

pose it has been found to exceed in durability and general usefulness every other material hitherto employed. This use of asbestos has been for some time known and put into practice in the United States. The Scotch Company, however, do not intend to stop at this comparatively limited application of this hitherto useless substance to the arts; as they allege that it is perfectly practicable to manufacture asbestos boats, tubes, boxes, waggon bodies, and even railway carriages.

According to *Nature*, the cuttlefish or *octopus* which was one of the great attractions of the Brighton Aquarium, has met with a sad fate. "Finding himself uncomfortable in a tank where he had been newly placed by the curator, he came out, in an unguarded moment, from the house of living oysters which he had collected as a shelter around him. In this tank were several large specimens of spotted dogfish. One of these fish, with the true acuteness of a sea-dog, immediately pounced upon the

unsuspecting *octopus* and swallowed him. *Appropos* of the preceding, Mr. J. G. George, of Nassau, Bahamas, describes in the *American Naturalist* for December, a gigantic *octopus*, measuring ten feet long, with arms five feet in length. The monster was found dead upon the beach, and its weight was estimated at between two and three hundred pounds.

One of the scientific curiosities observed in the recently concluded Hassler Expedition was the giant seaweed, the *Macrocystis pyrifera*, which grows off the coast of Patagonia in vast beds, springing out of from six to twenty fathoms of water. The stems of this seaweed are often from five hundred to a thousand feet in length, and they are thus the most gigantic of all existing plants. Patches of this sea-weed were passed in the open sea, with large sea-lions lying on its surface; and it is not at all impossible that some of the stories of the great sea-serpent may have been founded upon the floating stems of this plant.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

The *Revue des Deux Mondes* has an article entitled "A British Province in India," the subject of which is Anglo-Indian administration, with special reference to Orissa, the scene of the terrible famine of 1865-66. The article is appreciative, and, like some other recent articles from French pens, indicates an increase of candour on the part of French publicists in writing of British affairs. It admits the liberal spirit of British administration, but dwells on the gravity of the burden which England has laid on herself in undertaking to provide all the means of civilization, moral and material, for the Hindoos. "It will be seen," says the writer in conclusion, "from the foregoing account how great are the difficulties which the English Government has to encounter in India, and into what expenses it is drawn in maintaining its dominion. It is commonly said that if the Anglo-Saxon race is more adapted for colonization than other races, it is because it displaces the natives and substitutes itself in their room.

We have seen that, far from displacing and exterminating the Hindoos, England endeavours on the contrary to preserve to them their independence, and that she exercises her authority as much as possible through the instrumentality of native chiefs. We have seen also, that the system of abstention which she wished to practise at first has its limits, that every day new interests arise which oblige her to interfere more and more directly. There is the public health to be protected, there are communications to be opened, inundations to be prevented, famines to be averted, schools to be erected for the diffusion of knowledge among the people, personal security to be provided for by means of an organized police; in a word England has successively to establish all the branches of the public service which civilized nations require. England has conquered India by force, her honour demands that in the present day she shall rescue her conquest from the scourges which imperil its existence. We are reminded of