

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

A BRAVE RESCUE ON MOUNT ST. BERNARD.

It is only within the last few days that particulars have been published in the Swiss papers of a brave rescue effected on Mount St. Bernard on the night of the last Sunday in November. While a violent snowstorm was in progress, Grand, the manager of the hospice, noticed that his own special dog that was alone with him in his room became very restless, and made signs to him to go out. He took the lantern and fog-horn, and went out on the mountain, the dog leading him. In a very short time he heard a call and groaning, and, helped by the dog, dug out of the snow an Italian, whom he carried on his back into the hospice. The rescued man stated that his father, two brothers, and another Italian, all journeying home with him over the pass, lay buried in the snow. He had pushed on to obtain help, but had been overpowered by the storm. Grand made ready, and went out again. This second search was more tedious, and led him further away, but at last the barking of the dog announced a discovery. It was the Italian stranger who was now saved and carried up to the hospice. A third time Grand and his dog sallied out into the tempest, and after a quarter of an hour's search found the others near where the second man had been discovered. They were quite buried under the snow, and almost insensible. He took the most feeble on his own shoulders, and with difficulty conducted the others to the hospice. It was now past midnight, and his toilsome task had occupied Grand over four hours in a blinding snow-storm.

PHYSICAL HISTORY OF SCOTLAND.

To sit on one of the Highland Hills that overlook the Firth of Clyde, and watch the ships as they come and go from all corners of the earth; to trace village after village, and town after town, dotting the coast-line as far as the eye can reach; to see the white steam of the distant railway rising like a summer cloud from among orchards and cornfields and fairy-like woodlands; to mark, far away, the darker smoke of the coal-pit and the iron-work hanging over the haunts of a busy human population; in short, to note all over the landscape, on land and sea, the traces of that human power which is everywhere changing the face of Nature;—and then to picture an earlier time, when these waters had never felt the stroke of oar or paddle, when these hillsides had never echoed the sound of human voice, but when over hill and valley, over river and sea, there had fallen a silence as of the grave, when one wide pall of snow and ice stretched across the landscape; to restore, in imagination, the vast ice-sheet filling up the whole wide firth, and creeping slowly and silently southwards, and the valley-glaciers into which this ice-sheet shrank, threading yonder deep Highland glens, which to-day are purple with heather and blithe with the whirring of grouse and woodcock; to seal up the firth once more in ice, as the winter frosts used to set over it, and cover it with bergs and ice-rafts that marked the short-lived Arctic summer; to bring back again the Arctic plants and animals of that early time, the reindeer, the mammoths, and their contemporaries; and thus, from the green and sunny valley of the Clyde, with all its human associations, to pass at once, and by a natural transition, to the sterility and solitude of another Greenland, is an employment as delightful as man can well enjoy.—*Dr. Geikie's Scenery of Scotland.*

A DAY IN WINTER.

How could one live through a day like this,
Sweet! were one not with his books or in love?
I am both; I am happy; with that dear bliss
Of lovers who have no faith to prove,
Of readers who have no task for heeding,
But read for the sheer, sweet love of reading.

The sun is dead, and the clouds hang low,
And the winds are weeping a dirge. What though?
My life is full: in my heart I know
'Tis only distance keepeth the kiss
On thy lips from mine,
On my lips from thine;
No task to learn, no faith to prove—
Oh, how could one live through a day like this,
Sweet! were one not with his books or in love?

—*Century.*

ONE of the chief products of Sicily, according to a report by the British Council at Palermo, is sumach, which appears in the English and American markets in the form of a powder packed in bags, and produced by drying and grinding the twigs and leaves of the plant. The powder serves both as a dye and as a mordant to fix other dyes, and is used also for tanning. The sumach powder produced in Sicily is of two sorts. The best is of a rich green colour and carefully sifted, is soft to the touch, smells rather pleasantly, and has a strong astringent taste. The second has these qualities in an inferior degree, while its colour degenerates and takes a reddish hue. The sumach grown in Continental Italy is much inferior to the Sicilian, and has a yellowish colour tending both to green and red. None of the inferior sorts are prepared with such care as the best Sicilian, and are known by the prevalence of unground fibres and minute chips, indicative of less pains taken in sifting. Various adulterations are practised in preparing sumach for the market,—the most obvious, that of mixing it with mineral dust, can be discerned by steeping the suspected powder in water.

