LITERATURE

In the "Heroes of the Nation" series the latest volume is devoted to a history of the great Carthagenian general, Hannibal, written by William O'Connor Morris, sometime scholar of Oriel College, Oxford. The book is a charming resume of the brilliant man and the period, brilliant in the reflection of his own luminous qualities. Necessarily it is a composite. The author has drawn at many springs to furnish forth his goblet. It is a great stimulus. One cannot rise from consideration of such genius, such intrepidity, bravery, originality and patriotism as were possessed by Hannibal without feeling roused in spirit and stirred in admiration if not in emulation.

As Mr. Morris points out, Hannibal is handed down to us through the mouths of his enemies, and they speak of him only furtively and most often at a great distance of time. "Yet history has been busy with him," and he rises above limitations of silence and time, breaks the restraints of the calumnious, a great figure in historical perspective. Though they did write of his age, there is little of Hannibal, except in a cursory way, in the writings of Appian, Plutarch, Cornelius Nepos or Sallust; and Scilius Italicus only affords proof of how Hannibal's memory impressed Rome with awe even after the lapse of centuries. Polybius and Livy place posterity under obligation for most of all we know of this general.

Of his private life we know little. Mr. Morris sums it up in these few words: "He was a chaste, religious, earnest man, without show or theatrical glitter, little moved, it would seem, by human passion. His conversation had a peculiar charm: it was rich in the varied culture of his age, and he evidently possessed a native wit, which exhibited itself in sharp, pregnant and brief sentences."

But even all that is not easily subscribed to. We may accept chastity, earnestness, religion and asceticism in a man of extraordinary genius and achievement, and there are some few "sharp, brief and pregnant" sentences left us repotedly from Hanaibal's own lips, but how does Mr. Morris know that he was so charming a conversationalist? Of course, it's a pleasant point to subscribe to. However, all authorities on this man lived a couple of centuries after his lips were silent, except Polybius, whom our author denominates a dull writer, under Roman influence, and only tolerably impartial.

It is unfortunate that the moral influence of a private life of probity, such as must have been this great conqueror's, is not bequeathed to posterity. We have only the glory of his military career to inspire us. But his was an unparalelled one, which has held him through centuries in the first ranks of the world's generals.

Hannibal conceived one of the most daring military coups in history, and if he did not completely execute it, there is more glory for him in the manner of his retreat, for there is genius in graceful failure. Mr. Morris, in writing the history of Hannibal, really writes only the history of the second Punic war, the crisis of the memorable struggle between Carthage and Rome. The Carthagenian surrounded himself with an army of Phoenicians, Gauls, Spaniards, Italians and Africans, allied to him by no patriotic bonds, but servile admiration, he marched upon Italy to destroy the Roman empire and avenge the defeat of the first Punic war.

Rome was accustomed to the fight of force, an open field, an advance in front, a clash, and the triumph of the most enduring. Hannibal, with rare genius, understood this, and, appreciating the value of surprise, he planned the scaling of the Alps and a descent from this undefended quarter. The coup was successful. He pressed almost to the gates of Rome. Extending his hand for the prize, he was not permitted to grasp it. After a campaign of unexcelled brilliancy, covering seventeen years, the victorious Romans were willing to permit their vanquished enemy to depart in peace. Hannibal's genius is clearly shown in two points of this campaign, first in the expedition across the Alps, and secondly in his determination not to attack Rome, even after the victories of Trasimenus and Cannae.

He gave to the world the art of strategy. Before him, War was merely a clash of physical forces. He brought mentality and genius into battle. He was an expert tactician, eminent as an organizer, full of resources, constant in adversity, and surprising at every point. His ambushes and covert attacks, his flank movements and attacks from the rear terrified the simple-minded Romans, who looked only in front of them and fought only whom they saw and had not the foresight of anticipation.

There is something sad in the spectacle of this great and mighty man, after conquering the Alps, surviving a victorious stranger in the plains of Italia for seventeen years, to slink away, beaten, to end the life of a fugitive, without influence, hounded by Rome, and betrayed at last by a pledged assassin, who simulated friendship, but cheating fate at last in a cup of poison.

It is fortuitous, however, that Hannibal's arms were not victorious, for that would have meant not only his supremacy, but the supremacy of Carthage, and that would have been an unmixed evil. To arrive at this conclusion one has but to consider the character of the Carthagenians.

Mr. Morris' own words give a comprehensive review of their character. Carthage was not a nation in the true sense of the word; she was a colony that had made an empire, and that ruled allied and subject races, but there was no Carthagenian national character. But we can see what the Carthagenian citizens were, and what the quality of the population spread about the city. The Carthagenian was cowardly and superstitious in his faith; he propitiated Moloch by human sacrifice; he bowed before the cruel and licentious Ashtaroth. The noble had little thought of the moral forces that uphold states; of law, order and just government; he belonged to a dominant caste of traders, and was the master of slaves by tens of thousands; he was a narrow-minded, selfish, corrupt, and oppressive ruler. His position did not encourage manly virtue; his pursuit was to make money, and, accordingly, the government, of which he was the leader, was seldom energetic in public affairs, and usually adopted a timid policy that cringed to the strong and wronged the feeble. The mass of the citizens resembled their betters, and the lower orders formed a great urban populace; bought and sold like sheep in a mart of politics; but arrogant, domineering, passionate and addicted to the most odious vices.

