

### The Northern Lights.

These appearances are most generally known as the Aurora Borealis, the Merry Dances, or the Aurora Borealis, owing to the fact that the high northern latitudes have been much more visited than the southern. The same phenomena, however, are to be seen as we go southward, and so they are sometimes spoken of under the name of the Aurora Australis. We have chosen the most popular title, though perhaps the most appropriate one that has been applied to them is that of Aurora Polaris. As few of those who read this will ever have the opportunity of actually visiting either the northern or southern polar regions, let us immerse ourselves for a brief season to be upon the deck of a vessel far away in the north—let us say in the autumn, just before the approach of the long Arctic night. As we glance round all looks cold and bleak. There is light enough for us to see on every hand the fantastic forms of the icebergs looming up in the darkness. We hear the grinding of bergs together, and cannot suppress an uncomfortable feeling as the contingency presents itself to our mind of the ship getting aground between two of those huge floating ice islands. As we look, the scene changes as completely as though a magician's wand had transferred us to one of the jewelled palaces of the "Arabian Nights." We see arches of light stretching across the heavens from east to west—sometimes remaining stationary, and sometimes moving slowly towards the south. Rays of light shoot out perpendicularly from the arches, and if the arches are below the horizon we only see these rays, which, though really parallel, often appear as an effect of perspective to meet in a point in the zenith. These rays very seldom remain stationary, but shoot upwards towards the zenith. At the same time moving eastwards, often with a tremulous, snake-like motion from end to end, till sometimes they cover the whole sky. If now we turn our eyes from this magnificent light to look down again

upon the surrounding mass of bergs which just now looked so weird and gloomy, we can scarcely believe that they were the same, for now they throw back to us in a thousand colours the light that flashes on them from above, and the peaks and pinnacles of the bergs appear to be set with jewels of the most varied hues and the most dazzling brightness. The rays appear in the most varied forms and patterns, in one of the most beautiful of which, though seldom seen, the rays seem to hang from the sky in folds like a mantle. It is at present rather doubtful whether the auroral displays are or are not accompanied by any sound. Many observers have asserted that during an aurora they have heard crackling and hissing sounds; and some experiments made by M. Planse decidedly support this view. On the other hand, some of the most eminent polar explorers have listened in vain for these sounds, and have given it as their opinion that what was heard was merely the breaking up of the ice, and the grinding of the icebergs. Having now in our mind the appearance of these northern lights, we will repeat a well-known laboratory experiment. We take a glass cylinder, covered at the end with brass caps one of which is fitted with a stop-cock, which we can screw to the plate of an air-pump. To the brass caps we now attach the terminals of a powerful induction coil, and as yet we perceive no result. We now begin to exhaust the air from the cylinder, and as the exhaustion goes on we soon see a soft, tremulous light beginning to play about the ends of the cylinder; and this, when the air is sufficiently rarified, the light gradually extends right through the cylinder. As we continue the exhaustion, these phenomena will be reversed, the light gradually fading away as the exhaustion increases. We shall at once perceive how very much this resembles an aurora on a small scale, and so we have electricity suggested to us as the agent which produces the aurora.—[Science for All.]

### ODDS AND ENDS.

During the last week of October London had 89,221 paupers on the books.

The foreign papers announce an Irish opera by Mrs. Parnell, mother of the Irish leader.

"It's hisn't, but it's nice," said a horse thief in Montana, as he cast a cursory glance at the neck tie a committee were about to present him. "It is warranted to look well on a choker," was the reply, "and will fit any neck."

The Archduchess Marie Valeria, the youngest daughter of the Emperor and Empress of Austria, has written a comedy, which was produced at the theatre of the imperial palace on the fete day of her mother. The Archduchess will herself appear in the principal part.

In 1773 the subscription to her Majesty's Theatre, London, for fifty representations was \$105. In 1807, the year of Callani's engagement on what were then deemed most exorbitant terms, the price of a box containing six seats for the season was \$375. The regular performances were on two nights a week, and there were a few extra nights. The season was about six months.

Sardou hired a house in the country to pass the last summer, and went in search of a farmer who had a milch cow. Having found one, he said, "My good man, my servant will come every morning to buy a pint of milk." "All right; it is eight sous." "But I want pure milk—very pure." "In that case it is ten sous." "You will milk in the presence of my servant." "Then it is fifteen sous."

Oscar Wilde suggests that for the future ladies should leave off stays entirely and adopt the Eastern garb, notable as regards the corset and slippers. Like other geniuses, he is forgetful of details, and does not say how slippers are to be worn on a muddy day in November. For man he recommends the period of the Charleses as being the most becoming (not to say the most expensive) are from which to copy.

About 1200 Simon di Montfort, Earl of Leicester, granted a charter to that borough for the total exclusion of Jews therefrom. It runs; "No Jew or Jewess in my time or in the time of my heirs, to the end of the world, shall within the liberty of Leicester, inhabit, remain, or obtain any residence." Nevertheless, Mr. Israel Hart, a Hebrew, is Leicester's Mayor, and is the first of his creed to fill that office.

