

MISCELLANEOUS.

Ouida deduces from history the facts that men of genius are fine, handsome fellows. So they are, as a rule; witness Tennyson, Musset, Scott—the strongest man of the Rough Clan—Marlborough, Goethe, Bonny Dundee, Burns, Longfellow, Sir Henry Taylor, Napoleon, Shelley, Byron—a gallery of beauties. The Popes and Voltaires are the exceptions.

A new journal for the study of questions pertaining to Africa, especially the problems of the christianization and civilization of the Dark Continent, has been begun by the German *Evangelischer Afrikaverein*, and is published in Berlin under the title of *Afrika*. It promises to be one of the most reliable journals of its kind, its first number containing articles from such authorities as Grundemann, Merensky, Muller, and others. It is a monthly, costing 2 marks.

One of the two new Academicians, M. Albert Sorel, is descended from a sister of Charlotte Corday, and therefore also from Cornouille. The first cause of M. Sorel's successful candidacy was his clever book on Madame de Stael, which so gratified her grandson, the Duc de Broglie, and her great-grandson, the Comte d'Haussonville, that they determined to show to M. Sorel their appreciation in a magnificent way. They therefore won to his support the "party of the Dukes" in the Academy.

A German paper publishes particulars of the shells discharged by the Germans against the French fortresses in the war of 1870-71. Strasburg heels the list with 202,100, whilst Belfort received 112,500; Paris, 110,300; Thionville, 16,600; Neuf-Busach and Fort Mortier, 11,200; Verdun, 8,900; Soissons, 8,400; Bitche, 7,100; Mezieres, 7,000; Toul, 6,700; Montmedy, 6,700; Longwy, 6,400; Metz, 4,900. Others follow with 3,000 down to 100. The grand total reaches 521,000 shells.

The unveiling of the remarkable statue of Alain Chartier in the Rue de Tocqueville, Paris, recalls an anecdote concerning him. His works were so much admired that one day Margaret of Scotland, wife of the Dauphin of France, afterward Louis XI., in passing through a hall where Chartier was lying asleep on a lounge, stooped and kissed him tenderly. When the lords of her suite expressed their surprise that she could have kissed such an ugly man, the Princess replied: "It is not the man I kissed, but that precious mouth from which have issued so many witty sayings and virtuous sentences."

Up to the present only seamen-gunners who are qualified as gunnery instructors have been eligible for the posts of captains of turrets in our battle-ships, but we are glad to see that the Admiralty have now taken a more sensible view of the qualifications necessary for this rating, and that seamen-gunners of the first class who are expert shots, and who show marked intelligence and ability, may be selected in future to qualify in the gunnery schools as captains of turrets with the rating of petty officers first class. While holding this rating additional pay at the rate of 3d. a day will be granted.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

Renewed efforts are being made in Germany this year to introduce a fish ration for the army. The experiment is being tried in the regiment of Guards. Similar

attempts have failed hitherto in consequence of the difficulties of transport, but technical arrangements have been made by which it is hoped that the supply of fresh fish can be kept up and sent to long distances inland even in the hottest weather. If these prove to be successful, on one or two days a week most regiments will have the benefit of a fish meal. This, it is hoped, will be a popular as well as an economical measure.—*Army and Navy Gazette*.

Several instances having been brought to the notice of the Government of India in which expenses incurred on account of military escorts accompanying political officers proceeding on tour within or beyond the frontiers of India have been charged to the military estimates where no provision for such expenses existed in those estimates, the Government of India has requested that it may be informed in future, as early as possible, by the authority demanding the escort, of every case where a military escort is considered necessary, detailed information being at the same time furnished as to strength of escort, amount and nature of transport required, and the approximate estimated cost involved.—*Broad Arrow*.

A PHRASE.