Naturally, such a people was not fitted to be the architects of a permanent empire. They remained a mere nation of traders; their souls were given to the accumulation of riches; they had not the genius of well-ordered government; they were cruelly oppressive to the peoples they had made their subjects. In rescuing Rome from Hannibal Providence preserved the world from this sovereignty, for however great was Hannibal in war, he fought not for himself—he was unselfish—but for the supremacy of Carthage.

Interesting comments of Mr. Morris on the present value of Hannibal's influence on warfare will make a fitting conclusion of this introduction to this book of scholarship and subject value: "There is no more false or shallow notion than that suggested by a school of petty experts, that the conditions of modern war have so completely changed that the grand examples of the past do not require to be studied. The moral faculties of a great captain—resource, energy, craft, constancy, his intellectual faculties, imagination, judgment, quick and clear perception—will certainly play as decisive a part in the huge but short-lived contests of the present day, as they did in bygone centuries; the exhibition of these by warriors of all time will form matter for careful thought and reflection. It is a great mistake to suppose that the great movements of war, and those which give proof of peculiar excellence, are essentially different in any age.

"True strategy has but little changed. To occupy the decisive points on the theater of war, to bring superior forces to bear on them, to turn military strength to the best account, to attempt to gain an enemy's flank and rear, to operate on his communications, to defeat him in detail—all this has been illustrated far more perfectly in the past than in the last thirty years, and these grand examples, therefore, retain their value. Nor have the material inventions of modern days profoundly modified, as has been alleged, the larger and more important combinations of war. They have made them, indeed, more rapid and complete, but they have not affected their real character, they have not given them a new aspect; and that for this, among other reasons, they are forces capable of being employed on both sides alike, and capable of producing the same effect for both. * * * The exploits of Hannibal, prolonged for many years, confute a shallow and dangerous theory. He contended against an enemy six fold in strength; the armies of Rome were far better and far more numerous than his small army; and yet he brought Rome to the very edge of ruin because he was a captain of extraordinary power. What a great chief can accomplish with a little force is a lesson to be specially learned in our day." (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Washington: Brentano's.)

Charles Dudley Warner has united in one volume two articles which he wrote for the Atlantic Monthly and two which have heretofore remained in manuscript and they are all pertinent to the title he had given the volume, "The People for Whom Shakespeare Wrote."

Guizot first pointed out that the proper way to arrive at an understanding of the spirit and meaning of a writer and to do him the greatest fairness is to study the manners, politics, and people of his times. He applied this principle to his admirable essay on Shakespeare, and Mr. Warner makes it the reason of his present volume.

He has written four attractive essays on the customs and manner, the politics and religion, the people and literature of the Elizabethan era. In doing this he has but focused in his own words the messages of the chroniclers of those times. He has drawn liberally from "The Description of England," by William Harrison, a work which has been a mine of supply to every historian who succeeded him.

Mr Warner's essays are charming throughout. His grace of style, fecundity of illustration, and evident breadth of scholarship, make the brochure a morsel as dainty to the dilettanti as it is deserving of permanency in the library. (New York: Harper & Brother. Washington: Woodward & Lothrop.)

A book of exceptional popularity because of intrinsic value is the manual of suggestions for "Authors and Publishers," compiled by G. H. and J. B. Putnam. This work is now in its seventh edition, and the authors have added much new material. The topics touching the relations of authors and publishers are treated with rare intelligence by Mr. G. H. Putnam, and those explaining the technicalities of book manufacturing are set out clearly by Mr. J. B. Putnam.

Anyone who wishes to acquaint himself with the business end of literature, either from a practical motive or from incentives of mere curiosity, will find this manual an explicit and thorough treatise. In it are given extended explanations of the arrangements between publishers and writers, the many forms of contract by which books are put on the market, whether by purchase or royalty, on profit-shares, at writer's risk or publisher's; the ownership of manuscript, of plates, of copyright; the position of the literary agent; the value of authors' associations, and an intelligent exposition on copyright law, and the process of securing copyright. Supplemental, is a long and interesting description of book-making, giving instructions for the preparation of manuscript, the measuring of type, the correcting of proof and all the miscellaneous technicalities of that career of an author's brain work after it has been finished and contracted for, but before it has reached the reader.

Mr. G. H. Putnam sets out with insistence a practical idea for a literary court of arbitration, which would act in disputes between authors and authors, authors and publishers, and publishers and publishers. Often difficulties are built out of gross ignorance as well as actual cause, and valuable business associations are disturbed and unwarranted charges of contract breach are made simply because of misunderstanding and no convenient tribunal or umpire to settle disputes of a character intimate only to the authors' and publishers' profession.

