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"QUEEN'S WEATHER."

EFFECT OF SUNSHINE ON THE LONDON PARKS.

A Great Metropolis Free from its Gloom and Fog—Hunting for the Prince Albert Memorial—East and West End—Great Picture Collections—General Gossip.

(Special Correspondence.)

LONDON.—Seldom has as fine a season been known in London. The "Queen's weather" has taken hold upon the environment, and sunshine prevails in a manner that must be well nigh alarming to umbrella-loving Britons. For eight weeks—before, during and after the jubilee—the vast crowds that have thronged "The Great City" have come and gone and marveled at the unprecedented fairness of the weather. A half-dozen times have I seen the world's metropolis swathed in rain and mist, in smoke and dinginess, never supposing that it could exist without its enveloping gloom. And lo! now the seventh visit has proved its luck; the cloud is lifted, and from discolored stone and blackened brick and smoked marble London smiles.

For the first time to my consciousness the parks and gardens and little green squares bloom out of an obscurity that must have held them all along unseen. Hyde Park, Regent's Park, St. James' Park, Kensington Gardens are now picturesque realities—actual bits of nature in the midst of surrounding masses of bricks and mortar, whereas formerly they have seemed to me mere names, inclosed with an iron railing.

I well remember going once to see the Prince Albert memorial. It was during a fog, the density of which, however, we had not tested. We descended from the cab into what seemed like an ocean of bad-smelling, bad-tasting mist. "Where is the monument?" I asked. "'Ere it, his," said cabby. We groped about for some minutes, feeling with outstretched hands. Presently, one of us touched an iron railing, and so we stood looking until we were tired. There was absolutely nothing there but a wall of fog. Now, the monument fairly glitters in sunlight. Every American who meets another in the street or hotel or park grasps his brother by the hand with fervent congratulations, while the chuckle of the Englishman is heard in the land. During the review at Aldershot we were covered with dust, and even when the Queen reviewed her navy at Spithead it still forgot to rain.

Nothing could be more lively than the aspect of these crowded thoroughfares. The stream of private equipages, got up with an elegance of which only London is capable, is incessant, showing off to the best advantage handsome women, faultless toilets and immaculate lackeys, while in and out dash the perpetual hansoms at a rate of speed known only to the London cab, and which endangers not alone the life and limbs of pedestrians, but also the bones and sinews of the vehicles themselves. The shops are gorgeous. I felt a thrill of responsive pleasure go through every yard of dry goods upon my person at the thought of Jay's, of Howell & James', of Swan & Edgar's, and even of Peter Robinson's. But coaches and shops, parks and palaces, do not make all of London, as Walter Besant has manfully reminded the upper ten thousand, by pointing out in his book, "All Sorts and Conditions of Men," that vast quarter of London given up to the meagre ways and means of the other three million nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand. The stir which attended his book was followed by another over "The People's Palace," philanthropically projected and inadequately carried out by the wealthy "West End" for the benefit of the "great unwashed" in East London. "There are," says a modern writer, "two Londons. The one lies to the west, and is a paradise for the rich; the other stretches north, east, south in ever widening misery, and is a place of torment for the poor."

Perhaps no feature of the London season is more interesting to strangers (who have only the theatres, the concerts and other public amusements in lieu of the dinners, teas, balls and receptions of fashionable denizens) than the great number of pictures to be seen during the months of May, June and July. Aside from permanent collections, such as the National Gallery, or the Dore Gallery—always open—the last spring month brings out those delightful displays of painting and sculpture which represent the year's work of the best living artists.

One has only to look at the pictures in the Grosvenor Gallery to believe in the final triumph of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (whose works are now exhibited by themselves), of Millais, of Holman Hunt and of Edward Burne-Jones—those ardent spirits who first undertook to astound the old fogies of the Royal Academy. There used to be a great deal of fun poked at the exhibitors of the Grosvenor Gallery and the æsthetic rage which they created in London. The "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood" is no more; but the royal academicians have considerably modified their old-fogyism, and a few days ago a monument was unveiled in Kensington Gardens to the memory of the once reviled Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Indeed, the neighborhood of New Bond street tingles with the achievements of the æsthetic school. The Royal Institute of Painters in Water-colors, and other exhibitions of the same character, prove that art has indeed undergone a change since the days when the old-fashioned English aquarelle led the world against all modern innovations of water-color painters.

