

## "VOLNEY'S RUINS OF EMPIRES."

We believe the following fact, mentioned by the learned author of "Plurality of Worlds," is but little known. We put it on record, that it may obtain a wider circulation, and serve to confound the foolish admirers of the infidel philosopher:—

"Conversing one day with —, an eminent scholar, I mentioned 'Volney's Ruins of Empires;' and he replied, that he had visited the author of that book, while in Paris. He took him into his library. He looked round, put his hand upon several books, and said, 'Here, Mr. Volney, are the sources of your novel opinions.' He acknowledged to the Doctor, that he was right, and said, 'I am not anxious about it.' 'Have you seen the reply of Dr. Priestley, and more particularly, that of an English Clergyman?' He said, 'No;' and then spoke to this effect: 'I have no interest in defending the book; I do not pledge myself for the sentiments it contains. I was compelled to write, by desire of Buonaparte. I was ordered to manufacture a revolutionary book upon the subject of religion. I consider myself as a private in the ranks, obeying the commands of his superior officer.' Such is the origin of a book, full of astronomical fable;—a book which may injure persons of light and superficial reading, but can make little or no impression upon the minds of those who have been rightly instructed."

## THE BAY OF CALIFORNIA.

THE Alexandria Gazette publishes an interesting letter from an American citizen residing in Upper California, from which we take the following extract, giving a description of the Bay or Harbour of San Francisco:—

"It is one of the largest and most splendid in the world. The entrance is between two high lands, and about the width of the Narrows at Staten Island. The bay is more than one hundred miles in length, and I should judge from six to eight in width. It is protected in every direction from the winds, has good bottom for anchorage, and is capable of containing with perfect safety all the navies of the world. Three large rivers empty themselves into this bay through a strait called Kargines, forming by their junction, another separate and interior bay. These rivers are the Sacramento, San Joachim, and Jesus Maria. Some of these rivers are navigable for good-sized steamboats at least one hundred leagues. The surrounding country has a soil unsurpassed for richness and fertility, and a climate, which for salubrity and mildness, has not its equal in any other part of the globe. The extremes of heat and cold are unknown, the seasons being more properly divided into wet or dry.

"This place, from its natural position, is undoubtedly destined to become the great commercial metropolis of all the Western coast of North America. It is about two hundred and fifty miles from the southern limits of the United States Territory of Oregon; and could the northern part of California, which is now useless, and a bill of expense to the Mexican Government, be annexed by purchase or other means to our possessions, it would ultimately give to the United States the commercial and maritime control of this coast."

## DISCOVERY AMONG THE STARS.

M. BESSELL, a German astronomer, has made one of the greatest discoveries of modern times, by having ascertained the parallax of the double star 61 Cygni. He found, from repeated observations, made from August to March, 1840, that the parallax of a Cygni did not exceed 31 hundredths of a second,—which places the distance of that star from us at nearly 670,000 times that of the sun, or which is nearly 64 billions of miles (or more nearly 63,650,000,000,000 miles.) This immense distance can better be conceived when we state, that if a cannon ball were to traverse this vast space at the rate of twenty miles a minute, it would occupy more than 6,000,000 years in coming from that star to our earth; and if a body could be projected from our earth to 61 Cygni, at thirty miles an hour, (which is about the same rate

as carriages on railroads travel,) it would occupy at least 96,000,000 years. Light, which travels more than 11,000,000 miles in a minute, would occupy about twelve years in coming from that star to our earth.

## TALENT AND INDUSTRY.

More is to be expected from laborious mediocrity, than from the erratic efforts of a wayward genius.

Demosthenes elaborated sentence after sentence, and Newton rose to the heavens by the steps of geometry, and said at the close of his career that it was only in the habit of patient thinking that he was conscious of differing from other men. It is generally thought that men are signalized more by talent than industry; it is felt to be a vulgarizing of genius to attribute it to any thing but direct inspiration of heaven; they overlook the steady and persevering devotion of mind to a subject. There are higher and lower walks in scholarship, but the highest is a walk of labour. We are often led into a contrary opinion by looking at the magnitude of the object in its finished state; such as the "Principia" of Newton, and the pyramids of Egypt; without reflecting on the gradual, continuous, I had almost said creeping progress by which they grew into objects of the greatest magnificence in the literary and physical world. In the one case, indeed, we may fancy the chisel which wrought each successive stone; but in the other, we cannot trace the process by which the philosopher was raised from one landing to another, till he soared to his towering elevation; it seems as if the work was produced at the bidding of a magician. But Newton has left as a legacy, the assurance that he did not attain his elevation by dint of a heaven-born inspiration, out of the reach of many, but by dint of a homely virtue within the reach of all.—Dr. CHALMERS.

## BOOKS OF FICTION AND THE BIBLE.

THE Bible contains the literature of heaven—of eternity. It is destined to survive in human hearts every other book, and command the ultimate veneration and obedience of the world.

