

up his method as the only standard by which all others must be gauged, he lacks that reserve of perfect impartiality which gives greatest value to criticism. An extremist partisan is dangerous in proportion to his ability, his ingenuity, and his wrong-headedness. If Mr. Howells's theory is wrong, then is his teaching too dangerous to be passed over in silence. It would seem to me that between the extreme of visionary romance, on one hand, and the extreme of commonplace analysis, on the other hand, should lie the safe ground, and upon this ground is founded the romances of Scott, Hugo, Dickens and George Eliot, the plays of Shakspeare and of Bulwer, and the best lyrics of Tennyson, Burns, Wordsworth and Longfellow. I speak of this as the safe ground for the author, and it is the only ground upon which the critic can afford to stand.—MAURICE THOMPSON, in *The Independent*.

A New African Region.

THE Rev. David Asante, a native missionary of the Basle Gold Coast mission, Africa, recently visited during a journey of exploration the hill-country of Booso, where he says the temperature is cool, rains are frequent, and rivulets numerous. The country is thinly peopled by a population subject to goitre and extremely dirty, whose children and bachelors wear no clothing. Wives, being harder to get—by the process of wooing and winning their consent—than in most African countries are treated well. The fetich-worship is less subtle than on the coast, but the poison-ordeal is frequently resorted to, and accounts for the small population. When a person dies, a whole village sometimes submits to take an infusion of a poisonous bark. Quarrels are settled by resorting to the same dangerous arbiter, thefts are discovered by it, babies who cry much are made to swallow the infusion to prevent their growing up wicked, and parents who lose several children in succession take it in order that the cause of their affliction may be discovered.

Petroleum Products as Fuel.

THE residues of the distillation of petroleum have been employed in the Caucasus for several years as a combustible, and have appreciated from having no value in 1874 till they command a price six times higher than crude naphtha, which is now employed as a cheaper fuel. Naphtha has been considered dangerous on account of its explosive qualities, but it has been found that they disappear when the liquid has been exposed to the air for a few days till it has lost its volatile constituents, which compose about fifteen per cent. of its substance. Crude naphtha, right from the springs, is burned in the locomotive-furnaces of the Balachanskoi railroad, and there are no accidents. Naphtha is the fuel that develops the greatest quantity of heat, and it also possesses the great advantage of not containing sulphur or other injurious substances. Ninety per cent. of the

theoretic calorific power can be realized from it, while not more than sixty per cent. can be got from solid combustibles. In 1859, doubts were expressed in Russia as to whether petroleum could be used as a combustible; now it is employed exclusively on all the ships in the Caspian Sea, and only half as much of it is required as used to be consumed of coal. The maximum force to be obtained from petroleum is equivalent to two and a half times what coal will furnish; and experiments on the railroad from Baku to Balachan show that a given weight of naphtha will take the place of eight and a half times the weight of wood, although the theoretically calculated difference in calorific power is only as three to one. Petroleum is very conveniently introduced into the furnaces of locomotives with the injectors that are used; the combustion is very easily regulated, and the furnaces last well in the absence of sulphur, while no smoke, sparks or ashes are emitted.

Medicines and Digestion.

DR. ROBERT G. ECCLES lately called the attention of the Brooklyn Pathological Society to the importance of regarding the effect of medicines to be administered upon digestion. "We never stop," he says, "to question the wisdom of pouring into the stomachs of the sick, in the most promiscuous manner, drugs that inhibit, or check the production of life-and-health-giving pepsone. In all chronic diseases, the paramount consideration is that of the patient's nutrition. When we can not destroy the pathogenic micro-organisms outright, the patient's only hope in the struggle for life lies in the strength of his cells, and their power to triumph over their foes. The most important considerations at those times is digestion. To interfere with it, or check it, is in many cases criminal. When our remedies are incompatible with the gastric juice, the time of taking is likely to be of far more importance than the medicine itself. To weaken patients by the production of artificial mal-nutrition, gives their diseases the advantage over them, when a little more knowledge would have enabled us to aid the vital forces instead of handicapping them." The author described the properties of various remedies in this light, and gave accounts of a large number of experiments which he had made on the subject.

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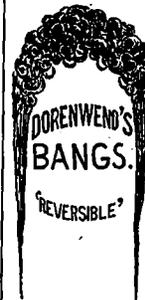
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