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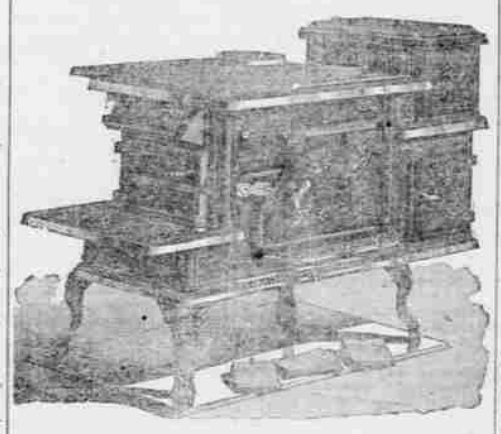

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DESERET EVENING NEWS.

Wednesday, May 21, 1890.

GENERAL NOTES.

The government telegraph service of Great Britain transmits, it is said, on the average, 1,558,270 words a day to newspapers alone.

A recent patent applies to a machine for dusting poisonous powders on growing plants, such as cotton and potatoes, to rid them of insects.

Joaquin Miller is credited with the sweet personality of any educated man in the United States, and his spelling is far from being according to Webster or Worcester.

Those interested in astronomy will have an opportunity to observe a total eclipse of the sun, under favorable conditions, in the year 1900. It will occur in the early morning of May 28th, and will be visible from Virginia to Louisiana.

The hole not was experimented with during the German autumn manoeuvres of last year with such evidences of its ability to enable men to endure immense physical labor that the German war office ordered thirty tons of it for consumption in the army.

Mrs. John G. Carlisle, of New York, has a most remarkable orchestra, made up of men, women and children from poor families. She has had them instructed by a good teacher, and now they play for paying charity entertainments. The practicing is done in Mrs. Carlisle's drawing rooms.

The American Meteorological Society, at a meeting held in Washington last month, advocated the adoption of the metric system by the government for custom house and foreign mail service. The metric system is now used by twenty-four nations in invoicing goods for shipment abroad, and many use it for all purposes.—*Science.*

There is said to be a plant in Arabia with flowers of bright yellow and with seeds which are like black beans, and these dried and powdered and taken in small doses cause a person to dance about and behave like a lunatic till he becomes exhausted and falls asleep. When he awakes he has not the smallest remembrance of his ridiculous behavior. The plant is called a "laughing plant."

The photographing of caves or other chambers underground, where a portable camera can be easily installed, offers no particular difficulty, and it is a comparatively simple matter to obtain curious and interesting views under such circumstances, illuminating the bowels of the earth by burning magnesium tape, which gives a brilliant light by means of which surrounding objects can be plainly photographed.

The four most valuable minerals found in Persia are coal, iron, copper and lead; while it has been ascertained that there are large deposits of the purest petroleum in southwest Persia. In the north a coalfield of great extent has been proved to exist in the neighborhood of Teheran. The coal has been tested, and experts affirm that it will bear comparison not unfavorably with the best English coal.

The electric headlight, which has been tested on railway engines during the past three months, is declared a perfect success. It throws the light from half to three-quarters of a mile ahead—far enough to stop a train running sixty miles an hour in time to prevent an accident. Another advantage the light has is that it is thrown directly in front of the locomotive, and does not illuminate the side of the track to any extent.

In Paris, last year, 10,940 horses, 241 donkeys, and 37 mules were slaughtered for food, two-thirds of the meat being used for sausages. Horseflesh is sold at 172 shops in the city, and is rising in price. In England horseflesh has a large sale, but statistics are lacking on account of the secrecy with which it is conducted. At Manchester large quantities are sold at twenty shops in the city, and at Salford horseflesh is sold at about twelve shops.—*Illustrated American.*

According to a statement in *The Week of Science*, upwards of one million American white fish have been propagated from ova by Mr. John Burgess, of the Midland Counties Fish Culture establishment, Malvern, Wells, England; the ova having been sent by the United States Fish Commissioners with the object of assisting Mr. Burgess in his efforts to establish this valuable food fish. The ova were hatched out with a very low mortality, and the young fish are doing well.

With the co-operation of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, Prof. Fullerton, Prof. Dolley and others, researches are in progress in the University of Pennsylvania, on the rate at which the nervous impulse travels in motor and sensory nerves and in the spinal cord, the time of reactions and of more purely mental processes, memory and the amount forgotten in a given time, the time of bodily and mental processes in diseases of the nervous system and in other directions. The apparatus now used in the laboratory of experimental psychology for measuring the time of physiological and psychological processes is considered the most complete in the world.