Such a court or commission might be instituted under the joint action of a society of authors and a publishers' association. By Mr. Putnam's plan it would utilize for legal requirements the services of counsel who had interested themselves in the law of literature and who had familiarized themselves with the conditions and precedents of publishing. The fees charged the contestants should prove sufficient to secure adequate compensation for the best services on the part both of the lawyers and of the expert laymen, whose time was also of value. The economy of the plan is in this, that a mere fraction of the amounts that would be required to put through an English or an American court an ordinary case of infringement or breach of contract, or of difference of opinion as to the interpretation of a contract, would be amply sufficient to provide the needful compensation for counsel and arbiters. Often the services of counsel could be dispensed with, for the contesting parties would be perfectly capable of stating the merits of their cases.

As publisher especially Mr. Putnam would like to see this desirable arrangement, for, under present unorganized conditions he says the publisher is comparatively helpless in securing from the other party to his publishing contracts the same measure of obedience that is nearly always enforced against himself. Then more valuable than all would arise from this arrangement a body of precedents that would come to form a system of literary and of publishing relations and would be accepted as the law governing these relations. The projector of this arrangement believes that another ultimate result would be the weeding out or irresponsible and untrustworthy publishers, and of the development of a larger measure of business knowledge and business responsibility on the part of authors. We hope to see the literary guild consider seriously so rational and practical a suggestion as Mr. Putnam has elaborated. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Washington: Brentano.)

The literary world has recently been studying over the maternal possibilities of a Puritan old maid. There was Louisa M. Alcott, "Miss," as you know, one of the most exemplary women of her generation, gentle, kindly, brainy and maidenly. The young loved her because of herself and her stories and because their elders pointed to her as a sort of uncanonized literary saint. And she was.

But the other day a copyright notice was published disclosing that Mr. J. S. P. Alcott was the son of Louisa Alcott! The intelligence shook New England to the very fundaments of Plymouth Rock. Louisa Alcott was then a mother! There was not a reading circle in Boston or a sewing circle in Lynn, or any sort of a circle anywhere else, that didn't put its various heads together in excited wonderment as to whether those lying newspapers had been at it again, or had Miss Alcott actually succeeded in palming off a mock sanctity all her life through, and had even escaped with a first-class funeral and many post-mortem praises.

Jeanette Watson Gilder cracked the nut. She exposed the facts in the Critic, and the very next week Miss Alcott's publishers wrote back this Socratic reply: "Miss Alcott was never married; but that does not prevent her from having a son. It is not even a 'new woman' fad. Did you ever hear of a woman adopting a son to inherit the same right and property as a natural son?"

Thus is the Alcott scandal exploded.

Living out of Boston has its compensations. The Alcott affair for the moment eclipsed another and far graver matter, but the beaneaters have valiantly returned to their muttons, which muttons is an inscription on a monument to be erected in the littlecity of "the three hills." Hearken to the Boston Transcript:

"Thirty-five men gave the money for monument about which 35,000 men are now worrying. The anxiety is all due to four Latin words, which have for years done service as the motto of the Society of the Cincinnati. First one error is detected and then another.

"'Omnia relinquit servare rempublicam' at first seemed to us a beautiful inscription, as suited to a memorial of Col. Shaw as was the inscription of Simonides to the memory of the heroes of Thermopylae. The first unhappy discovery was that in Latin the simple infinitive cannot express purpose, and that the wording should be 'ut servaret rempublicam' or 'servat' preceded by a semicolon. We have received a few score of different suggestions as to the best method of remedying that error.

"Next it was discovered that 'patriam,' not 'rempublicam,' should have been used. On this point the knowing differ with the weight of testimony in favor of the word not on the monument. Then came the suggestion that 'servire,' not 'servare,' should have been used. Then somebody proclaimed that the singular verb displayed snobbishness, and that the colored troops as well as their commander should be included in the appreciative inscription. Other adverse criticisms are expected by each mail. The inscription is called mortifying, awkward, inartistic, disgraceful and outrageous. St. Gaudens was twelve years in executing the memorial. We know now why he was so long in finishing it. He was trying to see how many shocking errors he could immortalize in four words."

A Presbyterian missionary in Tang Chow, of the name of Sheffield, has invented a Chinese typewriting machine. As there are 18,000 characters in the language, of which from 4,000 to 5,000 are in common use, the inventor has had no easy task. The machine was made in Hartford, Conn., and is said to have been received with delight in China. A gentleman interested in one of the popular American typewriters told me that he had sold hundreds of machines in Japan. "Fitted with Japanese characters?" I asked. "Indeed, no," he replied. "They wouldn't have them if they were. The Japanese are all learning English, and most of their commercial correspondence is carried on in that language." This marks the difference in the national characteristics of the two countries.

John Lane enjoys a parody even on his own books. He has published them before, and he announces another. Richard Le Gallienne's "Quest of the Golden Girl" is to be made fun of in "The Quest of the Gilt-edged Girl," by Richard de Lyreenne.

