

Literary Register.

Supplement
to Daily
"Observer."

VOL. V.—TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 1891.—No. 44.

Price 12½ cents.
R4 per annum.FROM CALIFORNIA VIA CANADA, TO
FLORIDA ON THE CARS:
A LECTURE (REVISED AND ENLARGED).

CALIFORNIA.

(Continued from page 339.)

There are a few more fragments to gather from my notes about California before we move eastward. I may mention that one of the nuisances of San Francisco is the number of Railway Advertising Agents. A regular business is made by the sale of railway tickets in outside offices and new arrivals are at once spotted as benighted foreigners, Guide Books, Maps, Pictures and other Advertisements being thrust upon them as they land, sit in their hotel, or walk along the streets. The opinion expressed by an American writer is that as we search the bible for truth, so may we, as a general thing, with as much certainty, look for the opposite in a Railroad Advertising Bill. One friend walking quietly to church, was accosted by a respectable Californian: "I suppose you have just arrived by steamer; you will wish to go by Niagara; if so, I can give you full information about the route; my office is round the corner," and so on, and so on!

Referring again to churches, there is of course no such thing known in America as Church of England or Church of Scotland or even the Anglican Church, while in many cities,—as I had found previously in Australia,—the aristocratic, pretentious buildings and congregations were Baptist or Methodist, and the quiet humble gatherings those of Episcopalians or Presbyterians; but as a rule a thoroughly fraternal feeling prevails, there being no arrogance or jealousies fostered by State recognition or patronage.

It was a new experience to me the first time of landing in California to hear a magnificent choir of children in a Methodist Episcopal church singing their national hymn all in praise of "the land of the free" to the same tune as our own National Anthem, and to find in addressing them afterwards that the name of Ceylon and even of British India, was almost unknown to them.

On the trip to Santa Cruz, there was but a passing reference made to the "Big Tree Grove" which almost forms a natural station (or "depôt" as it is called) for the line:—great stalwart redwood stems, whose tops look disdainfully down on the railway train and pigmy passengers. But they afford a delightful shade from the sun and are dignified enough to be worthy of all admiration. In this grove there are eighty-five "big" trees, with

a hundred or two of lower grades. The "San Lorenzo Giant," the big fellow who wears a great corset of cards that have been from time to time tacked on him by visitors, is now 286 feet in height, with a claim to 70 feet more of a topknot, blown off in a storm some years ago. He is 62 feet in circumference, measured 2 feet from the ground, is 20 feet 8 inches in diameter, and there is a straight stem of 109 feet to the first limb. The Hollow, or House Tree, as it is called, is 285 feet high, 40 feet in circumference, and by an accidental fire was burned hollow in the very early days. The cavity makes a room 16 feet by 20, and 30 feet high, and closely packed will hold fifty people. This tree is known to have been inhabited as early as 1835, and in the year 1846 Fremont, while on his way from San José to Santa Cruz and Monterey, occupied it with his twenty-five men. Subsequently he built a cabin near the grove, remains of which are still to be seen. For years this tree was used as a dwelling by a man and his wife; and the square window-hole and place chopped through for a stove pipe are evidences that they made themselves very comfortable therein. As I gazed on these giant-trees of California, some of them thus rising to close on 300 feet I could not help making mental comparisons with the giant specimens of *Eucalyptus amygdalina* I had seen in Australia 14 years previously, and the appropriateness of the poet's lines was never more apparent:—

Upreared within the azure sky,
Like temples leaf-crowned, vast and high
They firmly stand;
No breeze can sway their massive strength,
Or shake their mighty breadth and length,
By tempest fanned;
Their first of life what man shall know,
That sprung two thousand years ago?

In ages gone, those olden trees,
Perchance o'erlooked great inland seas,
Whose rippling waves
Bore on their flood some unknown race,
Who had their season, time and place,
Now in their graves;
Yet still they cast their shadows down
Like ancient warriors, grim and brown.

