

DESERET NEWS

WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

WEDNESDAY, - MAY 15, 1878.

THE TRANSIT OF MERCURY.

It was through no fault of ours that the readers of the NEWS were not informed last evening of the observation, yesterday, at Ogden, of the transit of Mercury. We visited the observatory in that city in the afternoon, for the purpose of obtaining the necessary data on which to report, having previously made arrangements to telegraph the particulars before our paper went to press. Our account was written on the spot and dispatched in good time by a messenger on horseback to the telegraph office, where he was informed that it would be promptly forwarded. After inspecting the instruments and having a pleasant conversation with the clever gentlemen who conducted the observation, we went into town, and, calling at the telegraph office to learn if our message had been forwarded, we were informed by one of the operators whom we met outside the office that the dispatch had been forwarded "in good shape." But on entering we learn from the manager that he had been absent most of the afternoon, and that not a line had been forwarded by the operators. He was then busy sending news of the transit to the east, and it was fifteen minutes too late for the DESERET NEWS. From what we learned afterwards we fully exonerate Messrs. Giles and Lancaster from blame in this matter, but we think a little inquiry into the affair in the Ogden office would result in good to the public, as well as the telegraph companies which now do their business at one place in that city.

The morning opened with dense clouds rolling up in a threatening manner, and by the time for commencing the observations, the whole face of the sky was obscured and the sun hidden from sight. In consequence, a view of the first contact, which occurred at 7.44 a. m. could not be taken. The second also was unobserved. The first contact is when, in the photograph taken, the edge of the approaching planet touches the outer edge of the sun's disc; the second when the planet has passed over fully, so that its opposite edge touches the inner edge of the sun's disc. The instruments used were two equatorial refractors, two meridian instruments and two photographic instruments, one French and the other American, in each case. M. Angot who is the inventor or improver of the 'photoheliograph' manipulated that himself, as well as the American photographing instrument. M. C. Andre had charge of two, and M. Hatt also of two instruments. Messrs. Hoffman and Larosh, of Ogden, assisted in the manipulation and development of the photographic views.

The first view was taken about 9 o'clock, when the sun peeped through the clouds. But a storm then set in, and snow, hail and sleet came down at intervals, till about noon, when the clouds began to break away, permitting occasional observations, and by 2 o'clock the sky was comparatively clear.

The gentlemen now worked with all their might, and views were rapidly taken as the planet advanced on its path across the sun until 3.14, when the inner contact of egress was obtained and at 3.17 the outer contact, when the observation was ended. Altogether 78 views were obtained, only 14 of which were taken before 2 o'clock.

The passage of the planet, was from northeast to southwest, and on the photograph of the sun's disc, four inches in diameter, it formed only a speck, one-fiftieth of an inch in size.

M. Angot achieved a triumph. His instrument was proven to be effective for observations of this character, and it will doubtless be brought into requisition in the observations of the transit of Venus, which occurs in 1882. The latter part of the observation was completely successful. In addition

to the test of the photoheliograph, the object of the labors of the gentlemen who came to Ogden all the way from Paris, was to obtain data from which to make deductions in regard to the existence of an inter-Mercurial planet; that is, a planet between Mercury and the Sun, which some astronomers claim while others deny, and the subject to all is doubtful. The calculations made from the transit of Mercury will also aid in the more perfect observation of the next transit of Venus, and in determining the exact distance of the sun from our earth.

Observations of the transit of Mercury were taken also in Japan, Australia, at some other parts of this country and in Europe. Before the full results of the process can be ascertained, the work of the various astronomers will have to be brought together, compared, calculated, corrected and mutual thought and different opinions canvassed and harmonized.

To the common mind all this trouble and immense expense will seem to be wasted. But the benefits which are likely to result to science, and consequently to the whole world, are beyond computation in dollars and cents or human toil and sacrifice. It is a pleasing thought to those who are interested in the general progress of useful knowledge that the leading governments take an interest in these important matters, and, by the expenditure of money and the means only at the command of wealthy nations, make possible the attainment of information which would otherwise be beyond the reach of the world's great minds.

After the hopes, fears, doubts, and almost despair of yesterday's cloudy morning, the grand success of the French astronomers at Ogden is a cause of great rejoicing, and we congratulate those pleasant, affable, and talented gentlemen on the triumph they have achieved.

THE DUTY OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE subject of privateering and the position which the United States may lawfully assume in relation to it is causing considerable discussion, and various views are expressed by journalists. The San Francisco Chronicle of the 7th inst. says:

"If Russia wants to send any number of vessels like the *Cimbric* to American waters, or any number of Russian officers and sailors across the continent to this city, she has a perfect right to do so, without any restraint by the Treaty of Washington; and we are no more in duty bound to listen patiently to the complaints of Englishmen and English consuls than we should be to like complaints from any other nation. In fact, from a strictly legal point of view, these complaints are impertinent and insolent until war shall be declared between the two powers; and whosoever desires it may fit up in American ports all the privateers they can till that time."