It is not worth while to attempt a description of any of the year's pictures now in London, although one of Edward Burne-Jones and the last Alma Tadema sorely tempt me to make a word sketch of their marvelous character and color. This last is the gem of the Royal Academy in spite of an exquisite head by Sir Frederic Leighton. Doubtless the American journals have discussed its merits. I see, by the by, that our own favorite Boughton has been elected a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-colors in the most flattering manner.

In both the Grosvenor Gallery and the Royal Academy, portraiture occupies an unusually prominent position, suggesting a much-to-be-hoped-for renaissance of that wonderful school of English portrait painting of which Sir Thomas Lawrence, Sir Peter Lely and Sir Joshua Reynolds were the lights.

To leave the charming haunts of New Bond street I would touch those other haunts of art—the theatres. Never in the modern world has the art of playing reached such perfection as is attained by Miss Terry and Mr. Irving in their own Lyceum Theatre and in the play of "Olivia." In the London theatres everything is put upon the boards at its best, and our own Albani sings the part of Elsa in "Lohengrin" with advantages which could seldom be given her in an American opera house. But Patti—I must close with a word about Patti. We all know how callous she has proved herself to the feelings of the American public, but one would have supposed a London audience, with the Prince of Wales in his box, might have inspired some respect. On the contrary, *three times within a week* did she (aided and abetted by Mr. Mapleson) fail the British public in Her Majesty's Opera House.

L. CLARKSON.

CEYLON SONG BIRDS.

Some of the Folk Lore Gathered from the Natives of That Country.

A correspondent of the *Ceylon Observer* notes some points in the folk lore of the birds of Ceylon, obtained largely in conversation with natives. The devil bird stands *facile princeps* for his evil reputation; its cry heard in the neighborhood of villages is a sure harbinger of death, and the superstitious natives are thrown into great consternation by its demoniac screech. The legend about the bird is as follows: A jealous and morose husband doubting the fidelity of his wife killed her infant son during her absence and had it cooked, and on her return set it before her. She unwittingly partook of it, but soon discovered that it was the body of her child by a finger which she found in the dish. In a frenzy she fled to the forest, and was transformed into a devil bird, whose appalling screams represent the agonized cries of the bereaved mother when she left her husband's house. The hooting of owls in the neighborhood of houses is believed to bring misfortune on the inmates. The magpie robin, though one of the finest of the song birds of Ceylon, is similarly tabooed; it has a harsh, grating screech toward evening, which is considered ominous.

The quack of the pond heron flying over a house is a sign of the death of one of the inmates, or of a death in the neighborhood. If the green pigeon should happen to fly through a house, as it frequently does on account of its rapid and headlong flight, a calamity is impending over that house. Similarly with the crow. But sparrows are believed to bring luck and are encouraged to build in the neighborhood of houses, and are daily fed. The fly-catcher bird of Paradise is called "cotton thief," because in ancient times it was a freebooter and plunderer of the cloth merchants. As a penalty for its sins it was transformed into a bird and doomed to carry a white cotton attached to its tail. The red wattle lapwing, the alarm bird of sportsmen, has the following legend connected with it: It is said to represent a woman who committed suicide on finding herself robbed of all her money, amounting to thirty silver pieces, by her son-in-law. The cry of the bird is likened to her lament: "Give the silver, give the silver, my thirty pieces of silver." Its call is heard at all hours, and the stillness of night is broken with startling abruptness by its shrill cry.

Another story about it is that when lying in its nest in a paddy field, or a dry spot in a marsh, it lies on its back with its legs in the air, being in continual fear that the heavens will fall and crush its offspring. The story current about the blue-black swallow-tailed fly-catcher and its mortal enemy, the crow, is that the former, like Prometheus of old, brought down fire from Heaven for the benefit of man. The crow, jealous of the honor, dipped its wings in water and shook the drippings over the flame, quenching it. Since that time there has been deadly enmity between the birds. The Indian ground thrush (*Pitta coronata*) is said to have once possessed the peacock's plumes, but one day when bathing the peacock stole its dress; ever since the *Pitta* has gone about the jungle crying out for its lost garments. According to another legend, the bird was formerly a prince who was deeply in love with a beautiful princess. His father sent him to travel for some years, and on his return the princess was dead. He still wanders disconsolately about calling her name. It is also said that the peacock, being a bird of sober plumage, borrowed the brilliant coat of the *Pitta* to attend a wedding, and did not return it. The disconsolate *Pitta* wanders through the jungle calling on the peacock to restore its dress—hence the cry, *ayittam, ayittam* (my dress, my dress). The cry of the hornbill is inauspicious and a sure sign of drouth. The bird is doomed to suffer intolerable thirst; not being able to drink from any other stream or rill, it has the power only to catch the rain-drops in its bill to quench its thirst, and keeps continually crying for rain.

