SCIENCE

FRIDAY, MAY 11, 1888.

THE GRAVE APPREHENSIONS as to the fate of Stanley's expedition, that are occasionally published in the daily papers, have no other foundation than the lack of any news since Stanley's departure from the mouth of the Aruvimi. We know from Junker's descriptions, that the region he has to pass through is a very difficult one, and that his original estimates of the time required to reach the Mvutan Nsige from the Kongo were too low. If any serious mishap should have occurred to him, exaggerated rumors would undoubtedly have reached the coast; for even in Africa a caravan of hundreds of men, including several white men, does not disappear never to be heard of again. News did not reach the lower Kongo, as no steamer has been able to visit Stanley Falls and the mouth of the Aruvimi since Stanley's departure. It is somewhat difficult to understand the reason for this state of affairs, except it may be that the steamers have suffered from their long-continued service, or are needed for the actual use of the stations near Leopoldville. The steamers of the missions and of the Sandford Exploring Expedition are not at the disposal of the Free State. The 'En Avant' has just returned from her great expedition up the Welle, and thus the number of available steamers was practically very small. Recent papers inform us that a new steamer, the 'Roi des Belges,' was launched on Stanley Pool Feb. 18, while the 'Ville de Bruxelles' is being transported to the upper Kongo. It is to be hoped that communication with the upper Kongo, which has practically been interrupted since the capture of Stanley Falls Station by the Arabs, — except when Stanley and Tippo-Tip ascended the Kongo, — will be resumed ere long.

WILLIAM C. WYCKOFF, late editor of the *American Magazine*, who died in Brooklyn last week, was well known among the scientific men of the United States. A few years ago, when the *New York Tribune* devoted much more space to scientific matters than now, Mr. Wyckoff, then a member of its editorial staff, reported the annual meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; and it is doing him only justice to say that no equally good reports have ever been made for a daily newspaper, rarely if ever for a weekly or monthly journal devoted to science. He was singularly careful and painstaking as a reporter, and his work received wide recognition among those most interested in and best able to judge of it. The same conscientiousness characterized all of his work as a writer and editor. His service upon the *Tribune* extended through many years. More recently, as secretary of the Silk Association of America, he has published a number of very valuable volumes in relation to that industry. His latest work was upon the *American Magazine*, as its editor, which in one year he built up from the old *Brooklyn Magazine*. This work speaks for itself. Mr. Wyckoff had a very wide circle of acquaintances and friends in the journalistic profession.

THE PROJECT of having a refuge-hut high up on the main range of the White Mountains — one which should afford adequate shelter in any weather — has long been entertained by members of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and the council of the society believe that the time has come for an effort in this direction. It is their desire to build this summer a permanent stone cabin at Madison Spring, in the saddle between Mount Adams and Mount Madison, provided with sleeping-bunks, a stove, and the most necessary furniture. Cooking-utensils and axe would be kept there, and there is a good supply of fuel at hand. The structure will be useful in two ways: first, as a resting-point for persons who wish to visit the Northern Peaks, or to traverse the ridge to or from Mount Washington, but who have not the strength to accomplish these expeditions (distinctly the most interesting in the White Mountains) in a single day; second, as a comfortable camping-place for scientists, photographers, and lovers of scenery, who will be able to make prolonged stays in this interesting upper region, and be independent of the weather. The structure which the council have in mind will cost (at that altitude) from five hundred to seven hundred and fifty dollars, if built in a thorough manner. Until five hundred dollars are secured, it will hardly be prudent to begin the work. The council have appropriated one hundred and fifty dollars from the yearly income, and some subscriptions can probably be obtained outside; but at least three hundred dollars ought to be made up by subscriptions inside the club. The council make, therefore, an earnest appeal to all persons interested in this enterprise to indicate at once the sums they are willing to contribute. Assistance from any one interested will be gladly received. Subscriptions should be sent to the councillor of improvements, Frederic D. Allen, 10 Homboldt Street, Cambridge, Mass.

DR. EMIL BESSELS.

IN a recent number of *Science* we announced the death of Dr. Emil Bessels, who won so much well-deserved renown on the 'Polaris' expedition. The deceased was born in 1847 at Heidelberg. At an early age he left school and entered business, but his love of science prompted him to resume his studies. He became a student at the University of Heidelberg, and paid particular attention to zoölogy. His first publication of importance was on the distribution of the American deer. In 1869, at the instance of the late Dr. A. Petermann, he joined the first German polar expedition, which, although unsuccessful in its attempts to reach Gillis Land, made important discoveries in those parts of the Arctic Ocean lying between Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla. Particular attention was paid to observations on the temperature and salinity of the ocean. His work on this expedition had proved him to be an energetic worker and excellent observer; and when the American polar expedition was organized, in 1870, he was invited to join it as scientist. The progress and the events of this expedition are so well known that it is unnecessary to dwell upon them. It ought to be stated, however, that the scientific results are almost solely the work of the deceased. Setting aside the valuable geographical discoveries which Bessels made on excursions by sledge, and among which the exploration of Petermann Fiord ranks highest, his hydrographical and meteorological observations are of great importance. He was the first to give the explanation of foehn-like winds now universally adopted; he was the first to pronounce the insularity of Greenland, founding his conclusion upon the fact that the Atlantic tide entered the northern part of Robeson Channel. It will be remembered that his conclusions were fully corroborated by the discoveries of the Nares and Greely expeditions. After his return from the Arctic, he was engaged in working up the results of the expedition; but he had hardly finished this task, when he began to make preparations for a new expedition, the prime object of which was to be physical observations. He corresponded about his plans with Weyprecht and Dorst, and preparations were made; but, when all was ready, unfortunate events prevented the carrying-out of the plan, which would doubtlessly have resulted in great additions to our knowledge of the polar regions. During the last years of his life he resided in Washington, engaged in completing a work on physical geography