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THE JOURNAL.

H. S. BUNN, - - - Editor.
W. HARPER, - - Business Manager.

NEW BERNE, N. C., SEPT. 9 1886.

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THE SCIENTISTS AT WORK.

The cause and nature of the recent earthquake shocks has opened fresh fields for investigation to scientific men, and they readily accept the task before them. Theories upon top theories will be advanced, but none will give sufficient light to devise means of avoiding such awful calamities. But nevertheless, there is no limit to man's desire for knowledge, and it is of general interest to know what men who have made the subject one of study and investigation think of the causes and nature of a shock that shook and alarmed, in a few minutes, half the American continent. A correspondent of the Baltimore *Sun*, writing from Charleston, gives the following:

Professor W. T. McGee has been very actively studying the physical signs and the effects of the earthquake. He very positively says that there are no volcanic signs in this earthquake. He does not think volcanism has anything to do with the disturbances, but that displacement of the basic rocks is the cause of the commotion, which opinion is strengthened by the evidently great area of the disturbance. He says the area is the largest recorded for any earthquake, and that volcanic [illegible] are usually local, while the slip of a coastal plain hundreds of miles in length may affect half a continent. The jerky nature of the shocks at Summerville are explained by this theory. The Professor says he thinks the general movement is over, and added the following reassuring statement: "I think the pressure has been relieved, and that there will be quiet for, perhaps, a long geologic period. The tendency to [illegible] and the movement will continue, though it may be inappreciable to the general public. It is probable that no more trouble will result, and that the slight shocks now noticeable here and there are the subsiding tremors. Perhaps the movement may be gentle hereafter in the South Atlantic States as it has been in the Middle States."

Subsequently, while he was in Summerville, Prof. McGee is reported to have said that when he left Washington he thought that he would have very little difficulty in determining the approximate cause of the earthquake, but confessed to have been much puzzled by his observations. Contrary to expectations, he found that the fissures were not uniform in their direction; some extended from north to south and others from east to west, and on this account he would hesitate now to give any scientific declaration.

But another Professor on the spot has a theory that differs from McGee and arouses the fears of the people as the following report sent out from Charleston on the 6th will show:

Considerable feeling was aroused in the city today by a statement of Prof. Simon Newcomb, that a tidal wave might be looked for or was within the probabilities. This opinion is [illegible] Professors McGee and Shaler, who are now here, and who say that if Prof. Newcomb [illegible] with the facts he would [illegible] to express any [illegible] opinion. The scientists [illegible] that there cannot be a [illegible] in consequence of or as an [illegible] of the recent earthquake. That there is no reason to [illegible] at Charleston. On account of the peculiar formation of the sea coast a tidal wave, even if it approached Charleston, would expend and dissipate itself in shallow water long before it reached our shores. Professors McGee and Meadenhall are confident that the earthquakes are substantially over, although there may be occasional [illegible] detonations. One of the reasons for saying this is that all the spouting wells which have been formed in the neighborhood of Charleston by the earthquake ceased to flow yesterday, which fact is taken as proof that the abnormal stress and pressure which induced the spouting have passed away and that normal conditions have been resumed.

CHARLESTON, S. C., Sept. 4.—Prof. W. J. McGee, of the U. S. Geological Survey, went to Summerville on Friday to investigate the immediate or remote causes of the recent earthquake. He stopped at Ten Mile Hill station, around which the earthquake was particularly active, and paid special attention to the matter which was thrown up from the craters which are numerous through the belt of country extending from Disbee's farm, about four miles from Ten Mile Hill north and south, and likewise east and west for an indefinite distance along the sea coast. Prof. McGee collected specimens of the soil and mud which had been thrown up, and samples of the water which flowed from the fissures, taking particular notice of the cavities on the farm of Charles Lee, the largest of which is sixteen feet square and about sixteen feet deep. At Summerville, Prof. McGee continued his investigations and talked freely with gentlemen there. One of these gives the *News and Courier* a sketch of Prof. McGee's statement. Prof. McGee said that ornamental work and ginger-bread work in Charleston were in many instances out of proportion to the building, and these parts would be apt to fall and carry away portions of the general structure. He said that when he left Washington City he thought he would have very little difficulty in determining the approximate cause of the earthquake but confessed to have been much puzzled by his observations. Contrary to expectations, he found that the fissures were not uniform in their direction; some extended from north to south and others from east to west, and on this account he would hesitate now to give any scientific declaration. He did, however, give the opinion that the shocks were the result of local land slides. By the term "local," he does not mean that the shakes can be traced to any particular place at Summerville, Charleston or elsewhere, and remarked that there was no connection between the shakes and suppressed volcanic action. His impression is that the area covered by the land slide theory, has been from forty to one hundred miles under the bed of the sea. He was confident, moreover, that the worst was passed. This statement, however, was made prior to the severe shock at 11 o'clock last night. He left Summerville this morning for the phosphate district, where he will continue observations.

