

THE GREAT ECLIPSE OF 1869.

The scientific observations made during the progress of the eclipse of 1869 are of special interest now, in view of the complete organization perfected by our American astronomers to observe the totality of to-day's eclipse in our Western States and in Alaska.

Six parties were sent out last year by various Governments, societies, or individuals. One from the Royal Society, under Lieutenant Herschel, located itself at Belgium, in India; another from the Royal Astronomical Society, under Major Tennant, went to Guntoor, in India, at which place a French party, under M. Janssen, who represented the Academie des Sciences, also established itself.

The special points to which attention was directed by all parties were:—1. Photographic records of the phenomena. 2. Observation of the protuberances or rose-colored flames. 3. Observation of the corona with the polariscope. 4. Observation of the corona and protuberances with the spectroscope.

Much valuable data for investigation was obtained by these observers. Several of the red prominences were visible, and photographed at different stations. At Guntoor, Major Tennant photographed one which from its size and shape was called the Great Horn. Mr. De La Rue, whose photographs of the sun in 1860 were unequalled, states that the copies which he had received were not sufficiently distinct to enable him to ascertain whether there was any change in the aspect of the Great Horn during Major Tennant's observations, but that it is very probable that there was for that prominence as depicted by different observers along the line of totality presented appearances warranting the suspicion that the Great Horn was undergoing rotation; and at a later date he recognizes evidence of such rotation in Major Tennant's glass copies of his photographs.

This latter statement is strengthened by the independent testimony of the photographs taken at Aden and at Guntoor, for, as Mr. De La Rue states, "A comparison of the two makes it evident that some change in the direction of the Great Horn had occurred in the lapse of forty minutes."

Important as are the conclusions already arrived at, much remains to be learned. In the last number of the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society (London) is an extract from a letter from J. Baxendall, in which he says:—"Recent observations and discoveries indicate very clearly that this corona is not an appendage of the sun. What, then, is it? or how is its appearance to be accounted for?"

The polariscope showed at various places of observation that the prominences gave no indication of polarization; but, on the other hand, that the light of the corona was polarized in a plane passing through the sun's centre. The most important observations, however, were with the spectroscope—that wonderful instrument by which astronomers can determine the chemical constituents of the heavenly bodies.

Upon the corona, these observations gave no result, or showed a very faint and apparently continuous spectrum. The luminous prominences, however, showed themselves to be gaseous, and gave marked spectra of bright lines.

The only photographs that have been generally circulated are those taken by the Prussian expedition under Dr. Vogel, one of which was sent to the Philadelphia Photographer.

The objects seen at the first moment of totality consist chiefly of a long series of flame-like protuberances, stretching for a distance of at least 500,000 miles along the edge of the sun, and composed of more brilliant central masses, with tongues and fringes of central light.

The impression conveyed is of a vast conflagration blown by a wind from left to right, and seen over the edge of a serrated range of hills.

The flame-like appearance of these luminous protuberances must, however, be regarded as only an accidental similarity of shape, as there are many reasons which make the existence of anything like true combustion in these regions extremely rare.

Following around the solar and lunar edge to the right, there is encountered a towering mass of similar luminous matter, which, on comparison with the solar radius, is found to be nearly 70,000 miles high and about 10,000 miles across the base.

Assuming that the other dimension is about the same, its entire volume would approach 7,000,000,000,000 of cubic miles, or twenty-seven times the earth's entire bulk, or enough to cover its surface to a depth of near 8000 miles, with an atmosphere of a constant density, our own atmosphere under the same condition reaching only about five miles.

On the day of the eclipse M. Janssen, who observed the eclipse at Guntoor, observed the solar protuberances with the spectroscope. He says:—"The total obscuration occurred instantaneously, and the spectral phenomena also instantaneously, in a very remarkable manner."

Two spectra, formed of five or six bright lines—red, yellow, green, blue and violet—occupied the field in place of the prismatic image of the sun which had just disappeared.

These spectra, about one minute (of arc) long, corresponded line for line, and were separated by a dark space in which I could see no lines. The fluder showed that these two spectra were caused by two magnificent protuberances which were now visible on each side of the point of contact.

