

## Notice.

### CAPTAIN WEBB.

Captain Matthew Webb, whose portrait we give in this number, was born at Dawley, in Shropshire, in 1848. His father is a surgeon at Ironbridge, and has had a family of twelve children, of whom Matthew is the eldest but one. After spending some time at school, young Matthew entered the training ship "Conway," lying in the Mersey. He had learnt to swim at seven years old, and his first life-saving feat was achieved while he was on board the "Conway," when he and the companions who formed the crew of his boat received each a silver pencil-case for rescuing a comrade who had fallen overboard. He was subsequently apprenticed on board an India and China merchantman, and when his indentures were expired, he served first as second officer, and afterwards as chief officer on board various ships in the Calcutta trade, and, while taking a vessel through the Suez Canal, he dived and cleared away a hawser that had fouled her. In April, 1873, having shipped before the mast in the Cunard steamer "Russia," he jumped overboard in a gale of wind to save the life of a man who had fallen into the sea from the yard-arm. The "Russia" was going 15 knots an hour at the time, and though the lifeboat was immediately lowered, it was 35 minutes before he was with difficulty picked up, having failed in his noble endeavor to save the life of his shipmate, who had probably been stunned and sunk at once. For this deed of gallantry he received the medal of the Liverpool Humane Society, as well as the Silver Medal and the Gold Stanhope Medal of the Royal

Humane Society, which latter were presented to him by the Duke of Edinburgh, and a present of £100, subscribed by the passengers.

Captain Webb steadily and determinedly prepared himself for the great feat of swimming across the English Channel, which he had set his heart on accomplishing, his training virtually commencing with his twenty-mile swim from Blackwall to Gravesend in four hours and fifty-two minutes. A fortnight later he gave another proof of his powers of endurance, by swimming from Dover to Ramsgate in eight hours and forty minutes. He swam across the English Channel from Dover to Calais in twenty-one hours and three-quarters. Nature failed him as he touched the shore. The heroic swimmer fell forward as soon as his feet touched ground, and was helped ashore by strong and kindly arms. Every heart gave a great throb, and eyes grew dim as there shot through the spectators that rare thrill at the achievement of any crowning act of heroism. Modestly and quietly Webb walked up to the carriage waiting for him, arm-in-arm with the sailors who sprang to his aid, and was driven to the Paris Hotel, Calais. He suffered from delirium for a short time, but soon sank into a sound sleep, and awoke almost himself again. He has since been recruiting at his father's residence in Shropshire, having been accorded a triumphal entry on his return. As a modern athlete, he completely throws in the shade all those of ancient Rome and Greece, and is a living exponent of the fact that the human race is not deteriorating.