

and willows, poplars, and the fig surround every estancia when fenced in. The open plains are covered with droves of horses and cattle, and overrun by numberless wild rodents, the original tenants of the Pampas. During the long periods of drought which are so great a scourge to the country, these animals are starved by thousands, destroying in their efforts to live every vestige of vegetation. In one of these siccos at the time of my visit, no less than 50,000 head of oxen and sheep and horses perished from starvation and thirst, after tearing deep out of the soil every trace of vegetation, including the wiry roots of the Pampas grass. Under such circumstances the existence of an unprotected tree is impossible. The only plants that hold their own, in addition to the indestructible thistles, grasses, and clover, are a little herbaceous oxalis, producing viviparous seeds of extraordinary vitality, a few poisonous species, such as the hemlock, and a few tough, thorny, dwarf acacias, and wiry rushes, which even a starving rat refuses. Although the cattle are a modern introduction, the numberless indigenous rodents must always have effectually prevented the introduction of any other species of plants; large tracts are still honeycombed by the ubiquitous biscacho, a gigantic rabbit; and numerous other rodents still exist, including rats and mice, Pampas hares, and the great nutria and carpincho on the river banks. That the dearth of plants is not due to the unsuitability of the subtropical species of the neighbouring zones cannot hold good with respect to the wide valleys of the Andes beyond Mendoza, where a magnificent hardy flora is found. Moreover, the extensive introduction of European plants which has taken place throughout the country has added nothing to the botany of the Pampas beyond a few species that are unassailable by cattle, such as the two species of thistle which are invading large districts in spite of their constant destruction by the fires which always accompany the siccos.—*Nature*.

ART APPRECIATION.

It seems not unnatural that a Boston correspondent should make a Chicago man the hero of this incident in what is called real life:

A prominent merchant of one of our Western cities, who counts his dollars with seven figures, but who, in the ardent pursuit of wealth, has neglected such frivolities as literature and art, was recently visiting Boston with his family, and seeing the sights of the "Hub." In the course of his wanderings he entered the Museum of Fine Arts, and after gazing superciliously around at the contents thereof, his attention finally rested upon some fine paintings by Gustave Doré, which were at the time the pride of the city. These seemed to interest him, for, turning to his guide, he said, "G. Doré? G. Doré? are these by G. Doré?"

On receiving an affirmative response, he continued, "It seems to me that he has improved greatly of late, hasn't he?"

The guide, remembering that the artist had been dead some time, struggled a while with the desire to be truthful, but delighted that the great man had at last found something to interest him, finally doubtfully answered that perhaps he had.

Then the Westerner called his son to him: "John, see these pictures by G. Doré. Yes, it certainly seems to me he has improved very much. G. Doré? G. Doré? Why, he painted our house in Chicago!"—*Editor's Drawer, Harper's Magazine for March*.

THE COPTS.

Though the Copts are remarkable for their general detestation of all other Christian sects their principal tenets assimilate with those of the Latin Church. They acknowledge seven sacraments, enjoin auricular confession and extreme unction. The latter is administered not only to persons at the point of death, but to penitents who have done meet penance after the commission of grievous sin. Evil spirits are exorcised "with candle, with book, and with bell." In celebrating the Holy Eucharist leavened bread is used, which has previously been dipped in wine. The Copts are most rigorous in their observance of fast days. Besides every Wednesday and Friday in the year, the Lenten fast is prolonged to fifty-five days, during which no manner of animal food is allowed—not even eggs, milk or cheese. Some rites, however, appear to be borrowed either from their Moslem or Jewish neighbours. Thus circumcision is deemed essential, in addition to baptism by immersion.—*All the Year Round*.

KHARTOUM.

"The Land of the False Prophet" is the title of the opening illustrated article in the *March Century*, by General R. E. Colston, who was formerly a bey in the Egyptian service. From it we quote the following: "Khartoum is a city numbering between fifty and sixty thousand people. Several European consuls reside there. The American consul was Azar Abd-el-Melek, a Christian Copt from Esneh, and one of the principal merchants. The European colony is small and continually changing; for Khartoum is a perfect grave yard for Europeans, and in the rainy season for natives also, the mortality averaging then from thirty to forty per day, which implies three thousand or four thousand for the season. Khartoum is the commercial centre of the Soudan trade, amounting altogether to sixty-five million dollars a year, and carried on by one thousand European and three thousand Egyptian commercial houses. Drafts and bills of exchange upon Khartoum are as good as gold in Cairo and Alexandria, and vice versa. From official sources I learned that the city contained three thousand and sixty houses, many of them two-storied, each having from ten to one hundred and fifty occupants. Stone and lime are found in abundance, and the buildings are, after a fashion, substantial, the houses belonging to rich merchants being very spacious and comfortable. There are large bazaars, in which are found a much greater variety of European and Asiatic goods than would be expected in such distant

