

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics—Continued Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

SCIENCE IN 1870.

From the N. Y. Evening Post.

The year which has just ended will perhaps be remembered longest as that in which the first railroad was completed across this continent, and that in which the Suez Canal extended the Mediterranean Sea eastward to India; changes which, together with the new line of the Pacific Mail steamships from the Golden Gate to China, have practically shortened by one-half the average time required for a journey around the world.

Chief among these are doubtless the achievements of the spectroscope, especially in the province of astronomical optics. It is but a few years since this instrument of research came into the hands of investigators; but it has already proved itself second in importance only to the telescope and the microscope, in extending our acquaintance with the laws of the universe.

There are some results of stereoscopic investigation, achieved during the last year, which pass beyond all the boldest anticipations even of its inventors. Perhaps the most brilliant of them is the method of determining the "proper motions" of the stars, even when they are in a right line to or from our sun. The spectrum formed by a prism, dispersing the rays of light, is the result of the law that these rays are refracted more or less, according to the length of the "waves" of which they consist.

The very recent discovery also made by the spectroscope of the identity of the anhydrous boracic with the zodiacal light, and of both with the corona surrounding the sun when totally eclipsed, is one which, as yet, indeed, is a stumbling block to astronomers, but which seems to lead them to the very verge of some wonderful revelation.

Indeed, the activity with which now facts concerning the solar system have been collected during the last year is itself one of the wonders of science. It is but a short time since the astronomy of our own system was regarded as complete in outline, and only to be filled up by painful and abstract researches, perfecting our knowledge of the several bodies in detail, which could have interest for the general reader.

There is no necessity for analyzing the remainder of this week and trisuly production. It is called "Lady Byron Vindicated," but it should rather be called "A Failure to Vindicate Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe." Without reason or motive, she put in circulation the nastiest piece of scandal that has been heard for years, and now, when called upon to prove it, she falls back upon the original fabrication of Lady Byron's mind, weakened by age and distorted by brooding upon her wrongs, as if a repetition of this fabrication were triumphant testimony to its intrinsic truth.

The French cable monopoly. The famous "cable" paragraph in President Grant's Message has at least found a responsive echo in the sympathies of our countrymen and countrywomen in Paris, however it may affect the Parisians in general, and outrages the sensibilities of the French authorities in particular.

It is clear that the illiberal policy of the French Government, so far as the Franco-American cable is concerned, is reacting not against the Government only, but against the company itself, whose stock is twenty-five per cent. below par, solely in consequence of trouble with the United States authorities, whereby its tenure upon American shores is made so uncertain. It is not impossible that this process of "bearing" is resorted to less in consequence of political vagaries in the brain of that "sound Confedrate," Mr. Erlanger, than as a shrewd business device for getting hold of the stock at depressed rates, and before they shall bounce up again on the adjustment of difficulties by reasonable concessions.

in animals, or even a decision of the vexed question whether organic life exists in other worlds than this.

MRS. STOWE'S BYRON BOOK.

The publishers of Mrs. Stowe's new book have acted prudently in stimulating public curiosity about it to the highest possible pitch before its appearance. Many thousands of persons will purchase copies of it simply to find out what there is in it, who, if they were fully acquainted with its contents beforehand, would not deign to give it a passing look.

For some months now Mrs. Stowe has been loudly proclaiming that the volume she had in preparation would be such a complete and triumphant proof of the truth of the charge she made against Lord Byron and Mrs. Leigh, in her article in the Atlantic Monthly, that there could be no further dispute on the subject. Upon the testimony adduced in the Atlantic the almost unanimous verdict of the public was that the charge was not proven.

Condensed into a few words, all this amounts to the simple proposition that inasmuch as the charge against Lord Byron, published by Mrs. Stowe, was one of the thousand accusations in circulation against him during his lifetime, and was not positively disproved by him, though utterly discredited by his friends, therefore it must have been true! The reader may well ask in astonishment, as we did on getting to the end of the chapter, is this all? Is there no direct testimony from any one acquainted with the facts; no positive proofs of the alleged criminal intimacy; no bringing home of the alleged offspring of the incestuous intrigue to Mrs. Leigh as its mother? Absolutely none whatever.