Kings of the forest, lords of eld,
Ere yet by our white race beheld,
Ye reigned alone;
Where great Nevada's peaks arise,
Your spreading arms beneath the skies
Were upward thrown;
As if outstretched in upper air,
Your waving hands were spread in prayer.

California is already celebrated for its schemes of irrigation and extensive works in aid of certain branches of agricultural industry. Mr. Deakin of Victoria as Special Commissioner for his Government a few years ago went over the irrigation works in this State and he found that by far the greatest of the reservoirs was situated in the Bear Valley, above Riverside and Redlands, where, by means of a wall of masonry 300 ft. long and 60 ft. high, 8,000,000,000 gallons, are preserved, owing to exceptional natural advantages, at a cost of £12,000. This will give a continuous stream of

150 cubic feet per second for 100 days the scale of supply adopted at Be... which on water at least 50,000 acres. A... lands, should is projected in south-easter... still larger reservoir sufficient to supply 100... Colorado, where water in connexion with... 0,000 acres is to be stored, capable, with... canal 80 ft. wide, 7 ft. deep, and area.*

To resume now, our journey eastwards,—
 a sleeping car clear from end to end with comfortable, even cosy seats, put on a different appearance when the intelligent negro Conductor began to make up the beds, each compartment for two passengers sitting *vis-à-vis* in the daytime, affording sleeping room for the same pair. One goes above in a recess let down from the side of the roof in which all the bedding is shut away in the daytime, while the seats below are drawn together to form the steadier, more comfortable lower bedroom. Curtained all round, nothing can be more complete than this arrangement; but the lower compartment is always preferable as the larger, airier, steadier, and the one more easily got out of and into. The great point therefore in making a long journey is to secure your Pullman ticket, with the compartment numbered, as early as possible. It is rather awkward for ladies if they should have to climb aloft even by the hand-steps provided; and therefore if a lady should be late in booking her place, she generally calculates on the gentleman, whoever he may be, giving up the better place. Two ladies travelling together make no difficulty in one being above rather than taking two lower berths in separate compartments. I have tried both upper and lower berths, but I have never enjoyed travelling more than while reclining in a lower berth some six by four feet, and pulling the window curtain aside, watching by brilliant moonlight the varied scenery of the Rocky Mountains as our train glided along at the rate of 15 miles an hour. The car is complete in itself so far as toilet rooms at each end for ladies and gentlemen respectively, are concerned, and it is almost impossible not to think, one is in a steamer saloon at sea, were it not for the landscape on each side. Sometimes, a lady and gentleman, strangers to each other have to take the corresponding berths, and occasionally very amusing accidents take place through garments getting mixed. A young lady perhaps may be heard calling out "Mamma, I have lost my skirt, it must have dropped into the gentleman's berth," or a strong-minded lady hands out an unmentionable garment saying to her neighbour above "This sir, must belong to you"! The company come to know something of each other sooner than at sea, unless they are particularly unsociable and the opportunity for making acquaintance and giving information is probably unequalled. A Californian judge who was one of the early pioneers and had strange experience in crossing the mountains as well as travelling by Panama and Cape Horn, accompanied his wife—equally experienced as traveller in the early days—part of the way, from San Francisco, the lady leaving our train during the night to take a branch line to Virginia City, the Great Nevada Mining centre, where she had property to look after.

Towards our first morning in this train at 6,000 feet elevation we passed under a continuous line

* In comparison with the above, Kalawewa tank in Ceylon with a bund averaging 60 feet high and six miles long, when full can hold in 11,921,343,750 gallons. It cost for restoring it and the channels, under successive Governors about R600,000, being estimated to irrigate 16,000 to 50,000 acres.—ED. L. R.

of snow sheds for 28 miles, absolutely necessary to keep the line clear in winter and we saw when we passed through, even in early March, the roof covered with snow.