With the passing and inevitable extermination of the Indian, there is slipping away a mine of legend and lore, superstitions and myths, foundations for almost a literature in themselves, a literature of unequivocal interest and value for its fecundity of simplicity, poetry and capacity for illustrating the character of a race which was Nature's own children. Curators of museums set great store by the wares and implements, dress and inscriptions of the red men, but little attention has been given to a systematic and thorough gathering of all the buried treasure of myth and lore which is slipping away as surely as the race of which it is the offspring and the tradition.

Mrs. Grace Franks Kane has written a little book of the "Myths and Legends of the Macinac Islands," which covers the work in a competent fashion, so far as the traditions of the north Michigan tribes are concerned. She resided among the people whose legends she records, and learned the tales from their own lips, and wrote them on the spots hallowed in the superstition of the people.

The legends display a sensitive temperament, poetical and sympathetic, with the superstition and awedness of ignorance, but fine in sentiment and tender in conception. The Indian finds nature the only working ground for his imagination. As he roams through the forests or rows over the lakes, or seeks shelter from storms in the caves, or fishes upon the river, his free creative faculty has conjured about him another world of persons and events reflecting in heightened colors and exaggerated lines those which are already known to him. But his conception is always poetic, relieved with artistic verisimilitude.

Mrs. Kane's myths and legends come like echoes out of a distant and different land. They should receive a wide welcome from all who are appreciative of good literature, and especially from those possessed of a patriotic interest in seeing preserved the valuable and only permanent expression of a noble but decaying race. (Cincinnati: Editor Publishing Company. Washington: Woodward & Lothrop)

The Hudson Library attains its majority with its latest issue. That is, it publishes its twenty first number. To be sure, it has all along conducted itself in a highly respectable and choicely literary manner, which beholdens its readers and cements them its friends, but having attained majority, we cannot possibly hope for anything else.

Its third time seventh book is "The Professor's Dilemma," by Annette Lucile Noble, whose "Love and Shawlstraps" was the opening volume of the Hudson series. It is good summer reading, but neither substantial enough in the story or distinctive enough in aim to make demand upon the serious-minded.

A number of amiable people cross the seas, and explore Cairo and vicinity. There are two scientific young men, one of whom is the professor; a young woman and her aunt, and another young woman and her father and her two aunts. They are the dramatis personae, only there is no drama. By some rambling process the professor and his friend become engaged to the two young ladies, but the love story is an undercurrent, very deep down. The main stream of the book is an easy narration of what led to the voyage; of the voyage itself, and the sightseeing around Cairo.

The characters stand out in remarkably clear silhouette, especially the two sister aunts, "Minerva for amusement, Harriet for comfort." The opening chapters have exquisite charm, and the reader parts with Sandy and drifts from Harriet's room with real regret. It is this same capacity for character and atmosphere which sustains interest through succeeding chapters. The authoress knows her Cairo pretty well, as her "personally conducted" evidences. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Washington: Brentano.)

There was also issued last week the regular fortnightly volume of the Appletons' Town and Country Library. But this is a much older institution than the Hudson Library. It is, indeed, at present in its 220th number. The story is "Nulma," by Mrs. Campbell Praed, who is designated on the cover as being the author of "Mrs. Tregaskiss," "Christina Chard," 'Outlaw and Lawmaker," etc.

Her newest story is a story of the English in Australia, rather continental and unspirited in most respects. A new governor of an Australian colony brings out with him his nephew as private secretary, and the nephew's wife is to be mistress of the governor's house. On the ship with them is the new chief justice, who, it transpires before the author lands her party, loves and is loved by the aforesaid lady. On landing they find a Dutch settler in love with an ingenuous young girl, Nulma. She shortly becomes a formidable rival of the mistress of the governor's house. There is an indiscretion, a scandal, the Dutchman marries Nulma, other marital complications remain in statu quo, and the book closes, a probably fair sample of what the British fiction reader seeks for, and finds satiating. It probably appeals largely to the large middle class, and it's a good specimen of middle-class literature.

The Town and Country is in a very extensive degree recruited from foreign productions. It must argue a native appetite for fiction greater than the fertility of the native market. (New York: D. Appleton & Co. Washington: Woodward & Lothrop)

Inspired possibly by the attractiveness of the stories for young people made of Wagner's heroes and heroines by Constance Maud, Anna Alice Chapin has paraphased the story of the Rhinegold into simple continuous English. She has accomplished her work gracefully and made another stroke to lower the barrier between the German master and a larger compass of appreciation. Such books as these are not for children only. Though the mythology of the Teutons appeals in its bold imaginativeness and its splendid heroism to youthful minds, it is appetizing food for their elders. Moreover only savants in the Wagner cult grasp the reason and meaning of things therein. Such simplifications as Miss Maud and Miss Chapin offer are valuable because necessary. They are primers which outline the fundamentals of the story on which we may build appreciation of the music and its meanings. They will teach many who have not believed it not only the existence of an extensive mythology, but it unfolds its exquisite poetry, its transcendant beauty.

