SCIENCE.

THE LIGNITES OF THE WEST.—F. V. Hayden, U. S. Geologist, has published, by permission, in *The American Journal of Science and Arts*, an abstract from his forthcoming report of the U. S. Geological Survey of Nebraska, which contains observations made by him during the Autumn of 1867, in regard to the lignite deposits of Colorado and Dakota. The following statements will be read with interest by those who have raised the question concerning the supply of fuel for the Union Pacific Railroad: Mr. Hayden's examination of the geology of Nebraska having failed to develop any workable beds of coal in that State, his attention was directed to the great lignite deposits of the Laramie Plains. He found the lignite to be of excellent quality, in beds from 8 to 11 feet thick, and he estimated the area occupied by this basin at 5,000 square miles. Its most eastern limit is about 10 miles east of Rock Creek, a branch of the Medicine Bow River. Outcroppings have been seen all along Rock Creek, Medicine Bow, on Rattlesnake Hills, on the North Platte, Muddy Creek, all along Bitter Creek, Ham's Fork, Echo Cañon, and all along Weber River, nearly to Great Salt Lake, showing that one connected series of deposits covers this whole area. The lignite taken from the beds on Rock Creek is from the outcroppings, yet it burns with a bright red flame, giving out a good degree of heat, leaving scarcely any ash, and is quite as desirable fuel for domestic purposes as any wood. Indeed, it might be called condensed dry wood. It is non-bituminous, exhibits just a trace of sulphuret of iron, which decomposing gives a rusty reddish appearance to the outcrops; and there are seams of jet, one to twelve inches in thickness, which looks much like cannel coal, and is thus termed by the miners. The Union Pacific Railroad will pass directly through these great coal fields, and as most of the freight will go westward for many years, the cars on their return can be loaded with this lignite, thus to be distributed through Nebraska at a cost much less than that of wood at the present time. There are also indications of an abundance of iron ore in the vicinity of these deposits, and the Union Pacific Railroad Company contemplate establishing rolling mills in the Laramie Plains at no distant period. The next point visited was South Boulder Creek, the Marshall Mines, which are probably the most valuable in the West. They have been wrought for four or five years. An average of 50 tuns daily are taken and sold at Denver, at prices varying from $12 to $15 per ton. The beds at the foot of the mountain dip to such an extent as to expose the whole series, 11 in number, varying from 3 to 13 feet in thickness, making from 30 to 50 feet, at least, of solid lignite. Another mine has been opened about 20 miles south of Cheyenne City, on Pole Creek. The lignite here grows better in quality as it is wrought further into the earth, and is sold readily at Cheyenne City for $25 per ton. The summit of the hills near this bed of lignite is covered with loose oyster shells, and there must have been a thickness of four feet or more almost entirely composed of them. The species seems to be identical with the one found in a similar geological position in the lower lignite beds of the Upper Missouri, near Fort Clark, and at the mouth of the Judith River, and doubtless was an inhabitant of the brackish waters which must have existed about the dawn of the Tertiary period in the West. These lignite beds are exposed in many localities all along the eastern base of the mountains. According to the explorations of Dr. J. L. Le Conte during the past season, these same lignite formations extend far southward into New-Mexico, on both sides of the Rocky Mountains. It is probable that no true coal will ever be found west of longitude 96°, and it becomes, therefore, a most important question to ascertain the real value of these vast deposites of lignite for fuel and other economical purposes. Specimens from the Marshall Mines were found to contain

Volatile matter, expelled at a red heat	26.00
Fixed carbon	59.20
The elements of water	12.00
Ash of a reddish color	2.80
Total	100.00

The per centage of fixed carbon shows at a glance the superiority of the Western lignite over those found in any other part of the world. In some portions of the lignite at these mines there is a considerable quantity of amber. Mr. Hayden spent two evenings burning this fuel in a furnace, and came to the conclusion that it would prove to be better than ordinary Western bituminous coals, and rank next to anthracite for domestic purposes. Being non-bituminous, it will require a strong draft to burn well. It is as free as anthracite, leaving no stain on the fingers. It produces no offensive gas or odor, and is thus superior in a sanitary point of view, and when brought into general use it will be a great favorite for culinary purposes. It contains no destructive elements, leaves very little ash, no clinkers, and produces no more erosive effects on stoves, grates or steam boilers, than dry wood. If exposed in the open air it is apt to crumble, but if protected it recieves no special injury. The connection of the lignite deposits on the Upper Missouri has been traced uninterruptedly to the North Platte, about 80 miles above Fort Laramie. The geological age of these western lignites is undoubtedly Tertiary. Prof. Lesquereux has furnished valuable notes as the result of his preliminary examination of the fossil plants in the lignite deposits, which confirm this view of their age. Mr. Hayden says all evidence seems to indicate that there are no valuable beds of lignite west of the Mississippi in formations older than the Tertiary, and that all the lignite tertiary beds of the West are but fragments of one great basin, interrupted here and there by the upheavel of mountain chains, or concealed by the deposition of newer formations.

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STEINWAY HALL.
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TUESDAY, MAY 19. | FRIDAY, MAY 22.
WEDNESDAY, MAY 20. | SATURDAY, MAY 23.
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FIVE DOLLARS.
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The sale of $5 tickets will continue but for one week, dating from this morning.

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THURSDAY, MAY 7,
MR. DAN BRYANT
WILL MAKE HIS
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IN IRISH DRAMA,
as above, sustaining his great specialties of
HANDY ANDY
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The Directors of the Academy have, in the most liberal manner, placed their house, free of charge, at Mr. Bryant's disposal, and that gentleman, supported by a number of artists who have volunteered their services, will devote the whole proceeds of the performance for the
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