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DESERET EVENING NEWS

Saturday, - August 16, 1890

AN ANCIENT WAR VETERAN.

PHENOMENAL MR. CONRAD WHO IS ABOUT 110 YEARS OLD.

On a farm about six miles from Manchester, Ia., lives Christian Conrad, a native of Cumberland County, Pa., who was born September 25, 1780. Despite his great age he busies himself in caring for his cattle and hogs, cutting wood, and raising corn and potatoes.

But it is not for his years alone that Mr. Conrad is worthy of notice. He is one of the very few surviving veterans of the war of 1812. He took part in the assault on Queenstown Heights, was in the battle of Fort Erie, witnessed Perry's great naval victory, and received an honorable discharge at Sackett's harbor. Mr. Conrad married sixty years ago. His wife still lives, and the couple have eleven children, forty-two grandchildren, and thirty-four great grandchildren. The old gentleman has used liquor and tobacco all his days, believes in personal liberty, goes to bed at 9 o'clock, gets up at 5 a.m., and votes the democratic ticket whenever there is an election.—*Topeka Daily Capital.*

English Theatrical Customs.

In London during the time of Charles I. the playhouses were open on Sunday, albeit such amusements were never made lawful on the Lord's day, and it may be that Shakespeare himself, at an earlier period, has strutted and fretted his hour upon the stage on that day. In 1580 the lord mayor appealed to the lords of the council against the practice, and held the opinion that "the exercise of those days is a great hindrance to the service of god."

The Globe theatre, by the Bankside, resident of the memory of Shakespeare, was a hexagonal structure, having for its sign "every trade and profession having its own peculiar sign in those days. Atlas supporting the world, and underneath was written, 'totum mundus agit histrionem,'" which probably suggested to the poet the famous "Seven Ages" speech, inasmuch as "As You Like It" was first produced at this house, with Shakespeare himself, on the authority of his younger brother Charles, as old Adam.

In 1613, just after Shakespeare had retired from his connection with the management and during the performance of a play on the subject of Henry VIII, called "All is True," the theatre caught fire from a wadding of one of the cannons fired on a salute and was burned to the ground. This was the first English theatre destroyed by fire.

When "Macbeth" was first played at the Globe theatre, Macbeth and Banquo made their first entrance on horseback.

Up to the time of David Garrick the elevation of the English stage was stilted and unnatural. The audiences had been long accustomed to an elevation of the voice, with a sudden mechanical depression of the tones, calculated to excite admiration and applause; to the just modulation of the words and concurring expression of the features from the genuine workings of nature they had been strangers, at least for some time. Davies, in his "Life of Garrick," says: "Garrick's easy and familiar yet forcible style of delivery at first threw the critics into some hesitation concerning the propriety as well as novelty of his manner." The famous actor, James Quin, after he had seen Garrick in some important character, declared peremptorily that if the young fellow was right, then he and the other players were wrong. The methods and naturalness of Garrick live at the present day, while the artificialness of Quin and his compeers is completely forgotten. Even the stately declamations of John Philip Kemble is a thing of the past.

When Garrick produced Macbeth at the Drury Lane Theatre on March 19, 1748, he wore a scarlet coat, silk stockings and a powdered wig, while Mrs. Pritchard, who was indeed a grand actress, as Lady Macbeth, was attired in a fashionable lady of the day. The staging witches were dressed in the most charming costumes, some of white satin and lace, were rouged and powdered, and made to look as charming and attractive as possible. The acting was good, but the costuming very bad, or, to say the least, inappropriate.

Footlights were first introduced into England by Garrick, about 1770. Previous to that time the stage was lit by chandeliers at the back. Garrick, too, in 1762, put an end to the practice of admitting strangers to seats on the stage. Tate Wilkinson thus gives a close description of the stage previous to this time: "On crowded nights an amphitheatre of seats was raised upon the stage, where there would be groups of ill-dressed lads and persons sitting on the stage in front, three or four feet deep; so that, in fact, a performer on a popular night could not step with safety, lest he should thereby hurt or offend, or be thrown down amidst scores of idle or tipsy apprentices. But it was the venue who usually affected that part of the house. There was only one entrance on each side of the stage, which was always particularly crowded. First, they spoiled their own figures to gratify self-consequence and impede and interfere with the performers who had to come on and go off the stage. They loved to affront the audience, particularly the gallery part, who would answer by showering down oranges and half-eaten apples, to the great terror of the ladies in the pit, who were so closely wedged they could not move." How different all this is at the present day.

On the opening of the new Covent Garden Theatre, under the management of John Philip Kemble, on the night of September 18, 1804, the nightly expenses were $1,500—something unparalleled before or since in theatrical history. There was a quadruple company, for tragedy, opera, comedy and ballet. The receipts averaged $400,000 per season.

