
LIEUT. DAWSON AND HIS BAROMETERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY NEWS.

SIR,—Do Messrs. Negretti and Zambra seriously wish your readers to believe that a yard of soft iron wire, of a thickness about that of an ordinary pin, cannot be thrust up to the end of a barometer tube, without breaking it? Such an assertion is simple nonsense; I have done it scores of times and have never had an accident, nor can I understand the possibility of one. As regards the method proposed for filling the tubes, it is that which was regularly adopted by Sir Thomas Maclear, when engaged in his great operation of measuring an arc of the meridian at the Cape. He always filled his tubes afresh at each station. Success in the operation requires much practice and some knack in reversing the tube without allowing air to enter, but the importance of continually practising, both on board ship and at Zanzibar, was fully pointed out by myself to Lieutenant Dawson. Messrs. Negretti and Zambra would do good service to future travellers if they succeeded in contriving a light and simple apparatus suitable for use in wild travel, by which barometer tubes could be easily filled. An appreciable error, due to the introduction of air and damp, would be almost sure to be present, but if it certainly did not exceed one-tenth of an inch of mercury, it need not be regarded as of importance, because observations to within that degree of precision would have high value.—I am, &c.,

FRANCIS GALTON.
