

SCIENTIFIC MISCELLANY.

Currents of the Great Lakes—When the Northern Lights Appear—Argon by Simple Means—The Pygmies—Microbes in Wood Pavements—Risk in Looking at the Sun—A Formidable Flesh-Eating Plant—An Electric Toaster.

A revised atlas of the surface currents of the great lakes, as determined from the drift of bottles during the last three years is given by Prof. M. W. Harrington in Bulletin B. of the United States Weather Bureau. Nearly 5,000 bottles were floated, of which 672 were recovered. These showed the chief currents to be: Eastward along the south side of Lake Superior, westward along the north side, south along the west side of Michigan and Huron, north along the east side, generally eastward in Erie and Ontario. Local and transient currents during gales are sometimes strong enough to drag vessels from their moorings. A phenomenon which may be called a seiche—a single wave which is seen by navigators as a white wall approaching and passing—is an occasional occurrence.

Records for the northeast of Scotland from 1773 to 1894 show that in the 122 years the average number of auroras seen has been 7 per annum, varying from 50 in 1879 to none at all in 16 years of the time. At maximum sun-spot periods the auroras have been frequent and brilliant, while with the absence of sun spots there have been few or none. In no year has an aurora been observed between May 23 and July 22—that is, near the summer solstice, and the rest of the year shows two maxima, a primary in October and a secondary in February.

As a simple method of showing the presence of argon in atmospheric nitrogen, M. Guntz proposes absorbing the nitrogen by lithium, with which it readily combines below the temperature of dark redness. After a sufficient volume of atmospheric nitrogen has been passed the apparatus remains filled with argon, while if nitrogen from chemical decomposition is introduced nothing is unabsorbed.

A determination by Prof. Barnard with the Lick telescope places the diameter of Neptune at 32,900 miles, from 2,000 to 4,000 miles less than is stated in most text-books.

Dwarfs in Africa were mentioned by Homer, referred to an historical fact by Herodotus, and described by Aristotle, Pliny, a later writer, speaks of the pygmies as living in different countries. These references were substantially all that was known of the African pygmies until a few years ago, who accounts of them were first given to travelers by neighboring tribes, then they were seen by Schweinfurth, and specimens were finally brought to Europe. M. A. de Quatrefages, the eminent anthropologist, finds that the ancients had information, more or less real, concerning five populations of small stature. Two were located in Asia; a third to the south, toward the sources of the Nile; a fourth to the east, not far from these; and the fifth in Africa, to the southwest. Two of these groups, more or less modified by crossing, are still located in Asia. The African groups are farther away than the traditions represent, but in nearly the same direction. All of them are fragments of two races of blacks—those of Asia, Malaysia and Melanesia to be distinguished as Negritos, and those of Africa as Negrillos—both including tribes, distinct peoples and sub-races. The Negritos, contrary to a common belief, are not an approach to the "missing link," but are people of some development.

An investigation by M. Miquel tends to disprove the idea that wood pavement is a favorable breeding place for germs, and that it may have led to the Paris epidemic of grippe in 1889-1890. Sawdust from different depths was sown on nutritive gelatine, the colonies being counted at the end of 30 days. New pavement of pine blocks yielded 650 bacteria per gramme at a depth of an eighth of an inch; pavement of Landes pine laid in 1887 gave 1,400,000 bacteria per gramme at the surface, and only 4,200 at a depth of a fifth of an inch, and pitch-pine pavement laid in 1889 produced 1,004,000 bacteria per gramme at the surface, and only 500 at a depth of a twelfth of an inch. In all cases the germs were confined to the superficial layers of the wood. Paris mud, dried and pulverized, yielded from 40,000,000 to 50,000,000 bacteria per gramme.

The dangers of watching solar phenomena, even with the partial protection of colored glasses, have been pointed out by Dr. George Mackay, of Edinburgh, Galileo lost his vision in this manner. Sir Isaac Newton's retina was permanently injured, and Dr. Mackay has himself met with not less than 17 cases of impaired sight as a result of viewing with the unprotected eye the eclipses of 1890 and 1891.