regions. In the spacious market-place a brisk trade is carried on in cattle, horses, camels, asses, and sheep, as well as grain, fruit, and other agricultural produce. Many years ago an Austrian Roman Catholic mission was established and liberally supported by the Emperor of Austria and by contributions from the entire Roman Catholic world. It occupies a large parallelogram surrounded by a solid wall. Within this inclosure, in beautiful gardens of palm, fig, pomegranate, orange, and banana, stand a massive cathedral, a hospital, and other substantial buildings. Before the people of Egypt and the Soudan had been irritated by foreign interference, such was their perfect toleration and good temper that the priests and nuns, in their distinctive costumes, were always safe from molestation, not only at Khartoum, but even at El Obeid and the neighbourhood, where the majority are Mussulmans and the rest heathens. It was stated some months ago that Gordon had abandoned the Governor's palace and transformed the Catholic mission into a fortress, its surrounding wall and massive buildings rendering it capable of strong resistance."

HORACE IN HOMESPUN,

CARMEN II., 3.

Dear Jock, ye're higher up the brae
Than me, your auldster brither—
Keep mind the higher up ye gae
The mair ye're in the weather,
I'm no' misdooin' that ye're wice;
An', for your ploos-share, speed it!
But I may better gie advice,
An' you may better need it.

The higher up the brae ye speel,
The farrer it's below ye;
Tak' tent ye dinna gie the deil
Occasion to dounthrow ye.
Be douce and ceevil wi' success,
For fortune's no' to trust aye;
Then if your head should tak' the gress
Ye're whaur ye were at first aye.

An honest fa', wi' conscience clear,
It never brak a bane, et;
There's aye the honest course to steer,
For a' that's come an' gane yet,
But let na lucre be your aim,
Pursued thro' thick an' thin aye;
The honour o' an honest name,
That's what ye first should win aye.

For happiness (to God be thanks!)
Is no' the gift o' fortune;
Wi' place the limmer plays her pranks,
Wi' men like puppets sportin'—
Rich folk lookin' idly on
At puir folk busy dargin'—
But happiness, my brither John,
It wasna in the bargain.

The ups an' douns o' human life
Are like a fairy revel;
But a' the world an' his wife
Maun lie at ae great level.
An' that's a thocht for me an' you
When fate's awards perplex us;
In calm eternity's wide view
There's little that should vex us.

Fate's like the waves aneth the moon,
An' we are vessels ridin';
It's up an' doun an' up an' doun,
An' here there's nae abidin';
But on the far horizon's edge
To which we're ever dritin',
The changes on our pilgrimage
Are but a paltry shiftn'.

—G. H. HALIBURTON.

THE SCHOOLMASTER ABROAD.

We have introduced the blessings of British rule—the good and well-paid missionary, the Remington rifle, the red cotton pocket-handkerchief, and the use of "the liquor called rum"—into so many remote corners of the tropical world that it is high time we should begin in return to learn somewhat about fetiches and fustic, Jamaica and jaggery, bananas and Buddhism. We know too little still about our colonies and dependencies. "Cape Breton an island!" cried King George's minister, the Duke of Newcastle, in the well-known story, "Cape Breton an island! Why, so it is! God bless my soul! I must go and tell the King that Cape Breton is an island." That was a hundred years ago; but only the other day the Board of Trade placarded all our towns and villages with a flaming notice to the effect that the Colorado beetle had made its appearance at "a town in Canada called Ontario," and might soon be expected to arrive at Liverpool by Cunard steamer. The right honourables and other high mightinesses who put forth the notice in question were evidently unaware that Ontario is a Province as big as England, including in its borders Toronto, Ottawa, Kingston, London, Hamilton, and other large and flourishing towns. Apparently, in spite of competitive examinations, the schoolmaster is still abroad in the Government offices.—*Cornhill Magazine*.

DR. JOHN MACLEOD, Govan, reported to the Glasgow Established Presbytery that nearly forty kirk sessions, representing some of the largest charges, have resolved to discontinue fast days. Mr. Robert Thomson says that by abolishing fast days they are "hastening disestablishment, making way for infidelity, Jesuitism, and spiritual dynamite voluntarism."

British and Foreign.

MR. GLADSTONE intends to vote in favour of the bill extending the parliamentary franchise to women.

THE latest service of a burglar alarm in Chicago was to call its possessor into the hall-way, where he was shot by the burglar.