THE sensation which France produces on the impressionable foreigner is first of all that of mental exhilaration. Paris, especially, is electric. Touch it at any point and you receive an awakening shock. Live in it and you lose all lethargy. Nothing stagnates. Every one visibly and acutely feels himself alive. The universal vivacity is contagious. You find yourself speaking, thinking, moving faster, but without fatigue and without futility. The moral air is tonic, respiration is effortless, and energy is unconscious of exertion. Nowhere is there so much activity; nowhere so little chaos. Nowhere does action follow thought so swiftly, and nowhere is there so much thinking done. Some puissant force, universal in its operation, has manifestly so exalted the spirit of an entire nation, here centered and focussed, as to produce on every hand that phenomenon which Schiller admirably characterizes in declaring that "the last perfection of our qualities is when their activity, without ceasing to be sure and earnest, becomes sport."

LITERARY GOSSIP.

ESTES AND LAURIAT are preparing a complete book on etiquette under the title of *The Correct Thing*.

DR. FRANCIS HUEFFER is preparing an English edition of the *Correspondence between Wagner and Liszt*, which appeared recently at Leipzig.

FRANK ASA MITCHELL will describe in *Outing* for March an exciting incident in a day's trout-fishing. The story is well told, and will be appreciated by all anglers.

WE learn that the second volume of Professor Henry Morley's "English Writers," embracing *From Cædmon to the Conquest*, will be published by Messrs Cassell and Company early next month.

MAX O'RELL has a remarkably clever article in *Lippincott's* for March, entitled *From My Letter-Box*, presenting the contents of anonymous and other letters received by him, with humorous comments.

THE *Bookworm* remarks that "there are probably more English and American collectors of Dickens than of any other author," and warns them to "beware of 'fac-simile reprints' of the genuine first editions."

MESSRS. MACMILLAN AND COMPANY will publish early in the year a new edition of Mr. Green's *Short History of the English People*. The work has been a remarkable success, the sale now being over 125,000.

PROFESSOR J. STUART BLACKIE'S *Life of Burns* will be the March volume of the "Great Writer" series. In the "Camelot Series," also published by Mr. Walter Scott, Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* will be issued at the same date.

ON the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of Lord Byron's birth most German daily and weekly papers produced highly appreciative articles on the poet's genius—rather a contrast to the tone of the English daily press, as the *Athenæum* justly remarks.

MR. STEVENS, the bicyclist, who recently put a girdle round the earth, has arranged with Messrs. Scribner, in New York, and Sampson Low, in London, for the publication of the second and concluding volume of *Around the World on a Bicycle* about the end of April.

THE general interest in the answers from twenty-three distinguished clergymen to the question, "What are the strongest proofs and arguments in support of the belief in a hereafter?" that appeared recently in the *Sunday Herald*, has led to their publication in book form by the D. Lothrop Company, under the title, *The Hereafter*.

WHO are the Anarchists? What is their doctrine? Why would they overthrow society and government, and what do they wish to substitute? These are questions frequently asked by thoughtful citizens. An article by Z. L. White, in the March number of the *American Magazine*, will answer such inquiries, and show the depth and virulence of the disease of which the Haymarket murders were only a symptom.

FAIRS—old-fashioned gipsy fairs—are fast disappearing both in this country and in England, and presently they will be traditions only. To get a good idea of them, however, one need only turn to F. Anstey's article in *Harper's Magazine* for March, entitled *A Gipsy Fair in Surrey*. All the cheats and amusing vagabonds usually found at such places are closely sketched by Anstey's pen and Frederick Barnard's pencil. The seven illustrations by Barnard are in his well-known style. His familiarity with such subjects, gained by frequent contact with them on sketching tours, appears in every stroke of his pencil, and every stroke tells.

MR. HUGH DE T. GLAZE BROOK'S many friends in Toronto will be very glad of the opportunity of looking at some of the results of his ten years' study of portrait painting in London, Paris, and Rome, which are to be seen for one week only at Messrs. Roberts and Son's gallery, 79 King Street West.

ATTENTION is directed to the fifty-fifth annual report of the British America Assurance Company, published in other columns. Owing to exceptional circumstances, the showing for the past twelve months has not been as profitable as could be desired; but the directors of the company look for better results during the year upon which they have entered. Certainly the company occupies a sound financial position; and under the direction of a specially strong board the shareholders may reasonably expect ever-increasing prosperity in the future.