

THE ROMANCE OF LITERARY DISCOVERY.—To the merest accidents have we been indebted for the preservation of volumes which are justly considered to rank among the most precious relics of literature; and not less remarkable than the discoveries themselves, is the fact that they have often been made at a time when further delay would have made them impossible. This has been particularly noticeable in regard to the remains of classical literature. In a dungeon at the monastery at St. Gall, Poggio found, corroded with damp and covered with filth, the great work of Quintilian. In Westphalia a monk stumbled accidentally on the only manuscript of Tacitus, and to that accident we owe the writings of an historian who has had more influence, perhaps, on modern prose literature than any ancient writer, with the solitary exception of Cicero. The poems of Propertius, one of the most vigorous and original of the Roman poets, were found under the casks in a wine-cellar. In a few months the manuscript would have crumbled to pieces and become completely illegible. Parts of Homer have come to light in the most extraordinary way. A considerable portion of the "Iliad," for instance, was found in the hand of a mummy. The best of the Greek romances, the "Ethiopics," of Heliodorus, which was such a favorite with Mrs. Browning, was rescued by a common soldier, who found it kicking through the streets of a town in Hungary. To turn, however, to more modern times. Everybody knows how Sir Robert Cotton rescued the original manuscript of Magna Charta from the hands of a common tailor, who was cutting it up for measures. The valuable Thurlow State papers were brought to light by the tumbling in of the ceiling of some chambers in Lincoln's Inn. The charming letters of Lady Mary Montague, which have long taken their place among English classics, were found in the false bottom of an old trunk; and in the secret drawer of a chest the curious manuscripts of Dr. Dee lurked unsuspected for years. One of the most singular discoveries of this kind was the recovery of that delightful volume Luther's "Table Talk." A gentleman in 1626 had occasion to build upon the old foundation of a house. When the workmen were engaged in digging they found, "lying in a deep, obscure hole, wrapped in strong linen cloth, which was waxed all over with beeswax within and without," this interesting work, which had lain concealed ever since its suppression by Pope Gregory XIII. We are told that one of the cantos of Dante's "Paradiso," which had long been mislaid, was drawn from its lurking-place (it had slipped beneath a window-sill) in consequence of an intimation received in a dream. One of the most interesting of Milton's prose works—the essay on the Doctrines of Christianity—was unearthed from the midst of a bundle of despatches, by a Mr. Lemon, deputy keeper of the State papers, in 1823. How the manuscript could have found its way into such uncongenial company remains a mystery to the present day. As years roll on, and curiosity is more and more awakened, such discoveries must become rarer; but probably many precious documents are still lurking in unsuspected corners, and not a few literary discoveries remain even now to be made, which will, when made, immortalise the discoverer.—*Fireside.*

INTERESTING DISCOVERY.—Some interesting archaeological discoveries have been made at Rome. At the angle formed by the Strada Montebello and that of Voltorno, on the site of the Prætorian camp, a vault has been opened containing about a thousand and amphore in superposed rows ten deep. About 200 of them bear coloured inscriptions (black, white, red, or green), important for the light which they throw on the traffic in articles of food among the ancients. At the point where Strada Mazarino and the Strada Nazionale meet has been discovered a magnificent mural representation in mosaic, in brilliant colouring, nearly seven feet in height by rather more than six in width. The subject is a large galley, with sails spread and standard displayed, at a moment of entering a port. The latter has quays, steps for disembarking, a mole built on piles and arches, and a lighthouse of which the lower portion is rectangular and the upper cylindrical. The mosaic has been offered to the Capitoline Museum by Prince Pallavicini, on whose property it was discovered.

STATISTICS ABOUT WRITING.—The *Printing Times* says we must accept the following data on the authority of the compiler, who has evidently more time than business on his hands:—A rapid penman can write thirty words in a minute. To do this he must draw his pen through a space of a rod 16½ feet. In forty minutes his pen travels a furlong. We make on an average sixteen curves or turns of the pen in writing each word. Writing thirty words in a minute, we must make 480 to each minute; in an hour 28,800; in a day of only five hours, 144,000; and in a year of 300 days, 43,200,000. The man who made 1,000,000 strokes with his pen in a month was not at all remarkable. Many men, newspaper writers for instance, make 4,000,000. Here we have, in the aggregate, a mark of 300 miles long to be traced on paper by such a writer in a year. In making each letter of the ordinary alphabet we must make from three to seven turns of the pen, or an average of three and a half to four. Perhaps some equally ingenious person will next inform us how much ink a journalist can save by not dotting his "i's."

Children's Department.

THE BIBLE SAYS I MAY.

I am a little soldier,
And only five years old;
I mean to fight for Jesus,
And wear a crown of gold.
I know he makes me happy,
And loves me all the day;
I'll be his little soldier—
The Bible says I may.