One of them, that on the left, was more than three minutes (of arc) long, and was separated by a distance of half an inch from the point of contact, the other, which looked like the flame of a furnace, flashing violently from the openings of the burning mass within, and driven by a strong wind, was the one to the right presented the appearance of a

mass of snowy mountains, with its base resting on the moon's limb, and enlightened by a setting sun. The preceding observation shows at once that the protuberances are in fact a series of islands (the lines being bright).

"Second. The general similarity of their chemical composition (the spectra corresponding line for line)."

"Third. Their chemical species (the red and blue lines of their spectrum being no other than the lines C and F of the solar one, and belonging, as is well known, to hydrogen gas)."

"It is very certain that if an atmosphere formed of the vapors of all the substances which have been found in the sun really existed above the protuberances, it would have given a spectrum at least as brilliant as that of the protuberances, which were formed of a gas much less dense and less luminous. It must, then, be admitted that, if this atmosphere exists, its light is so small that it has escaped notice. I must also add that this result did not much surprise me: for my investigations on the solar spectrum had led me to doubt the reality of any considerable atmosphere around the sun, and I am more and more inclined to think that the phenomena of elective absorption, ascribed by the great physicist of Heidelberg to an atmosphere exterior to the sun, are due to the vapors of the protuberance itself, in which the solid and liquid particles forming the luminous clouds are floating.

This view is not merely in harmony with the beautiful theory on the constitution of the protuberance which we owe to M. Faye, but even seems to be a necessary deduction from it."

On the day of the eclipse M. Janssen discovered a method by which these red protuberances might be observed even when the sun was unobscured, and, applying this new method on the following morning, he soon saw the bright lines formed by the protuberances; but their length and arrangement showed that great changes had occurred. It was evident not only that hydrogen was the most important element in these circum-solar masses, but that they were rapidly changing both in form and position.

He also observed that the bright lines of the protuberances sometimes penetrated into the corresponding dark lines of the solar spectrum, showing that the protuberance extends over part of the sun's disc. It was to be expected that these protuberances, belonging to the sun, would exist not merely on the margin, as seen from the earth, but over its whole circumference, or over the whole surface; but during eclipses the interposition of the moon makes its proof impossible.

Another advantage of the new method of observing the spectra of the protuberances consists in the fact that these spectra are directly compared with the spectrum of the sun itself; whereas in eclipses, the sun's spectrum being out of view, it has been necessary to resort to graduated scales to fix the position of the lines. The principal conclusions to which M. Janssen arrives, at the time of his report, in November, are these:—

"First. That the luminous protuberances observed during total eclipses belong unquestionably to the circum-solar regions."

"Second. That these bodies are mainly or entirely composed of incandescent hydrogen gas."

"Third. That they are subject to movements of which no terrestrial phenomenon can give us any idea; since, though they are masses of matter having several hundred times the volume of the earth, they change completely their form and position in the course of a few minutes."

"This latter statement is strengthened by the independent testimony of the photographs taken at Aden and at Guntoor, for, as Mr. De La Rue states, 'A comparison of the two makes it evident that some change in the direction of the Great Horn had occurred in the lapse of forty minutes.'"

Important as are the conclusions already arrived at, much remains to be learned. In the last number of the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society (London) is an extract from a letter from J. Baxendall, in which he says:—"Recent observations and discoveries indicate very clearly that this corona is not an appendage of the sun. What, then, is it? or how is its appearance to be accounted for?"

In a conversation I had some weeks ago with Professor Koseov on the subject, I reminded him that in a paper which I read to the Literary and Philosophical Society in March, 1864, giving the results of a discussion of an immense number of magnetical and temperature observations made in different parts of the world, I showed that these results could be best explained by assuming the existence of an irregular nebulous ring circulating about the sun, nearly in the plane of the ecliptic, and at a mean distance of 0.162; and I suggested to him that the reflection of the sun's light from the matter of this ring might be the real cause of the appearance of the corona in total solar eclipses."