The story of the Rhinegold is the story of the Niebelungen lied as set out in the tetralogy of Wagner. Miss Chapin divides her story into four parts, according to the opera: The Rhinegold, the Valkyre, Siegfried and the Twilight of the Gods; and each part is divided into chapters according to the acts of each opera. The simplicity, convenience and reason of this is patent. Frequently in the course of her narration the author employs the actual words of Wagner, permitting the characters to tell their own story, and the principal motifs are introduced with elaborate descriptions of the emotions they are expected to convey. A valuable preface gives a short but remarkably clear exposition of the complicated series of traditions from which Wagner made his operas.

Miss Chapin gives this brief but lucid explanation of the meaning of Wagner's supposedly bothersome motifs and it will enlighten many old people as well as the young: "When he set his poem of the Niebelungen to music he was not satisfied with merely beautiful airs and harmonies linked together with no purpose save lovely sounds. He wished above all to have the music fit his words; and for every character and thought and incident, and, indeed, for almost everything in his operas, he wrote a melody, and those descriptive musical phrases are called motifs. Each one has its meaning, and when it is played it brings the thought of what it describes and represents, and it makes a double language, what the characters on the stage are saying and what the music is saying as well. Through the motifs we understand many things which we could not possibly understand otherwise."

The book is illuminated with a dozen full-page, half-tone pictures of characters in the tetralogy from paintings by great artists. They lend an especial attractiveness to this little volume. (New York Harper & Brother. Washington: Woodward & Lothrop.)

Book agents, go to Hawaii. You are invited; you will find a welcome. A least so says E. S. Goodhue in a column of correspondence in Book News, from which we quote:

"I wonder nothing has been said about it, but Hawaii is one of the best markets for a limited number of magazines and books. Every family has its score of periodicals, and I have never come across a better read people than the old residents; people versed in current literature, especially verse and fiction. Every new book is sent for, and where you would least expect it, is an Atlantic or N. A. Review. A woman said to me, 'I can't understand why there is so much said against book agents in your country. We are eager for them here, and when we have bought their books we invite them to dinner.' After some months' residence here, I must confess to the same weakness, or right-mindedness. When the foreign mail arrives, generally once in two weeks, it is a sort of feast day, wherein all manner of excesses are permitted: mysterious wrappers are torn from new and fragrant magazines, and we are across sea once more in tears of laughter."

Robert Barr is gradually getting a formidable list of works to sustain the "etc." which follows "author of 'A Woman Intervenes,'" on the title page which bears his name. Until just now the bulwarks of the "etc." were "From Whose Bourne," "In the Midst of Alarms," "The Face and the Mask," "One Day's Courtship," and "Revenge." "A Woman Intervenes" escaped the "etc." because it was the best of his books, and would be especially remembered by those who read them.

He has recently finished and published a new novel. It is called "The Mutable Many," which title Mr. Barr takes from "Coriolanus;"

"For the mutable, rank-scented many, let them
Regard me as I do not flatter, and
Therein behold themselves."

The question is, does "The Mutable Many" deserve place before or after his hereinbefore best, or shall it be consigned to the "etc.?"

Mr. Barr makes an ambitious effort in this novel. The ambition has all been bestowed upon the conception, what the dramatist would call the scenario. When it came to elaboration, to dressing and finishing, he has not distinguished himself beyond the rank and file of modern English fictionists. It is a story which depends on its readers for classification. As a piece of literature it is inoffensive, but not striking. As a story, counted for its absorbing values and potency for capturing and confining the interest of those who read for the story's sake, it is almost masterful, for he has devised a striking story, and the process of narrative carries it firmly forward in in crescent interest to the very end.

The mutable many are the people who struggle for existence. "The Mutable Many" is a story of their struggle in a great strike against an alleged tyrannous factory manager. London is, of course, the scene. In the person of John Sartwell the author has drawn an impressive character so conventionally frequent as to be almost commonplace, yet he attacks our interest. Plainly, he is the pride of his creator, though the responsibilities of playing hero are shifted to a young factory man who loves Sartwell's daughter. The character is fine in denotement rather than in itself, and inspires admiration for Barr rather thna Sartwell. He is one of those iron-willed, cruelly-just, self-made, ambitious, inflexible men with a kind heart when the right spring is touched, a steel keenness, such a man only as could, as he did, walk unmoved and fearless through a mob of threatening strikers breathing vengeance and wrath upon him. Mr. Barr has made an effort to heighten his impassive temperament by contrast with a self-depreciating, too-real wife, who only bores the reader as cheap and irrelevant. Sartwell stands alone.

The cheapness of Barney Hope needs apology, as does his presence at all so far as his relation to the story, but he is clearly drawn. Gibbons is a well characterized specimen of labor leader and fois admirably the younger, saner, and more admirable youth, Marsten. It was inevitable that his fine spirit should appeal to Sartwell and conquer him, but it must be taken on inference only that there was any magnetic potency in Sartwell's daughter, Elna, to attract Marsten, for the author has failed to show it. (New York: Frederick Stokes. Washington: Woodward & Lothrop.)