MARRIAGE IN ANNAM.

Some Customs Firmly Founded on Justice and Morality.

Marriage settlements and dowries are not recognized on account of the difficulties that might arise in case the marriage is dissolved. According to Annamite custom, the woman should not bear the charges of marriage, because she takes the name of her husband and associates herself with him in order to perpetuate his family, not for the sake of her own. It is just for the husband, in his own personal interest, to furnish all that she and her children may need; yet according to another custom frequently followed, the suitor whose character is not well known should make several visits to the family of his affianced, so as to admit himself to a kind of testing, often very severe, which shall permit his value and the amount of his knowledge to be rated. This stage of the negotiations sometimes lasts for several years.

Marriage is usually contracted by inclination, without money considerations entering into the matter. The family is regarded as a moral union, and not as a business association. Hence it is common to see a wealthy family allied with a poor one. It is considered that when a man marries a girl without fortune, but wisely brought up, she will be easily touched by the care he will take of her, and be obedient to his authority. Then, it is not right to exact a dowry from a girl whose education has already imposed on her parents large sacrifices of time and money, and who has, moreover, abandoned her family name to take that of a stranger, so there is no dowry. The parents give their daughter what they please without the young man being allowed to claim or stipulate for anything. Sometimes they require him to make considerable presents, which will be the sole property of the wife. It must not be supposed that the condition of wives is the same in Annam as in China. The six ceremonies of marriage are, it is true, nearly the same in both countries; but while the Chinese wife has to keep to her apartments, the Annamite wife is treated as the equal of her husband.—*Popular Science Monthly.*

REVIVING AN ANCIENT CUSTOM.

A Lady in New York Appointed to the Office of Deaconess.

St. George's Church, the largest Episcopal church in New York city, and of which the Rev. Mr. Rainsford is the pastor, has just revived the old ecclesiastical office of deaconess, after it had disappeared from the church for centuries. The person so honored is Miss Julia Forneret, a Canadian lady of the utmost zeal and devotion. Miss Forneret will engaged in mission work connected with St. George. An account says: "The visitation of the sick, inquiry into the needs of the poor, a helping hand for the myriad ailments which run from basement to garret, in crowded tenement houses of the city, is what Deaconess Forneret has embraced as her life work. It is certainly a new and distinct departure in the Episcopal church to consecrate and employ deaconesses in its labors. Miss Forneret enjoys the honor of reviving in her person this apostolic privilege of her sex. Mr. Rainsford is hopeful that other pious ladies will soon follow in the footsteps of such praiseworthy example."—*New Orleans Times-Democrat.*

PROBOSCIS ANIMALS.

THE ORGAN WHICH ATTRACTS THE GREATEST ATTENTION.

Trunk of the Elephant Really a Fifth Hand—Wonderful Dexterity Secured by Some of These Monsters—A Curiosity Discovered in South America.

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IN all the animal kingdom, with its multifarious forms of varied shape and appearance, none attract so much attention as the elephants or proboscidians. This is chiefly due to the fact that the elephant possesses a trunk or proboscis. Without this organ it would be a huge unwieldy creature, attracting no more notice than a whale; but the trunk gives it an unique appearance and stamps it at once, as far as external contour goes, as one of the most remarkable and striking of all animals. Without the trunk the elephant would starve to death, as shown in the case of an Indian elephant that, having lost its trunk by accident, was unable to feed itself, and would soon have died had it not been for the man detailed to feed it.