This view appears to be taken by a great many, among whom are lawyers and statesmen of distinction. They think that until war is actually declared, either Russia or England may fit out vessels in American ports to prey upon the commerce of the other. So far as the Treaty of Washington affects the question, this may be correct. But the laws of the United States forbid any such proceedings and impose heavy penalties upon any one in this country who engages in them. The following is section 5,283 of the Revised Statutes:

"Every person who, within the limits of the United States, fits out and arms, or attempts to fit out, arm, or procures to be fitted out and armed, or knowingly is concerned in the furnishing, fitting out, or arming of any vessel, with the intent that such vessel shall be employed in the service of any foreign prince or State, or of any colony, district or people, to cruise or commit hostilities against the subjects, citizens or property of any foreign prince or State, or of any colony, district or people with whom the United States are at peace, or who issues or delivers a commission,

within the territory or jurisdiction of the United States, for any vessel, to the intent that she may be so employed, shall be deemed guilty of a high misdemeanor, and shall be fined not more than \$10,000 and imprisoned not more than three years, and every such vessel, with her tackle, apparel and furniture, together with all materials, arms, ammunition and stores, which may have been procured for the building and equipment thereof, shall be forfeited; one-half to the use of the informer and the other half to the use of the United States."

It will be observed that no distinction is made in this section between times of war and seasons of peace. The spirit of it is just and right. The general sympathies of the people in this country, in the event of a war between England and Russia, will run in favor of the Muscovite. In the civil war England secretly favored the South, while Russia encouraged the Government. Then, in spite of the influences of later times, the spirit inspired by the revolution against the mother country still lives in the United States, and the impressions stamped upon the juvenile heart by school instructions, Fourth of July celebrations, and historical descriptions of victories over the British, have great influence upon American sentiment, and aid in turning the tide in favor of Russia. But no matter how much moral support may be accorded to the Czar in his passage at arms with John Bull, Uncle Sam's duty, while at peace with either power, is to prevent any material assistance to the belligerents by persons within the jurisdiction of the United States.

Notwithstanding this, it is generally believed that Russia expects to obtain vessels, arms and men from the ports of this country, and intends to strike therewith early and desperate blows upon English commerce. Steamers ready for conversion into powerful cruisers are said to be waiting in a port of the Baltic for orders to put to sea as vessels of destruction. Others, it is reported, have been dispatched to this country, where arrangements are to be effected so as to evade the letter of the law but aid in the scheme of attack. And it is expected that Russia will develop into a far more formidable marine antagonist than England has ever dreamed of.

These movements will be closely watched by agents of the British Government, and while counter-preparations are made to meet every emergency from Russian causes, the United States will be expected to carry out the principles to which this government is pledged by its demands in the Alabama case, and there is no doubt that any attempt at privateering within its jurisdiction will be promptly suppressed, so that strict neutrality may be preserved, while the British Lion and the Great Bear of the North engage in the tremendous struggle which now appears almost inevitable.

RUSSIA'S ADVANCE TO THE EAST.

THE New York Herald of the 4th inst., prints a map of the regions immediately east of the Caspian Sea, with an article on the route to Cabul, the whole showing Russia's easiest road to conquest in British India. Both map and description are taken from the *Golos*, a Russian paper published in St. Petersburg. The issue was seized by the police immediately after publication, doubtless in order that the dangerous suggestions and comments it contained might not go to the world and intensify present complications. But a Herald agent secured a copy and forwarded a translation to the great journal, which is as unscrupulous as it is enterprising in the collection of news.

The article claims that Russian movements in Central Asia are the result of the force of circumstances, and the necessity of guaranteeing its eastern frontiers against invasions by nomad tribes; that such movements cannot end with present acquisitions and aggrandizements, "even though it may displease the English;" and that cir-

cumstances require and explorations prove the feasibility of the construction of a railroad connecting Central Asia with Russia in Europe. It goes on to show reasons for the advancement of Russian influences and the weakening of English power in India, hints that "the discontent of the inhabitants of the country might easily be spread by a new revolution," and declares that "Russian influence in Asia is very great and may soon be greater than the English appear to think of." It utters the following significant remark, and then proceeds to point out the most feasible highways to India:

"The growing influence of Russia on the one hand, and on the other the extreme care of England in defending her interests in the East, will inevitably provoke an encounter between these two Powers in Central Asia. This is simply a question of time. These circumstances prove that the question of our routes to India, which has been revived from time to time, now represents a great interest and is of very great importance."

Although no official importance can be legitimately attached to the remarks of the *Golos*, yet they show very clearly that surveys of the country lying between the Caspian Sea and British India have been made by Muscovite authority; that Russian policy points to further acquisitions of territory in that region; and that a struggle with England for supremacy in the East is anticipated, with a firm belief in the ultimate triumph of Russia. All this is in accordance with the schemes and instructions of Peter the Great.

In view of the designs of the Colossus of the North, Great Britain has ample cause for action while the settlement with Turkey is pending. And it is evident, from the course Russia is taking to increase her powers on the sea as well as to extend her borders to the south and the east, that reasons of diplomacy alone prevent her from throwing off the mask and appearing in her true colors as a disputant with England for the Empire of the East.