In reviewing Putnam's new publication, "Nippur," some account was last week given in these columns of the eminent services contributed by Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania to the cause of ancient excavation. Recognition of the pre-eminence in its class of the work of the Americans is now given by the Thunderer of the British capital, the London Times:

"To have unearthed the ruins of the oldest city in the world, the foundations of which were laid some six or seven thousand years before the Christian era, is a reward of which an explorer might indeed be proud. Such good fortune seems to have fallen to the lot of Mr. Haynes, who for nearly five years has been in charge of the American expedition engaged in excavating the great mounds of Nuffar, in Northern Babylonia, the site of the ancient city of Nippur, the sacred city of Mellil, or the 'Older Bel' of the Semites. The history of the expedition, which, since 1888, has worked upon this site, is a remarkable one, and its great work has been so quietly done that it has attracted but little attention except among students of Assyriology. The work was undertaken by the University of Pennsylvania, the funds, which have amounted to about $70,000, being provided by a small committee interested in the work. * * *

"We have been able to give only a brief account of the wonderful work of this campaign, which reflects so much credit on its organizers, and, above all, on Mr. Haynes. For thirty-two months he lived alone among the wildest Arab tribes in Mesopotamia, in an atmosphere of fever varied with cholera. One determined, but fortunately unsuccessful, attempt was made upon his life; yet amid all these surroundings he lived and did the work of three men. It is no overpraise to say that Mr. Haynes is justly entitled to take his place in the front ranks of explorers along with those who have restored to us first chapters of the world's history."

Miss Marie Corelli has been celebrating the twelfth anniversary of her debut as a novelist, and it appears that the royalties of her initial volume, her celebrated "Romance of Two Worlds," would be ample for her support, even if she had no other sources of income. And yet, as in so many historic cases, the publisher's readers, who seemed to be called readers on the focus a non principle, rejected the story as romantic rubbish. Perhaps it was, and is, but the public has paid so many dollars for it and the other progeny of its author's prolific pen that Marie Corelli is, in point of income, far and away the richest woman writer of the time. She is physically much the style of woman the lamented Duchess was—small and blonde—a singular fact considering her Italian blood, which appears to show itself chiefly in her imagination rather than in her physique. Miss Corelli is one of the numerous literary people of Kensington, in London. Success has merely stimulated her pen and possessed her of a truly Marion Crawford-like rage for writing.

Mr. Kipling has written a letter to Mr. David Christie Murray on the subject of the criticisms from his pen which have been running in the London Weekly Sun. Mr. Kipling hopes the time will come when he will be able to write "a real novel—not one volume or a two-volume, but a real, decent three-decker." He considers that no man, on this side of forty at the earliest, has secreted enough observation—not to say thought—to write a novel, which, in spite of all they can say of the short story, is, in his opinion, the real vehicle. "Independent firing, by marksmen, is a pretty thing, but it is the volley-firing of a full battalion that clears the front."

A Too Ingenious Wheelman.

Evidently determined to lessen his expenses for a trip to the shore, an ingenious wheelman pedaled down Walnut street early yesterday morning on a tandem, the rear seat of which contained an ordinary traveling trunk supported by means of a board fastened to the seat. Comments and smiles were numerous as the strange-looking load went about, but the cycler wore a satisfied expression, which showed that he was proud of his ingenuity. He got along swimmingly until he reached Second street. In the midst of a gathering of produce teams the daring rider spied about ten inches of an opening. Giving an extra spurt, he attempted to pass through, evidently forgetting he had the trunk in the rear. There was a sudden jolt, a crackling noise, colored language, and all was over. By a miracle the cycler was not hurt, but was merely thrown among a lot of splinters which had formally been a trunk. In a dazed manner he collected a lot of shirts, collars, outing suits and several other essentials to a sporty time, and, strapping them together, tied them on the seat again and started for home.—Philadelphia Record.

Not Available.

"I have proposed to seven girls this summer already," said Timmins, "and I haven't been able to get accepted once. Dinged if I ain't beginning to feel like one of my poems."—Indianapolis Journal.

SEA CHECKERS.

"'Sea checkers,' said Dr. O'Laughlin, in his relic-hunt cabin, "while its existence is known to the steamship companies, cannot easily be stamped out, so long as there are deck hands desirous of earning shillings and quarters, or passengers willing to spend them. Briefly, 'sea checkers' is the game by which our men add to their wages by wooing money out of our patrons' pockets. It took me years and years to become acquainted with even the rudiments of the game, and but for the information received from a smoking-room steward whom I treated through a serious illness, I should still be in comparative ignorance on the subject. From this steward, however, I gathered enough to fill a book.

