

SCIENCE.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1884.

A CHRISTMAS GREETING.

ALTHOUGH still an infant, having scarcely attained the age of two years, *Science* does not appear to-day in its usual leading-strings, but has been granted a certain license in accord with the season, of which it does not in the half know the meaning, and has been decked in a new dress to fit the day. That what the child says may be rambling, is to be expected: that what it may mean shall be clear, its lisps shall be translated. First look at its new dress, all salmon and brown. 'Arbor scientiæ' does not mean that the plant is a scientific tree, nor yet a tree upon which science grows, but rather the tree is to symbolize the fact that science does grow. Inside the cover you will find a picture of the sun, taken at the Harvard college observatory, but of a composite nature, as all the prominences with which it is circled were actually observed, though not all at one time.

The sun has in all times been worshipped by some; but since it has been reduced to nothing more than a ball of fire rolling on through space, according to laws fixed by Sir Isaac Newton, his worshippers have many of them abandoned him. Still to a few faint souls it occurred that their old favorite could not fail them so utterly; and they have sought to show his influence on the growth of wheat, the price of stocks, and the pointing of the compass: of this there is more in the opening article. They would also call attention to the effect the sun has in bringing out the flowers, and the early birds, and the insects that the birds may have whereon to feed. 'We had not meant to give the sun-worshippers such vantage-ground; but, looking down the pages, we find something about tornadoes, about the variations of temperature at different points in the United States, and a map showing by lines the points at which the average mean temperature for the year is the same, — phenomena which depend on the sun,

— and certain advice to farmers which would be of little avail if the sun should fail to perform its part. Whether earthquakes can be made to depend on the sun, we dare not say; but there are those who would not deny him even that power.

But at last we find some small evidence of a revolt against the tyranny of the sun. For years people would rise as the sun rose, they aimed to eat their dinners as the sun crossed the meridian, and they donned their nightcaps as the sun went down. A few wise men have long pointed out that the sun had by no means the regular habit he had the credit for; that often good people had eaten their pudding, and got well into their broth, before the sun had crossed the noon-mark. This is all changed. Man now gets up by a railway-whistle, eats his dinner by a railway-whistle, and counts his sleepless hours at night by railway-whistles. That it may be clear just how these whistles blow, we give a map showing the limits of railway-time. So the sun at last has lost a part of his former pre-eminence, and yielded it to the railway-king.

The natural instinct with each of us is to live within himself; he is quite startled when, at times, he notes that he is only one among a large community; and, as we view with indifference the toils of some distant Tasmanian, so does the Tasmanian live in utter ignorance of our toils. The maps of the stars we give are from some point in the solar system. We look at the stars as pretty, bright objects in a frosty sky. Suppose the maps made from the point of view of a dweller in the planetary system about σ Draconis: would our sun be given?

The innovations which science has brought to pass have startled a few; to allay which fear, *Science*, casting about in search of an anchor still left to which a well-regulated life may be moored, has hit upon the almanac, and therefore gives up the closing pages to such data of sun and moon risings and settings, of high tides and low tides, of planets good and planets bad, as may enable all its readers to know at least when it is day, and when night.