

ALTHOUGH Professor Piazzi Smyth has, through old age, been obliged to resign his post of Astronomer Royal for Scotland, he has been hard at work revising his famous book "Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid," the fourth edition of which has just run out.

"In the matter of weight," writes a London gossip-picker, "Lord Salisbury undoubtedly has it. He stood on a machine this week while the Prince of Wales looked on, and the record gave 230 pounds. Mr. Gladstone's weight is only a little more than 160 pounds."

In her lecture on "The Literature and Religion of Ancient Egypt" at Chickering Hall, New York, last Friday evening, Miss Edwards said that the poetry of the Egyptians, although singularly regardless of rhyme and metre, like Walt Whitman's verse to-day, is true poetry of a high order.

Is it the fact that a new sect, the Elmerites, is to arise, as the *Standard* puts it, to be the followers of an apostle who exists only in fiction? If so, the movement will afford an interesting study to men like Professor Max Müller, who are fond of prying into the origins of religious faiths.

MR. JUSTIN H. MCCARTHY is at work upon a poetic drama of the Viking time, the subject of which, taken from the old Icelandic *Laxdæla Saga*, is the same as that of Wm. Morris's "Lovers of Gudrun." Mr. McCarthy is a son of Mr. Justin McCarthy, M.P., who visited Canada some years ago.

A REPORT to the Dominion Parliament alleges that last year 31,000 persons who had been for a time settled in the United States returned to remain in Canada. Australia and the Argentine Republic are now the most formidable competitors for emigrants which Canada has to contend with in Europe.

MISS AGNES DUHAMEL, of Ottawa, niece of His Grace, Archbishop Duhamel, who has been studying in the Royal Conservatory of Music, in Paris, has passed a very creditable examination in that institution. She got first prize in declamation and voice culture. She will probably finish her course in Milan, Italy.

IN Mrs. Fawcett's delightful little volume, "Some Eminent Women of Our Times," just published by the Macmillans, there are biographies of a dozen English women of international reputation. Of these, seven never married, and three of the remaining five did not marry until in the neighbourhood of forty.

UNDER the title "Robert Browning: Personalia," Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin and Co. will soon publish a little book by Edmund Gosse, the well-known English writer. It will contain a notable article printed in the *Century* some years ago, Mr. Gosse's recent paper in the *New Review*, with prefatory matter and an epilogue, with a poem by Mr. Browning never printed.

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS and Rev. Herbert D. Ward have collaborated in a novel which Houghton, Mifflin and Co. will publish shortly. It is entitled "The Master of the Magicians," and deals with court life in Babylon six hundred years before Christ. The prophet Daniel is the hero, and the royal personages, the life and customs of the time, the conflict between polytheism and the Jewish religion, are figures and elements in a striking love story.

"OYSTER CULTURE" by the Marquis of Lorne, with illustrations by Princess Louise, is, perhaps, the most noticeable of the contents of *Good Words*. The visit described to the oyster nurseries of Arcachon is very interesting, and the information that 200,000 people get their living in France in connection with this and similar nurseries, obtaining also fair wages, is a strong recommendation to the Marquis' plea for the encouraging of the industry on British shores.

IN the April *Atlantic*, Dr. Holmes, in "Over the Teacups," discussing modern realism, says that the additions which have been made by it "to the territory of literature, consist largely in swampy, malarious, ill-smelling patches of soil which had previously been left to reptiles and vermin." After falling foul of a romance which has been lately quoted by a brother-author as "a work of austere morality," he says: "Leave the descriptions of the drains and cesspools to the hygienic specialist, and the details of the laundry to the washerwoman."

MR. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON and his wife and stepson have arrived at Apia, Samoa, from the Line Islands. A correspondent of the *New Zealand Herald* says: "Mrs. Stevenson and her son, I understand, go to Sydney by the *Luback*, but we are likely to have Mr. Stevenson with us for a month or so longer. He seems to have struck quite a rich vein in some of the islands he has visited. These islands are the last resort of many of the desperate characters that have stamped their personality on Pacific island history. I believe he has had a stirring time among some of the old beachcombers sheltered there."

