

faces of catalogues, and in other more or less obscure places. A collected volume would find its own fit public among those who liked to hear the ancient man's memories, and to revere that patriarch of hard literary labour. The longer he lived the better he seemed to write about well-beloved books, that were as dear to him as to Southey.

THE PRESS OF FINLAND.—In one of the reports recently published by the Governor-General of Finland, an account was given of the Press of the Grand Duchy. This consists of fifty-four periodicals; twenty-four edited in the Swedish language, and thirty in Finnish. The first newspaper published in the country appeared in 1771, and belonged to the former category. The second came out five years later, and was printed in the vernacular tongue. After this the Press grew rapidly, although up to 1840 the Swedish journals outstripped in number the Finnish. The researches, however, of Elias Lönnrot into the national literature and the publication of the Finnish epic, "*Kalwala*," gave a remarkable impulse to the vernacular, and Swedish—until then the language of the educated classes—began to be pushed into the background. At present the Swedish language still prevails in polite society, though to a less degree, and it is therefore in the towns that the *Helsingfors Dagblad*, the *Abo Posten*, the *Ostra Finland*, and other Scandinavian papers appear. The *Unsi Suometar*, the *Sanansaattaja*, and other Finnish journals with equally unpronounceable titles, appeal more to the peasants and lower classes, and they circulate chiefly in the rural districts. A feature in the vernacular Press is the cheapness of the newspapers. The *Unsi Suometar*, which appears five times a week, only costs 13 marks, or 10s., a year, which is less than a half-penny a number. Its circulation is 6,500 a day—insignificant, indeed, for a "daily" boasting of the "largest circulation" in Finland, but then the whole population of the province is barely 2,000,000 people, and these are scattered over a superficial area twice as large as that of this country. At Helsingfors several illustrated papers appear weekly; at Jyväskylä there are three reviews and a schoolmaster's journal, and in the southern districts every village has a reading club that subscribes freely to the Press. In 1883, when the use of Swedish as the official language was abolished, and the vernacular compulsorily employed throughout the Duchy, the support accorded by the Government to the Swedish newspapers was withdrawn, and its transfer to the national Press gave a fresh impulse to the literature ennobled by the poetry of the late John Runnberg, the Tennyson of Finland.

A RUSSIAN AUTHOR'S HABITS OF WORK.—Now that "*Stepniak*," the author of "*Underground Russia*," has a new book under way, some account of his manner of work will not be uninteresting. That he writes with the utmost conscientiousness and care is at once seen by the readers of his book. "He writes slowly," says a writer in the *London World*, "and polishes with poetic care; there are whole chapters of his '*Underground Russia*' which were written and rewritten six times, and even then sent to the printer with reluctance, so far from perfection did they seem. The simplest parts—the

were precisely those that gave him the most trouble: he could never make his meaning sufficiently clear, his arguments sufficiently telling and easy of comprehension. The portraits, sketches, and descriptions came easier to him, but even some of these were several times recast before assuming their final shape. For the life of him, Stepniak could not work regularly and methodically, as, for instance, Anthony Trollope was wont to work. Like all men of nervous temperament, he is more in the vein at some times than at others, and, though the reverse of a desultory worker, he writes by fits and starts. But the fits are of frequent occurrence, and when he finds one coming on, he places himself under what he calls the *régime littéraire*. He goes to bed at midnight, rises at two, and plies his pen without surcease—save for refreshment, which he takes as he writes—until noon. Then he sleeps for about three hours, when he again sets to work, and, until midnight, gives himself only one or two short spells of rest. This goes on for five or six days a week, or until the task he has set himself is accomplished; and while it is in progress he drinks enormous quantities of tea and coffee, the one as black as the other. Only a man of iron constitution, and of otherwise temperate habits, could long endure such a literary *régime* as the late editor of the *Norodnaia Volia* has devised for himself. Like a good many other people, Stepniak finds the beginning of a book, an article, or a chapter the most difficult part of a writer's work. He seeks an effective opening, and it is generally some time before he gets fairly into his stride."

A CHINESE WORK.—The *North China Herald* says that the last number of the illustrated Chinese periodical issued from the Tien Shih Chai is a real work of art. The drawing is most elaborate, and the scenes depicted have the merit of great originality. A Chinese artist, indeed, would be without one of the most important essentials of his trade if he lacked imagination and inventiveness. For instance, one of the pictures represents a lady and gentleman—foreigners, of course—undergoing the ceremony of divorce. At a table behind a sort of mixed court railing sits a stout person with his hat on, while in front of him stand the unlucky pair. The lady with bowed head, is placing her hands on the shoulders of a bad gentleman, who, stooping with his hands on his knees, looks the picture of shame. Then we have a terrible subject very realistically portrayed—the burial alive of a rebellious son. The wretched boy kneels at a short distance from his own grave, which is being dug for him by several cheerful-looking coolies; on one side is a group of village elders, headed by a very venerable old man, who appears to be conducting the solemnity, while on the other there are a number of respectable-looking women, one with a baby in her arms, who form the congregation. The landscape in the background is rural and pretty, and this enhances the horror of the whole scene. There is also a capital, but strongly idealised, view of the ships at Woosung, with the forts; an amusing presentment of some imaginary French defeat, in which a French standard-bearer is represented standing upright, still grasping the flag, though his head lies on the ground beside him, having been cut off at one blow by a truculent-looking genius behind, who appears to be executing a war dance; a most elaborate