THE first volume of the autobiography of the late Dr. Begg is announced for immediate publication by Mr. James Gemmell, of Edinburgh.

OF the seventy-five students attending Magee College, Derry, seventy-one are members of the Total Abstinence Society.

THE memoir of Dr. Moffat, by his son, is nearly completed, and will be published by Mr. Fisher Unwin during the present year.

THE call from Broughton-place, Edinburgh, to Mr. Smith, of Berwick, has been signed by 871 members and 176 adherents.

PROF. MILLIGAN, of Aberdeen, delivered in Blythswood Church, Glasgow, the first of his course of Baird lectures on "The Revelation of St. John."

UPWARDS of \$62,500 have been subscribed for the widow and children of the late Sir Alexander Grant, Principal of Edinburgh University.

JOHN KING, the last of the "Seven Men of Preston," is dead. Joseph Livesey and he were the first to sign the "tectotal" pledge.

THE Bicester hounds in England recently had a remarkably long run, which terminated by the fox falling dead in front of the pack. Five horses were killed.

THE Princess Louise opened lately an international bazaar, at Hackney, in aid of the building fund of the new mission house and schools for St. Barnabas, Homerton.

DR. WILLIAM WILSON is to deliver a course of six "Chalmers Lectures," in Edinburgh. His subject is "The Headship of Christ and the Independence of the Church."

THE oldest elder in Scotland is believed to be Mr. William Laughton, of Kirkwall, who is ninety-eight years of age. He was ordained in Holm Church, seventy years ago.

MRS. LEWES, the wife of George Henry Lewes, is still alive and resident at Notting Hill, with her daughters, one of whom, Miss Mildred Lewes, is an accomplished musician.

REV. J. M'NAUGHT, Glasgow, is to move at next Presbytery meeting that the Assembly be overtured to publish annually the membership in the congregations of the Established Church.

A TEACHER, speaking before the Rhode Island Institute of Instruction, recommended the introduction of healthful story books as an antidote against the evil of flash literature.

THE Lockerbie Free Church Presbytery has been discussing the suggested superintendence of congregations. It was resolved strongly to deprecate the proposal, as it was a modified Episcopacy.

THE Stirling Free Church Presbytery has memorialized Government to suspend the landlord's power of eviction till legislation in accordance with the Crofters' commission recommendations is passed.

THE call from Newington congregation to Mr. Whyte Smith, of Galashiels, has been signed by 400 out of 540 members and eighty-six adherents. Fourteen out of twenty deacons and eleven of sixteen elders have signed it.

PRESIDENT WHITE says that Cornell, since it got rid of Adler and Russel, and some other pronounced anti-believers, has resumed a Christian attitude. The Board of Trustees is in a large majority evangelically Christian.

AMONG the 150 Roman Catholics who have united with the Presbyterian Church in Valparaiso, one-third say that the turning point in their religious experience took place while witnessing the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

ONE of the New England Legislatures has under consideration a bill to change the name of Frances Ellen Hamor to Ella Frances Hamor. There was a committee hearing, and all the formalities having been observed, probably solemn consent will be given.

AT the annual meeting of Lady Glenorchy's Church, Edinburgh, of which Rev. T. Burns is pastor, it was reported that there has been an increase of nearly 200 members last year. There are now 904 on the roll, 478 having been added during the last two years and a half. The seats are fully let.

BELFAST Presbytery have resolved to hold a series of evangelistic services in all the churches of the town on the third week of March. Thirty brethren from other parts of the country will aid the local ministers, and a band of workers will be organized in each congregation for house-to-house visitation.

DR. SAMUEL SMILES, in his newly published work, "Invention and Industry," incidentally remarks regarding manufactures in Dublin: The only thriving manufacture in Dublin is that of intoxicating drinks—beer, porter, stout, and whiskey. Unhappy Ireland!

THE late Miss Joan Kerr, Sanquhar, has bequeathed to the South United Presbyterian congregation, Sanquhar, \$1,500 to the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, \$3,000 and the residue of her estate, about \$30,000, to the Scheme of the Church, as may be determined by her executors, the sons of the late Rev. D. Croom, of Edinburgh.

THE Rev. T. S. Dickson, M.A., Dundee, intends to move an overture to the Synod, asking it to deal with bazaars, to suppress all circuitous, expensive, illegal, and injurious modes of raising money for church purposes, and to enforce Scriptural and worthy modes of church finance.

PETER BAYNE, LL.D., is engaged on an elaborate Life of Luther, which will probably be his *magnum opus*. He has made special visits to all the localities in Germany connected with the Reformer, and it is said his book will include much matter of importance that will be new to English readers.