Carnivorous plants are usually small,

but European journals have been giving accounts of one of gigantic size and great power which has been discovered by Dunstan on the shores of Lake Nicaragua. As this naturalist was walking with his dog, he was attracted by cries of pain from the latter, and, hastening to the rescue, he found the animal held by three black, sticky bands, which had chafed the skin to bleeding. These bands were branches of a new carnivorous plant, which Dunstan calls the "land-octopus." The branches are flexible, polished, black, without leaves, secreting a viscous fluid and furnished with a great number of suckers by which they attach themselves to their victims. It might almost be believed to be an octopus transformed into a plant, from which the dog was released with great difficulty and severe injury to the hands. Among the few facts learned was that the fetid odor of the sticky liquid serves to attract prey, and it was also observed that the "land-octopus," like other carnivorous plants, abandons its victims after sucking out the nutritive elements. To the natives this strange plant is known as "the Devil's noose."

The electric incubator upon which Otto Schulze, of Strasburg, has been at work for three years is intended to overcome the ordinary difficulties of the artificial hatching of chickens. The apparatus is easily manipulated, and requires only an uninterrupted but small supply of electricity. Automatic attachments regulate both temperature and moisture, the former being kept within a tenth of a degree of the normal temperature of incubation. In this apparatus, 90 in every 100 eggs are expected to hatch. An electric mother, a box in which the freshly hatched chicks can find heat and protection while being at liberty to run about on the ground when they choose, has been devised as an accompaniment of the incubator.

A cycle ambulance has been invented by Dr. Honig, of Berlin, who suggests its use for small towns where a horse ambulance is too expensive. It consists of a kind of covered litter resting on a frame with five wheels, three in the front and two at the back, is provided with a signal bell for the use of the patient, and is propelled by a cyclist at each end. Beneath the litter are boxes for materials, instruments, etc.

As to Silver.

The money question is such that the greatest alarm pervades the circle of the goldbugs. They fully realize that the people are determined to throw off the shackles which these money sharks have fastened upon them. Their hovel of "sound" money has lost its power to longer frighten the people. With the aid of benchmark and a liberal use of boodle they have successfully defeated the interest of the people. But matters have reached such a crisis that the people are compelled to call a halt to the policy that places them in the hands of these Shylocks.

From the howl these vampires are raising, one unacquainted with the facts would be to believe that silver had no intrinsic value and that bimetalism was a thing that had never been tried.

We have had bimetalism in this country, and it is a fact that the silver dollar was worth as much intrinsically as the gold dollar; in fact it was worth slightly more when it was demonetized in 1873. Why, then, was silver demonetized?

It was not on account of its decline in intrinsic value for the facts stand that the silver dollar was worth more than the gold dollar. The reason it was done is plain. It was a plan of the goldbugs who saw that what they were banking on were being eclipsed by the white metal. This was a bad thing for them, and therefore they set to work to cut silver down, which they did by shrewd legislation. Members voting to do this actually said they did not know that the effect would be to demonetize silver. So shrewdness, villainy and plotting demonetized silver and not the fear that silver was not "sound" money. And all the chatter and silver bluster about "sound" money is enough to give us the "boggs."—Raleigh Press.

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A BASIC MONETARY QUESTION.

Has Silver a Ratio with Gold in a Scientific Sense.

To THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—

The pending monetary discussion is tending more and more, among thoughtful persons, to pivot on the practicability and potentiality of bimetalism. Did it, when in operation in France in 1803-1872, keep in that country two metals at parity under free bimetallic coinage?

What is "value" when applied to coinage and coin? What is ratio in the sense of coinage and of value as well? Can the word "ratio" be accurately used to define a relation betwixt gold in a country where it is free coinage money and silver in another country where it is only merchandise? Or a relation betwixt gold, free coined, and silver nowhere free coined?

Inquiry is now fastening on this.—Did France by free bimetallic coinage make prevalent throughout the world, or anywhere, her mint weight ratio determining the comparative value of uncoined and coined lumps of either metal, thus uniting the two metals in one?

That is the basis question? While and where silver is merchandise, has it in a scientific sense "ratio" with gold where it has free coinage?

Much reliance is placed on the tables showing the price of silver in London when one bought it for shipment elsewhere, and on the relation of silver and gold during the great wars; but to what are the tables relevant? Even when France was bimetallic, did she undertake, on any day, to collect for money dealers coins of either metal for shipment, or exchange gold francs for silver francs? Does any accurate thinker now speak of "keeping the gold market steady" between New York and Berlin?