But, apart from the rigidly abstinent, it is our conviction that there was more drinking and deeper drinking here in the year 1839 than in any of the 260 preceding years, since Hendrick Hudson discovered this island.

The fearful consequences can here only be glanced at. Destitution, squalor, vice, profligacy, robbery, murder—these are more prevalent in New York to-day than at any former period. Beggary and harlotry, crime and infamy, crowd our streets; finding in the groshop their source and their inspiration. Very rarely is a novice drawn into a gaming-house or a den of debauchery except when under the influence of liquor. It is our firm conviction that, if alcoholic beverages could be wholly and permanently banished from our city, and all our police and machinery of criminal justice went with them, there would be forthwith less crime and far less misery in our city than there is.

There is a very considerable body of respectable citizens who cannot shut their eyes to these horrors, yet who are not converts to total abstinence. They drink rarely and cautiously—at least, they think so—are in no danger of falling into drunkenness, and do not feel constrained to give up what they deem an innocent and pleasurable exhilaration because others abuse liquor to their own hurt and that of their families.

In Massachusetts and other States where prohibition has been strongly advocated, these moderates profess to favor a stringent Excise law, which they say would do more for temperance than prohibition can, because it can be enforced, while prohibition cannot be.

Men of convictions and of moral principles, who are not total abstainers! what is your way of repressing excess in drinking? Let your acts answer!

The Boston Blue-Stockings. The literate ladies of Boston have a club. They assemble therein and read each other their respective poems. Sometimes Emerson comes and lectures to them. Once a month they venture upon the extravagance of a tea-party, to which uninvited outsiders are sometimes invited.

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of the stockholders, the President declared that France would stand by its grant of twenty years' monopoly, and that Erlanger verified the assertion.

Now, as it is alleged that the company claims that it can lobby through Congress itself a confirmation of this monopoly, it is well for our people to keep a sharp look-out on the proceedings of this body. Everybody will remember how public indignation was stirred when, just before the new wire touched the sand at Danbury, it was made known that the permission applied for by certain of our citizens to land an American cable on the French shore had been peremptorily refused.

We repeat that it only remains for the French concessionaires to disarm the storm in season, and for the French Government to repair its errors. The arrangement effected hitherto for non-reciprocity in privilege is opposed to the spirit of modern commerce by barring out competition. There was not for it even the excuse of a new experiment, deserving patent or exclusive rights, since the cable from Ireland to Newfoundland had already been successfully laid, and thereafter success for similar enterprises was assured.

THE DRUNKARDS' CARNIVAL. From the N. Y. Tribune. It is the general testimony of our city press that the Christmas holidays were this year distinguished by extraordinary and excessive drinking in New York.

Drinking was once all but universal; now it is not. There is a very considerable minority, even in this metropolis of sensuality, who systematically and on principle reject every intoxicating beverage. These are a hundred times more numerous than they were fifty years ago.

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drinking or the splendor of their environments. They doubtless think that the mens discliar in one thing and the otium cum dignitate another. If they can approve their claim to the latter to their New York sisters without a pang. And they will presently have an opportunity of vindicating the said claims, for they are going to publish a newspaper. It will probably be less screaming and vehement in tone than the Revolution, but it is safe to predict that its literary character will be as high as the common law of Massachusetts will permit. Mrs. Howe will supply its intellectual radiance and its bland atmosphere of scholarship; Garrison will darken and agitate the same with casual thunderbolts of gratuitous fanaticism; Higginson will reason from the wrong premise to the wrong conclusion, and with much copiousness confound the counsels of the wise; and Miss Lucy Etchings, of whom we have not hitherto been aware, but who is of the editorial quartette, will do something or another, and upon this simple testimony of her name—as musical as the murmur of haubtyoes or the rustle of leaves—we venture to assume that she will do it with grace and grammar, and that neither her argumentation nor her rhetorical usages shall bring tears to the eyelashes of the elect. The Revolution will have to burnish its armor anew if it wishes to keep its place in the reformatory field.

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