

THE COMING ECLIPSE.

How it is being Observed in Europe—The American Observers at Work—Predictions of the Effect of the Eclipse and Accompanying Phenomena upon the World.

At the last session of Congress, at the suggestion of Hon. J. A. Bingham, of Ohio, an appropriation of \$25,000 was made for the observation, in the interest of science, of the total eclipse of the sun which takes place December 22, and which is visible only in the southern part of Europe. The observations were directed to be made under the charge of Prof. Benjamin Peirce, Superintendent of the U. S. Coast Survey.

Immediately upon the appropriation being made an officer was sent to examine the various places, and obtain all the local information which might be required to select the most favorable positions for observation. The expedition has been divided into two parties, each of which consists of about twelve persons. One party is under the immediate direction of Professor Peirce, and will observe in Sicily; and the other is under the direction of Professor Winlock, the director of the Observatory of Harvard University, and will observe in Spain. Almost all the astronomers of the expedition were upon the central path of the great eclipse which occurred in this country in August, 1869, so that they are experienced and well prepared for the work before them.

These two main bodies will in turn be divided into several small bodies, each of which will be stationed at some separate point near the main observatory. The observations for precision have been entrusted in each party to an experienced officer of the survey, who will be upon the exact ground of observation at least a fortnight before the eclipse. He will have the instruments all properly mounted and protected, the time well observed, and the arrangements made so that the principal observers of the physical phenomena may find everything in readiness. The officers upon whom this duty has devolved are Mr. Schott and Mr. Dean, assistants of the Coast Survey.

The party for Spain sailed on the 3d of November, and the party for Sicily on the 13th of the previous month. A portion of the latter have since been staying in England co-operating with the English observers.

It was at first intended to use a Government vessel to convey the party to the countries named, but the war in Europe, which required the presence of our fleet there, prevented that arrangement. An English party of sixty-eight volunteers from the best scientific men of the country had been formed, with the expectation of getting a Government grant and vessel for their use; but in this they were disappointed. The Admiralty discovered that the nation would assuredly disapprove if room were found for mere men of science and their trumpery in any of her Majesty's ships, and accordingly, just when the extensive preparations requisite for the expeditions were in full progress, news came that the means of transport must be found by the observers themselves.

Professor Peirce on his arrival in England immediately extended an invitation from the United States, through the Royal Society, to the English party of observers, asking them to join with the American party. This invitation has in part been accepted, though other independent parties will go out. As at present arranged there will be four English parties. Beginning with Spain, there will be one to Cadix, in charge of the Rev. S. J. Perry; and one to Gibraltar, under Captain Noble. The English branch of the Anglo-American expedition will be under the charge of Mr. Lockyer; while there will be a fourth small expedition, under the charge of Mr. Huggins, to Oran. The English delegation co-operating with the American Sicilian party is composed not so much of professional astronomers, though there is no lack of experience, skill, and knowledge among them.

As Gibraltar is English ground, the larger English party will be stationed there. For all observing points within Spanish jurisdiction the best of arrangements have been made by the representatives of the Spanish, British, and American Governments for the convenience of the observers. The Spanish Government has agreed that at the Spanish custom houses no duty or deposit shall be demanded on the astronomical or physical instruments that foreign astronomers bring into Spain for the observation and study of the eclipse. In return the astronomers have agreed to make known all particulars respecting their visits and their instruments to the Madrid Observatory.

The American party on Spanish soil is now stationed at Malaga, where the minor parties report. Two Philadelphia photographers are with the party, in charge of the photographic department. In addition to Professor Winlock, who is in charge, Professor Young, of Dartmouth, in care of the spectroscopic observations, Professor Pickering, of Boston, and Professor Peters, of Hamilton College, also accompany the Spanish observers. Professors Hall, Harkness, and Eastman, of the Washington Naval Observatory, are with the Sicily party. All the delegations have the finest instruments—telescopes, cameras, lenses, and apparatus generally—made especially for the occasion.

The lenses of both cameras and telescopes have been ground by the best makers in an especial manner for the work for which they were designed. An apparatus has been made for each camera and photographing telescope, by means of which a series of photographic plates are so arranged and worked as to obtain a series of instantaneous views, about one for every second of the totality. Two very large equatorial telescopes, arranged with the finest adjustments and clock adjustments, and with a perfect coincidence of visual and actinic focus, have also been expressly manufactured by Alvin Clark & Sons, of Cambridgeport, Mass., the younger partner of which firm accompanies the expedition.

