

hateful to the multitude. But if only the mentally and spiritually privileged should read and assimilate, the result might be a perceptible hastening of the destruction of that inequality which, in Matthew Arnold's famous words, applicable to more countries than England, "materializes our upper classes, vulgarizes our middle classes, brutalizes our lower classes."

Total Eclipses of the Sun. [Columbia Knowledge Series.] By Mabel Loomis Todd. Boston: Roberts Bros. 1894.

Joy is hardly too strong a word to express the surprised state of mind of the reviewer who finds a work upon a subject sharply cut treated thoroughly upon a plan sharply cut. True, an easy subject has been selected. Professor Ranyard some years ago digested in a thick quarto all that had up to that time been observed in relation to solar eclipses, and those astronomers whose attention has been turned that way have kept subsequent observations under continued comparison with those recorded by Ranyard. That, therefore, facilitated Mrs. Todd's task. Yet it was not easy to boil Ranyard's huge volume (together with all that has been observed since) into a couple of hundred pages of duodecimo. This has been effected with such skill that the most learned astronomer may profit by reading these pages, though any novice can profit by them.

Of all the phenomena of nature, a total solar eclipse is incomparably the most sublime. The greatest ocean storm is as nothing to it; and as for an annular eclipse, however close it may come to totality, it approaches a complete eclipse not half so near as a hurdy-gurdy a cathedral organ. Few people who do not make journeys on purpose ever see a total eclipse; consequently, it is difficult to imagine how such events could ever have been predicted before the theory of them was understood. The Babylonian bricks have shown that the most scientific people of antiquity often made mistakes in their predictions that solar eclipses would occur; and they never seem to have attempted to predict their totality. It is true that in the period of fifty-four years eclipses come round with some approximation to their former conditions. It may possibly have been that Thales, who is said to have predicted an eclipse 585 B. C., made use of this period; but several considerations cast great doubt on the prediction. It is a curious fact that the records of ancient eclipses, solar and lunar, do not gibe with modern observations. To account for the discrepancy, Oppolzer and other European astronomers suppose a gradual change of the motion of the moon; but our American authority, Newcomb, finds evidence of a sudden change such as might have resulted from some cataclysm within the interior of the earth, which should have altered the length of the day by a minute amount that might become appreciable in the course of many centuries.

Mrs. Todd gives full information about the observations of the sun's corona and about the various theories of it, all of them unsatisfactory. She seems to regard it as certain that the light of it is largely ultra-violet. If this be the case, fluorescent spectacles ought to assist the observation of it. Mrs. Todd makes the curious if not very probable suggestion that the wings of the winged sun-disk which the Egyptians imported along with the god Ra represent the sun's corona. They are certainly similar to some appearances of the corona. At the end of the book is a valuable chart of the eclipse-tracks of the next fifty years. It would

have been better if the quincuncial projection had been employed for this purpose, as recommended by Oppolzer. But the book is so pretty and so interesting that we need say no more of it; our readers will find it out for themselves.

The Epicurean: A Franco-American Culinary Encyclopedia. By Charles Ranhofer. Illustrated with 800 plates. New York, 682 West End Avenue: Charles Ranhofer.

It is affirmed by gastronomic connoisseurs that within the past thirty years the degeneracy of the once famous men cooks of Paris has been making rapid progress, and that the true *cordons bleus* of France are now women, recruited from the Provinces, whose services are confined exclusively to private families, where and under whose auspices the traditions of classical cookery are alone maintained. That there is a certain measure of truth in this assertion is confirmed by the sarcastic allusions of French writers to the bad quality and indifferent preparation of the food now served at the Parisian restaurants, and the unqualified praise which they bestow upon the female *cordons bleus*. Théodore de Banville touches on this subject in the following words:

"Ils trouvaient chez elle des plats accommodés avec des jus savants par une vieille cuisinière de Moulins, que Madame Silz cachait comme un proscrit, car le chef du café anglais et celui du baron de Rothschild avaient organisé en vain des fourberies et des tours de Scapin, pour arriver à lui parler et à savoir ses recettes."