In the creation of two at least of the recent peerages, Mr. Gladstone must have found personal pleasure. Sir Walter James is an old and intimate friend, at whose country home Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone have spent many happy days, and Lord de Vesci is a nephew of Mr. Gladstone's early and abiding friend, Sidney Herbert, whose death at 47, the same age as Pitt when he died, has been to him a ceaseless regret.

The Rev. Dr. Paxton is quoted as saying: "I could never understand why a Scotch drink was always considered to be dry. If ever any people on the earth keep it wet outwardly, and a good deal wet inwardly, I must say the Scotch people do it. But after all, the Scotch people, whether they get their wetness from the weather or from toddy, are the only people who ever successfully solved the problem on this little planet of how to combine punch and piety."

Two years ago a large water spaniel called "Black," the property of a bathing machine owner, was the means of rescuing eight sailors, at Biarritz, France, by carrying a corked line to them on a rock. A dog's fate was organised in his honor, the municipality subscribing \$10, and he was, further, presented with a silver collar. Ultimately he was bought by the Grand Duke Vladimir and taken to Russia. He lately was seen in Paris, and well round his paws.

A letter received from an aide-de-camp of Lord Wolseley states that for a fortnight previous to writing no advance had been made, and the army of relief was moving slowly at the great cost of \$100,000 a day. One of the chief causes of delay was the want of coal. The health of the men was good, though some dysentery prevailed. Excellent rations were plentiful. The Essex and Cornwall regiments and two companies of the Guards were then encamped under canvas near Wady Halfa.

The London correspondence of the American (Paris) Register relates this: An epicurean Bishop was neatly taken in by a smart boy at Banbury. Being desirous of tasting the famous cakes, he beckoned the lad to come to him at the window of the railway carriage, and asked the price of the cakes. "Three pence each, Sir," replied the boy. Giving him six pence, the bishop desired him to bring him one, and added, as he was running off, "Buy one for yourself with the other three pence." Presently the boy appeared, munching his "Banbury," and handing three pence in coppers to the Bishop, announced in the most ingenious manner, "There was only one left, sir."

### A Bridegroom Wanted.

A New York society journal, of recent date, reports a rather sensational and somewhat amusing contretemps in connection with an unsuccessful attempt at marriage in high life. It seems that Mr. D. L., an intimate friend of Jay Gould, Jun., was engaged to a beautiful young Southern lady, and a quiet private marriage was to have taken place Wednesday evening, at eight o'clock three weeks ago. The young gentleman dressed himself for the event and proceeded in a carriage for the scene of the ceremony. About a block from there he stopped at a resort which he was in the habit of patronizing, and dismissed his equipage. Here he met old friends, whom he joined in a glass of champagne. In his excited state a little wine soon affected him, and when the hour for the ceremony arrived, the lover and his friends, who in the meantime discovered his secret, were all in a hilarious state. The little party invited to the wedding waited impatiently. Nine o'clock came, then ten and eleven, and yet no bridegroom. The party was breaking up in disgust, and the first one who attempted to make an exit from the house found the bridegroom's unconscious form stretched across the threshold. His friends had carried him there, and on his back they had pinned a placard announcing that that night, at eight o'clock, he had been married to Pommery Sec. Champagne. A jilted lover is said to be at the bottom of the chemo.

Where Moses was when the light went out: "Sir Moses Montefiore has not got ten children, as reported by the papers. He never has had a single child," said Moses Schaumburg to Gilhooly. "He never had a child?" asked Gilhooly. "Never had a child." "Well, then, perhaps he has ten grandchildren, instead of ten children as reported. That's how the mistake occurred."

### Making of Mummies.

An extraordinary subject was brought forward at the recent meeting of the Social Science Congress, namely, the actual making of modern mummies. A paper was read on this question by Mr. Thomas Rayley, of Birmingham, going fully into the objections raised to cremation, the most important, as far as legal points are concerned, being, that cremation does away with all evidence of foul play, which must be lost the moment the body is destroyed. In the face of this grave difficulty, the paper proposes a plan by which the dead may be easily preserved for an indefinite time after death, and so as to be at any moment recognizable and in a fit state for analysis, examinations, or otherwise as may be necessary—the body, in fact, becoming a perfect mummy. This curious position is arrived at by enveloping the body in cotton wood; it is then placed in an air tight case, and exposed, in a subterranean gallery lined with cement, to the action of cold air, which is dried and purified from putrefactive bacteria. After this, air at a higher temperature is used in the same way; and the result of the process is the manufacture of a complete mummy, with the integument remaining white, and the body entire. And herein this new process differs from that adopted by the ancient Egyptians, who were specially careful to remove the interior portions of both the trunk and the head, their pieces being stuffed with peppers, spices, and other aromatic herbs. It is a somewhat delicate question to ask whether this curious suggestion will ever become popular with Englishmen, or Europeans in general; but there can be no doubt, in questions where suspicion of murder has arisen and yet cannot be proved, that the preservation of the body of the deceased in such an ingenious manner would be eminently satisfactory to relatives of the supposed victim, because the body is always at hand, intact and ready for careful examination at any moment, on the discovery of fresh evidence, or otherwise.

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Children's Fine German Cashmere Hose at 35, 45, 55c up.  
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Ladies' Leather Satchels in Tan and Black, 40, 50, 75c, \$1, \$1.25 up.

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