elephant, has of late received more attention, and excited greater interest, than any of the burning questions of the day, the Irish troubles and Oscar Wilde not excepted. Even the Scientists have been interested in this remarkable animal, that in some respects resembles the ordinary African elephant, whilst in others differing from that type as well as from their Asiatic congeners. When seen in profile he presents an appearance not unlike some of the sketches of the mastodon given in works on the Fauna of pre-historic ages. Professor Doremus, of New York, is said to favor the theory that Jumbo is of mastodonic lineage, and many other scientists are reported to entertain similar views. Whether he is a lingering specimen of the monsters of the miocene or pliocene periods, or not, the fact remains that Jumbo is the largest beast now known to be in captivity, and it is doubtful if a larger animal walks the earth.

The following account of a newly invented milk-test, from a German paper devoted to chemistry in its relations to agriculture, deserves to be placed on record. This instrument, the "piscoscope" consists of a disc of black vulcanized caoutchouc, having in its middle a very flat, circular depression. A few drops of the milk in question, well mixed, are placed in the hollow and covered with the second part of the apparatus, a plate of glass painted with six shades of colour radiating out from a small uncoloured circular spot in the middle. The colours range from white grey to deep bluish grey. The layer of milk is seen through the uncoloured spot in the centre, and its colour can thus be compared with the radiating colours, and its quality is judged according to the colour with which it coincides. Thus the whitest colour stands for cream, the next for very rich milk; then follow in succession—normal, inferior, poor, and very poor.

It has frequently been stated that the rays of the electric light were favorable to vegetation, and it was hinted that this light might in the future be used as a means for hastening the maturity of plants. From *Les Mondes* we learn that investigations on this point have recently been made at the Palace of Industry. It was found that the naked rays were injurious to plants, but after passing through glass globes, they ceased to have any hurtful action upon plants, but their efficacy was not great. Nocturnal illuminations is not fatal to plants, but there is no proof that it is beneficial.

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To the Editor of the EDUCATIONAL RECORD.

SIR,—I have read with pleasure and interest the memoranda of Dr. Robins to the teachers of French in the Protestant schools of Montreal; they are good, and the fact of associating names with things is a happy idea. But it is not to commend Dr. Robins' papers that I write to you, but to make one or two remarks. To teachers of French in Senior classes Dr. Robins says: "One special difficulty in your part of the work is the order of the pronouns before