DESERET EVENING NEWS.

Thursday, - - - - July 16, 1868.

A BLIND INVENTOR—SINGULAR STORY OF A BLIND MAN.

The biography of James Gale, the inventor of the non-explosive gunpowder process and other devices, has just appeared in England. The biographer, Mr. John Plummer, points out the disadvantages arising from the prevalent mode of conducting the education of the blind. He shows that of the many blind men who have distinguished themselves scarcely one is known to have been educated at an institution designed exclusively for the education of the sightless, and not one in twenty of those reared in the blind schools of Paris are enabled on leaving them to gain their own livelihood. Mr. Plummer quotes authorities for the purpose of proving that there is no insuperable difficulty after all in a blind boy being educated at an ordinary school, that he can read, cipher, and even write from dictation, with his class, and all the while with this advantage, that he is not continually regarding himself as belonging to a separate order.

A London paper says:

Mr. Gale affords a singular example of what this sort of training may effect. He has ridden a horse race, and won it. Returning once in a carrier's van from Plymouth to Tavistock, when the driver lost his way through the darkness of the night, his acute sense of hearing enabled him to detect the fact that they were on the wrong side of the road and to lead them into the right one. He has succeeded in concealing his blindness so effectually that he has actually acted as guide to more than one person who happened to be unacquainted with the locality, and concealed the fact of his blindness until the journey had been concluded. He has ridden a blind horse in perfect safety over several miles of ground, and has even shot pigeons at a shooting match. In business he has shown himself a man of remarkable shrewdness and energy, and if he did not see as much as a traveler, he visited quite as many places as an ordinary tourist during his summer vacations is able to manage. The degree of a German university may not, perhaps, be very highly esteemed by those acquainted with the way these honors are sometimes obtained, but however easy the preliminaries may be to ordinary people, it is in the highest degree creditable that a man suffering the disadvantages of Mr. Gale fulfilled the necessary requirements, and obtained the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Arts from the University of Mecklenburg.

In his own country and to many of the public however, Mr. Gale is known as an active philanthropist. As a guardian of the poor of his town he afforded an example of zealous care and kindness which is seldom met with in gentlemen who undertake these offices, and as the founder of the South Devon and Cornwall Institution for the Instruction and Employment of the Blind, his name will long be remembered with well earned gratitude. To the public Mr. Gale is best known as the inventor of a means for rendering gunpowder unexplosive. The Erith explosion of 1864 recalled to Mr. Gale an experiment which he had made with gunpowder in his youth. He devoted his time and energy to the prosecution of his experiments, and the result was that in 1865 the public were surprised to hear that gunpowder, when mixed with a fine powder made from glass, was practically capable of being carried like ordinary merchandise, and attended with no danger from explosion. Mr. Gale's experiments were repeated in presence of her Majesty and of the War Office authorities at Wimbledon with unquestioned success, but we have not heard of his plan being put into practical use.

The discoveries of the blind inventor in the materials of warfare by no means terminated with that relating to gunpowder. He also invented an ammunition slide and a rubber ball cartridge, by which a very great rapidity in firing may be attained; a fog-shell, which when thrown upon the upper deck of a ship generates a vapor so impenetrable that the soldiers and marines on board are utterly unable to see anything not immediately close to them, and a balloon shell, which when thrown from a hight clears a space of a hundred feet from all except very ponderous objects. Peace, as well as war, has also benefitted by Mr. Gale's inventive mind. He has manufactured an electric alarm clock, by the aid of which a person may be enabled to wake at any hour he pleases, and an electric house guard or thief and fire detector.

WHY WE SHOULD WEAR BEARDS.—There are more solid inducements for wearing the beard than the mere improvement of a man's personal appearance, and the cultivation of such an aid to the every-day diplomacy of life. Nature combining, as she never fails to do, the useful with the ornamental, provides us with a far better respirator than science could ever make, and one that is never so hideous to wear as that black seal upon the face which looks like a passport to the realm of suffering and death. The hair of the moustache not only absorbs the moisture and miasma of fogs, but it strains the air from dust and the soot of our great smoky cities. It acts also in the most scientific manner by taking the heat from the warm breath as it leaves the chest, and applying it to the cold air taken in. The beard is not only a respirator, but with the beard entire we are provided with a comforter as well, and these are never left at home, like the umbrella, and all such appliances, whenever they are wanted for use.

Moffatt and Livingstone, the African explorers, and many other travelers, say that in the night no wrapper can equal the beard. The remarkable thing, too, is, that the beard, like the hair of the head, protects against the heat of the sun; it acts as thatch does to an ice-house; but more than this, it becomes moist with the perspiration, and then, by evaporation, cools the skin. A man who accepts this protection of Nature may face the rudest storm and hardest winters. He may go from the hottest room into the coldest air without any dread.

PRIVATE HOUSES AT DAMASCUS.—From the mosque our party went to see the houses of the French and English Consuls, as also of several Jews and Moslems. It is impossible to conceive anything more beautiful or luxurious. They are all of the same type. Emerging from dirty long lanes, and passing through low insignificant doorways, you consequently into a court paved with marble, with a fountain in the center, shaded with oranges, lemons, pomegranates, and other exotics, beautiful roses, (of the kind called in England the "monthly cluster," a highly-scented one, from which the attar is made,) jasmine, and other flowers. From this court opens out a succession of rooms such as are described in the *Arabian Nights*, the walls covered with mosaic, the ceilings of wood exquisitely carved in the most delicate Saracenic patterns, and equally exquisitely colored with that peculiar blending of shades none but Orientals understand. In the center again is a fountain, and at each end of the room a raised divan covered with beautiful Persian carpets, the windows latticed and pierced in the most delicate patterns; beautiful china in niches, and other Oriental treasures, enameled narghilehs (pipe-holders), engraved bowl of silver and platina, into which divers patterns and passages of the Koran are elaborately worked, filagree coffee cups all glistening with jewels. Such are the houses of the English and French Consuls, and such, in a greater or less degree, is the Oriental idea of perfect luxury.

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