

LITERARY NOTES.

POPE PIUS IX has nearly completed his sermons. They are not to be published until ten years after his death. Father Dresciani, a very learned Jesuit, is the only assistant in the work.

THE LARGEST CHEQUE ever drawn on authors' account was one for £20,000, given by Longman & Co. to Lord Macaulay for copyright on the History of England.

THE GHASTLY FAILURES of so many American life insurance companies have lead Mr. Elorne Wright, an ex-inspector, to publish a searching book on the subject with the startling title of "Traps baited with Orphan."

MR. PARKER, formerly publisher at Oxford, still continues his researches at Rome. Part 8. "The Aqueducts," and part II., "The Mosaics," have just appeared. Mr. Parker has an enthusiasm for Roman excavations, which is very unusual at his advanced age, and it is indeed admirable in every way. The earnestness and ability of his researches must fill the later years of his life with a rare pleasure. He publishes the result of his explorations in parts, each part being complete in itself, so that if death should stop his efforts, his labors will not have been fruitless to the world.

THE NEW VOLUME of Truboir's Philosophical Library is Edith Simeux's "Natural Law—an Essay in Ethics," a very deep subject, and one requiring much courage to attack. The object of the book is to show that law and morality do not depend upon authority, and that religion does not depend upon revelation, but that they are founded upon the nature or constitution of humanity in general. Every rational being which follows out the free development of its own nature is following the laws of morality. The book is a very suggestive one, and quite unorthodox enough to be popular.

"THAT HUSBAND OF MINE," has been the most successful story published since "Helen's Babies." The usual crop of weak imitations has followed. We have "That Wife of Mine," "That Girl of Mine," and "That Lover of Mine." "My Mother-in-Law," which a clever story, is already followed by My

Grandmothers," and no doubt "My Nephews and My Nieces" will follow. This mean eruption of parasites shows how much of unmitigated "shop" there is in literature to produce such a crop of "pot-boilers" in so short a time after the happy invention of a new and striking title.

THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER of the *Nineteenth Century* commences another "Modern Symposium," the subject being "The Soul and Future Life," and the speakers, Mr. R. H. Hutton, Prof. Huxley, Lord Blatchford and the Hon. Roden Noel. They all speak from their different standpoint in answer to Mr. Frederic Harrison, who in the June and July numbers of the same periodical denied the existence of any conscious life after death, and yet scorned the company of those whom he called Materialists.

MR. GRAHAM BELL'S TELEPHONE, which many consider to be of little practical importance, was made the subject of many experiments at Plymouth during the recent meeting of the British Association. The conclusion arrived at was that the Telephone is one of the most important inventions of the age, and will likely modify our present telegraph system very seriously.

SERGIUS KERN, a chemist of St. Petersburg, in working upon some platinum ores, has discovered a new metal which he calls Davyum, in memory of Sir Humphrey Davy. It is a hard, silvery metal, very infusible, and somewhat ductile.

SIR WILLIAM THOMSON still clings to his theory, put forth when President of the British Association, that life on this planet was originated by germs brought by meteorites from some previously wrecked world. He lives in hope of actually seeing a plant of meteoric origin. This is an odd way of diminishing the difficulty attendant upon the scientific conception of the origin of life.

DR. COXES, the Bodleian librarian, at Oxford, has refused to lend "The Priest in Absolution," even to a Bachelor of Arts of the University.