

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

AS TO NATURALIZATION.

A novel and somewhat peculiar incident in the history of naturalization is the refusal of a Hungarian to sign the declaration of intention, as related in a dispatch from New York. The reason given is, that in the document referred to, he was required to renounce all allegiance to foreign potentates and particularly the emperor of Austria. He declared that he never owed any allegiance to this emperor, but only to the king of Hungary. The case being brought before the court, the judge decided it was no business of the American courts to pass upon any points involving disputes between foreign countries, but he would accommodate the applicant for citizenship by inserting a clause expressing the idea that he was a Hungarian subject. But even this proved insufficient for the patriotism of the Magyar, and he left court foaming and declaring his intention of bringing the matter before the Austrian parliament.

On the looks of it, an alien who comes to this country and asks for hospitality and privileges of citizenship, at the same time making loud demands and impotent threats—some-what after the manner of gypsies in rural districts—is not worthy of the distinction he is seeking to obtain. If his initial course is an indication of his general disposition, the probability is that his career as a citizen would be of that quarrelsome, strife-provoking nature which can do but harm. The point disputed is as insignificant as possible. By law an alien applying for citizenship in this country is required to forswear allegiance to "all foreign potentates" and particularly the one in whose domain the applicant was born. When, as in the case of the ruler of Austria and Hungary, one monarch happens to wear two crowns the custom is to refer to him in this dual capacity. To suppose that this is intended as a slight to the smaller country, or a refusal to recognize such autonomy as it may possess, is almost imbecility. The applicant demanded that the words "the emperor of Austria" be eliminated, but he might as reasonably have objected to the term "all foreign potentates," for in that clause the emperor of Austria is included, whether specified separately or not.

A similar point was discussed only a few days ago between the clerk of the District Court in this city and a Swedish applicant for citizenship. The latter held that there was no particular necessity for his renouncing allegiance to the king of Norway as well as the king of Sweden. But on learning that it was customary to thus word the important document, he cheerfully subscribed his name.

One who earnestly and honestly seeks the blessings of American citizenship is not likely to make trouble about trifles, nor insist on the recognition of his own personal dignity when

nobody intends to assail it or in any way call it in question.

THE MARTIAN CONTROVERSY.

English astronomers and those scientists who are engaged in the Lick university are at it teeth and nail on the question as to whether or not Mars is inhabited, and up to the present stage of the polemic battle honors seem to be about even. Though Mars is in the nearest proximity to earth of any of the planets, the little matter of 35,000,000 miles of space makes it rather difficult for those residing on this globe to witness the gambols of the Martian schoolboys, if any there are.

The controversy comes over the recent investigations of Prof. W. W. Campbell, at the Lick observatory, as a result of which it was given out that the professor had discovered that Mars had no atmosphere. The NEWS took issue with this statement at the time, and pointed out that Mr. Campbell had not achieved the result claimed for him. It now appears by the professor's own statements in the controversy going on that he does not hold to the claim first made. His conclusions, based upon investigations with the spectroscope, are stated by him as follows:

First—The spectra of Mars and our moon, observed under favorable and identical circumstances, seem to be identical in every respect. The atmospheric and aqueous vapor lines which were observed in both spectra appear to be produced wholly by the elements of the earth's atmosphere. The observations, therefore, furnish no evidence whatever of a Martian atmosphere containing aqueous vapor.

Second—The observations do not prove that Mars has no atmosphere similar to our own, but they set a superior limit to the extent of such an atmosphere. Sun light coming to us via Mars would pass twice, either partially or completely, through his atmosphere. If an increase of 25 to 50 per cent in the thickness of our own atmosphere produces an appreciable effect, a possible Martian atmosphere, one-fourth as extensive as our own, ought to be detected by the method employed.

Third—If Mars has an atmosphere of appreciable extent, its absorptive effect should be noticed, especially at the edge of the planet. At the center of the disc of the planet we look directly through the supposed layer of atmosphere, while at the edge we look through it very obliquely. My observations do not show any increased absorption at the edge. This portion of the investigation greatly strengthens the view that Mars does not have an extensive atmosphere.

Upon this, Prof. E. S. Holden, of the observatory, announced that there were no inhabitants on Mars, therefore those who had been looking for the man who was said to be signalling from the ruddy planet to the earth need not waste their time in such a way. On this point Prof. Norman Lockyer, of the Royal College of Science in London, took issue, and proceeded to argue that Mars had an atmosphere and was inhabited, and that it also produced trees

and vegetation like the earth. He believed the lights seen on Mars of late were due to forest fires. He also pointed out discoveries that led him to conclude the atmosphere of Mars was precisely like our own; therefore he regarded Prof. Holden as being on the off track.

At this point Prof. Campbell offers a suggestion on his own observations. He says that he discovered mountains on Mars 10,000 feet in height; his observations of the atmosphere there were that its density "is only thirty-eight hundredths as great as that of our own;" and he says "this conclusion is decidedly opposed to the view that Mars is inhabited by beings like ourselves." He goes on to say, however: "It is, of course, not claimed that Mars is uninhabited. So far as we know, it may even support a civilization superior to our own."

Taken all together it is clear that no definite conclusion can be arrived at by scientists further than that, in the present state of discovery, they do not know anything about the occupancy of the neighboring planet. The assertion of Prof. Holden that there is no man on Mars must be, therefore, put down as an assumption unsupported by any known fact, and of that class which, as coming from scientists, do more harm than good, because in them there is a pretense of knowledge that is not possessed. The astronomers have not learned enough yet to say whether or not Mars is inhabited, and while information on that point, based on scientific investigation and observation, might be very desirable and valuable, positive assertions one way or the other, in the absence of definite proof, do not tend to inspire confidence in the work of those who make them.

RAILWAY MILEAGE.

A few weeks ago the NEWS received advance sheets of the report of Henry C. Adams, statistician to the Interstate commission, giving the general railway statistics of the country for the year ending June 30, 1893. The reason assigned for the seemingly long delay in getting the report before the public was explained by the statement that there had been great dilatoriness on the part of some of the railways in giving desired information. The NEWS placed before its readers, when the sheets came to hand, a summary of the statements therein regarding railway mileage, operating expenses, profits, values, freight and passenger business, employes, accidents, etc., in the United States. There now come to hand advance sheets containing the tables of the statistician's report, which give much of detail that is interesting and valuable to those specially concerned in railway matters.

A feature of general interest to the people in this section, in addition to the items heretofore published, appears in the railway mileage as given by states and territories. The total mileage of the country is placed at 176,461.07 miles, an increase over the previous year of 4,897.55 miles. Of this amount Illinois leads with 10,408.79 miles, and the District of Columbia has the least share, 28.35 miles. Next in the list above the District of Columbia is Oklahoma with 198.22,