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YELLOW FEVER IN FLORIDA.

During the month of August much alarm has existed in Florida, on account of the appearance there of yellow fever. Many deaths have occurred in the smaller towns of the peninsula, but Jacksonville has been the principal seat of war in the battle between health and disease. Daily bulletins have been received from it for the last twenty days and have shown some fluctuations in the number of cases and deaths, but on the whole a pretty constant number of new cases have been reported.

Every means was adopted to check the speed of the fever. Resin and tar fires were built and maintained, in the hopes that the bituminous fumes would kill the bacterial germs. Acting on the theory that concussion of the air would effect the same result, cannonading was extensively practiced. Elaborate quarantine arrangements were established, passengers' baggage on the railroads if suspected was detained and fumigated. Camps were established for refugees. A sadder form of precaution was the pickets. Outlying lines were guarded by armed men for the exclusion of fugitives from infected districts. On August 20, five new cases were reported at Jacksonville and one death, giving a total to date of thirty-eight cases and six deaths. At present the threatened plague is diminishing, and a few more days will, it is to be hoped, witness its end, before the evil reached any degree of magnitude.

THE GREAT AUGUST STORM.

During the week ending August 21st, the United States were visited by a severe wind and rain storm which may fairly rank among the greatest storms of the year. It began on Monday, Texas and the adjoining territory being the starting point. Thence it moved on in a northeasterly direction, its center reaching Memphis, Tenn., at 8 o'clock that evening; twelve hours later it reached Louisville, Ky.; and twelve hours more brought it to New York. A low barometer prevailed along its course, 29.46 being the Memphis and Louisville readings at the periods when the storm center passed over them. On its way to New York the storm passed through the Ohio Valley, and even reached the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River.

In the neighborhood of the Gulf of Mexico the high water on the rivers and coast did much damage. The plantations about the mouth of the Mississippi were inundated, a large portion of New Orleans was flooded, many washouts were caused on the railroads, and a great number of coal barges were sunk. Elsewhere similar occurrences are reported, a vast extent of country being inundated along the course of the storm.

In this city the wind reached the rate of thirty-six miles an hour, and in eighteen hours of August 21st the rainfall amounted to 3.30 inches. In some respects it ranks as the most severe storm of the year.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHTING CONVENTION.

The National Electric Light Association, which met here last week, is much increased in membership since last year, the attendance itself showing it. The papers, for the most part, were upon practical topics, explaining just how certain obstacles may be removed; some were on theoretical problems, and some cited experiences extremely valuable to others, though costly to those who conducted them; for it is always instructive to a practical man to be told how a certain result may not be obtained, and the reason why.

Some of the principal papers read were: Electrical Steam Engineering, by W. L. Church; Some Practical Pointers, by C. C. Haskins; Measurements of Alternating Currents for Commercial Purposes, by O. B. Shellenberger; The Ideal Motor, by F. B. Crocker; Disruptive Discharges of Underground Conductors; Electrical Conductors in New York City, by S. S. Wheeler.

It is an interesting and instructive study to note the growth of this association and the conditions surrounding it. We can all remember when the telephone appeared and startled us. It was so novel that it was hard to understand how it could be made of practical value, especially as, at that time, with the apparatus at hand, it did not work so smoothly and reliably as now. Practical, pushing men got hold of it, and now we wonder how we could get along without it. The case of the electric light has been, in many respects, similar. Who would begin to distribute it? Who would be the first to use it? Projectors delayed, as if to give each other a chance to spend a pot of money in experimenting. It was only a short time, however, when a system was devised for both the voltaic arc light and the incandescence. Some projectors came out boldly and put their money in lighting plants, while others, not yet sure, showed an inclination to make the apparatus and let others do the lighting, until finally there came to be no more doubt about there being money in selling the light as well as the plant. Naturally enough, with a great field full of ingenious, practical electricians, the first crude attempts at general distribution were improved on over and over again, and this improvement has never known a pause. It is going on

now even faster than when it first started, one improvement following another so quickly, it treads upon its heels.

