

Educational Department.

The New Comet.

At present the comet is about one hundred and sixty millions of miles from the earth, and its distance from us will probably not be less than eighty millions at any time, though further calculations will be necessary to settle that point. But though it will not approach us so nearly as other comets have done, it may be expected to make a fine display for a few days in the early part of June. Only ten comets have hitherto been known to approach the sun so nearly as this in all probability will. It is to be regretted, however, that its greatest brilliancy will occur at a time when it will be invisible to us, and seen only in the Southern Hemisphere. In this respect it will resemble the great comet of 1880. The present extraordinary intensity of its light which comes to us from the enormous distance of 160,000,000 miles, proves that it has plenty of material for future display, and it will probably show a long and nearly straight tail of enormous dimensions to our antipodes. How much of the same sort it will give us is still somewhat problematical, and can only be decided on the basis of further observations.

It is now invisible to the naked eye, and by a small telescope, though it is readily seen, yet owing to its smallness it can hardly be distinguished from the stars which surround it. After passing its perihelion it will probably become visible in the Northern Hemisphere. It now appears in the constellation of the Lyre, near Vega. It will pass to the westward of that star, and will continue on its journey up into Cygnus, when in May it will make an abrupt turn and go plunging in towards the sun.

The elements of the orbit of the new comet are: Perihelion passage, June 15; perihelion place, 49 degrees, 35 minutes; longitude of node, 206 degrees, 40 minutes; inclination, 74 degrees, 47 minutes; perihelion distance, 10,000,000 miles, motion direct.

This comet appears to have no analogue in the past, as no comet is known with elements sufficiently resembling these to constitute reasonable belief in identity. The elements of the comet of 1097 somewhat resemble those of the present comet; but the perihelion distance of the former is computed to be seven times as great as that of the

latter. Two weeks of further observation will serve to remove many uncertainties which now exist as to the future of this comet, and these observations will unquestionably be awaited with the greatest interest. *Albany Cor. N. Y. Herald.*

Technical Education.

Technical education is a subject that is just now attracting a good deal of attention in this country, not only among the teachers, whose special business it is to look after the training of the young, but among that larger and more numerous class of persons who are interested in the rising generation, as parents, philanthropists, and reformers. Three things conspire just now to make this question prominent: (1) the necessity that is acknowledged to exist in the United States for training boys to become skilled workmen; (2) the selfish and stubborn disposition among the leaders of the different trade unions to allow but a few boys the privilege of apprenticing themselves to learn a trade; and (3) the influx of the immense number of foreign immigrants now flocking to our shore from the Old World, many of whom are skilled and experienced artisans and perfect masters of their pursuits, who are crowding the new beginners out of position.

These are the three branches of the question. The resident portion of our population who would like to see their children engage in agricultural pursuits, begin to entertain well-grounded fears, if this large and ever increasing volume of immigration continues (nearly 7000 immigrants arrived at the port of New York last week) that there will soon be no good land to be obtained at a cheap rate, and certainly none in a few years to be had at the government price. So they are obliged to look about for other occupations, for their boys beside the honorable, healthful, and honest one of farming. They find all the so-called learned professions already full and running over, the supply far exceeding the demand, and yet all the colleges and universities contain thousand of others who are preparing to become lawyers, doctors, or ministers. If a man would like to have his boys learn trades, he is confronted with opposition at the start, not from the proprietors of the manufacturing establishments, but from their

workmen, whose societies limit the number of apprentices, and from their arbitrary decision there is no appeal. Hence it is that in sheer despair the American parent turns to the public schools for relief, and asks if that beneficent institution, which has done so much for his children already, cannot be made to help him in this emergency also and establish a department for the technical education of his boys and girls at the taxpayers' expense.

The original intention of the common school system was to provide every child in the State, free of cost, with the opportunity of obtaining the rudiments of a good English education, and nothing beyond that. The old saw expressed the idea exactly, with the three R's—"Reading, 'Ritin', 'Rithmetic." After a little there was an innovation, and the higher branches began to be taught in the common school. Still later the high school system was engrafted upon the parent stalk, with its normal department for training teachers, and its classical courses to prepare young men to enter college. All this advancement has been strenuously resisted by some taxpayers and wealthy capitalists, who insist that it is done in violation of the fundamental principles upon which the common school system of this country rests. The most of the money that is raised for the support of the public schools comes from the pockets of the wealthy classes of the community, who do not send their own children to the common schools, but educate them elsewhere, after paying their full share towards the fund that defrays the expense of educating their neighbors' children. But these men should see the duty and propriety of helping those who cannot help themselves. They can afford to contribute of their wealth for the amelioration and elevation of the condition of the masses, for the general good and with a view to ultimate economy.

Resistance to the proposed establishment of technical departments in the public schools will be opposed by the same classes of men who oppose the high school and the teaching of the higher branches in the district schools. But technical education and the proper training of the young of both sexes are undoubtedly among the most important and really necessary undertakings that now confront the present generation. Knowledge is power, and morality and intelli-

gence go hand in hand. It would be a great thing if all our boys could be taught the use of tools and the arts of mechanism, as well as literature and science; and the claim of the girls to be taught something relating to cooking and housekeeping, or to be trained in a way that will aid them in obtaining an honest and independent living, is as imperative and ought to be heeded with as much respect as is paid to the demand of their brothers. The opponents of the education of our boys and girls in the practical arts and mechanical trades at public expense reason from a superficial standpoint and from a mistaken notion of economy. The best economy, as far as society and government are concerned, is that which educates the masses in knowledge and trains them to self-supporting industry. No proposition in social or political economy is more demonstrable than that.

Chicago Journal.

When you lay before the school authorities the fact that with charts, blackboards, a globe and a magnet, you can teach a whole class of twenty or thirty, more and better than you can teach a single pupil without these helps, it will be an easy matter to take the next step and convince them that true economy demands that the school shall be furnished with these things without delay. You can do ten or twenty times as much work within a given time with these helps as you can do without them.

Knowledge through the eye is conveyed a thousand-fold faster, especially among children, than by any other organ or faculty.—*Ec.*

The time children can attend school, passes so quickly that it would seem to be the part of wisdom, certainly, to give them the best possible facilities for acquiring knowledge while they are there. A teacher can do very much more work, and teach twenty or thirty quicker, with maps, globes, charts, a magnet and other helps, than they can teach one without these things.

President Barnard, of Columbia College, has recommended that that institution admit ladies.

BAPTISMAL ROBES.

THE "LADIES AID SOCIETY" OF THE Christian Church, Portland, is prepared to furnish "Baptismal Robes" to those desiring, at prices from \$5 to \$7, according to kind of cloth. These will be sent by mail to any part of the coast. Address, HERALD Office, 105 First St., Portland, Or.