

Saturday, October 2, 1899.

## FORECASTING THE WEATHER.

The Meteorological Committee of the Royal Society in England have lately issued an interesting report concerning the progress made in forecasting the weather. The system of telegraphing the meteorological changes through the British Islands was inaugurated by the late Admiral Fitzroy. His plan of forwarding to the ports indications of gales and the direction of the increasing wind has saved many a vessel from destruction. Captain De Rostang, Chief of the Meteorological Department of France, states that eighty-nine per cent. of the strong winds actually experienced on the French coast were foretold by telegrams from Admiral Fitzroy's establishment in London, and that seventy-six of the predictions of strong winds issued through his office were fulfilled. The agent at Sifloth, in England, stated that ninety per cent. of the telegrams during the Admiral's time were correct. The director of the Norddeutsche Seewarte, at Hamburg, up to the end of last December, had received thirty-seven telegrams from London, in nineteen of which the threatened storm arrived in the course of the ensuing night or next day, in nine cases still breezes followed, six the wind remained high, and in three the wind was strong before the arrival of the telegram.

The London meteorological office is in communication with that of Paris, from which two daily telegrams are received. Reports also reach London from Strasbourg, Lyons, Brussels, Skudensaya, (in Norway), and Corunna, in return for which the state of the weather is sent from various points in England and Ireland. The telegraph outposts the wind so much that intimations of a storm traveling from certain directions can be transmitted from London to the continent several hours, and even days, before it reaches the place forewarned. A careful study of the weather has been systematically carried on in the London establishment for the past year, and a chart has been drawn of each day's condition of the atmosphere, from the telegraphic reports. These afford an easy means of recognizing the occurrence of previous weather anomalies in type, and upon this, to a certain extent, he predicted the character and course of a disturbance of the atmosphere when the commencement assimilates to these recorded experiences.

By means of elevated drums, each indication of a storm, as telegraphed from London, is announced at the British ports for the benefit of the seafaring population, and every outward-bound skipper accordingly. Very great benefits have resulted from the system, and as it becomes more perfect, greater results are anticipated.

## ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT.

The following description of the appearance of Alexander von Humboldt is from the pen of Bayard Taylor, who saw him in November 1856, three years before his death. It was at this interview, it is said, that Humboldt remarked that Mr. Taylor had travelled further and seen less than any man he ever met:

"As I looked at the majestic old man, the line of Tennessee, describing Washington, came into my mind: 'On, good gray head, which all men knew.' The first impression made by Humboldt's face was that of a broad and genial humanity. His massive brow, heavy with the gathered wisdom of nearly a century, bent forward and overhung his face like a ripe ear of corn; but when you looked below it, a pair of clear eyes, almost as bright and steady as a child's, met your own. In those eyes, you read that trust in man, that immortal youth of the heart, which made the snows of eighty-seven winters lie so lightly upon his head. You trusted him utterly at the first glance, and you felt that he would trust you, if you were worthy of it. He had approached him with a natural feeling of reverence, but in five minutes I found that I loved him, I could talk to him as freely as with a friend of my own age. His nose, mouth and chin, had the heavy Teutonic character, whose genuine type always expresses an honest simplicity and directness. His wrinkles were few and small, and his skin had a smoothness and delicacy rarely seen in old men. His hair, although snow white, was still abundant, his step slow but firm, and his manner active almost to restlessness. I could not perceive that his memory, the first mental faculty to show decay, was at all impaired. He talked rapidly, and with the greatest apparent ease, never hesitating for a word, whether in English or German, and, in fact, appeared to be unconscious of which language he was using, as he changed five or six times during the conversation.

"You have traveled much and seen many ruins," said Humboldt, as he gave me his hand; "now you have seen one more." "Not a ruin," I could not help replying, "but a pyramid!" for I pressed the hand which had touched those of Frederick the Great, of Foster, the champion of Captain Cook, of Klopstock and Schiller, of Pitt, Napoleon, Jefferson, Hamilton, Welland, Herder, Beethoven, Walter Scott—in short, of every great man whom Europe had produced in three quarters of a century."

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