We have now left California behind and entered the State of Nevada, with its wonderful silver mines and mountain lakes, some of them so saline that the human body floats like a cork. Otherwise the country for some hundreds of miles grows no green thing that can sustain life, the earth being alkaline and powdery, and dusty sage-brush the only vegetation, and lizards almost the only living creatures. About 100 miles square here are known as the Great American Desert—a fire seems to have swept over it and Sahara itself could not look more useless and forbidding. There are, however, wayside stations planted right through the country and stores and occasional workshops. The railway stations are invariably wooden sheds run up for a few dollars. We are stopped three times a day for meals, plain enough but with abundance of meat, bread and vegetables, even in the desert country. No dining car is provided in the Western and Rocky Mountain section of the railway.

Choice and elegant are the names that are given to mining localities in this part of the world, California and Nevada.—Chuckle-head Diggings, Gospel Gulch, Ground Hog's Glory, Gridiron Bar, Greaser's Camp, Chicken Thief Flat, Shirt Tail Canon, Petticoat Side, and Blue Belly Ravine, are among the most select that might be quoted. "When Americans strike new mines," says the *New York Herald*, "they do not sit up all night to find a fancy name for the new town. They take the first homely one that is thought of."

On the morning of the second day we are approaching the Great Salt Lake of Utah, the Central Pacific line skirting the northern shore until Ogden is reached. But here we were unexpectedly stopped quite in the country for 24 hours in consequence of a washout through melting snow. This was a very tiresome experience: 24 hours on a cold mountain plateau with nothing of interest within reach. But we learned that Madame Adeline Patti and her Operatic Company were on the other side of the gap, just as anxious to get Westward to California. Next day we passed into Ogden and saw the famous Prima Donna in her special carriage with drawing, dining and bed-room—all in the one car.

At Ogden, I left the main line, bidding good-bye to several friends and took a branch railway for 36 miles to Salt Lake City, the capital of the Mormons or Latter Day Saints. In this wonderful town of about 70,000 people, in the midst of highly cultivated country, where not long ago all was desert, I spent a couple of days. The land, has been reclaimed by means of irrigation, water being drawn readily from the surrounding hills which enclose the town as an amphitheatre; the outlay in bringing into cultivation has been about £20 an acre. The town itself has some of the widest streets (130 feet) of any city in the world with trees planted along the footpaths at the sides, but there is neither Macadam nor pavement, and the mud and slush in wet weather are horrible. The buildings too are irregular, many poor wooden affairs and altogether the feeling was one of unsubstantiality. The enormous tabernacle 250 by 150 feet by 70 feet floor to ceiling, looking outside like a vast beehive with 20 doors, is substantial enough and the acoustic properties inside are wonderful. We were sent by the Irish caretaker to the very farthest limit of the tier of amphitheatrical seats, but his slightest whisper was borne along and a pin dropped on the platform cushion made itself heard! May is the month of the great gathering of Mormondom from the remotest verge of

the State and then the tabernacle is crammed, with over 10,000 people; while to relieve the heat, in the very centre is placed a fountain with a large wide basin to receive the water, and this is always filled with flowers at these summer gatherings. There joined myself and friend in entering the tabernacle, a very objectionable specimen of the British cockney eye-glass tourist who superciliously poopohed everything pointed out and provoked the guide almost beyond endurance. Very often in my journey through America, I was asked how it was that British visitors from India and China with their affable social ways, differed so much from the haw-haw, stony, staring, reserved specimens of our countrymen who came direct from the old country!

