

## READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

## THE CHILDHOOD OF THE HEART.

Oh, the rosy days of childhood,  
How blissfully they sped,  
When not a charm had vanished,  
And not a wonder fled!  
The year was full of promise then,  
The tongue was full of praise,—  
But I think the cup is sweeter now  
Than in the childish days.

Oh, the laughing world of childhood,  
Of ignorance and ease!  
The lightest touch could quicken,  
And the least pleasure please;  
Yet the upward paths are dearer,  
With all the thorns they bear,  
Than a garden of a hundred flowers  
When ignorance is there!

Oh, the beating heart of childhood—  
That little heart of snow,  
That doubt has never entered,  
Nor sorrow has brought low!  
Trust me, not all the rapture  
Its eager life can span  
Can shadow forth the perfect love  
That warms the breast of man.

—Dora Read Goodale, in Harper's Weekly.

## THE NEW SOUTH SEA BUBBLE.

Those who are disposed to invest in Australian securities should read in the Nineteenth Century the Hon. J. Fortescue's account of the finance of the Southern Colonies, which he calls "The New South Sea Bubble." He is far too pessimistic, making too little of the property as well as the resources of Victoria and New South Wales; but he draws a terrible picture of the financial recklessness and confusion which for years past have prevailed in those Colonies. He declares that Victoria is insolvent, as she cannot, or does not, raise the money to provide interest on her existing debt; and he estimates the debt of South Australia at £51,000,000. Here, again, he does not take in the other lands thrown open by this expenditure; but it is well, in a sanguine time, to read the depressing side. We believe ourselves that the Colonies will pull through, though with frightful losses to individuals; but we are not sure that they are not trusted too fully by investors, simply because their people are of British origin. So were the people in all the American States which repudiated.

## EXPLOITS OF A FAKIR.

In a short time the fakir had sufficiently recovered from his long trance to stand up, and when the sheik pointed to the braziers, he thrust his hand into it, seized some of the live coals, blew them till they emitted sparks, bit off pieces of them, as one would bite an apple, and eagerly ate them up. He then went to a large prickly cactus, which was standing on the platform, plucked a leaf armed with strong spines, bit off a piece and swallowed it. With equal avidity he crunched and consumed cactus and the glass were handed to the spectators, who examined them and convinced themselves that they were really the things they were represented to be. An attendant brought in a shovel, the iron-part of which was red-hot, so that at once into flame. The fakir took the wooden handle of the shovel with his right hand, placed his left hand on the glowing iron plate, which he also licked with apparent relish, and then stood upon it with his bare feet until it became black. This last exploit filled the air with a faint odor of burned horn. A sword, so sharp that it cut a piece of paper in two when drawn across the edge, was handed to the fakir, who thrust it with all his force against his throat, his breast, and his sides. The sword was then held in a horizontal position about three feet from the ground with the edge upward, by the servant who took hold of the point, which

was wrapped in several folds of cloth for the protection of his hand, and by another, Aissaut, who held it by the hilt. The fakir placed his hands on the shoulders of the two men and, leaping up barefoot on the edge of the sword, stood there for some seconds. He then stripped and, resting his naked abdomen on the edge of the sword, balanced himself in the air without touching the floor with his feet, the sheik meanwhile pressing down upon the fakir's back with the whole weight of his body.—The Popular Science Monthly.

## TALL MEN.

Turner, the naturalist, declared that he once saw, upon the coast of Brazil, a race of gigantic savages, one of whom was 12 feet in height. M. Thevet, of France, in his description of America, published at Paris in 1575, asserted that he saw and measured the skeleton of a South American which was 11 feet 5 inches in length. The Chinese are said to claim that, in the last century, there were men in their country who measured 15 feet in height. Josephus mentioned the case of a Jew who was 10 feet 2 inches in height. Pliny tells of an Arabian knight, Gabara, 9 feet 9 inches, the tallest man in the days of Claudius. John Middleton, born at Hale, in Lancashire, in the time of James I., was 9 feet 3 inches in height; his hand was 17 inches long and 8 1-2 inches broad, says Dr Plott in his "History of Staffordshire." The Irish giant Murphy, contemporary with O'Brien, was 8 feet 10 inches. A skeleton in the Museum of Trinity College, Dublin, is 8 feet 6 inches in height, and that of Charles Byrne, in the Museum of the College of Surgeons, London, is 8 feet 4 inches.