"To the experencied deckhand there are, I believe, as many as 254 moves in 'sea checkers.' Each move, as handed down by tradition or else recently added to the list, has a number by which alone it is known to the checker players. For instance, move No. 1 consists in matches wherewith to light his cigar, and, as if by accident, offering him one or more of the desired fire-producers. If your passenger be liberal he is pretty sure to fish out a three-penny bit, or perhaps a nickel, sixpence or dime for this attention. The smoking room steward has special facilities for playing move No. 1. It lies in his power to let the smoking room stock of matches run low and then to dispatch a confederate in search of would-be smokers along the decks. The confederate comes forward in the nick of time and subsequently shares the proceeds of his venture with the smoking room steward.

"Move No. 2 is one which all who have played quoits aboard will recall. It means the hiding of the quoits atop of the deck houses or in some other secure place whenever passengers are heard asking for them. This necessitates the sending for a sailor to find the wished-for implements. It is surprising how, whenever the quoits are missing, there always happens to be a deck hand within hail, who will volunteer to hunt out their whereabouts. Moves 20, 21, 22 and 23, et cetera, are variants in the same cunning scheme—i. e., of inflicting some injury on the apparel or person of a of a passenger, and then coming with the means of straightening out the damage.

"Move 20 begins with the sly addition of some fresh paint or chalk to some particular spot upon which a liberal passenger has been seen to sit. The passenger in question returns to his favorite seat, and reads or ruminates in fancied security until upon the scene appears an innocent-looking deck hand with the horrified exclamation, 'Lor, sor, you've been and sat down in some paint. Never mind, though, sir; I'll get it off in two twos for you. I never comes aboard without some benzine.' In the case of chalk, a whisk broom is produced with equal readiness, and the passenger, moved by such thoughtful attention, fishes in his pocket for a shilling or so.

"The moves from No. 40 to No. 50 are all feats of showy daring or bravado, undertaken when the deck is crowded with curious folk. A man will lower himself over the side to scrape some imaginary disfigurement off the vessel. His proceedings are watched by scores of pilers, and when he gracefully swings himself back there is nearly always a collection raised for him by some good-natured busybody.

"With a certain class of passengers moves 101 to 111 are good ones. These are all connected with the various lotteries, pools, etc., which enliven smoking-room life. The shrewd deck hand picks out a passenger with slight scruples, and tells him in a whisper to buy in such a ticket, say, for the daily pool on the ship's run, pretending to have accurate private information as to the number of knots to be covered during the forty-eight hours. If the passenger be as unsportsmanlike as is supposed he is greatly tickled by this news, and pays for the 'tip' willingly. Of course, the 'private information' rarely turns out to be correct, and during the rest of the voyage the deckhand gives his victim a wide berth.

"Number 100 is a move of note. It consists of yam spinning solely. The deck hand, or steward, holds himself in readiness to tell wondrous sea tales or yield up valuable (though doubtful) information regarding every subject connected with the ship and the voyage from the habits of the deep sea fish to the domestic relations of the officers.

"Alleged cures for seasickness are productive moves in 'sea checkers,' and these are of the most varied nature. Usually the deck-hand physician prescribes some nostrum of which brandy or whisky forms a component part, and gets some of the spirit for himself in addition to financial reward.

"The second cabin and steerage passengers fall into the snares of the sea-checker player cruelly often. Indeed, I have heard that more money is made out of these people than out of the richer travelers in the cabin. All sorts of small privileges and luxuries are in demand with the second-cabin folk, and many a dollar makes its way from their slender purses into the ready palms of the 'checker-players.' Altogether, this old game, which has existed, I believe, since the earliest days of the passenger packet, and which cannot be stamped out—is a highly interesting study, and amusing withal."

Petty Officer James Kurtz, who has been in the service of the big Atlantic and Pacific lines for over twenty-five seasons, smiled grimly when questioned about "sea checkers." "I won't admit that I ever played the game myself," he said, "but I cannot deny the fact of its existence. It had no particular name when I first went to sea, but since then some wag called it 'sea checkers' and set forth a regular code of rules. These have become traditional, and there are men who can rattle off for you every one of the 250 odd 'moves' without making a mistake. A very good move is to secure the washing of the decks in the morning, and induce some passenger or passengers to come up on deck for a day-dawn bath from the hose. These baths become tremendously popular, for they are most refreshing. That is 'move' No. 202.

"Fastening nails, point upward, in convenient places for sitting used to be a good 'move.' This was worked in confederacy with the bedroom steward, who afterward offered to mend the clothes torn in this way, or, if the rent was a very bad one, received the damaged garment as a gift."

In the old days of packet ships, if a passenger was found standing on a forbidden part of the deck a sailor was privileged to run a chalk line around him. If the sailor could completely surround the passenger with a ring of chalk, an unwritten rule compelled the victim to pay the wily checker player 25 cents. Of course the passenger could complain to the captain, but this was likely to provoke ridicule which few persons would be willing to stand. The ruses to which sailors resort to escape duty are also part of the game of sea checkers. Some of them are exceedingly ingenious and very amusing.