The trunk is literally a fifth hand or general utility organ. With it the elephant draws in water and ejects it into its mouth. It also takes up dust and throws it over its back or introduces the trunk into the mouth and draws water from the stomach to blow over the heated body. At a word from the driver the latter is lifted by the trunk upon the elephant's back. With the trunk the smallest stones are picked up and handed to the mahout to throw at elephants ahead. The pet elephant of the Duke of Devonshire drew corks with its trunk with great gusto, and Colonel Nicholas Pike, of Brooklyn, our late consul at the Mauritius, informs me that he has seen the same act performed. With its trunk the elephant smells, lifts light objects, can hurl a tiger thirty feet through the air uses it as an organ of touch and also utters through it ear-splitting sounds. In fact, the trunk is to the elephant what hands are to man, and one of the most extraordinary organs known. In Jumbo it presented an astonishing appearance when swinging to and fro, resembling some huge pendulum attached to a wonderful machine.

The trunk, as it is commonly called, is formed by union and prolongation of the nose and upper lips. Externally, it appears, especially in old elephants, to be ringed, and in the mammoth it was to some extent hairy or covered with bristles. The trunk rarely attains a length of over seven feet, and is inserted on the nasal opening and high up on the face. If a section is made it will be found to have two tubes which are closed proximately by valves and free at the destal end, where there is a thumb and fore-finger-like arrangement. Large muscles attached to the face bones control the trunk, and it contains or is made up of an enormous number of small muscles, estimated by Cuvier at 40,000. The muscles are transverse and oblique. There is a superficial set extending longitudinally, some anterior and others posterior, others again being lateral, while a deep set are radiate and transverse. This wonderful combination explains the multifarious movements which this organ is capable of. The trunk of the elephant, as powerful as it is, is not used in the reckless way generally supposed. When an attack is made the trunk is raised high out of the way to a place of safety. In drawing or lifting heavy loads the trunk is not used. Asiatic elephants when hauling take the rope in their mouths, allowing it to rest over the tusk, and when a heavy load is to be lifted the weight is borne by the tusks, the trunk being used merely to hold the timber in position. Extraordinary tales are told of the destruction of forests in Africa by the elephants of that country; yet while these trees, the mimosa, are large and seemingly ponderous, they have no top root, and it is comparatively easy to overthrow them.

While the elephants are the only living forms which may be said to have trunks in the popoular acceptation of the term, there are a number of animals which may lay claim to having a proboscis, or a prolongation of the lip, that in its use calls to mind this organ. The lip-finger of the rhinoceros might almost be termed an organ of itself, while the prominent lip of the tapir, the upper being extended to a striking length, is well shown when the animal is reaching after anything. The Saiga antelope is another example.

Burmeister, the eminent South American paleontologist and anatomist, has discovered a curious animal in the pliocene deposits of that country which he considers as belonging to the horse family, yet as having quite a long proboscis. Burmeister shows a head and neck of a horse-like creature with a trunk perhaps two feet long, a conjectural restoration of this animal which he calls Macrauchenza Patagonia, as shown in the accompanying cut, the head and proboscis being after Burmeister and the body added by the present writer, to show how possibly the animal might have appeared. Thousands of years ago these strange animals may have roamed the Patagonian country, perhaps being exterminated by early man or dying a natural death, their extirpation hastened by some climatic change.

In the common horse of to-day the power of prolongation in the upper lip in reaching is well known to all and considerable power or force is thus developed. It is supposed by paleontologists that the extinct denocerata were elephantine animals with trunks.

Among some of the small mammals, as the shrew, there is a decided proboscis, and in the so-called elephant shrew it is very pronounced. The proboscis of the insect-eating mammals is, however, not at all homologous to those of the true proboscidians, being largely constituted by nasal cartilages, and of course not susceptible of such extended movements.

The sea elephant has a proboscis capable of considerable extension, but only showing to the best advantage when the animal is enraged, when it appears to be inflated with air. Whether it is of any actual use to the huge animal is not known, and its size and length are generally exaggerated in popular works.

C. F. HOLDER.

A NOVEL SOCIETY.

An Association of Inventors Lately Discovered in Paris.

[Special Correspondence.]