## WILLIAM MORRIS.

William Morris, the poet, is a short-set, broad-shouldered man of robust build, with keen, lustrous eyes, a curly mane of tangled gray hair, and a full flowing beard. He waxes his moustache, and wears spectacles. He habitually affects the roughest apparel, his general get-up being decidedly nautical. His friends declare that nothing pleases him so much as to be mistaken for a sailor. Not very long since, while he was sauntering through one of the crooked riverside streets in the old part of London, he was overhauled by a seafaring man. "Avast there!" cried the stranger: "don't I know you? Weren't you once mate of the brig Sea Swallow?" To be taken for a sailor was delightful, but to be mistaken for the mate of a ship with so poetic a name was simply glorious. "Yes, I am he," replied Morris; and, locking arms with the stranger, he piloted him to the nearest public house and filled him with meat and drink. The poet is now fifty-eight, and is a graduate of Oxford. He early turned his attention to the study of architecture, and in 1868, together with Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Burne Jones, endeavoured to set on foot a movement for elevating the artistic tastes of the public by starting an "art fabrics" concern for the manufacture of wall-papers, stained glass, tiles, and other household decorations. Though undertaken as an artistic venture rather than as a business speculation, the concern has proved extremely successful. His leisure moments are devoted to the composition of poetry. "The Earthly Paradise," which is perhaps his best-known work, appeared just a quarter of a century ago. He has recently translated the Odyssey of Homer, and rendered into English verse a number of Icelandic legends. He declares that hereafter he intends to do his own printing, and announces that his forthcoming volume will be issued from the press he has established in a cottage near his house. He is quite an enthusiastic antiquarian, and, as is well known, has long been one of the leaders of the socialistic movement in England. His wife, who is said to be a singularly beau-

tiful woman, lives a remarkably secluded life, hardly any of the poet's closest intimates having ever seen her.—M. Crofton, in Lippincott's.

## ABUSE OF THE STOMACH.

Different constitutions have peculiarities in regard to the way in which they assimilate food, and the old adage that, what is one man's meat is another's poison, is a very true one. There is no ailment more common in middle life and in old age, than indigestion. This, of course, depends upon improper food taken too frequently, and in undue quantity. As a rule, the victim of indigestion flies to medicines for relief, or to one of the thousand-and-one quack remedies that are advertised to cure everything.

How much more rational, would it not be, to alter the diet, and to give the stomach the food for what it is craving! If the stomach could talk, I can imagine it, after pills, and gin and bitters, and quack remedies of every description have been poured into it, begging to be relieved of such horrors, and saying, "Give me a little rest, and a cup of beef tea, and a biscuit, and go and take a little fresh air, and exercise yourself." Instead of this, the miserable organ has to be dosed with all sorts of horrible concoctions in the way of drugs, brandies, and sodas, and champagne, to endeavor to stimulate it into action. There is no doubt, that the stomach that requires stimulants and potions to enable it to act efficiently, can hardly be said to be in a healthy state, or can long continue to do its work properly.

The digestive organs, unfortunately, are the first to sympathize with any mental worry. They are like a barometer, and indicate the errors of malnutrition and their consequences. The healthy action of every organ depends upon the proper assimilation of the food taken. As soon as the digestive process fails, everything fails, and ill-health results with all its disastrous concomitants.—The Popular Science Monthly.

## THE NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC.

The New England Conservatory of Music, which since its establishment has been at the head of American Conservatories, is to-day in a most flourishing condition. Many changes and improvements have been made in its methods and systems under the new management, whose intentions and wisdom have been so plainly apparent to all who have taken any interest in the welfare of the institution, that the confidence of the public has been secured to an extent not heretofore believed possible.

Undoubtedly the New England Conservatory of Music offers a combination of advantages not alone in the extent and variety of the studies (including Music, Elocution, Art and Languages), which can be pursued under the most competent teachers, but also in the great list of excellent concerts and lectures offered free to students, and other privileges not to be obtained elsewhere.

He wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it never changes with the next block.—Shakespeare.

As a blush is a signal of innocence, so is serenity of manner the token of a quiet conscience.—Mme. Necker.

For words are wise men's counters, they do but reckon by them; but they are the money of fools.—Thomas Hobbes.

One's self-satisfaction is an untaxed kind of property, which it is very unpleasant to find depreciated.—George Eliot.

There would not be so much harm in the giddy following the fashions, if somehow the wise could always set them.—Bouvee.

A well-cultivated mind is, so to speak, made up of all the minds of preceding ages. It is only one single mind which has been educated during all this time.—Foutenelle.

The newspapers!—Sir, they are the most villainous—licentious—abominable—infernal—Not that I ever read them. No, I make it a rule never to look into a newspaper.—Sheridan.