Outwardly in Salt Lake City there is nothing to mark the peculiar Institution of the Mormons save the tabernacle and such signboards as the "Zion Co-operative Store," "Holiness to the Lord" under an eye. Indeed the town is now freely overrun by "gentiles" and as the American Government is determined to suppress polygamy,* already there have been large defections from the Mormon ranks, while the younger generation especially the women are against its continuance. But in the country districts, the Mormons are still numerous and bigoted. Miss Kate Field of Boston, a well-known American writer, who was acting as a "Special Correspondent" at Salt Lake City, told me how in one of her exploring visits she was received at a farmhouse where the owner sat down with over a dozen women round the table who had been working in his fields and were nominally his wives, principally Norwegians. Miss Field got into conversation and learned of much discontent and unhappiness. But when she visited the farm another day, only one woman was visible, the rest had been hid away. So in Salt Lake City, no Mormon openly lives with more than one woman, and two United States Senators whom I met in the hotel were of opinion that in a few years they would be able to clear their country of this foul blot on its social and moral system. The Senators were applying a franchise law by which no professed polygamist could be registered as a voter, and in return for much information given to me they were greatly interested in learning what had been done in Ceylon to suppress polyandry and negatively by education, etc., to encourage the dying out of polygamy.

Before leaving Mormondom let me give the impressions of another traveller, Dr. Macaulay of the Religious Tract Society:—

At Ogden, one thousand and thirty-two miles from Omaha, and nine hundred miles from San Francisco, we find ourselves at the entrance of the valley rendered famous throughout the world by the Mormon settlement. It consists of a broad open plain, running far up into the Wasatch Range, a part of the Rocky Mountain chain. The Great Salt Lake, from which it takes its name, lies at the northern end of the valley, near to Ogden. Its dimensions are variously stated. Those given by Hepworth Dixon, "a hundred and fifty miles long by a hundred broad," are clearly exaggerated. A hundred and twenty-five miles in length by fifty in breadth are probably nearer the truth. Like the Dead Sea it is so saturated by salt that no fish can live in it, and its specific gravity is so great that it is scarcely possible for the human body to sink. It resembles the Dead Sea further in having no exit, the contents of the streams which flow into it being carried off by evaporation alone. About sixty miles farther up the valley is the Utah Lake, whose waters are pure and sweet. The two are joined together by the River Jordan, a turbid and turbulent stream. The Mormons lay great stress

upon the resemblance between the hydrography of their territory and that of Palestine—their sweet-water lake, river, and salt lake bearing a curious similarity to the Biblical Sea of Galilee, Jordan, and Dead Sea.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the glory and beauty of the scenery of the Salt Lake Valley. "The scene, from whatever point of view, it may be taken, is one of the half-dozen pure and perfect landscapes which the earth can show." My first visit was shortly before sunset in early summer. The waters of the lake, along whose shores the railway runs for about forty miles, were exquisitely clear, breaking upon the beach in white foam. Mountains on other side, many of them rising to a height of eleven thousand feet, were crowned with snow. The setting sun poured a flood of golden light into the valley. The air was so bright that the most distant objects stood out to view with a marvellous distinctness. The soil was gay with innumerable flowers. We passed smiling homesteads, surrounded by orchards and gardens, meadows as green as those of the Emerald Isle, fields of corn as carefully cultivated as those of England. Then the city came in view, with a foreground of lake and pasture land, a background of mountains. It has the appearance of a vast garden, dotted here and there with houses. The streets, each one hundred and thirty-two feet wide, are lined with shade trees, and a stream of water runs between the roadway and the side walks. Excepting in the main business thoroughfares, each house stands in its own separate inclosure, which is commonly planted with fruit trees, reminding me, at first sight, of Damascus, which is hidden in the same way by the orchards and gardens that surrounded it.

(To be continued.)

CLEARING THE UNIVERSE.