The long-anticipated Eastern question is not a mere theory or fancy, it is a matter of fact, a reality that will sooner or later bring about the bloodiest war of modern times. A peace may be patched up now, although this is barely possible, because Russian credit is poor and war cannot be prosecuted without money; but the struggle is bound to come, and when it is fully inaugurated it will shake mightily the nations and convulse the eastern continent, from the shores of the Atlantic to "India's coral strands."

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Germany has recently expended about \$10,000 in the purchase of forest tree seed, with the object of renewing her forests. This shows commendable forethought. The groves and woods of America are being cleaned out, without scarcely an effort at replanting. Germany is an advanced nation with many customs and methods worthy of imitation.

A mechanic at Vienna has invented a sewing machine that will work several hours at a stretch by motion imparted through wound up springs. It is easily managed and does away with the treadle motion, which has proven very injurious to large numbers of women and girls. We hope to see this new machine introduced very soon into this country.

Slade, the "medium," is succeeding better in Berlin than in London. The Germans take to him easier than the English. He has performed some trick of jugglery which could not be detected nor explained, and Dr. Zolner, a philosopher and scientist, endorses the spiritualistic swindler. Slade narrowly escaped imprisonment in the British metropolis; in the German capital he is making a fortune.

The Turks think much of a silent man, therefore they considered Grant a sage. A pasha made a remark to an American to this effect: "Gen. Grant is a very wise man." The gentleman asked, "Did he say anything to you?" The reply was "No, not a word, but he looked wise." There is many a fool who has gained a similar reputation just because he had nothing to say. Still there are many people in

this fix who talk on all the same, but Grant has sense enough to be silent.

Rev. John Jasper, the colored preacher, who still maintains that the "sun do move," and that if the earth "rolled over and over" the sea would be spilled out and all the people would be "drowned," is ready to prove his assertions by the Bible at fifty dollars a prove. He has taken to the lecture field, and has already discoursed on the subject in Washington. We are afraid John Jasper, although he has a heavenly topic, is smitten with an earthly affection—the love of "filthy lucre."

We are in receipt of the *Encyclopaedia of Wonders and Curiosities*, published by H. S. Allen, New York. It is a volume of 958 pages, neatly bound in cloth, and containing a huge but well-assorted mass of general information—curiosities respecting man, animals of various kinds, birds, insects, vegetables, mountains, oceans, mines, grottoes, caves, winds, storms, earthquakes, meteors, buildings, ruins, arts, customs, literature, natural phenomena, etc., illustrated with numerous engravings. It is a work full of interest, and descriptions of very remarkable facts, incidents, and phenomena. Neils Madsen, of Mount Pleasant, is agent for the work in Southern Utah, and it is a book that ought to meet with ready sale in this Territory.

The clerk of the Wasatch Stake sends us a conference report, which we can print with but little scratching and without transposing and mutilation. Stake clerks, go ye and do likewise. The public are not intensely interested in the particular hymn sung by the choir, nor as to who called the meeting to order, nor in the oft-repeated statement that Elder So and So "arose" before speaking, and said "he was glad to meet with the Saints and pleased to hear the remarks by Brother so and so." Give us the main facts, and abbreviate the particulars, but do not abbreviate words or give "Bp." for Bishop, nor write on both sides of the paper, but prepare the reports as nearly as possible ready for the printer. The drudgery of wading through many of these reports and preparing them for the press, is far more laborious than writing an original article.

Dr. Howard, of New York, has been exhibiting in London his method of restoring animation to persons apparently drowned. The Royal Humane Society tendered the Doctor a vote of thanks and endorsed his system, which is, briefly explained, as follows: The patient is stripped to the waist and placed on his stomach, with his clothes or a hard pillow underneath it, so that the stomach and lungs become the highest part of the body. One hand is then placed over the stomach and another on the back, and by using pressure, any fluid which is in the stomach is ejected. Having got rid of the water the patient is instantly turned upon his back, his clothes or a firm pillow are placed under it, so as to make the pit of the stomach the highest point, and his tongue is drawn out and held at one side of the mouth by a piece of cotton cloth. The arms are next seized at the wrists, drawn backwards and tied across behind the head. After this the operator stands over the patient, and placing his two thumbs on the lower intercostal spaces on either side, proceeds to use pressure, the effect of which is to empty the lungs of a portion of the air contained in them. The hands are suddenly withdrawn, creating a compulsory inspiration. This process is to be carried on till animation is restored.

Read a letter from Brother Dunn of Tooele in this issue of the NEWS. The people of the south had better be on the watch for a swindler who will get possession of their watches if they are not warned in time. The letter will give a key to his character, may prevent an escape movement, and lead to his being wound up in jail.

Local and Other Matters

FROM FRIDAY'S DAILY, MAY 10.

Seventeenth Ward. — A grand ball was given in the 17th Ward Hall last night particulars of which are crowded out till to-morrow.

Cricket. — The Ogden cricket club has challenged any eleven that may be selected from the clubs