The above observations have been made on the spot, but after more thorough investigation these gentlemen may themselves come to some other conclusion.

A Veteran Farmer's Views.

The floods of last spring and excessive rains of June, which damaged lands and crops to a large extent, point out three things that the farmers must do to save their fields from ruin. Drainage and terracing—next, the saving of timber by doing away with fencing, and the encouraging of forest growth. Drainage and terracing are within reach of all who have the will and sagacity to have the work done, and it can be done by any intelligent farmer who will provide himself with a level to lay off the terracing, also to lay off ditches where ditches are necessary. The work is simple; the most important part is locating where the terracing should be laid off; when that is done, making the terraces is to have it high enough and strong enough to keep the rain fall from breaking through them. Lands but partially terraced showed their importance and utility in saving lands from washing during the heavy rains we had in the spring, and also in June—fields not terraced were badly washed and some farms were nearly ruined—hence the importance of this great work; it must be done and done at once to preserve our farms from washing and gullying. Next is doing away with fencing and saving what little timber we have left from being entirely destroyed. Our timber is too valuable for building purposes and other uses as well as for fuel to be destroyed as it is being done for fencing. We can do without fencing to great advantage by adopting the stock-law, which is to fence in stock, and where stock is kept up and properly cared for, we raise finer animals, and make it decidedly more profitable than the scrub stock we now have that make their living in the public highways, nibbling what scanty herbage they find in the fence corners, and as for the woodland range in the mountains of North Georgia, it affords more rocks than vegetable matter; hence they are worthless for stock purposes. But here is another question of greater importance in saving our forest growth than perhaps has ever been considered by our people. It is [illegible] that when the forest has been cleared up it produces a great change of climate—there is less humidity in the atmosphere, especially in the summers; hence we are more often visited with summer droughts so destructive to crops, and our winters have become so cold and bleak—and again by denuding the hills of their forest growth, they become but watersheds that run off the rain floods precipitately in the rivers and creeks and filling them eventually with sand and mud that causes them to overflow their banks and inundate towns and farms which of late is becoming a frequent occurrence, to the damage of millions of dollars and ruination of all farms that the floods sweep over. True, the forest growth has been largely and wantonly destroyed, so much so in some sections of the country, there is hardly a sufficiency of timber left to properly fence in the farms, and when we consider what great damage is done by floods, and the various other uses there is for timber, why can't the Legislature take the proper view of the situation and without leaving it to the vote of the people, when over half that vote do not own a foot of land or a stick of timber, but vote under the idea that stock should be permitted to run at large for all who own perhaps one cow and one pig—a freeman's privilege, when for the privilege of a few who own one cow or one pig it costs millions of dollars, and other damages, for a class who do not own a foot of land or a stick of timber? We should think the Legislature, for the welfare of the State, as the State's welfare depends on its agricultural success, should independently act for the good of the State and pass a general law doing away with fencing, so as to preserve timber and forest growth, and by such a law all who wished to fence in their fields would not be debarred of so doing if they saw proper to do so.

The general good should be considered, and not stickle to what the legislators call class legislation. Save the timber, and guard against floods and inundations if forest growth is a preventive which experience demonstrates to be so. The capital of the farmer is in keeping up the fertility of his farm; the prosperity of the State depends on its agricultural resources and prosperity, as such, agriculture must be fostered and protected by legislation, when it becomes necessary to do so. Monopolists require no legislative protection; their capital protects them and it was great injustice to the farmers and laboring classes when the Legislature of Georgia exempted capitalists building factories in the State from five year's taxation. A farmer coming from another State and buying a farm in Georgia should have been entitled to the same exemption, for he was also bringing capital into the State. So why talk of class legislation when it comes to the fence question and it is not considered class legislation when it comes to exempting monopolists moving into Georgia and not exempting a farmer who also brings his capital in the State? All I can say to that is, farmers are very conservative and can stand most anything imposed upon them, whilst the bloated monopolists are exacting and bring the legislators to their terms. The monopolists are imperious whilst the farmers are conservative, and that is the reason their wants are not considered by legislators. Their votes and taxes are scrupulously looked after by legislators, but when it comes to the fence question and protecting animals from vicious dogs, we are simply told that the people must settle such matters among themselves. These questions should be fully discussed in the agricultural clubs and what they determine is to be for the interest of agriculture and the farmers, they should see to it that the Legislature would comply with those demands when just and reasonable.

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