A society of inventors has been discovered in Paris. The great fraternities of Frenchmen who work that they may live are firm believers in the Belgian motto—"Union is strength"—and nearly every trade and profession has its *syndicat*, or council, which watches over the interests of the workers. There are councils and associations of masters, and councils and associations of men. All this is intelligible in the case of a particular branch of industry, but inventors may be anything or nothing, and they may stand on quite different rounds of the social ladder. M. Jules Imbs, who is president of the new-born "Syndicat des Inventeurs," says their object is to bring about a union among French inventors, to help and guide them, and protect their individual interests as well as the collective interests of invention in general. Inventors should have the same rights of property as are accorded to painters, musicians, authors and dramatists. To be a member of the new brotherhood a man must be a Frenchman and have invented and patented something. There is an annual subscription payable, but unfortunate inventors are forgiven it. The syndicate does not maintain its members in luxury and ease, but it places them under the wing of the "Association des Inventeurs," founded by Baron Taylor, which possesses a revenue of $2,400 and holds out a hope of pecuniary assistance during hard times. The president, however, regrets that the offerings of a grateful public do not flow into the inventors' bank as plentifully as into that of the French authors, composers or artists. In this, as in many other respects, present-day society looks upon the inventor as a sort of pariah, when it is charitable enough not to look upon him as a madman. The new combination will help its members morally and materially, and it will also strive to reform the law of 1844, which does not recognize inventors as they ought to be recognized. The man who counterfeits or imitates anything invented is considered by the general public as a clever fellow, whilst he is nothing more nor less than a dishonest man and a thief, and must be punished as such. Since modern society owes so much of its wealth and comfort to inventors, inventors must be granted the protection which is their due, and not left to be oppressed, despoiled and ridiculed as they have been. The law of 1844, it appears, has simply "served to develop the logomachy of lawyers and make fortunes for the worst enemies of genius and invention." When two members of the syndicate happen to come to loggerheads about a machine or what not, the points in dispute will be referred to a committee, after which the parties, if still dissatisfied, may indulge in law if they like. The syndicate hopes to accomplish the legal reform by 1889, and a "Museum of Labor" will be organized, containing records as to experiments made in different branches of science and art and all sorts of documents useful to inventors. The programme of the united inventors has much to recommend it, but I am afraid it will be difficult of execution.

The greatest truths are the simplest; so are the greatest men.

SHORTHAND.

HOW PEOPLE WRITE AS FAST AS THEY CAN TALK.

System Used in Reporting the Debates in the British Parliament—Handed Down from Father to Son—Isaac Pitman's Invention and the Use it Has Been Put to.

For ages it has been a great object with mankind to write as fast as they can talk. Systems of writing adapted to this purpose are called "shorthand writing," though there seems to be no reason why we should not drop the "hand" and call them simply "short writing." Cicero had a slave who could report his speeches, word for word, as they were uttered. The system used to report debates in the English Parliament is that of a man named Gurney, and was invented many years ago. It is purely arbitrary—that is, it consists of signs which represent objects or words, by an understanding that they shall do so, and not according to any system; thus a circle would stand for the world, &c. Mr. Gurney made his system very rapid by having a large number of signs for whole phrases of frequent occurrence, such as "there ought not to have been," "the honorable gentleman on the other side," &c. A fast speaker can be followed with ease by a Gurney reporter; and ever since the system was invented the proceedings of the British Parliament have been thus reported by generation after generation of the Gurney family, the children learning the art just as soon as they can handle a pencil, and practicing under the supervision of their elders long before they enter upon the work of actual reporting. The system, however, is very laborious and difficult to acquire. Dickens is said to have described his own experience in learning it in the thirty-eighth chapter of "David Copperfield." A Gurney writer, who was in this country during a celebrated trial in New York, some years ago, while he competed successfully with the other reporters, said that he would recommend no adult to undertake to make himself an expert in the method. It bears, indeed, the same relation to a system of shorthand which has an alphabet, and spells its words according to fixed rules, that Chinese bears to ordinary English.