Mr. Baxendall proceeds to show the improbability that the corona can be the result of reflection from the earth's atmosphere, or from any possible atmosphere upon the moon's surface. New observations must determine the point.

In conclusion, it may be briefly said that the present scientific theory of the solar constitution represents or classifies it in three atmospheres:—1. The solar protuberance, or visible surface, the white-light-giving atmosphere. 2. The cool, absorbing, relatively non-luminous atmosphere. 3. The chromosphere, or local aggregations at the prominences of an entirely enveloping medium."

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SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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THE PRESIDENT AND HIS DETRACTORS. From the N. Y. Times.

We have no particular call to take the blunders of our Democratic politicians and journals to heart. At the same time we believe in parties; we think the country is apt to be better governed when party organization is thorough, and pretty sure to be ill-governed when there is no effective opposition. It is from this point of view that we regret the line of attack upon the President into which the opposition party has fallen. In the absence of any substantial grounds for controversy, it seems to be regarded as the fit and proper thing to dog the President's footsteps wherever he goes, to belittle his employments, to give him the appearance of being habitually surrounded and engrossed with trifling or equivocal company, with consulting his personal ease to the neglect of his public duties, and in general to be a man who really has no comprehension of the great interests committed to his charge.

Now, as we have already remarked, we accept no responsibility for the blunders of the gentlemen who preside in the councils of the Democratic party; at the same time it is but neighborly for us to notify them that in our opinion, they are making a grievous blunder in the course they are now pursuing towards our Chief Magistrate.

It is never worth while for an individual or a party to make war until they have cause for war and have counted the cost of making it. Now in this case the Democracy have no grievances. They are trying to belittle and degrade the President by publishing stories and gossip from which every gentleman, and a President more than any other person, is entitled to exemption. And what will come of it? The public, the country, will not judge the President by the number of horses

drives, by the number of cigars he smokes, by the places he frequents during the heats of summer, by the number of days or weeks he remains in or out of Washington, or by the class of people who get access to his presence as means of getting their names into the newspapers. These are matters about which the great body of the nation are indifferent. They wish to know, and are willing to wait a proper time to learn, how the President is attending to their business, having no particular curiosity to know how he attends to his own. Now, when the time comes for the state of public business to be officially and fully submitted to them, they will find some results which will probably put the bipartite critics who give forth the harassing positions, as means of getting the results of the brief five months of President Grant's administration, which may be cited to the public in response to the charge that the public service is neglected.

We were told in October last by the same oracles that now find it so difficult, in speaking of the President, to respect the ordinary proprieties of social life, that there would be a deficiency in our revenues for the fiscal year just closed of one hundred and fifty-four millions of dollars. That is what they regarded as the best prospect the future had to offer us financially nine months ago.

Now, what has this idle, cigar-smoking horse-jockey of a President accomplished during the brief five months that he has had such control of the Government as Congress accorded to him?

By a greater care in the selection of trustworthy agents, and by a vigorous enforcement of the law, the revenues have so rapidly increased that the direct debt of the Government has already, since his inauguration, been reduced between forty-three and forty-four millions of dollars. The revenues from whisky and tobacco alone have more than doubled. A reduction of treasury from forty regiments to twenty-five is to result in a further saving of many millions.

The effects of the new policy of the Government toward the Indians cannot now be appreciated, but enough is already known to make a further economy in that direction that must be estimated by millions. Our Federal territories north of day last \$250,000,000 more than they were worth the day our President was inaugurated, and are advancing at the rate of ten or fifteen millions a week. There is no doubt of our ability to find the entire national debt within a year at a rate of interest not exceeding four and a half per cent. We are sure of a surplus at the end of the current fiscal year of from \$125,000,000 to \$150,000,000, and it is no longer a question that our revenues will justify a large reduction of our taxes.

These are all facts which our Democratic friends may safely take upon our authority, and we ask them now in all candor whether the people are going to believe that the President who can cipher up such a year's work as this, and gives the promise of it, neglecting their interests as he does, will not feel inclined rather to withdraw their confidence from their party oracles, who prove to them such blind guides, and transfer it to a President whose recreations prove so advantageous to the country?

