

**IRON CLADS PLAYED OUT.**—Recent artillery experiments in England have demonstrated that the monitors and iron-clad ships can be rendered of no account whatever. By an application of the vertical fire, as it is called, an iron-clad can be destroyed or set on fire as easily as a wooden canal-boat. By vertical fire, is understood a shot upon a curved line in the air, instead of a horizontal plane. In other words, you drop the shot upon the objective point, instead of firing at it. So instead of blazing away at the armored side of an iron-clad, you drop shot upon its turret and deck. It has long been ascertained that the force of a shot dropping in this way is equal to the force of the same shot discharged on a horizontal plane; but heretofore the almost proverbial inaccuracy of the drop shot, or vertical fire, has rendered that use of artillery rather a matter of speculation than service. To remedy this inaccuracy, has heretofore been a prime object in the Shrapnel experiments, and it is believed that with the use of rifled mortars, the construction of which is now mooted, it will be possible to drop a shell with as much certainty as one is now shot. This done, the iron-clad is out of date. As shown at Shoeburyness, a 13-inch shell dropped by the vertical fire upon a target built in the same manner as a monitor deck, smashed everything before it, and fell through the deck in such a way that it was really the interior of a vessel into which it had fallen, the explosion would have carried destruction on every hand. With the correction of the present inaccuracy of this line of fire, and the use of larger shells, it is evident that there is no known deck that could stand before a drop fire. The shells would burst in the interior with tremendous effect, even if they did not possess so great a velocity as to tear clear through the hold so as to scuttle and thus sink the ship; and against such a fire it is now out of question to provide any further defense than an additional armoring of the deck. But already, to withstand the tremendous horizontal fire now possible, iron clads are so heavily armored on the sides as not to permit of much extra weighting, and yet without a very great increase of strength in the deck, there would be no chance to keep out the drop shots. Of course, the vertical fire is as good from an iron-clad upon a fort, as from a fort upon an iron-clad, so far as the theory goes; the fact being, however, that one well-directed drop shot upon a vessel might sink her instantly, whereas the same shot could not do more than disable a part of the gun; and in the light of this fact, the new application of vertical fire promises to restore the old supremacy of land defenses as against war ships. The present horizontal fire, forces ships to weight themselves by side armor to the water's edge, and the problem is now how to keep them afloat under the increased armoring that an accurate vertical fire will compel.—Ex.

**WHAT THE TELESCOPE IS DOING.**—One of the largest telescopes in the world, it is well known, is owned by the Chicago University. The destined work of this wonderful instrument is to make, in connection with nine other observatories of Europe and America, an entirely new catalogue of 250,000 stars, determining the right ascension and declination of each particular star; so that by observing its position, astronomers may, in far-off ages, be able to declare in what direction it has proceeded through the illimitable voids. At this moment it is slowly and surely performing its sublime work, and furnishing those far off astronomers the data upon which to base their calculations respecting that mighty problem, the direct motion of the sun through space. When this is solved, data will also be abundant for locating the position of the great central sun, around which millions upon millions of other suns, popularly denominated stars, do, in all probability, revolve. The labor being divided among the ten principal observatories in the world, will make the share of it falling to the Chicago Observatory, 25,000 stars—upon each one of which the most careful observations will be made and recorded. It will require about ten years to accomplish this stupendous work, and when it is done we may expect some most important astronomical discoveries.—Scientific American.

**WHAT BREAKS DOWN YOUNG MEN.**—It is a commonly received notion that hard study is the unhealthy element of a college life. But from tables of the mortality of Harvard University, collected by Professor Pierce, from the last triennial catalogue, it is clearly demonstrated that the excess of death for the first ten years after graduation is found in that portion of each class of inferior scholarship. Every one who has seen the curriculum knows that where Ecclylus and political economy injure one, late hours and rum punch injure up a dozen, and that their two little fingers are heavier than the loins of Euclid. Disipation is a sure destroyer, and every young man that follows it, is as the early flower, exposed to untimely frost. Those who have been inveigled in the path of vice are named Legions. A few hours' sleep each night, high living, and plenty of "smashes," make war upon every function of the body. The brain, the heart, the lungs, the liver, the spine the limbs, the bones, the flesh, every part and faculty are overtaken and weakened, by the terrific energy of passion loosened from restraint, until, like a dilapidated mansion, the "earthly house of this tabernacle" falls into ruinous decay. Fast young men, right about!—Scientific American.

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