What is true in this description of female cooks applies equally to two women writers upon culinary subjects. Madame Rosalie Blanquet, in her 'Cuisinière des ménages,' and Mrs. Beeton have both produced veritable classics relating to cookery in private families. Francatelli has done as much for the *grande cuisine*, but it has remained for Mr. Charles Ranhofer, in his 'Epicurean,' to combine under one cover all of the merits of the other three. In the great accumulation of facts relating to the preparation of food contained in the 'Epicurean,' there is no single instance where the recipes are not given with a lucidity and clearness in marked contrast to the involved and exasperating confusion of words so common in the formulas usually found in similar works. More than 3,715 recipes recorded, while many are calculated for a kitchen organization of the most complete and elaborate character, there are many more which are easily within the compass of the most modest household equipment. This being so, Mr. Ranhofer might well have trusted to the admirable accomplishment of his performance to secure him the full recognition of its merits, without the unnecessary accentuation of his occupancy of the post of chef of a conspicuous restaurant of the town as indisputable proof of his superior capacity. While this may have an effect upon certain classes of people—those who eat but do not dine, and those who blindly follow the fad of the moment—among gastronomic connoisseurs it will have no value or consideration whatsoever; quite the contrary. Moreover, it is among this fastidious and discriminating group that Mr. Ranhofer must look for the larger sale of his work, inasmuch as the price of it will naturally restrict its general distribution.

There is another feature of Mr. Ranhofer's book which is open to criticism. He has copiously padded it with reproductions of the menus of private and public dinners which have been served in the restaurant in question

during the past thirty years. These have considerably increased the bulk of the work, already large, without adding a corresponding interest. These menus are of no possible value, except possibly to betray to commentators of the future the depth of gastronomic savagery which prevailed among us during the latter portion of the nineteenth century. We allude not to the culinary merits of the dishes, but to their barbaric profusion, with the reckless waste of food products as a natural sequence. In France, where the price of comestibles is so high and the quantity, as compared to ours, is so limited, effort is constantly being directed towards superlative merit in cookery as a counterpoise to profusion. The following menu of an exceptional dinner of twelve covers recently served in Paris will more clearly emphasize the contrast between the foolish prodigality which characterizes the menus recorded by Mr. Ranhofer, and the restraint which is exercised in such matters abroad:

Potage à la royale.
Truite saumonée, sauce Rachel.
Selle d'agneau à la rennaisaise.
Langouste à la Bragatton.
Dinde truffée.
Salade.
Pâté de foie gras de Nancy.
Fonds d'artichaut au parmesan.
Bombe Walkyrie.

Even this menu might have been curtailed to advantage by omitting the selle d'agneau and the pâté de foie gras.

In the copious index which accompanies the 'Epicurean,' there is one omission which should be supplied. While under the heading of beef, veal, eggs, etc., the various methods of preparation are recorded in sequence, in the case of fishes they are omitted. To learn the various modes of cooking these, it is necessary to refer to the individual species. Finally, in the choice of a binding, neither taste nor fitness has been consulted.

Elementary Meteorology. By William Morris Davis. Boston: Ginn & Co. Pp. 355. Illustrated.

THE slow development of the study of meteorology, even in our larger universities, is responsible, perhaps, for the lack of adequate textbooks. That of Loomis is antiquated, Buchan's is out of date and out of print. Waldo's 'Modern Meteorology' seems better calculated to make weather-observers than scientific men well grounded in the principles underlying their specialty, while the German works of recent date, excellent as they may be, have had no translators to adapt them to the needs of our schools. This work by Prof. Davis is, therefore, most timely, and any such would have received cordial welcome even had it been from a less skilful master of the subject. The sole criticism which suggests itself is that, in its departure from previous models, the arrangement of the book may fail to commend itself at sight to teachers having occasion to use it. This, however, is essentially true of all ventures into comparatively new fields, and the instructor who is competent to make such criticism will find the abundant material here given readily adaptable to the needs of any reasonable preëxisting method.

The book discusses first the origin, nature, uses, and extent of the atmosphere, and, next, temperature and its distribution, upon which factors the winds are dependent. This leads naturally to a consideration of the winds themselves and the moisture which they carry and distribute. The later portion of the book is devoted to the relation of atmospheric phenomena to each other, with some account of the practical matter of weather prediction, and to

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