TRADE OF THE PACIFIC RAILWAYS.

The completion of the railway to the Pacific, while it opens the route for the great trade from Asia to all parts of the world, is, in the present, the extension of the facilities of commerce and production to a new, vast, and hitherto secluded portion of our own country. The commerce between Chicago, and over that part of the country lying between the Missouri river and Laramie plains, will exceed, during the next ten years, our entire trade with China; and when to this is added the future trade with Colorado, Utah, and Nevada, on the south of the railway, and Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho, on the north, the trade with Asia, however valuable, will be comparatively but a small contribution to the national wealth. It is but a few years since the railway system of Chicago was extended to Wisconsin, Iowa, and Kansas; a still shorter period has passed since Minnesota was embraced in the iron band; and these States until thus connected were more remote from trade—more remote in the means and opportunities of an exchange of commodities—than Nebraska, Colorado and Nevada are today.

The opening of the railway is but an extension of the commercial circuit of which Chicago is the centre. It is the extension, to a hitherto closed region, of the means of sending their products to market, and of receiving other needed commodities in exchange. These States and Territories, rich in their inexhaustible mineral treasures, are destined to be as productive in other particulars as their more Eastern neighbors. The hand of industry, which has made the sage-brush land of Utah as productive as the prairie of Iowa or Minnesota, will, with little delay, and at no very great cost, turn the mountain streams and spring rivulets through and over the now arid plains, and the sage will give place to timothy; the desert will bring forth corn and wheat; and herds of bees will be fattened on the fields now sterile. Into this vast region of gold and iron, silver and lead, and of coal, will pour a hardy and thrifty population. From Europe and Asia will come the laborer that is to work the mines, irrigate the land, cultivate the soil, build the roads, and swell the volume of national wealth.

HARVARD FOREVER!

While yet the Oxford-Harvard regatta is unrolled, that sonorous wisdom with which the gifted British journalist has even the faculty of making a printed page reverberate comes out strong upon us by cable and by mail. For instance, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which is of opinion that the method of training adopted by the Harvard crew is "similar to the barbarous but long exploded system of English amateur training in the dark ages," hopes, in the most condescending and disinterested way, that "the Americans will be cautioned in time." And we have the news by cable that "the comments of the English press are generally unfavorable upon the Harvard style of rowing," with a subsequent admission that "they were considered to have behaved better the second day they were out. Nor does the Briton restrain a highly well-bred propensity to question the veracity of our poor newspapers, and indite a saving clause in his countrymen's behalf. "They (the Harvard crew) were put down generally," says the *London Herald*, "as near eleven stone than twelve; but the weighing of them yesterday told a different tale altogether, for they all pulled over the scale at twelve stone, and one of them nearly thirteen, thus giving them an average of nearly twelve stone and a half!"—which "startling increase," the *Herald* is at pains to admonish the crew, there will be plenty of time to train away before the regatta is in mind," as the late lamented Mr. Lincoln used to say, of a little story.

A cockney, conversing with an American in London, mentioned a horse, belonging to a friend of his, which had "gone his mile in a minute, sir, 'carrying my friend over the downs.' "That," quietly remarked the American, "is about the pace of our common roadsters. I had a horse once—a horse altogether too fast. When I mounted him, I used to walk out about ten rods in front of where the men were holding him, climb some portable steps under the limb of a tree, grasp the limb with both hands, and hang on. Then the steps were removed. Then I gave the word for the horse to be let go, and, at the

same instant, let go of the limb myself. I always lighted in the saddle. Every morning I used to have to ride that animal around a large factory to take a little of the spirit out of him. He used to go so fast for the first twenty or thirty times around that I saw my back continually, and came nearly running over myself on several occasions."

And we have tranquil assurance to make to every mother's son of these London writers who are trouncing the Harvard crew with their quills, that those boys are perfectly competent to starve themselves down to emaciation in a fortnight, dance the rest of their flesh off their skeletons the night before the coming regatta, put their bonny girl to the oars of a yawl next day, and pull round the course, sit down to their dinners and eat themselves into obesity again, before their Oxford opponents have fairly got their blades into the Thames!

