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EVENING NEWS.

Monday, February 13, 1877.

General Pleasanton's Blue Glass "Discovery."

It is curious that, in the extended comment which Gen. Pleasanton's hobby has received from the press of this vicinity, it has been treated wholly as if it were a discovery—something hitherto unheard and undreamed of. The fact is that the action of blue glass upon the sun's rays was known long before the spectroscope came into use; and has been so thoroughly experimented upon and examined that General Pleasanton has added not one jot or tittle to the sum of knowledge already recorded in the premises. He has made the not infrequent, but always amusing, error of crying aloud as new an old discovery, and of coupling with it old illusions long since dispelled.

We believe that for the first clear demonstration of a difference in character in the rays of the sun, science is indebted to one of our own countrymen—Prof. Draper, of New York. He established by clear experiments that the rays of heat and light were so distinct from the *chemical* rays that the two might be separated, and only one allowed to fall upon the object used in the experiment. In the chemical rays he recognized a new principle or force, which he christened with the name of "tithonicity," the rays being called "tithonic." Further English experiments, however, wrested the right of sponsorship from Professor Draper, and conferred it upon Mr. R. Hunt, and the accepted title for the new force now is "actinism," and for the rays "actinic."

Long before the spectroscope came into use it was discovered that the actinic rays of the sun were wholly intercepted by red, orange and yellow glass; and that, on the other hand, the rays of heat and light were not only intercepted, but that the actinic rays were actually made more powerful by passing through *blue* and violet glass—the light rays serving as a drag upon the actinic force. Photographers years ago made use of this fact, making the skylights of their studios out of blue glass to strengthen the actinic rays. The same reason explains why photographs can be taken as well on cloudy as on bright days—the clouds are the blue glass, intercepting the rays of heat and light, but affording ready passage to the actinic rays.

The invention and appliance of the spectroscope extended our knowledge of this peculiarity of light, though not informing us of the ultimate cause. The red, orange and yellow rays of the solar spectrum were found to contain no actinism. It commences feebly in the green, becomes strongest in the blue, and is most abundant in the violet. It is found to exist also, very abundantly, in the dark space outside the visible spectrum—the ray-waves being of such extreme velocity that the eye cannot transmit them to the brain without retarding appliances.

If General Pleasanton had pursued his resources a little further he might also have "discovered" that scientists were long since aware that the quantity of actinic force in the sun's rays varied greatly with different hours of the day, and with different seasons. It may be stated, as a general rule, that when the luminous is most abundant the actinic force is least, and *vice versa*, within proper limitations. The actinism is greatest in the early morning, and in the spring of the year.

But it is in the supposed effect of blue glass upon vegetation that General Pleasanton makes his greatest error. When actinism was first discovered the idea prevailed (and this he has caught hold of) that to increase the actinism was greatly to quicken the germination of seeds and cuttings, and to assist in the formation of the coloring matter of leaves. Blue glass was therefore used, and is still used, in the hot-houses, for that purpose. Later and most conscientious experiments have, however, proved that it is not the increase of actinism but the decrease of the light rays that hastens the germination. On the other hand it has been conclusively demonstrated that it is the red rays alone which produce the green coloring matter (the chlorophytine) to which we owe the health of the world, it being the laboratory of nature which consumes the excess of carbon, and restores it in the shape of oxygen—thus preserving the equilibrium of the atmosphere. Thus, while blue glass helps the plant at particular stages, the full solar light is necessary to its complete and healthy growth.

As to the therapeutical effect of the blue glass on human beings, there may be something in it, for particular stages and particular conditions. It helps the plant to germinate—it may help the infant in embryo; but the idea that it can have any general healing effect is apt to be purely imaginary, and springs from a partial acquaintance with the subject. Perhaps no more appropriate comment could be passed upon General Pleasanton's "discovery" than Pope's oft-quoted couplet—

A little learning is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.

—*Cincinnati Times, Feb. 12.*

Our Country Contemporaries.

Ogden Junction, Feb. 17—

The Conference of the Weber Stake of Zion commenced in this city at 10 o'clock this morning, President F. D. Richards presiding. The congregation was addressed in the morning by President Richards and Elders Robert McQuarrie, F. A. Brown, Joseph Parry, F. A. Hammond, and D. B. Rawson.

Provo Enquirer, Feb. 17—

"On Monday last the Lehi municipal election passed off quietly, and the ticket was voted for without a dissenting vote. The citizens of that city acted wisely and justly in the affair, and there was only one ticket in the box. The ticket presents the following to the civic honers—Mayor, Wm. H. Wins; Aldermen, S. R. Thurman, T. R. Cutler; Councillors, Ole Elingsen, Charles Barnes, Thomas Ashton."

—David A. Wasson considers the highest national success in the future will require three more amendments to the constitution—first, compulsory education; second, an educational qualification for voting; third, apportioning national representation to qualified voters. The women think another amendment necessary—the abolishment of the distinction of sex in political and some legal matters.

—Numbers of persons are emigrating to Texas from Kentucky.

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