

since the year 1608, a little before the telescope was invented and applied to the heavens. . . . It is stated that Cortes when he first visited lower California, found the weather so extremely warm that he called the country *calida fornax* (Latin for hot furnace), and these words have since been abbreviated into *California*. . . . There are in the United States 694 public libraries, containing an aggregate of 2,201,623 volumes. . . . A metrical version of the Psalms of David by the late Rev. Charles Wesley is about being published in England. . . . The Rt. Hon. T. B. Macaulay M. P. has been elected President of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution in place of the late Professor Wilson. . . . Prince Albert suggests that instead of the proposed Statue to himself, for the success of the Great Exhibition, Scholarships for proficiency in certain branches of art and science be established. . . . The government have purchased Burlington House in London and its magnificent gardens for £140,000. They are shortly to be opened to the public for the purposes of art and science. . . . Certain inscriptions which have been found on some cylinders recently discovered at the ruins of Babylon clear up several difficulties with regard to the reign of Belshazzar, and reconcile the sacred and profane chronology in some points where they appeared to be hopelessly at variance. . . . Lawrence Oliphant, Esq. the present private Secretary to His Excellency the Earl of Elgin is the author of one or two interesting works of travel—one of which entitled "The Russian Shores of the Black Sea," has been recently re-printed in New York. . . . The French Government has decided that a periodical, containing the reports and papers of literary and scientific societies, accounts of missions, etc. shall henceforth be published under the title of "*Bulletin des Sociétés Savans*." . . . Hugh Miller the distinguished geological writer has been presented with a piece of plate by a few friends as an expression of their approval of his editorship of the *Edinburgh Witness*. . . . Several English and French Artists have accompanied the expedition to the East in order to sketch by pencil and photograph the scenes they may witness. . . . Lamartine proposes to write a series of Turkish Tales which he intends should form a companion volume to the celebrated "*Arabian Nights*." . . . The waters of the Lake of Zurich have become so low that the remains of some Celtic architecture have been discovered, the previous existence of which was never suspected. . . . The N. Y. Mercantile Library having been removed to its new home on the 8th inst. addresses were delivered on the occasion by the Governor of the State and other distinguished persons. The library contains nearly 50,000 Volumes. . . . The Earl of Carlisle has been elected President of the Royal Society of Literature for the ensuing year. . . . The annual meeting of the British Association is to be held, this year, at Liverpool—commencing on the 21st of September, and special pains have been taken to render it attractive and interesting. St. George's Hall—one of the finest buildings for public meetings in Europe—has been placed at the disposal of the Association. . . . The Institut Canadien, of Quebec, is offering three medals valued at \$60, each for the best French compositions on three specified subjects. The first is on "The Educational establishments, and literary and scientific institutions, of Canada, their history, their destiny, and their influence on French nationality."—The second, "the eulogy of Lake Champlain;" and the third, "the Commerce of Canada: what it has been; what it is; what it will be."—The prizes are to be delivered at a public sitting of the Institut.

HISTORY OF "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN."

The history of this remarkable book is thus told by the Boston correspondent of the N. Y. Literary Gazette of the 1st inst: "An editor of a public journal wanted a tale for his columns; a lady was engaged to prepare one, which she did; that tale was published, and thrown by with the thousand-and-one things that are read in newspapers and then forgotten. But there was, as it would seem, a 'divinity' 'shaping the end' of that newspaper story. Another lady, the wife of a publisher, remembered it, and it was much in her thoughts. She thought it ought to be made into a book, and she urged her husband to undertake its publication. He demurred, and did not wish to think of it; but after much importunity one evening, he promised that he would write to the authoress and ascertain her mind. And so, at a late hour of the night, and to redeem the pledge which he had somewhat incautiously made, he wrote his letter, which brought from the writer of the story the promise of an interview in a few days or weeks. The interview was had, the tale was to be published, and the writer to share in the profits of its sale. There was, however, little hope in regard to the enterprise, so little that the husband of the writer, when doing the business in his wife's behalf, embodied his expectations in words like these:—'If the profits of the work shall be sufficient to buy my wife a silk dress, that will do;' and afterwards. 'If we can only realize enough from the sale of the book, to purchase a