FIDELIS writes: Kindly correct two or three *errata* which have crept into the article in last issue, entitled "The Murder Microbe." The first is of most consequence, as it conveys a sense—if such it can be called—directly opposite to the intended meaning. (1) At the close of the third paragraph, for "the altruism which has been slowly cooling," etc., read "the altruism which has been slowly evolving through ages of moral growth." (2) At the beginning of the next paragraph, for "this malignant nidus," read "its congenial nidus." (3) The quotation from Alfred Russell Wallace should not end where it seems to do. The quotation marks should have been carried on to

the line of Tennyson which ends it. Dr. Wallace repudiates, like many other evolutionists, the materialistic belief, the effects of which he so vividly describes, and all who respect his lifelong devotion to science rejoice that he does so. (4) For "excess of crime," near the end of the article, read "access of crime."

THE *New York Catholic Review*, in its review of Mr. O'Hagan's volume of poems, "A Gate of Flowers," which appears in its last issue, has the following complimentary estimate of the author's gifts: "Mr. O'Hagan has been before the public for some years, and has won for himself an enviable place in the temple of the Muses. His verse is flowing and musical, in fact its greatest fault is its tendency to weaken a strong idea for the sake of a melodious phrase or rhyme. In this volume the twenty-five poems are fairly indicative of Mr. O'Hagan's poetic ability, which is far above the average. The tone of the poem is, perhaps, too melancholy, though this is really the fault of a poetic soul; for the deep insight which poets have into the things that are is apt to sadden their expression. Young poets should resist this feeling of melancholy, for we go to the muse to be cheered rather than saddened. The most dignified poems in the book are the poems on different occasions, such as those read at Moore's centenary and the College commemorations."

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE

TWO STATESMEN.

ONE in England served his Queen,
The people called him "Dizzy,"
So much work had he to do
That he was very busy.
Busy Dizzy.

One worked hard for "Fatherland"
Old "Blood-and-Iron" "Bizzy";
A ruler new came to the throne
And made the warrior dizzy.
Dizzy Bizzy.

The British sphinx is dead and gone,
The Chancellor has resigned,
And two such men as Diz and Biz
Full a-rarely shall we find.

—America.

THE AGONIES OF COMPOSITION.

DICKENS, when he intended to write a Christmas story, shut himself up for six weeks, living like a hermit, and came out looking as haggard as a murderer. Balzac, after he had thought out thoroughly one of his philosophical romances, and amassed his materials in a most laborious manner, retired to his study, and from that time until his book went to press, society saw him no more. When he appeared again among his friends, he looked, said his publisher, in the popular phrase, like his own ghost. The manuscript was afterwards altered and copied, when it passed into the hands of the printer, from whose slips the book was rewritten for the third time. Again it went into the hands of the printer—two, three, and sometimes four separate proofs being required before the author's leave could be got to send the perpetually rewritten book to press, and to have done with it. He was literally the terror of all printers and editors. Tennyson is reported to have written "Come into the garden, Maud," more than fifty times over before it pleased him; and "Locksley Hall," the first draft of which was written in two days, he spent the better part of six weeks, for eight hours a day, in altering and polishing.—*Answers*.

MASSACRE OF CHINESE IN FORMOSA.

THE last mail from China brings news of the massacre of a force of Chinese troops in Southern Formosa by the aborigines now in revolt there. The natives, or savages as they are called, aided, it is said, by a number of half-castes, planned an ambush. Putting on their sandals reversed they made a number of tracks connected with a particular spot. Messengers were then dispatched to the nearest Chinese post with news of an outbreak and an appeal for assistance. The troops went out, the commanding officers, it is said, being considerably in the rear. Pretended sufferers by the raid appeared from time to time. On reaching the tracks the soldiers followed them up and fell into the trap, when all but a very few were killed. Out of 200 which left the post only ten escaped. It is reported that, for the first time in the history of Formosa, all the aboriginal tribes are banded together and act on an organized system. Thus the eighteen tribes of Bhotans in the south, numbering about 5,000 warriors, were concerned in this ambush. Shortly after the disaster the Chinese issued proclamations offering ten dollars reward for the return of each of the guns lost on the occasion, and subsequently the Chinese general began negotiations, in which he was greatly hampered by the bad faith shown on many previous occasions to the natives. At last, and with many precautions on the part of the latter, a meeting was arranged, and a peace was patched up for the time by means of large presents and larger promises to the chiefs. The past is to be forgotten, and the savages are to live on terms of friendship with their Chinese neighbours. From subsequent information, however, it appears that the disturbances in the south of the island have broken out with more violence than before.

THE EXTINCTION OF THE KANGAROO.

