

## SCIENTIFIC NOTES.

(ASTRONOMICAL).

Those who imagine that expensive telescopes are necessary to the satisfactory study of astronomy, may be interested in the announcement that Mr. E. F. Sawyer, the variable star observer, has completed a list of 3415 Southern stars, whose brightness down to the 7th magnitude was estimated solely by the use of an opera glass, and of a field-glass for the fainter stars. The catalogue has been published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Mr. Sawyer made 13,654 observations.

Scientists, generally, will wait with great interest the receipt of details respecting the observations made of the total eclipse of the sun on the 16th of April. The observations by the British, American and French parties sent to Africa and to South America appear to have been entirely successful. This is gratifying, as it was the last total eclipse this century that could be satisfactorily observed.

On the 4th of August last the earth and Mars were on the same side of the sun and

about 30 millions of miles apart. On the 15th of this month they will be 231 millions of miles apart.

On the 14th of June, at 7.30 p.m., Mercury, Venus and the new moon will apparently be close together and form a very pretty group of objects in the west.

Saturn is now the most interesting object in the night sky and will continue to be so for some time. The system of rings, already very beautiful, will be better and better observed as the summer passes, as they will gradually widen out to an observer on the earth.

Proctor's monumental work, "Old and New Astronomy" (Longmans, Green & Co., London) is a magnificent contribution to the service of astronomy. The volume contains upwards of 800 pages, quarto, and is profusely illustrated and written in a popular style. It is certainly most creditable to its famous projector, the late R. A. Proctor, and to Mr. A. Cowper Ranyard, the able astronomer, who completed it.

## BOOK NOTICES.

*Potiphar's Wife, and Other Poems.*—By SIR EDWIN ARNOLD. Octavo demy, 128 pp. New York, Chas. Scribner's Sons; Toronto, Rowell & Hutchison.

This collection of poems, chiefly relating to Japan and Egypt, and the human heart as its fundamental characteristics manifest themselves in all ages and under various forms of civilization, is, to say the least, interesting. Sir Edwin Arnold's name in itself carries weight in making these poems receive public attention; his grace and brilliancy as a writer ensures them a wide range of readers. It would, however, be rash to say that the collection deserves more than a temporary reputation. The poems are very unequal in quality; some of them would scarcely gain admission on their intrinsic merit to a well conducted magazine, perhaps not to a first class newspaper. But several are worthy of the author. "The Grateful Foxes," a tale of Japan, will pass and pass away also. "The No Dance" has much merit: it is excellent in its general conception and descriptive power, full of brilliant gems of thought, and remarkable for its airy, graceful diction, while the novelty of the Japanese ideas pervading it gives it an additional attractiveness that should ensure its popularity with readers. Several other poems are worthy of the poet's best moods, while the inferior work is interesting, to say the least, as illustrating what a gifted writer may sometimes do, or fail to do.

*The Novel. What is it?*—By F. MARION CRAWFORD. 16mo. Royal, 108 pp. New York and London, Macmillan & Co.; Toronto, the Williamson Book Co., Ltd.

This little book makes pleasant reading to the large numbers of people interested, more or less, in questions of literature, and is of especial

value to amateurs in the art of story-writing. With all of the conclusions many readers will not wholly agree, and can give reasons for their divergence of opinion, but in the general view taken by this popular novelist on what the novel should be, and his defence of idealism against realism in fiction, wholesome story-writers will concur. The style of the discussion, it is unnecessary to say to anyone acquainted with Mr. Crawford's works, is very pleasing.

*Mistress Branican.*—A Novel, by JULES VERNE. Octavo demy. 470 pp. Toronto, Rose Publishing Co.

Jules Verne's characteristic style is so well known, that to say that this novel is in keeping with the best of his former ones is, to say nearly all that can be said. Vivacious in style, full of adventure and of the scientific imagination which has formed the chief charm of this copious writer, the tale of *Mistress Branican* possesses a good deal of interest, especially to boys. The book is illustrated with about 70 woodcuts.

*Nurse Elisia.*—By G. MANVILLE FENN. Octavo demy, 313 pp. Toronto, Rose Publishing Co.

This is a striking novel; the plot is good; the diction good; the tone is morally wholesome. It is emphatically not a summer novel; the faults of nearly all the characters are brought out so strongly that the general effect on the mind of a reader who wishes for simple relaxation and temporary relief from an oppressive sense of the defects of human nature is, to say the least, a little painful, but to others who do not crave for that relief the volume will be found profitable and pleasant reading. The volume is well printed on heavy paper.