There are many such systems now in use for writing our language, but most of them are modifications of the "phonography," or sound writing, which was invented by Isaac Pitman, of Bath, England. This is based on the principle of putting down signs for the sounds, as they fall from the speaker's lips, which is nominally the principle of all our spelling, though of course the signs cannot be the letters in ordinary use. In practice, too, phrases are built up and abbreviations used as in longhand. Mr. Pitman also started out with the rule of writing one invariable sign for the same sound under all circumstances, but in actual reporting he employs several signs for the same sound, according to the combination with others in which it is found. It was necessary for him, in constructing his system, to devise a set of characters which could be easily learned, easily remembered when wanted, easily written and easily read afterward. For this purpose he constructed his alphabet out of the circle and its diameters, or lines drawn through its centre, to represent the consonants; and used dots or dashes placed before or after the consonants to represent the vowels. In actual reporting there is no time to write vowels, and their sound is indicated by putting the consonants above the line if a "first-place" vowel is understood, as in the word "eat;" on the line if a "second-place" vowel is understood, as in the word "ate;" and below the line if a "third-place" vowel is understood, as in the word "at." It is found that a great deal of time is lost in taking the hand off the paper, and various devices are adopted to avoid this in familiar phrases.

To learn phonography takes a diligent student of ordinary capacity working four hours a day about nine months. He has then mastered the theory of the system, as he might the elements of music. Afterward perfect accomplishment can only be attained and kept by constant practice. The average speed of a good phonographer is about 150 words a minute. The writer does not believe it possible for the best adept to follow a very rapid speaker for any great length of time with perfect accuracy. The strain of the work is tremendous, and no man earns a living by more exacting and exhausting labor than the professional shorthand writer. Think what he has to do—first to catch the sound, then to recall the sign for it, and lastly to write the character down. And this without an instant's hesitation, for if he is forced to pause ever so brief a space as to consider exactly what the orator has just said—lo! a sentence has slipped away from him. He must, in short, hear, think and write with an unvarying distinctness, promptness and legibility. Fortunately, the severest test is not by any means always put upon the reporter; most distinct speakers are deliberate, and an examination in court, consisting of questions and answers, with its frequent pauses, is not a difficult job; but chaos comes to the reporter when, as sometimes happens, witness and attorney insist on talking "both at once." The phonographer's great labor, as a rule, is in getting his notes transcribed. The typewriter, with its rapid and neat work, is an assistance to him. A reporter will frequently dictate to four typewriter copyists at the same time, thus greatly shortening the time of transcription. Others send out their report from time to time to copyists who can read their notes, and thus have the transcript ready soon after the taking of the report is completed. The introduction of a system of shorthand, based on the use of a single sign for a single sound, can hardly fail to help on the desirable reform in the ordinary spelling of English words.

JAMES T. RINGGOLD.

In a New Light.

Colonel John A. McCaull, the well-known comic opera manager, was a soldier in the Confederate army. He has a single answer to every one who attempts to chaff him about the rebel flags. "Confound your impudence," he says, "who made this country anyway? Where would the developed greatness have been if we hadn't rebelled? Who gave you fellows up North a chance to get rich and rob each other? Who enabled Grant to leave the tanner's store? Who gave 'Phil' Sheridan a chance? Wouldn't Sherman still have been out on the frontier mixing with Indians but for us? Why, gentlemen, we have made you. You can't crow over us."—*New Orleans Times-Democrat.*

"Jeremiah, did you bring that hunk of oleomargarine from town with you?" inquired Farmer Goshem. "Yes, father." "Well, jis' drop it inter the churn and call out the summer boarders."—*Worcester Gazette.*

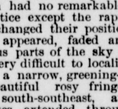
NO WONDER THEY LAUGH.

When'er you see an ancient chap,
Take up a baby in his lap,
And bounce the infant on his knee,
Until it fairly crows with glee,

Make up your mind the reason why
Is that the youngster doesn't cry,
And gets its happy little mood
From eating Lorgeine, Baby Food.

But when you find the little dears
Inclined to waste themselves in tears,
Remember how of yore you cried
When hunger was unsatisfied.

Then as their doleful cries attest
The emptiness of mother's breast,
See pain give place to joyful mood,
Charmed thence by Lorgeine, Baby Food.



And all who substitute Lorgeine
To nurture baby, or to wean,
Find as they view its healthy state,
The strongest praise inadequate.

No longer then we vainly seek
For roses on the infant cheek,
Since chubby angels do we see
In babies plump as plump can be.

Lorgeine by day the babes delight,
Lorgeine a soothing balm at night,
Lorgeine the safest nutriment,
Lorgeine the good and excellent.

For with conviction's hearty force,
Lorgeine do mothers glad indorse,
And they — relieved from baby cares—
Include Lorgeine in all their prayers.