I love my precious Savior,
Because he died for me,
And if I did not serve him,
How sinful I would be!
He gives me every comfort,
And hears me when I pray;
I want to live for Jesus—
The Bible says I may.

I now can do but little,
Yet when I grow a man
I'll try to do for Jesus
The greatest good I can.
God help and make me faithful
In all I do and say;
I want to live a Christian—
The Bible says I may.

NELLIE'S IDEA OF PRAYER.

Little Nellie, who was only four years old, no sooner saw work laid aside, than she ran to her mother's knee and claimed a seat there. Mrs. Lee lifted her to her lap, and went on busily thinking of her duties and cares.

For a while Nellie amused herself very quietly in winding a string in and out through her fingers; but presently she began talking to herself in a low tone: "When I say my prayers, God says 'Hark, angels, while I hear a little noise.'"

Her mother asked her what noise that was. "A little girl's noise. Then the angels will do just so" (shutting her mouth very tight, and keeping very still for a moment), "till I say Amen."

Isn't this a sweet thought? I wonder if the children who read this story of little Nellie have ever thought how God always hears their prayers? He hears the softest prayer of the little child.

HOW CAME HE HERE?

One day a visitor to a prison saw a gang of convicts going from their day's work. They were walking "lock-step," each prisoner crowded close against another, their feet moving together, their arms pressed back, with each one's hands on the forward one's shoulders. Between a great rough man and a negro with a low, cruel face, was a slender, refined young fellow.

"How came he here?" asked the visitor, and the prisoner overheard the question, if not the answer: "Oh, a breach of trust—cheated his employers out of twenty thousand dollars."

A few minutes later the young man sat alone

in his miserable cell, out of which daylight had faded; cowering on his hard bed he pictured to himself the world outside, full of warmth and light and comfort. The question came to him again sharply: How came you here? Was it really for the stealing of that last great sum? Yes and no. Looking back twenty years, he saw himself a merry-hearted school boy, ten years old. He remembered so well one lovely June day—why he could fairly see the roses in bloom over the porch, and the dress his mother wore at her work, could hear the laborers in the wheat fields. Freshest of all before him stood his good old uncle John, such a queer, kind, forgetful old man! That very morning he had sent him to pay a bill at the country store, and there were seventy-two cents left, and Uncle John did not ask for it. When they met that noon, this boy now in prison, stood there under the beautiful blue sky, and a great temptation came. "Shall I give it back because I ought? or shall I wait until he asks? If he never does—that is his own lookout. If he does, why I can get it again together."

The birds sang as sweetly as if a soul was not in danger—as if a boy was not making his whole future. The boy listened not to the birds; but to the evil spirit, whispering, whispering, and he never gave back the money.

Yes, twenty thousand dollars brought the man to the prison door, but the boy turned that way years before when he sold his honesty for seventy-two cents, and never redeemed it. That night he sat in a chilly cell, Uncle John was long ago dead, the old home desolate, his mother broken hearted, and the prisoner knew what brought him there was not the man's deed alone, but the child's.—Had the ten-year-old boy been true to his honor, life now would have been all different. One little cheating was the first of many, until his character was eaten out, could bear no test, and he wrecked his hope and manliness.

SOMEBODY'S MOTHER.

The woman was old and ragged and gray,
And bent with the chill of a winter's day;

The street was wet with a recent snow,
And the woman's feet were aged and slow.

She stood at the crossing and waited long,
Alone, uncared for, amid the throng

Of human beings who passed her by,
Nor heeded the glance of her anxious eye.

Down the street, with laughter and shout,
Glad in the freedom of school let out,

Came the boys like a flock of sheep,
Hailing the snow piled white and deep.

Past the woman so old and gray,
Hastened the children on their way,

Nor offered a helping hand to her,
So meek, so timid, afraid to stir

Lest the carriage wheels or the horses' feet
Should crowd her down in the slippery street.

At last came one of the merry troop—
The gayest laddie in all the group;

He paused beside her, and whispered low,
"I'll help you across if you wish to go."

Her aged hand on his strong, young arm
She placed, and so, without hurt or harm,

He guided the trembling feet along,
Proud that his own were firm and strong.

Then back again to his friends he went,
His young heart happy and well content,

"She's somebody's mother, boys you know,
For all she's old and poor and slow;

And I hope some fellow will lend a hand
To help my mother, you understand,

If ever she's poor and old and gray,
When her own dear boy is far away."

And "Somebody's mother" bowed low her head
In her home that night, and the prayer she said

Was: "God be kind to the noble boy,
Who is somebody's son and pride and joy!"

—The rector of a fashionable church in Toronto is spoken of as the "Apostle to the Genteels."