Dr. George Stewart has in the last *Atlantic Monthly* a pleasant little paragraph in which he attacks what he calls that "unpleasing and un-English" phrase, "it goes without saying." Dr. Stewart comments with regret upon the fact that this expression is found in widely circulated magazines, and that it frequently appears in the ordinary newspapers. He says:

Cela va sans dire, of course, we can all understand. In French it is not meaningless, nor is it inelegant. As the French use it, it has a widely different meaning from the English version. There is no genuine equivalent for it in any language out of France, where it originated. Dumas uses it with good effect in *La Comtesse de Charny*, and other writers have followed him. The literal translation as we have it is not effective, it grates on the ear, and there is nothing strong or helpful about it. To my mind it rather tends to weaken the force of the text. Why not say at once, and be done with it, "it is an evident fact," "it is a natural conclusion," "it is a truism," "nobody disputes it," "it is admitted." But what "goes" without saying? Can anybody tell?

The fact that this objectionable phrase has attained the popularity which Dr. Stewart admits that it has attained proves that it supplies a long-felt want, and is just the expression people were waiting for. There may be no actual English equivalent for *Cela va sans dire*, but what we would like some doctor well skilled in language to inform us is whether other languages have any genuine equivalent for "it goes without saying." If not we are sorry for them, while we rejoice that the English language is so much ahead. There may be objection to the use of that little word "it," but the substitutes suggested by the learned contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly* have that word. As for "goes" it is a most useful and expressive word: a thing that doesn't "go" is not worth saying. "It,"—the fact indicated—"goes without saying" is a simple and expressive and forcible way of saying that "nobody disputes it," and is quite as good as "it is a truism," a fact, we think, that goes without saying, even though we say it.—*From the St. John Globe*.

Black lead is not lead at all, but a compound of carbon and a small quantity of iron.

German silver was not invented in Germany, and does not contain a particle of silver.

Electric melting of metals, notably cast iron and steel, as produced by a new German process, is said to have some very great advantages. In crucible steel the new process shows an economy of fuel of more than half, which, for metal so difficult of fusion, is a favourable result.

Ottawa Citizen: Why do people write illegibly on hotel registers? In business a man ordinarily exercises a certain amount of care in the delineation of his signature. But even the person who most affects the distorted array of characters which passes among some for the sign manual of distinction, rarely manages to conceal his identity so securely in his regular signature as he does in the inscription of his name on a hotel register.

The Montreal Witness: In commenting upon President Cleveland's letter on the tariff a few days ago we remarked upon "the unwonted floweriness" of its expressions, and quoted the phrase "the deadly blight of treason has blasted the councils of the brave in their hour of might." It appears that President Cleveland is indebted to Tom Moore for those lines, which are almost word for word as they appear in "The Fire Worshippers":—

Oh, for a tongue to curse the slave
Whose treason, like a deadly blight,
Comes o'er the counsel of the brave,
And blasts them in their hour of might.

Mr. Cleveland no doubt supposed that these very suitable words were so familiar that a paraphrase of them would no more need to be credited to the author than lines from the Bible or Shakespeare.

The psychology of the weather is suggested by Dr. T. D. Crothers as a promising subject for study. He says, in *Science*: "Very few persons recognize the sources of error that come directly from atmospheric conditions on experimenters and observers and others. In my own case I have been amazed at the faulty deductions and misconceptions which were made in damp, foggy weather, or on days in which the air was charged with electricity and thunderstorms were impending. What seemed clear to me at these times appeared later to be filled with error. An actuary in a large insurance company is obliged to stop work at such times, finding that he makes so many mistakes which he is only conscious of later that his work is useless. In a large factory from ten to twenty per cent. less work is brought out on damp days and days of threatening storm. The superintendent, in receiving orders to be delivered at a certain time, takes this factor into calculation. There is a theory among many persons in the fire insurance business that in states of depressing atmosphere greater carelessness exists and more fires follow. Engineers of railway locomotives have some curious theories of trouble, accidents, and increased dangers in such periods, attributing them to the machinery." Dr. Crothers adds that the conviction prevails among many active brain-workers in his circle that some very powerful forces, coming from what is popularly called the weather, control the work and its success of each one.