II

The London Times said a year ago.—More confidence might, perhaps, be felt in the maintenance of a ratio by agreement if bimetalists would deign to tell us what ratio they would fix if they had their way. * * * But it is at this point that the courage of the bimetalists fails them. One and all shrink from giving the smallest indication of what they think the ratio ought to be.

Cernuschi, the French apostle of bimetalism replied:—

Either it will be stipulated that silver is to be universal money and that gold is to be money in Europe and the United States at the ratio of 1 to 15½ of silver, or nothing will be stipulated. Why?

Because if, for the 15½ ratio, a ratio more favorable to gold were substituted, France would either have to melt down her gold francs in order to create lighter ones, or to melt down her silver francs in order to create heavier ones.

The 15½ ratio was proposed jointly by the governments of the United States and of France at the monetary conference held at Paris in 1881. That ratio cannot but suit Germany, for the thaler, which is full legal tender for three marks, is in the 15½ ratio of weight to three gold marks. The Dutch silver florin weighs almost exactly 15½ gold florins. The silver ruble weighs 15½ gold rubles. The silver peseta weighs 15½ gold pesetas. Thus the 15½ ratio suits also Holland, Russia and Spain.

What about the United States? The silver dollar weighs 412½ grains—that is to say, 16 gold dollars. It is too heavy. It would have to be replaced by a new dollar weighing 15½ gold dollars—that is to say, 400 grains. Thereby we see what the ratio of international free coinage must be, and how the United States will make nearly three cents on each by recoinage their silver dollars.

III

Mr. Cernuschi goes further. He contends that the fall in prices which is complained of is not due to what has been a scarcity of gold, a scarcity which is purely imaginary, and against which, if it were real, there could be no remedy. He insists that the monetary morbus by which the world is afflicted is not famine, nor yet contraction. It is a malady which never raged before. It has no known name. And he then affirms that the affliction can only be removed by a revival of the 15½ ratio. Under any other ratio, such as 25 or 30, he says "the losses inflicted by the fall in exchange upon agriculture, commerce and upon many industries in Europe, but especially in Great Britain, as the losses inflicted upon the finances of the silver monometallic States, and upon the creditors of those States, would become chronic, perpetual."—N. Y. Herald.

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Every naval officer is a jingo; every one of them would hail with delight a war with some great power, England preferred, on any sort of quarrel, just or unjust. A naval officer in time of peace is perpetually bored. He wants fame. Rear Admiral Meade dislikes the present Administration because it is not inclined to give the navy a chance to fight. Washington is full of naval officers who frankly say that they want a war with a frigate power above all things. Was it not old Ben-Franklin who remarked: "There never was a good war or a bad peace?"—Louisville Times.

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CHARLOTTE, N. C., May 15.—Boggs' "sound money" meeting at Raleigh was captured by the silver men, resolutions being adopted not to send delegates to Memphis. The Chamber of Commerce refused to back Boggs. Sam Ash in a reply to Boggs said: "The money question is greater than any other that has ever confronted the people of the world except the Reformation, and unless it is settled right the people will settle it if it requires another French revolution." Ashe added that the Memphis convention was a gold convention and Raleigh ought not to be represented in it at all.

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Practices in the courts of this and adjoining counties, also in the Federal courts. mh 8 ly

SALE OF CITY PROPERTY.

By virtue of the powers of sale contained in two deeds of trust executed May 14th, 1882 and August 5th 1883 by C. G. Watson to The First Building & Loan Association of Hickory, N. C., and duly registered—and because of default made in the payment of interest and dues specified in said deeds and to satisfy the claims of said Association, I, A. L. CROUSE, Secretary-Treasurer and Trustee will on Saturday, June 8th, 1895, at 2 p. m. before the Bank in Hickory, offer at public outcry to the highest bidder, the John or C. G. Watson property in the north-western part of Hickory, being about four acres of land with large residence recently remodelled; lot known as No. 1 on the plat of the Bank heirs Exact boundaries furnished upon application. TERMS—Cash, unless otherwise agreed upon. This May 1st, 1895. A. L. CROUSE, Sec-Treas. & Trustee. E. H. CLINE, Attorney.

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