(From Chamber's Repository.)

IS THE WORLD ROUND?

We hope our readers will not think us demented for asking the above question; but Mr. John Hampden (or "Parallax") has recently backed his opinion to the contrary by a sum of five hundred pounds; and an interesting experiment has taken place. This gentleman in 1865, obtained a book to prove that the earth is a *plane*, without motion, and unaccompanied by anything in the firmament but the sun and itself. The whole question turns on the convexity of water, for if the earth is a globe, and twenty-five thousand miles in circumference, the surface of all standing water must have a certain degree of convexity; every part must be an arc of a circle, rising at the rate of about eight inches per mile; and in every successive mile, eight inches multiplied by the square of the distance. Mr. Hampden says he tried the following experiment: In the Old Bedford Canal, Cambridgeshire,a boat and flag was directed to sail from Welney Bridge, and remain at Welche's Dam, about six miles distant. Mr. Hampden, with a telescope, placed himself in the water at a height with his eye not exceeding eight inches above the surface. The flag and the boat could be seen to remain in view clearly visible throughout the whole distance, so that he concluded if the surface of the water had risen as above mentioned, he ought not have seen the boat at all. We have neither the space nor the inclination to follow Mr. Hampden in the far-fetched theories contained in his volume. Suffice it to say that his gentleman offered to row a hundred pounds on his theory: and Mr. A. R. Wallace accepted the challenge, offering, in like manner, to row five hundred pounds upon the issue, and agreeing to "prove the convexity or curvature of the surface of a river, or lake, by actual experiment." The spot chosen was that portion of the Old Bedford Canal between Old Bedford Bridge and Welney Bridge, a distance of six miles on a straight line.

The experiment came off March 5, 1870; and an oblong signal, six feet by three, was placed on Old Bedford Bridge, its centre being thirteen feet four inches above the water. At three miles' distance from the canal (we quote from the report of Mr. Carpenter, Mr. Hampden's referee), a staff was erected, having a red disc of wood exactly the same diameter affixed to the centre of which was also thirteen feet four inches above the water: and six miles beyond, three miles further, a third signal was placed, reaching the top of the bridge, thirteen feet four inches likewise above the water. These observations were made by means of a large telescope (four inches in diameter) and also by means of a sixteen-inch Troughton level, placed in the same position and height above the water as the large telescope. If the earth's surface were a plane, the centre signal-staff there was a red disc, which is also allowed to remain when it sinks below the water, or four feet lower than the other.

Now the result was, that in each of these observations, one taken from Welney Bridge, and the other from the Old Bedford Bridge, with the large achromatic telescope, the two discs of the central staff appeared in each case above the other letting the lower disc be identified in the centre was higher, and thus proving the convexity of the water. The result was precisely repeated with the telescope of a sixteen-inch Troughton level, placed in the same position. The umpires, of course, could not agree, and the editor of the *Field* was called in as referee. He decided that