Dubuque, Iowa, has been treated to a great electrical storm, which was not attended by loss of life, though telegraph and telephone instruments were burned out and some damage was done to property. It is quite probable that the electric wires helped to protect the people from a storm of unusual violence. The great balls of fire that are reported to have exploded, doing no damage, have been observed before. Sometimes they are harmless, but more frequently they kill. As many as eight men have been killed at one stroke, and so instantaneously that their dead bodies have remained in the attitude of life.—*Philadelphia Ledger.*

The hottest region on the earth is on the southwestern coast of Persia, where Persia borders the gulf of the same name. For forty consecutive days in the months of July and August the thermometer has been known not to fall lower than 100 degrees, night or day, and to often run up as high as 128 degrees in the afternoon. At Bahrin, in the center of the torrid part of the torrid belt, as though it were nature's intention to make the region as unbearable as possible, no water can be obtained from digging wells 100, 200 or even 500 feet deep, yet a comparatively numerous population contrive to live there, thanks to copious springs which breaks forth from the bottom of the gulf, more than a mile from shore. The water from these springs is obtained by divers, who dive to the bottom and fill goatskin bags with the cooling liquid and sell it for a living. The source of these submarine fountains is thought to be in the green hills of Oman, some 300 or 600 miles away.

Boots of Human Skin.

In 1876 the firm of Hahrenholtz Bros., boot and shoe makers of New York city, made a pair of boots from human skin which they sent to the Centennial exhibition at Philadelphia. If we remember rightly, they were never put on exhibition, which goes to show that there was some humanity in the centennial officials if not in the makers of the ghastly footgear. Afterwards they were sent to Professor S. V. Baird, of the Smithsonian Institute, who would not allow them shelf room. The skin from which the boots were made was taken from the breast, stomach and back of a man who had died suddenly and been taken to a medical college. In general looks the boots were of a light brown color and somewhat heavier than if made from calfskin. The dark color was caused by the tanning process. The leather was much more porous than either calf or cow skin.—*St. Louis Republic.*

Barometric Indications of Storms.

A suggestion for bettering weather predictions has been recently made in the *National Magazine* by Captain Franklin Fox, a well-known English seaman. During last January, when terrific gales burst upon the British Islands, he finds that barometers at London gave no reliable monitions of these disastrous cyclones. His own idea is that the atmospheric power of raising or depressing the mercury in a barometer is affected by the amount of electricity in the air at the moment, and that "to have strict reliable weather-forecasts we require electric tests of the conditions of the atmosphere attached to them." It may be true, as Captain Fox has supposed, that electricity has an effect on the oscillations of the mercury in the glass.

During the passage of an electric storm over a station, the mercury, for reasons never fully explained, almost invariably rises or falls very rapidly, though it often returns to its previous level when the storm is past. There is little doubt that the electrical state of clouds, as Lord Rayleigh has shown, determines their precipitation, and the downrush of rain, always accompanied by a downrush of air, will tend to sustain or elevate the mercury—an effect likely to be intensified when the descending air is filled with the smoke and dust arising over a great city. When, therefore, a great storm is approaching, and clouds in its front are in that electrical condition which favors heavy and prolonged precipitation from them, the effect may very naturally account for the barometric phenomenon noted by Captain Fox. At all events, the series of experiments which he proposes could not fail to throw new and valuable light upon the degree of reliance to be placed upon the weather glass. If the invention of a reliable marine barometer should be the result of such experiment, it would be the means of saving thousands of lives and ships from the ocean cyclone.—*New York Herald.*

An Ingenious Expedient.

Superintendent Moir, of the Hudson River tunnel, is a man of resource. There was a leak in his caisson which divers had failed to find. He trapped half a dozen big water rats and in their tails he attached small bundles of salam, string cut to half a yard in length and caught in the middle by a piece of brass wire, which was also bound around the tail of the rat. The animals were then placed in the air pump and forced into the caisson, where, as they followed the air, they reached the leak, and in passing through the hole left each his souvenir of salam. It took a day or two to this leave sufficient oakum in the hole to stop the leak, but the supply of rats was unlimited.—*Buffalo Courier.*

Business in Russia.

A well known merchant of Kieff thought it merely a clever stroke of policy to bribe all the telegraph messengers to bring him every telegram addressed to the business men in whose speculation he was interested. He paid one rouble per telegram, and having read, copied and revealed them, he sent them to the consignees and used the information thus acquired for his own sale. He profited by this trustworthy source of information for two years, and would probably have continued to profit by it till his death had the conspiracy not been discovered—by the merest accident.—*Portsmouth Review.*

A Friend of the White Man.

Crowfoot is dead. He was a noted man in his day, but at present few people recollect that but for him the Riel rebellion in Canada's northwestern possessions might have proven successful, at least for a time. Crowfoot was chief of the Cree Indian nation and stuck by the white men in the crisis precipitated by the Metis. In appreciation of his services Queen Victoria sent him a gold medal.—*Ex.*

Henry M. Stanley is in the field for "Goodie." He said to a friend before he left America in search of Louis Fashoi "I am getting on pretty nibble life. I have not saved a cent. My books and lectures shall pay me within the next five years enough to make my old age comfortable. This African expedition is for money, not glory."

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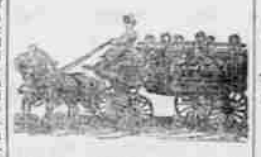

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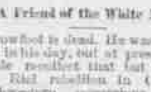

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