THE SPANISH GUNBOATS.

The course taken by the Government in regard to the Spanish gunboats indicates plainly a spirit of fairness towards Spain that ought to soften the asperity with which her agents here might naturally receive the announcement of the purpose of the administration. Spain and Peru are quite equal before us and have the same claims in regard to our neutrality. Spain was herself the first to appeal to our laws to prevent the sailing of ships. Her war with Peru, though in a practical state of abeyance, made her especially careful in regard to the armed forces of that nation, and when certain vessels were bought here for the Peruvian Government the protest of the Spanish authorities prevented their sailing, and they finally did not sail, except on a sort of parole, our Government exacting a guarantee that they should not be used against the power of Spain. Exactly what our Government then did, on the application of Spain herself, it now does for Peru. Although nominally the Spanish vessels are seized, they are, in fact, only under the surveillance of the law. Thus those charged, with their construction are left unembarrassed and the building and equipment of the ships go on. So that when the Spanish Government has given sufficient evidence that these vessels are not intended for use against any power with which we are at peace, it will be found that the action of our Government has not entailed a day's loss of time. Our hope for the interest of Cuba, however, is that in the meantime the administration, putting itself in full sympathy with the national sentiment on the subject, will see the propriety of recognizing the rights of the Cubans, and then if Spain gives guarantees that compel the withdrawal of the protest entered by Peru, the Cuban Government may take the place of Peru and enter another protest. Spain would then only have to lament the inconvenience to a nation of having on its hands more than one war at a time.

THE IMPERIAL SURRENDER.

The draft of the Parliamentary reforms in France is now matured. It accords with Napoleon's late message in granting the right of self-regulation, the voting of the budget in detail, the simplifying of the mode of amendment, the selection of ministers from the chambers, the submission of tariff modifications, and the extension of the right to interpellate. The Emperor and the Legislature will together enjoy the initiative in making laws; and the members of both chambers will be permitted to address questions and demands to the government. Amendments will be passed to a committee, communicated to the government, returned to the chamber with remark, and finally acted upon. A more definite statement of this provision is to be expected than that which we have now by cable, but apparently the Council of State is deprived of its sovereign right to devour all amendments before they can be put to the vote, while the Emperor retains sufficient power over the subject to make the amendment still a matter of process and difficulty. Over and above the reforms promised in his late message, the Emperor's new exhibit provides that Ministers shall be present at debates, and, though responsible for their acts, can only be impeached by the Senate. The Senate will have public session, but on motion of five members may be resolved into secrecy. We are advised that the Emperor's decree of the Emperor will thoroughly ordain the relations which are to exist between the two Chambers, and himself, and will dwell on the traditions of national government into liberal empire. He will also reduce taxes and extend education.

These concessions, skillfully checked and balanced, as we believe they will further appear, will not quench the suspicion or satisfy the desire of France, but they are parts of a wholesale measure of change from an absolute to a constitutional government. When it is remembered that in 1852 France had no right to discuss the imperial address, and could but furtively venture an opinion on the budget, the extent of the present concessions may be reckoned. At that time the Legislature could neither question ministers nor initiate laws. Even in 1860 the right of the Legislature to address the Emperor, and the Emperor to consider it a privilege that the Parliament should have its debates fully printed. The reforms now granted are like a tide wave overwhelming many old abuses.

The Emperor is a shrewd student, but has lost some of his faculty of adaptation; his latest concessions show the awkwardness of surrender. One of his critics speaks of him as a reed pointed to look like iron. He would prefer that the world should regard him as in the secret with destiny and in conspiracy with events. We fear that his last move reveals the Imperial Castiglion, and shows that France is conscious of a fate to which Louis Napoleon is but a circumstance and an impertinence. The Emperor, in his famous letter to M. Ollivier, declared that he was restrained from returning "either by inertia or a vain intention for premeditation," but from a desire to "establish at a stroke what is called the crowning of the edifice," and to avoid taking any step which would have to retract. He has now made a stroke at last, and though he advertises that personal government is ended, the edifice is not crowned. Will he attempt to go backward when France endeavors to advance still further?

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