One of the most difficult problems before the officers of the association was how to get men who had succeeded in making improvements to come to the conventions and explain them. They were slow to do this, hard to be convinced that it was to their interest to do so; for that they would, like enough, carry away with them in exchange the equally valuable discoveries that had been made by others in other directions. It has been in this way, by urging men working in the same field to exchange ideas with mutual advantage, that the management have succeeded in bringing the National Electric Light Association to its present satisfactory position and awakening so much interest in its proceedings. That the theory they worked on was a good one is amply proved by the attendance and the fact that every big lighting company in the country sends a representative to its meetings; those who have come to the earlier meetings and explained their experiments in the way of removing obstacles, appearing again and again to repeat the same thing, and listen to what others have been doing in the same line.

MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science began its annual meeting at Cleveland, O., on August 15. The usual address of welcome on the part of the city was responded to by Major J. W. Powell, the president of the Association. The retiring president, Prof. S. P. Langley, gave his address on the subject of the History of a Scientific Doctrine. The meeting then lasted until the close of the week. It was marked, as usual, by receptions to the Association on the part of the citizens of the place of meeting, and by evening lectures by members. Prof. Putnam, the permanent secretary, reported an excellent financial status. The permanent endowment fund exceeds \$45,000, and the liabilities are nominal.

In the chemical section, Profs. Maybery's and Dow's paper on the Salt Brines in Northern Ohio was of special interest. They found bromine and lithium in the brines from natural gas wells in quantities sufficient to indicate a commercial value for this product. In the biological section, Dr. E. Lewis Sturtevant read a paper on a Phase of Evolution. It was a study of the dandelion and of its apparent modifications under cultivation. He advanced the view that cultivation does not cause new variations, but only takes advantage of those already existing.

The ever interesting subject of gravitation was treated in a paper by Prof. Erasmus D. Preston, entitled Deflections of the Plumb Line and Variations of Gravity in the Hawaiian Islands.

Prof. Atwater gave one of his striking monographs on the subject of plant food, stating that it might yet be practicable to raise crops in water, the food elements being supplied thereto by the cultivator. He cited a buckwheat plant thus raised, producing about 800 perfect and 200 imperfect seeds.

Transisthmian canals were discussed by Mr. W. Nelson, who spoke of the Panama Canal as it is, while Lieutenant Peary and Commander Henry T. Taylor told of the progress made on the Nicaragua Canal. The probable cost is now put at fifty or fifty-five millions of dollars.

After the election of officers for the next year, Prof. Mendenhall being elected president, the meeting adjourned.

Cholera and its Effects in Sicily.

The British consul at Palermo, in his last report, observes that business during last year suffered greatly from an epidemic of cholera in Sicily, the mortality being very great in most of the towns. The population of Palermo lived for some months in a state of "savage panic." The effects were heightened by the ignorance and superstitious character of the people generally. In the poorer quarters it was believed, as in the Middle Ages, that the government and the richer classes were disseminators of the cholera poison, in order to exterminate the poorer population. Sisters of charity were stoned in their visits to the houses of choleraic patients, and even doctors were sometimes obliged to visit the sick under military escort. A man with a decent coat on his back always walked in danger of being assaulted, since it was believed that all were agents in a conspiracy for the extirpation of the poor. In interior towns tragic scenes ensued in consequence of this superstition. "The popular mind in Sicily seems inaccessible to any idea of the virtue of clean water and soap," and sanitation has been so completely neglected that it may be doubted whether cholera has not become endemic. For a time Messina became a veritable desert; many of the chief medical men fled, as well as numerous apothecaries; every house was closed and food was most difficult to procure, and what was obtainable was of the very worst quality. The mortality was almost entirely confined to the humbler classes, all who could leave the city having fled.