STRANGE NEWS ABOUT VENUS.

Signor Schiaparelli, the Italian astronomer who has made more wonderful discoveries among the planets than all the other astronomers of our day put together, has just furnished a new surprise, greater even than his recent discovery that Mercury performs only one rotation in the course of a revolution around the sun. He now asserts that Venus, the brightest of all the planets that we see, the twin sister of the earth, which is at present glowing with nightly increasing splendor in the west after sunsetting, also turns but once on its axis in the course of a revolution around the sun. In other words, there is no alternation of day and night on Venus, as on earth. The planet enjoys perpetual day on one side of its globe, while the other side is plunged in unending darkness. Astronomers have heretofore believed that the time of Venus's axial rotation corresponded almost exactly with that of the earth's, namely, twenty-four hours. This was supposed to have been established by noting the return of spots visible on Venus to a similar position night after night; but Schiaparelli shows that some of these observations have probably been misinterpreted, and that instead of indicating a rotation period of twenty-four hours, they rather confirm his conclusion that the rotation is performed in 224.7 days, which is the time the planet takes to complete a revolution around the sun, or, in other words, is the length of Venus's year. Venus is about 67,000,000 miles from the sun, and its orbit is more nearly a circle than that of any other planet. It follows that there is very little variation in the amount of solar heat falling upon Venus at different periods of its year. Schiaparelli says the axis of rotation is nearly perpendicular to the plane of the orbit. If that is so, Venus has no diversity of seasons such as the earth enjoys. Its equator forever turns with the ardent heat of an unending summer, and its polar regions undergo no change in temperature. Inasmuch as Venus receives almost twice as much light and heat from the sun, in consequence of its greater proximity, as the earth gets, it must be pretty hot in the equatorial regions on that side of the planet which perpetually faces the solar furnace. If what the great Italian observer says about Venus is true, then the additional fact announced by him that the planet's axis is perpendicular to the plane of its orbit seems almost a providential provision of nature, for in that way it is rendered possible for the polar regions to enjoy a comparatively mild climate, although the equator and the spaces corresponding to our tropical and temperate zones may blaze with uncomfortable heat. If the axis of Venus were inclined like that of the earth, the consequent variation of seasons would plunge the poles alternately into a day of fierce sunshine enduring for seventeen weeks, and a frosty night of equal duration. The result would be that life under such forms as it assumes upon our globe would probably be impossible anywhere on the surface of Venus, for the sunward side of the planet would be scorched while the night side was frozen. But it, as Schiaparelli's observations indicate, the poles of Venus are not tipped now one and then the other toward the sun, but remain upright at right angles to the direction of the sun, then in their neighborhood, the heat may be tempered just as it is at the poles of the earth, in accordance with the law of inclines of the solar rays. Of course the cold, being unbroken, may be very intense just around the poles themselves, and in fact within a few years past white spots have been discovered on Venus, about where the poles would be situated according to Schiaparelli's idea; and these spots may be caused by the accumulations of snow and ice there. But in somewhat lower latitudes an agreeable mean might be found between the consuming heat of the equator and the glacial chill of the poles. The imagination may not go far astray in picturing these intermediate zones, on the sunward side of the planet, as the scene of activities corresponding to those that mark the human occupation of the inhabitable parts of the earth. To be sure, the inhabitants of even these favored regions on Venus could not enjoy the agreeable interchange of day and night, but would be perpetually alone upon by the sun; but even here there are indications that nature may have provided at least a partial compensation. All telescopic observations of Venus testify to the blinding brilliancy of its surface; and the most reasonable hypothesis yet put forth to account for this phenomenon is the existence of an extraordinary amount of cloud in its atmosphere. Anybody who has watched a sun-illuminated cloud knows how splendidly it reflects the light; and, of course, in looking at the clouds of another planet we can practically see only their sunny side. If, then, as appearances indicate, Venus' atmosphere is largely filled with clouds, the effect would be to screen off the superabundant sunshine, and perhaps render even perpetual daylight far less obnoxious than we might, at first sight, be disposed to regard it. There are reasons for thinking that the atmosphere of Venus is most abundant. Its depth has been calculated to exceed that of the earth by about one-third, although Venus is a slightly smaller planet than ours. The existence of watery vapor in its atmosphere has been clearly established by spectroscopic examinations. Of the extent or even the existence of oceans on Venus we know nothing by direct observation, but since the planet possesses an atmosphere and clouds, it is not unreasonable to conclude that it must have an ocean capable of supplying the needed vapor.—*New York Sun.*

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