

oussion in the myriads of "shooting stars" which streaked the cerulean dome on this occasion.

That these flashy visitants were much more remote than those we usually see—many of which nearly reach the earth and a few of which have actually reached us—was quite evident. Not only were they beyond our atmosphere but doubtless greatly so. This display at this time suggests to the reflective mind the question of whence its materials came and what their origin. Are they vagrant fragments from the comet's train drawn toward the earth or some neighboring planet by the reason of our great attractiveness? It should be remembered that the cometary wanderer is now pronounced by the astronomers of the day to be nothing but a nebulous haze through the densest parts of which stars can easily be seen; that its motion is not quite ascertained, approaching us one day and apparent, receding the next; that it is not likely to have a perihelion passage around our sun as other comets have which come within his influence; and all these premises being correct, the conclusion may properly suggest itself that the astronomers were correct a day or so ago when they announced that the visitor was drawing nearer and likely to be quite close on the 28th, and equally correct now in saying it seems to be withdrawing. If the planets of our system are constantly drawing off fragments of its luminosity by reason of its approximate nearness, would not the diminution thus created impart to it the appearance of receding into space, even though it might be stationary through opposing attractions, or still headed our way as recently observed? Its final disappearance may be accounted for in the same way, that it has not gone from our field of vision but been completely disintegrated through the piratical procedure of those among whom it came. We don't present this as a scientific deduction or explanation by any means; it is simply the thought that suggests itself after beholding the beautiful phenomenon, a thought strengthened somewhat by the circumstance that it occurred in an arc of the heavens but a few degrees in width, slightly north of the zenith and surmounting equidistantly the identical point at which the comet now is, or was Wednesday evening.

We are as profoundly ignorant of what comets are composed of and what their errand is now as at any time since scientific investigation began; this being the case the opinion of one man who gives the subject careful and intelligent consideration is as likely to be correct as that of any other person. The same is largely true of meteors, but not so much so of those which enter our atmosphere or reach our earth. The latter are mainly iron in a more or less igneous condition, and may have been fragments of the moon drawn forcibly from her through the powerful magnetic influence of the earth and which, striking our atmosphere with terrific force, are ignited by the concussion; and they may not.

MORE BURGLARIES and still no clues. The only feat of boldness yet unattempted by the marauders is the bodily kidnapping of a policeman; they needn't fear to try it.

A WEIGHTY POLITICAL FACTOR.

One of the material causes that led to the unexpected victory of the Democrats in Illinois has not, we believe, received due recognition. It is true Mr. Wanamaker hinted at it when he dolefully commented that the result of the national election was "a tale of two cities,"—the enormous Democratic vote in New York and Chicago. But even he did not undertake to explain how the returns from Chicago came to tell such a tale. We suspect that the World's Fair project had much to do with it.

It is fair to assume that the residents of Chicago, and by this is meant also the vast army of workmen now congregated there, are interested far more in the success of the great exposition to which they have set their hands than in that of any political party this year, next year, or for several years to come. Equally reasonable is the view that the maintenance of the high tariff would be calculated to militate against the success of the Fair so far as foreign exhibitors are concerned. The natural argument with all such would be that since they were in a large measure excluded from participating in American commerce and trade, it would be a waste of time and means to make a display of their products at an American exposition. Is it not probable that an appreciation of this fact caused the World's Fair city to undergo such a wonderful political overturn? No great acuteness of mind is necessary to an understanding of the irony of inviting a foreigner to compete in the display while denying to him the privilege of competing in the market; and the average Chicago mind, keenly alive to the immense monetary gains that must come from the exposition if it is successful, was doubtless ready enough in such a contingency to sink partisanship without a murmur. A London financial paper thinks there is nothing extravagant in the statement that \$250,000,000 of foreign money will be left in America as the barvest of the exposition, and "Americans will be literally burdened with money seeking investment." When that sum, or the full amount whatever it is that the Fair will bring, is safely lodged within our borders, the tune that the Republican state of Illinois will sing may be pitched in an altogether different key to that just given in this year of grace 1892.

LOOKING BACKWARD.

The courtesy of Mr. W. B. Dougall enables the News to lay before its readers an interesting review of the prices of some of the ordinary household supplies in this city twenty-eight years ago; the source of our information being a copy of the account of a resident of this city with the mercantile firm of Cronyn and Clayton, for the year 1864. The whole statement, which is in the well-known handwriting of William Clayton, the junior member of the firm, is full of figures which to readers nowadays would appear grotesquely and outrageously high; yet Cronyn and Clayton were known to be as moderate in their prices

as any of their competitors and, like the profession then and since, indulged even at that early day in occasional "bargain sales," when goods were sold for "less than cost." There is no doubt that the purchaser in the instance we now refer to felt that the firm's prices were in all regards fair and equitable. With this much of introduction we come to the record.

The first item reads: "To cash, postage on letter to England, 25 cents;" and following this is a charge, "1 sett hoops [was this crinoline?], \$3.00." In the line of dry goods we quote "fine domestic at 75 cents a yard," "blue drilling at 70," "canton flannel at \$1.00," another grade of "domestic" at \$1.10, "shirting at 60 cents," "de-laine at \$1.50," "thread at 30 cents a spool," "braid at 30 cents per knot," "head nett for \$1.00," and "overshirt for son at \$6.50."

In the line of groceries and hardware are: tea at \$5.00 and coffee at \$1.25 per pound; pepper, raisins and currants were the same price per pound as the coffee, and nutmegs and indigo came at the same figure as the tea; coal oil was \$10.00 a gallon, linseed oil and turpentine \$12.00 each per gallon, a keg of white lead was charged at \$15.00, and nails came at 65 and 70 cents according to size. Soap was 60 cents a pound and rice 50; while gunpowder is quoted at \$2.50, and shot at 60 cents per pound, with "water-proof caps" at \$1.25 a box; mustard was \$2.00, ginger \$2.25, cinnamon \$2.50 and cloves \$3.00 a pound; a pound of rope cost \$1.00 and an ordinary cross cut saw is set down at first cost plus freight at \$7.84. We conclude with the important and highly interesting item of "100 pounds of sugar, \$100," with an additional charge of 75 cents for the sack which contained it!

The foregoing is submitted by way of dessert for the Thanksgiving dinner our readers partook of a couple of days ago and on the remains of which they have doubtless been dining since. A consideration of it and of the changes that have taken place during the twenty-eight years may furnish a text for reflection if not a cause for renewed gratitude.

ENDING A CAREER WITH FAILURE.

The wires convey the information that the Gladstone government is pursuing a policy of masterly inactivity, no bills being ready to present and no settled plan regarding any pressing subject having been adopted. The ministers are constantly at work, but they seem to be acting like so many men in a fog and it is doubtful whether there will be any result to their labors. The dispatch forecasts the early dissolution of the government, and if this should be fulfilled the experiment engaged in by the people of Great Britain in restoring the Liberal party to power will prove a great fiasco.

No matter what the outcome of the present situation, the lesson is once more imparted to the people that greatness does not abide in a name. Great and honorable achievements in the past must stand by themselves, and are in no sense a precursor of assured success in the present, because conditions, situations and the mind of man itself are constantly undergoing change.