

SCIENCE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1887.

THE ENDEAVORS of the Australian colonies to raise money for resuming explorations in the Antarctic regions have so far been unsuccessful. The funds for rewards for whalers extending their cruises beyond the sixtieth degree of latitude have not been appropriated, and, since Allen Young's offer to take command of an expedition of this kind, nothing has been done. Sir Graham Berry has, in accordance with instructions from the government of Victoria, asked the British Government if they would contribute the sum of £5,000 towards an Antarctic expedition, provided the Australian colonies agreed to contribute a similar sum, and the subject is now under consideration by the British Government. The financial state of the Australian colonies is not very satisfactory at the present time, and therefore it is not likely that an energetic attempt will be made. The movement for resuming these explorations originated in Germany; but so far nothing has been done there to raise money and to send out an expedition, as the activity of explorers is almost exclusively directed towards Africa and the islands of the Pacific Ocean. Our American whalers are those who have the most immediate interest in the matter, as they frequent the neighboring seas and derive considerable quantities of whale-oil from that region. A few years ago one of them landed on m Graha Land, and found near its shores an abundance of sea-animals; but as he had no authority to visit those dangerous latitudes, and as the ice was closing upon his ship, he did not continue his explorations. We do not think that the endeavors of the Australian colonies will be successful for some time to come, and it would be gratifying if meanwhile American enterprise would take up this important problem, in which no nation is more interested than we are, as our vessels are those which visit the Antarctic waters most frequently, and as a successful approach is most probable close to the south point of our continent. Arctic navigation shows that progress is always most promising under the shelter of land. Graham Land can be reached comparatively easy; and under its shelter, that is, on its eastern coast, important discoveries without great risk, and at no great expense, can be made. This would be a task for one of our whaling-masters who, in their swift schooners, navigate year after year the ice-covered waters of the Arctic Ocean.

IN A RECENT SERIES of articles, the London *Chemical News* has sought to show the importance of scientific research to nations, and in the closing article of the series encounters what is the main question with Englishmen, whether the present position of science in the United Kingdom is satisfactory, and, if not, why not. Answering its own queries, *The Chemical News* says, "To the former of these queries scarcely any one has the boldness to reply in the affirmative. Were all well with us in this respect, why that feeling of dissatisfied excitement rarely felt on any subject which does not fall within the programme of faction? Why do we send out commissions to scrutinize the state of scientific and technical education in continental countries? Why do we institute new colleges and training-schools of different grades, and why propose, as it has been lately done, new parliamentary action in this direction? Why do we hear complaints made, not merely at the gatherings of purely scientific bodies, but among men of business, that in this important respect, and in comparison with rival nations, we are not holding our own, not to speak of gaining ground? That along with this feeling of discontent and this craving for improvement there is an undercurrent of indifference, or even of hostility to

science, is but too true. Why, else, should Sir Henry Roscoe, in his late presidential address before the British Association, remark that science was less respected in Britain than in other civilized countries? Or how could a well-informed German contemporary take occasion to say that Britain had, whichever party happened to be in power, 'a government very unfavorably disposed to science and to her disciples' (*Eine der Wissenschaft und ihren Jüngern sehr abhold gesinnte Regierung*)? In fact, notwithstanding all that has been done of late years, all the efforts made, and all the money expended, many of the complaints urged in Babbage's 'Decline of Science' still hold good. It can no longer, indeed, be said that there is in all the universities of Britain not a single person engaged in any train of original research. We recognize with pleasure that experimental science has obtained a footing in our ancient seats of learning, and that fairly efficient laboratories—chemical, physiological, and biological—have been or are being organized. Whether these institutions, when compared with those met with abroad, e.g., at the University of Strasburg, are fairly commensurate with the importance of their task and with the wealth of the country, is another question. But we have still to complain of the paucity of research issuing from the British universities. We have tilled and manured the soil, and scattered the good seed; but the harvest, so far, is of the scantiest."

THE 'UMBRIA'S' WAVE.

MR. HENRY TOYNBEE, marine superintendent of the English Meteorological Office, has published in *Nature* of Sept. 29 a report by William Watson of the 'Umbria's' wave. Captain Watson, who is general superintendent of the Cunard line of steamers, states that no doubt there were some big waves knocking about the Atlantic on the morning of July 26, but nothing more than could, under the conditions of weather, be expected. There is no evidence of other steamers meeting an exceptionally big wave.

Abstract of Log, SS. 'Umbria.'

Date.	Wind.	Bar.	Air.	Water.	Remarks.
July 25. Noon	S. W.	29°60	62°	63°	Strong wind and overcast.
4 P.M.	W. S. W.	29°50	60°	61°	Fresh wind and showery.
8 P.M.	W. by N.	29°45	60°	61°	Fresh wind and clear.
Midnight	W. by N.	29°31	60°	62°	Moderate gale, force 9.
26th. 4 A.M.	N. W. by W.	29°42	59°	61°	{ Moderate gale and squally, force 9.
8 A.M.	N. W. by W.	29°50	60°	62°	
Noon	N. W. by W.	29°70	59°	62°	

"4.40 A.M., sea came on board over the bows, breaking No. 2 companion-hatch, twisting the forward bridge, breaking some iron stanchions on the bridge, breaking the short bridge between the forward end of the promenade deck and the break of the forecandle, and bending the brass rails on the port side of the main upper bridge, leaving the lower bridge intact. 8 A.M., fresh gale, force 9, with a heavy, confused sea. Noon, gale moderating and the sea going down, but still confused."

At midnight on the 25th the wind was freshening from west by north, and the weather becoming squally. A long, heavy sea was coming from west-south-west, but the ship was only taking an occasional spray over all. At 2 A.M., 26th, the wind was west-north-west, a gale, with heavy and frequent squalls, sea rising fast from north-west. At 4, the wind had veered to north-west, with heavy and frequent squalls. At this time the west-south-west sea was still very heavy, with a high north-west sea running across and over