When Sir Walter Scott returned, a trembling invalid, from Italy, to die in his native land, the sight of his "sweet home" so invigorated his spirits, that some hope was cherished that he might recover. But he soon relapsed. He found that he must die. Addressing his son-in-law, he said, "Bring me a book." "What book?" replied Lockhart. "Can you ask," said the expiring genius, whose fascinating novels have charmed the world, but have no balm for death—"Can you ask what book?—there is but one."

No, there is but one book that God has given to us—let us give that one book unmutated to the world.

## USEFUL SUGGESTION.

I HAVE seen many a promising and fine young man gradually led to dissipation, gambling, and ruin, merely by the want of means to make a solitary evening pass pleasantly. I earnestly advise any youth who quits that abode of purity, peace, and delight, his paternal home, to acquire a taste for reading and writing. At every place where he may reside long, either in England or the continent, let him study to make his apartment as attractive and comfortable as possible; for he will find a little extraordinary expense, so bestowed at the beginning, to be good economy at the end; let him read the best books in the language of the place in which he lives; and above all, let him never retire to rest without writing at least a page of original comments on what he has seen, read, and heard in the day. This habit will teach him to observe and discriminate; for a man ceases to read with a desultory and wandering mind, which is utter waste of time, when he knows that an account of all the information which he has gained must be written at night.—Clayton's Sketches.

THE Leipzig Gazette announces the death of Galvini, the musical professor, at the age of 104. He was a son of the celebrated singer Galvini, who died at Rome in 1825, having reached the patriarchal age of 138.

## COPYRIGHT IN SERMONS.

A PRACTICE has recently arisen of taking down in short hand the sermons of first-rate preachers, and of forthwith printing and publishing them for the pecuniary benefit of the person by whom the short-hand writer is employed. We are asked whether the preacher can check such a practice by any proceedings in the courts of law or equity? In other words, whether such an act as we have mentioned amounts to an act of piracy? The two principles upon which copyright depends, are these—1st, that it is originally a species of property; 2dly, that it does not pass to other hands by the act of publication. There can be no doubt that a sermon, like a poem, a treatise, a history, or any other manuscript, the fruit of a man's own labour up to the time of its delivery, is his own property, and that until that time it is subject to his exclusive disposal. Thus there can be no doubt that the first of the two principles of copyright is applicable to a sermon. The difficulty of the question, such as it is, will be found to arise upon the second of these principles. The delivery of a sermon from a pulpit amounts to a publication. The hearer listens for his own instruction, pleasure and improvement. For the same objects he may reduce the whole into writing; but it does not, therefore, follow that he may print and publish it for his pecuniary benefit. We see nothing in the relation of the preacher to his congregation which can sanction such a step. His duty is to teach and to instruct, to point out religious duty, and to persuade his congregation to be zealous in the discharge of it; but not to make them a present of an essay which they may publish with a profit.—Law Magazine.

## THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

THE English language consists of about thirty-eight thousand words. This includes, of course, not only radical words, but all derivatives, except the preterites and participles of verbs; to which must be added some few terms which, though set down in the dictionary, are either obsolete, or have never ceased to be considered foreign. Of these, about twenty-three thousand, or nearly five-eighths, are of Anglo-Saxon origin. The majority of the rest, in what proportion we cannot say, are Latin and Greek; Latin, however, has the largest share.—Phil. Stand.

## BOSTON.

It is said that there are 35,000 persons in this city who habitually neglect public worship. Several denominations are attempting, by city missions, to reach this part of our community. It is to be regretted that our own church has not yet participated in these philanthropic efforts. The subject is, however, now under consideration, and we hope soon to have a good and laborious man in the work.—Zion's Herald.

## DREADFUL SUICIDE FROM THE TOWER OF CHELSEA CHURCH

ON Monday afternoon, a respectably-dressed man applied to one of the churchwardens of Chelsea, for permission to ascend the tower of the new church, stating that his object was to take a sketch of Westminster Abbey. Permission was granted, and he went up to the summit, with the man who usually tolls the bell for funerals. About a quarter before four a policeman observed a person on the tower apparently preparing to precipitate himself to the ground, and a second afterwards he threw himself off, and came down with terrible velocity on the west side. Several persons immediately lifted the unfortunate man up, but life was found to be quite extinct. The height of the tower is nearly 200 feet. The deceased was attired in a suit of black, nearly new, and, upon examining his pockets, eight sovereigns and two shillings were found, also two letters addressed to "Mr. Lloyd, Leamington, Warwickshire." The deceased appears to be about fifty years of age, fair complexion, rather stoutly built, and is about five feet eight inches in height. When he applied to the churchwarden in the first instance, nothing in the slightest degree remarkable was observed in his manner; and when ascending the steeple with the man who tolls the bell, he seemed cheerful and collected.—Lon. Watch.