Professor Winlock has made arrangements for the use of special methods by means of which the spectral lines of the corona may be preserved for subsequent measurement

and discussion. The polariscope observations are under the charge of Professor Pickering. General observations of the corona will be made by as many of the party as possible, and what are known as Steinheil's hand comet-seekers will be especially available for this class of observation. Hand spectroscopes will also be used by several of the party.

It is said that this is one of the greatest of modern total eclipses for various reasons, among which may be mentioned the fact that it occurs when the moon is particularly near the earth, and also at the time of the winter solstice. It is stated also that the position of the planets is such that the sun, moon, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Uranus, and the earth all exert their attractive influence in the same straight line. As a result of this there have been various predictions of the effects upon the earth, such as earthquakes, great tidal waves and storms, hurricanes, and cyclones. It is said that there was a similar position of the heavenly bodies at the time of a total eclipse when Calao and Quito were destroyed by earthquake and tidal waves. Whether any of these startling predictions are of a truthful character remains to be seen. No great danger is apprehended by those best versed in such matters.

The line of obscuration is as follows: The eclipse will begin in the North Atlantic Ocean, the central line moving in a southeasterly direction. Crossing one part of Spain and the Mediterranean Sea, it enters Africa near Oran, and afterwards attains its southern limit. The shadow of the moon moves in a northeasterly direction, and leaves Africa, and crossing the Island of Sicily, the south of Turkey, the Black Sea, and the Sea of Azof, disappears.

The penumbra of the moon decreasing rapidly, leaves the earth with the setting sun in Arabia. The sun will be centrally and totally eclipsed at noon in latitude 36 degrees and 38 minutes north, longitude 5 degrees 1 minute west, a little to the northeast of Gibraltar, and near the Lisbon coast.

The greatest credit is due to our Congress in that they took sufficient interest in science to forward its interests in this particular. Our scientific men have made the best use of the funds thus put into their hands.

THE NEW MORALITY OF NATIONS.

From the Fall Mail Gazette. It would be wasting words to show at length that the criminality of Russia consists not so much in her breaking the international engagements of 1856 as the reasons she gives for breaking them. Nations occasionally break treaties, just as men occasionally break promises, upon sudden impulse, or what they wish to be considered as sudden impulse; but the man who sins upon impulse, and who inflicts a deep injury on society, is he who in cold blood declares that there is no such thing as morality, or that if there is, he does not intend to be bound by it. If Russia has found a pretext, however trivial, for declaring war against Turkey, and proclaiming herself free from her engagements as the consequence of war, she would have injured the permanent interests of mankind far less than she has done by the astounding doctrine that so much of the international law as is founded on treaties no longer involves the moral obligations attached to it in former times. If such a principle is to obtain, the prospects of Europe are gloomy indeed. The sky was already black with the pent-up passions of nations or lurid with their furious explosion; and now the very earth opens under our feet through the perfidy of Russia.

Next to the action of the British Government the policy of the Prussian Government is the most interesting subject of speculation. It is too busy for material but not for moral influence. We have stated in detail what are the indications of complicity with Russia on the part of the Prussian Court and Foreign Office; and even if these indications are deceptive, there are plenty of reasons for suspecting that there will be at least German toleration of the Russian breach of treaty. The Germans have made many pretensions since they put forth the military strength which had been so carefully husbanded, but there is nothing to show that they have ceased to be absolutely in the hands of the Prussian reigning house, which has lately shown a singular avidity for the honors and decorations showered upon it by its Russian kinsmen. The class which supplies the officers who have done such good service in the war with France professes an hereditary devotion to the Government of the Czar; and both among the people and the public men of Germany there is plenty of dislike to Austria, the power materially injured, and of spitefulness to England, the power morally outraged, by this great act of bad faith. Yet, on the other hand, if Germany can replace petty motives by large ones, and rise to the level of the elevation to which her successes have raised her, there are many reasons why she should regard the blow aimed directly at herself than at any other power. The great bribe offered to Germany is probably preponderance, and specially maritime preponderance, in the West, for which the return is to be the concession of unlimited opportunities to Russia in the East. But the opportunities for an aggressive power in Eastern Europe are infinitely greater than for a power whose sphere is in the West. If the nations of Western Europe arm themselves after the German fashion, as it seems certain that they will, the effort demanded by warfare will be too great for anything but the greatest exigencies. Russia will be the only power adapted for the sort of war which will lead to the gradual dismemberment of the Turkish empire; and this process she proposes to put in operation unfettered by the disapprobation of Western countries, and even unbacked by her own express promises to take, or not to take, a particular course. The great power thus coiled round Europe will have room for movement and expansion altogether denied to the most eminent and active of Western nations. For Russia, it must be remembered, will advance, if not now checked, with a new resource which may help her own more effectually even than her own arms, the weakness of Turkey, or than the sympathies of the Christian populations of the East. She has called to her aid an Oriental morality. The varnish placed over her doctrines through the French in which they are conveyed cannot conceal the fact that they belong essentially to the same moral code which was followed by the Mahattri Sivagee when he drove his iron tiger-claw into the vitals of the enemy whom he had lured into friendly conference. No power whose civilization is of the really Western type could compete with a rival pro-