small cottage in which we may live, this is all I could ask; for we could then live upon my salary.' In due time, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' sees the light, and its name is borne on every wind. It is, in one way or another, brought to the mind of almost every man and woman in the nation. And there is also genius in these volumes. The characters, many of them, are very exquisitely drawn. The book is exciting; it makes the nerves twitch, and the tears flow, and the heart burn, and the tongue mutter hasty, and sometimes vindictive words. And therefore it is read. And so 'Uncle Tom' goes over the land, and across the sea, and becomes over all the broad area of freedom, the popular idol. And this has been the history of the Book, till *three hundred and ten thousand* copies have been sold in this country, and unknown thousands beyond the sea, and the fortunate writer has realized from the home sale of the work, the pretty sum of *thirty thousand dollars*, and from the sale abroad, we know not how many thousands more."

IMPORTANT DISCOVERIES IN GALVANISM.—Professor Callan of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, has recently made some valuable discoveries in Galvanism, in explaining which, he says:—"Soon after I had discovered the cast iron nitric acid battery, I commenced a series of experiments on the decomposition of water by the galvanic battery, with a view to obtain a steady and brilliant oxyhydrogen lime-light, such as might answer for light-houses. In a paper on our large galvanic battery, dated April 6, 1848, and published in the *London Philosophical Magazine* of the following July, I stated that 'I got the lime-light by igniting the mixed gases as they were produced by the decomposition of water, and throwing the flame on lime.' Although I succeeded to a certain extent in obtaining the light which I sought, much still remained to be done. I found that the instruments previously used were unfit for my purpose, and was therefore obliged to devise and make several new ones. My experiments ultimately led to the following results:—First, a new apparatus for safely employing the mixed gases to produce the oxyhydrogen flame and lime-light. Secondly, a new voltameter, to which a common jet may be screwed and the mixed gases inflamed as they issue from it, without the smallest risk of a dangerous explosion, and by which the full decomposing effect of a hundred, or of any number of cells arranged in one series, may be produced without exhausting the power of the battery more rapidly than if it contained only four cells. This voltameter is new in every respect; new in the material of the decomposing vessel, which is wrought iron, an inch thick, coated inside with an alloy of lead and tin, or of lead, tin, and antimony; new in the manner in which the decomposing plates are connected with the opposite ends of the battery, whilst the vessel remains air-tight; new in the material as well as the arrangement of these plates; new, finally, in the fluid through which the voltaic current is made to pass, in order to produce the mixed gases. I have found that with the common voltameter a battery of a hundred cast iron cells will not produce more than the 25th part, and that a battery of 500 cells will not produce the hundredth part of its full decomposing effect. The third result is a new negative element, cheaper, more durable, and one that may be made to act more powerfully, than the platinised silver used in Smee's battery. The fourth result is a new 'Means of protecting iron of every kind against the action of the weather, and of various corroding substances, so that iron, thus protected, will answer for roofing, cisterns, baths, gutters, window frames, telegraphic wires, for marine and various other purposes.' This is the title of the invention as set forth in the application for letters patent."

L'ECOLE DES BEAUX ARTS IN PARIS.—The Ecole des Beaux Arts is the great public school of France, corresponding to the English Royal Academy, and from a report published in 1845, by Mr. Townsend, we learn that the instruction is gratis, admission being obtained by competitions in the months of March and September. Here the educational system is the same, in reference to elementary studies, as that in the schools of the private professors, the most eminent of whom, indeed, also occupy chairs in this institution, and are paid by the government. The general tendency of the arrangement is to promote a spirit of emulation and consequent industry, among the élèves—this being, in fact, the distinguishing feature in the training of youth throughout the French metropolis. The competitors for admission are generally five hundred, of which number perhaps one hundred succeed. The "admitted" are divided into two classes, of odd and even numbers, and the studies of these two classes are conducted week by week, alternately, after the Antique and the Life, in the two great amphitheatres devoted to the purpose. The model sits six consecutive days. The proportion of sculptors is about twenty in a hundred. The professors attend in rotation, from five to seven in the evening. During the studentship there is a monthly competition, the decisions being given every quarter. One silver and two