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NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1887.

Contents.

(Illustrated articles are marked with an asterisk.)

Table listing various articles such as 'Adulterations, bakery, poisonous', 'Air, analysis of', 'Alumina bleaching compounds', etc., with corresponding page numbers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS OF

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT

No. 612.

For the Week Ending September 24, 1887.

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Table listing contents of the supplement by section: I. BIOGRAPHY, II. BIOLOGY, III. ENGINEERING, IV. INSTRUMENTS OF PRECISION, V. MEDICINE AND PATHOLOGY, VI. METALLURGY, VII. MISCELLANEOUS, VIII. NAVAL ENGINEERING, IX. PHOTOGRAPHY, X. TECHNOLOGY.

THE RETURN OF OLBERS' COMET OF 1815.

Prof. Brooks announced the discovery of a comet on Aug. 25. It took its place on the cometic annals of the year as "Comet f 1887 (Brooks)," and the discoverer was serenely unconscious that he had found a celestial pearl of great price.

Olbers' comet of 1815 was expected about this time, on its first recorded return after an absence of over seventy years. A surprising resemblance was found to exist in the orbits of the two comets.

Olbers, a German astronomer, discovered the comet at Bremen, and Bessel, another German astronomer, calculated its elements. He assigned its next perihelion passage to February 9, 1887, and, wonderful to relate, the comet is but six months behind time.

Thus cometic astronomy has its triumphs. Pons' comet of 1812, also discovered by Prof. Brooks, looked down from the celestial depths after an absence of a little more than seventy years.

The latest comer among the comets is an ordinary specimen of the family, has a stellar nucleus and a faint tail, but will grow brighter until it reaches perihelion, on October 6. It will be seen, by consulting Prof. Brooks' chart, published last week in the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, that it is nearly north of Denebola on September 26.

The Ninth International Medical Congress.

The Ninth International Medical Congress opened its sessions in Albough's Opera House, Washington, on Monday, Sept. 5. The attendance at the convention was extremely large, upward of 3,500 medical men being present.

The following day's proceedings comprised both business and pleasure. Many receptions and excursions were provided for. For the heading of papers the convention was divided into sections, so that comparatively small audiences heard many of the most important ones.

Dr. Cyrus Edson, of the Board of Health of this city, read a valuable paper on the "Milk Supply of Cities." The dissemination of scarlet fever, diphtheria, and typhoid fever by milk, already described by us, and the subject of the ptomaine "tyrotoxin" in milk were treated of.

The committee appointed to arrange for the next place of meeting reported in favor of Berlin, Germany. The date, as far as the year is concerned, is 1890. The day has not yet been fixed.

The proceedings terminated with a banquet on Thursday, September 8, though excursions and trips to Niagara and elsewhere prolonged the attendance of many of the foreign members.

Taken altogether, as regards the number present and the high rank of many of them in the profession, the quantity of papers read, and their importance, and in

view of the many courtesies and attentions showered upon them by the society of Washington, the meeting may be pronounced one of the events of the year.

The Preparation of Arrowroot in Bermuda.

According to the last report of the United States Commissioner of Agriculture, it appears that of late years a considerable impetus has been given to the cultivation and preparation of arrowroot in Bermuda, and large quantities are annually exported from the island.

The Volunteer Chosen as Defender of the America's Cup.

After several unsuccessful attempts, a decisive trial race came off between the Mayflower and Volunteer, at New York, on September 16. The latter won by 16 minutes 2 1/2 seconds over a 41 1/2 mile course.

Alumina Bleaching Compounds.

Hypochlorite of alumina has long since been employed in bleaching, under the name of "Wilson's bleaching liquid," and has been preferred on the grounds that "it accelerates the bleaching process and deteriorates the fibers of the tissue much less than the chloride of lime."