vided with such an advantage. Count Bismarck went pretty far in 1866, but he had at least an historical or ethical theory to help him to the persuasion that he was obeying a higher morality than that of more scrupulous politicians. He was the world a reparation for having contributed to produce the doctrine, different from his own, and yet directly descended from it, that the obligation of promises between nations is a fiction and a chimera.

Professor von Sybel, who was lecturing the British public the other day on its failure to apprehend the German feeling about Alsace and Lorraine, has made it the labor of his life to show that it is an error to suppose France exclusively the evil genius of Germany. Germany, we are told by him, has had two permanent enemies since their respective appearance on the international stage—France and Russia. It was Russia which by her intrigues in Eastern Europe paralyzed the efforts made by Prussia to stem the fiery flood of revolutionary passion which France in the throes of the First Revolution was pouring over the world. It was unassessing respect for Russia which led the Prussian Government into that alliance with revolutionary France which first disgraced and ultimately ruined it. And it was the desertion of the European cause by the uncle of the present Czar which made it impossible for Prussia to escape earlier than she did from the depths of humiliation into which she had been thrust by the First Napoleon. French force and Russian fraud are thus declared to be the twin sources of German calamity, and the twin obstacles to German unity. And it is certainly curious that the evil influence possessed by Russia over Germany has always been exercised, not through direct aggression on her interests, but by distracting her attention to intrigues at once dangerous and obscure, or by tempting her to share in ignoble advantages foreign to her true sphere of ambition. If Prussia was not sover the great Teutonic power, it was because Russia seduced her into making herself a Slavonic power; nor is it possible to doubt that she will long bear the burden of her Polish acquisitions. It is all very well for Count Bismarck to say that Poland is dead and buried. While respecting the maxim of the great moralist, "Never prophesy, unless you know," we may admit this to be probably true so far as armed revolt is concerned. But Posen is not the less the weak spot in the German armor. The next age will be one of international theories, and men will grow more and more sensitive to their accurate application. Just as the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine will assuredly compromise political liberty in Germany by forcing it to contend against the innumerable difficulties springing from the discontents of a subject population, so the possession of a part of Poland will always disgrace that national unity and compactness with which the privileged classes in Germany hope that their countrymen will be satisfied in lieu of political freedom.

Another gross temptation is now held out by Russia to Germany. In return for it, she is asked to connive at the abrogation of the international code, and to renounce all influence over the destinies of Eastern Europe. Perhaps the most insulting part of the relations of Russia with Germany consists in the caricature of the German pretensions which she offers to the world. Pan-slavism is a travesty of German unity. The protectorate claimed over all Christians of the Greek faith is a ludicrous distortion of the interest felt by Germans in all the outlying fragments of the Teutonic family. But the most galling caricature of all is the exaggeration of the Prussian morality of 1866 in Prince Gortschakoff's circular. From a moral law which permitted the most trivial pretenses to be seized for making the express engagements of treaties bend to the great object of consolidating German power, we descend to an actual disclaimer of moral law, and the announcement that promises no longer bind nations, unless it is convenient to keep them. The intransigence of Prussia under Russian influence gave Europe the great war at the beginning of the century; we have now to see whether she can be bribed or coaxed into helping to obtain for Europe a perpetuity of treacherous wars.

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