

of these Assyrian inscriptions to Mosaic record in Genesis.

In the South Kensington Museum, as one of the last prizes with which its wonderful art collections have been enriched, are the valuable relics which Dr. Schliemann has recently disinterred from the site of Old Troy.

Among the last art treasures of which the Londoners have possessed themselves, is Cleopatra's needle, which now stands on the north bank of the Thames.

In a word, London, taken altogether, must be regarded as filling the place of headquarters on our planet.

CICERO'S EPISTLES.

Cicero was one of the most prodigious literary workers the world has ever seen. He was actively engaged in the stirring political life of the time, and his life was prematurely cut short when he was only 64, yet he delivered and published oration after oration, (81, in fact), wrote book after book, and letter after letter. And the fact that many of these orations and treatises and letters have always been considered models of their kind, shows that they cost the writer time and labor. We wish here briefly to call attention to his epistles.

There are extant about 1000, and he probably wrote as many more. As they were never intended for publication, Cicero throws off all reserve and restraint, and we see him just as he is and feels. He therefore possesses a peculiar charm to which but few of the great letter-writers of history can lay claim. Pliny's letters have not that openness of heart and freedom of expression; neither have Alexander Pope's; this peculiar grace is illustrated however in those of Cowper and Madame de Sevigne. Cicero's letters furnish therefore very entertaining reading. Even Mommsen—who has hardly a good word to speak for Cicero in any connection—acknowledges that his correspondence is "interesting and clear so long as it reflects the urban villa life of the world of quality,"

but, he must add, "when the writer is thrown on his own resources, as in exile, in Cilicia, and after the battle of Pharsalus, it is stale and empty as was ever the soul of a feuilletonist banished from his familiar circles." (*Hist. of Rome*, IV. 725, Prof. Dickson's Trans.) On the other hand, a critic in the *London Quarterly Review* says: "The attention is not suffered to flag; there is nothing like prosing. They [Cicero's letters] will remain to after ages, as they have been in the past, models to be studied and imitated," and he places them alongside of Demosthenes' orations as unsurpassed in modern times. (See Vol. VII. 1857, p. 357.) Mr. Forsyth, in his fine biography of the great Roman, gives a like testimony. "There is a charm," he says, "in these letters to which we have nothing comparable in all that antiquity has spared us. To say nothing of their exquisite Latinity, and not unfrequently their playful wit, they have a freshness and reality which no narrative of by-gone events can ever hope to attain. We see in them Cicero as he was. We behold him in his strength and in his weakness—the bold advocate, and yet timid and vacillating statesman—the fond husband—the affectionate father—the kind master—the warm hearted friend." (*Life of Cicero*, I. 73, 2nd Am. Ed.)

As Cicero thus portrays himself at full length, we have plenty of materials for forming an idea of his character. Nor need it surprise us if we discover many weaknesses and foibles there. Let the twenty years' private correspondence of any great literary and political man be published—think you he could stand the test any better than Cicero? Let those who are wont to exaggerate the faults of Cicero, remember that they are indebted in a great measure to his own frank confessions for their knowledge of his failings. At the same time, the letters will not allow us to concur in the strangely extravagant estimate of Cicero's character, given by Erasmus and Petrarch, who speak of him as fit to be a canonized saint!

The letters are nearly equivalent to an