ALASKA AURORAS.

A Most Marvelous and Beautiful Arch of Kaleidoscopic Light.

Lieutenant Ray, in his report to the government on the international Polar expedition to Point Barrow, Alaska, says: "Every clear night the sky was illuminated by the most beautiful displays of aurora it has ever been my fortune to witness. They always commenced in the northeast and the northwest, and seemed to spring from a dark, low bank of clouds. The lights were never stationary for a single second, neither did they ever take the form of bows or arches, so often seen in other latitudes, but great curtains of light, flashing with all the prismatic colors, seemed to be drawn across the heavens, ever rising and changing, and often culminating in a corona of the zenith, and falling like a shower of meteoric fire. As the winter advanced these displays were more brilliant, and were always of a character that defies description, either by pen or pencil, as they were never for two seconds alike. They were unaccompanied by any sound, so far as we were able to observe, and the deathly stillness that always prevails in this region when the sea is closed gave us an excellent opportunity to detect any sound had there been any."

Lieutenant Ray thus more specifically describes one of these auroras—one of the most magnificent displays that he observed, and which occurred December 8, 1881:

"The first appearance was in the south and southeast, and for several hours nothing appeared but a few pale arches and bands, which had no remarkable features worthy of notice except the rapidity with which they changed their position and character. They appeared, faded and reappeared in various parts of the sky so quickly that it was very difficult to localize them. At 2.40 A. M. a narrow, greening-yellow arch, with a beautiful rosy fringe, developed in the south-southeast, and in a few minutes extended through Taurus, Cassiopeia and Cygnus down to the north, and for about ten minutes displayed some extremely beautiful tints, especially along its northern halt. It seemed to be composed of an infinite number of short rays in a condition of intense vibration, the motion being principally in the direction of its length, while flashes of the most vivid coloring beamed out in the most bewildering variety. At the same time numerous rays and patches of quivering light appeared in various parts of the sky in quick succession, dancing and gyrating to and fro, swift as the lightning flash. While the northern half of the arch remained thus brilliant the southern half faded away.

"A few minutes afterward a patch of rosy, greenish light appeared in the middle of Orion, and in a minute or two developed into numerous sheaves of rays with the greatest variety and intensity of motion, and displaying the most brilliant colors as they rose and converged to a point close to the star Aigol, forming an imperfect but most brilliant corona, which swayed and swirled and eddied around our zenith with a kaleidoscropic magnificence utterly indescribable. The changes of tint, aspect and position were so rapid and numerous that the eye strove to follow their bewildering confusion in vain. The general motion was to the north, though a brilliant curtain was at the same time moving toward the zenith from the north. The brilliancy of the moon seemed to have little effect on the intensity of the colors which appeared. The colors were very numerous. Orange, yellow, rose, ruby-red, peach blossom, emerald green and numerous intermediate tints changed and interchanged in beautiful confusion. The whole phenomenon of waving wreaths, flickering flames, rays, curtains, fringes, bands and flashing colors, the strange confusion of light and motion, presented a picture of which words can convey a very poor idea. The whole display lasted about thirty minutes. There was also intense magnetic disturbance during this time, the needles being almost unmanageable. The peculiarity of this aurora was the lowness in the atmosphere, several patches of cloud, apparently not very elevated, appearing far above it. It did not entirely disappear until about 12, mid-day."

The First Banjo-player.

The first man who ever played a banjo was Joe Sweeney, and his instrument was an excavated gourd with four strings. Joe gave the first tunes in a public circus tent. He was a deck hand, working on a canal, going from Richmond to Lynchburg. He afterward was with negro minstrel companies, and was a great feature, both in this country and Europe.—*Baltimore American.*

Baseball Lovers to Arms!

"It's a shame," says the duke, "that the National League should be suppressed by the English government. There are no finer men in the world than Anson, Mike Kelly, Hardy Richardson, Joe Hornung and other eminent ball players that I might mention. Will we permit Great Britain to rob us of our national game without a protest? Never, by gum!"—*Utica Observer.*

The Busy Scientist.

Dr. Spencer F. Baird was the author of more than 1,200 books, pamphlets and publications of various kinds.

When Shakspeare said "There's a divinity which shapes our ends," did he (a correspondent asks) refer to a lady adjusting her bustle?

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