Of such are the wiles of the sea checkers expert, and in this wise does he make unto himself a comfortable little surplus income. Let the traveler ponder over his past experiences upon the great deep, and recall whether or not he has ever yielded up his worldly wealth in response to some of the 252 "moves" or "sea checkers."—Detroit Free Press.

Homelike Noises.

Weary Watkins—Funny, but I've been hearin' crickets fer two or three days all the time.

Hungry Higgins—Yes, they're two of 'em in my whiskers. Don't they sound homelike and all that sort of thing.—Indianapolis Journal.

THE MIRACULOUS LAW.

Once there was a law made that every one should tell the truth. The peculiarity of this law was that the moment it was entered on the statute books every man, woman and child in the country found it impossible to speak anything except the exact truth. The effect in some cases was astonishing.

At the time when the town clerk dotted the last i and crossed the last t in this law, a good deacon had just arisen to make a speech at a Sunday-school festival on "How I Became Rich." This is the way he began:

"Children, the first time I ever traded a jack-knife I cheated. I gave the other boy a mean little knife with one broken blade, while his had two good blades and a corkscrew. When he wanted to trade back I wouldn't. I told him he ought to have looked out for himself. This is the way I have been doing all through life. I made $50,000 last week in the stock market, out of inside information about sugar. I——"

At this point the minister requested the deacon to step down.

Two days later the deacon was a ruined man, and had to begin life over again. He could not do it on the jack-knife trading principle, because he was obliged to tell the exact truth all the time. Several other leading citizens lost property in the same way, through inadvertence in answering questions. Rents in real estate offices dropped 50 per cent, and the greater part of the tenants found they could live quite nicely in houses much finer than those they had occupied, and proceeded at once to move. Several business concerns went under in the general mix-up, and only those which kept goods about which they could comfortably tell the truth had any show at all. These places increased their trade so much that they were able to employ nearly all the clerks who had been working for the other houses, so that business was really not much impeded by the change.

The legislators, however, found, to their dismay, that they could not say anything without endangering their chances for re-election, and this brought the session to an abrupt close without any more business being done.

Society was nearly as badly off. Compliments were at a discount, and quarrels were at first frequent, until the wearied denizens of ballrooms and opera boxes sought their congenial friends, to whom they could truthfully pay compliments. As nearly everybody had some particular friends, social relations were readjusted on a new basis, and though much quieter and less ambitious, were a source of real pleasure. Some husbands and wives hastily separated, but a vast number were brought together by the new arrangement and lived very happily, being quite sure that no concealment of their real feelings would be possible.

The circulation of certain newspapers decreased with alarming rapidity, but, on the whole, the newspapers suffered very little from the new arrangement, as everyone was obliged to tell the truth to the reporters or to say nothing, and so each piece of news could be relied upon. The reporters thus had time to hunt up fresh news, instead of denials of former statements, and very little that was interesting happened in that country which the newspapers did not print.

The business of the law courts being infinitely shortened, there was a chance to report the good and beautiful things which happened each day, and peace and benevolence were so prevalent in the offices that the editors seriously thought of investigating the halos and the harps.

Of course, there were some fights, due to the injured feelings of the victims of too much truth, but after misunderstandings had been explained and facts aired in court, every one knew in precisely what relation he stood to each one of his acquaintances, and it saved trouble.

The only reason why this law was ever repealed was that the inhabitants of that country became so good that they died younger and younger each year. Finally, the entire population expired in infancy, and the land became a desert, to be repeopled by a nation who had never heard of truthfulness, and who lived to be centenarians.

Waste in the Kitchen.

The waste in the poor man's kitchen by ignorance or thriftlessness is proverbial. The laboring population of this country throw away more food than would supply all the needs of the starving millions in India. An article by Prof. Atwater, of the United States Department of Agriculture, deals with this subject in an interesting way. Prof. Atwater says that "the most wasteful people in their food economy are the poor," and again he says: "The poor man's money is worst spent in the market; the poor man's food is worst cooked and served at home."

The French nation understands the arts of economy in their living. Rich and poor practice it. Understanding cookery and the nutrition in foods, they utilize everything and waste nothing. Out of what an average American family throws away in a day a French family might make palatable dishes for a day's meals. The marvelous power of recuperation of the French nation which was shown after the Franco-Prussian war, with its tremendous sacrifices, was due to French economy. In the United States, among the working population, there is an extraordinary amount of ignorance of the simple principle of kitchen economies, and hence, while there is waste of substance, there is often lack of necessary nourishment.

Prof. Atwater cites the case of a very poor widow, with a family of children, all bright and industrious and well intentioned. She was put in the way of earning a small sum of money. Of the first $2 which she received, 60 cents went for jelly, a tumblerful of which contains less nutriment than a slice of bread. In another case a laborer earns from $2.50 a week to $8, according as he has worked. His wife spent 35 cents a day for bread. Thirteen cents would have paid for flour, yeast, etc., and extra coal, had the bread been made at home. Examination showed that the family had about four-fifths of the n