AUSTRALIA is likely before many years to have no kangaroos except in its museums. From the reports of the various stock inspectors, it was estimated that in 1887 there were 1,881,000 kangaroos, but in 1888 this number fell to 1,170,000. The chief objection to the adoption of measures for the effectual protection of the marsupial is his vigorous appetite. One kangaroo is said to consume as much grass as six sheep, a fact to which sheep farmers are painfully alive. It is curious to learn, however, that if the kangaroo is likely to be exterminated, a new introduction, the wild buffalo, has found a home in the plains of Northern Australia, where it is now to be met with in vast herds. These animals, which are said to be of extraordinary size, and to possess splendid horns, are, apparently, the descendants of the first buffaloes which were landed at Port Essington, in North Australia, about the year 1829.

THE GRAVE OF CHARLES LAMB.

A VISIT to Charles Lamb's Grave, in the Edmonton Churchyard, is described by Benjamin Ellis Martin, who says in the *April Scribner*: "The obscurity and desolation of the grave—the shocking structure which dominates it, of the stone-mason order of architecture, well-cared for, and which aggressively commemorates one 'Gideon Rippon, of the Eagle House, Edmonton, and of the Bank of England,'—all this is typical of the relation borne by literature to Society, and to Respectability in England. These combined cohorts don't know, and don't want to know, about the burial-place of their only Charles Lamb; but they do due reverence, with naïve and unconscious vulgarity, to the memory of the bank-official who kept Books or handled Money. Lamb himself, with his large sense of the ludicrous and his small sense of the decorous, would be tickled by the harmony between this state of affairs and his whole life. To the grave come pilgrims from the other side of the ocean, and sometimes the Blue Coat boys in small groups."

HOW THE BOOMERANG IS MADE.

THIS curious and unique weapon, about which so much has been written and so little is really known, is a curved piece of wood, slightly convex on one side and nearly flat on the other. It is cut from a natural bend or root of a tree, the hardest and heaviest wood being always selected, and its curve follows the grain of the wood. Thus it will vary from a slight curve to nearly a right angle; no two ever being the same shape. It is about three-eighths of an inch thick, and from two to three inches wide, tapering toward the ends, which are either round or pointed. The edge is sharpened all round, and the length varies from fifteen inches to three and a half feet. This is the shape of the boomerang but the secret of its peculiar flight is to be found not so much in its general form as in its surface. This, on examination is found to be slightly waving and broken up by various angles. These angles balance and counterbalance each other; some, by causing differences in the pressure of air on certain parts, give steadiness of flight and firmness; others give buoyancy, and each has generally to be determined practically by experimental throwing. Some boomerangs appear to be mere dented or crooked sticks; but they are really implements which some black man has whittled and scraped till these dents or angles have been properly adjusted according to the boomerang principle. I believe it is possible to make a boomerang by exact mathematical calculation; but yet I have never seen two exactly alike. I have made two, apparently the same in every particular, yet, while one rose buoyantly the other fell dead, because of some untrue adjustment of the angles of its faces. When all angles are properly arranged the boomerang goes through the air somewhat as a screw propeller goes through the water—whirling rapidly in its flight like a revolving wheel. Gravitation and the force with which it is directed cause its peculiar swallow-like swoops, which are prolonged by the action of the floating angles in counteracting gravitation; consequently, with spent force it is still kept on the wing, and often reaches the ground considerably behind the thrower.—*Horace Baker in Scribner's Magazine*.

DIARY OF MARIE BACKBAYSHIFT.

AH, mon Dieu! Fifteen years old to-day, and not one "affaire du cœur" to look back on,—mon Dieu! I will be loved! I am young! I am beautiful! I am svelte! I am chic! (Smashes a chair.) Ah, mon Dieu! but I will be loved!

Tuesday—Yesterday, after my ebullition of passion, during which I looked very handsome (my eyes flashed and my beautiful nostrils dilated), I dressed myself carefully in purple moire antique, with the green ribbons, letting my stockings fall little loosely about my ankles, and thrusting a yellow jonquil in my belt, I tripped lightly down the stairs singing as I went that little chanson:

"Oh, to feel the breath
That comes through a soft moustache:
To lean my head on a manly breast
Without being considered rash."

My voice is a beautiful one. Wouldn't I like to sing in Music Hall, and raise the roof and make Patti tear her imperial dyed hair with rage. Ah, mon Dieu! (The reason I say mon Dieu so much is because I had a French governess. Oh, she was une mignonne—a corker! She taught me to roll cigarettes and read Zola. Ah, friend of my infancy, in what paths do your tender feet wander?)