In one issue of a newspaper the other day we remarked three paragraphs. The first announced that "the most prized of our orchids are reported to be rapidly disappearing from their native places"; the second, that "the only hope of preserving the fur-seal from extermination is said to be to stay their slaughter for six or seven years"; the third, that "nearly all the principal animals indigenous to the United States are either substantially extinct, or in immediate danger of becoming so." These are the words of Professor Langley, head of the National Zoological Park at Washington. Three such statements, published side by side, as it were, upon authority, give food for thought. Incontrovertible in themselves, their significance might be strengthened by endless illustrations. As regards orchids, Messrs. Stevens announced last month, at a public sale, that the Government of Ceylon has forbidden the gathering of a certain species—*Dendrobium McCarthya*—for an indefinite time, to preserve it from extinction. Another, the loveliest of all, as some think, *Lælia elegans*, would have vanished from this lower sphere had not some few specimens found a lodgment on cliffs absolutely inaccessible, where the Indians eye them with vain longing. Of the grand variety of *Lælia purpurata*, which enthusiasts call the "true," not a plant remains in its native seat. The commonest of fine orchids half a century ago were *Cattleya's Mossia* and *Triana*, as we perceive by the great quantity still surviving in our greenhouses. At this time, they are classed among the rarest in Caraccas. The best variety *Odontoglossum crispum* was found along the Pacho River in such profusion that early collectors pronounced the supply inexhaustible; the *Journal des Orchidées* states that "only a few plants are now left." Not to prolong the list, it may be declared that every species, in every part of the world, for

* This was in 1884.

which there is a great demand, begins to fail. They cannot be replaced unless Government interfere—and vigorously too, for the profits of smuggling, while they last, would be enormous. Orchids will become a royal fashion, indeed, when they cease to be weeds in their native home. Among the hundreds of skilful horticulturists who have tried again and again in the last half century, but one has been successful in raising any member of the great *Odontoglossum* family from seed; this happy individual is M. Leroy, gardener to M. Edmond de Rothschild, and his plants have not yet flowered. Other genera less intractable demand five to sixteen years of most careful cultivation before they produce a bloom. Which means, in brief, that the grower would ask their weight in gold for his nurselings.

But orchids are commonly regarded, even now, as luxuries in which the general public has no interest. That is a grievous mistake, but we may let it pass. The public feels an interest, however, in fish, and that product also is threatened. Year by year the trawlers seek new ground, and still the price rises. They have cleared our coasts so far that fishermen themselves, the least nervous of mortals, and not the most intelligent, demand protection, to save their industry from collapse. It is not worth while to speak of oysters. All the world knows that our famous "natives" have vanished, and miscellaneous foreign species occupy their beds. For the daily supply of lobsters we depend on Scandinavia eked out by America; how long these will last is a matter for calculation. Such inland waters as are open to the public have been cleared of big fish long ago, and the continual replenishments scarcely keep pace with the multiplication of anglers. So desperate we grow that perilous designs of acclimatization are welcomed. The black bass of America, the silurus of Southern Europe, will be turned down shortly in our narrow streams and tiny lakes, where assuredly, if they themselves give sport they will kill off all the natives. A pastime which some of us remember with especial delight, "tickling," or "grappling," is forbidden by law; with reason enough under the circumstances. Like its rival in the memory of veterans, birds'-nesting, it had to be suppressed for the "preservation of the species." Country lads find more blameless sports now, perhaps. So we must hope. But the pursuit of Lepidoptera is not for all, and there are still myriads of boys who can rarely enjoy a game at cricket in the holidays. They suffer by the clearing out of wild creatures which have amused every generation of English youth. And the farmers suffer also. Eagles, kites, buzzards, and bustards have gone. Owls and hawks are following. While we write, Parliament is debating whether or no it is worth while to arrest the extermination of hares.

The romance of the universe will be eclipsed when wild beasts disappear; and the time draws on. Professor Langley, whom we have quoted, makes a strong appeal for the preservation of such as still survive in North America. May it be successful; but we fear. Close seasons may be appointed, and hunting parties may be forbidden. But the area of cultivation will spread, and settlers will still be armed with weapons more and more and more deadly. The same process is going on everywhere. Startling it is to learn, for those who knew South Africa but twenty years ago, how far a man must travel beyond the Orange River to find even springbok—an antelope which he remembers covering the veldt in thousands as he drove northward from the Karoo. The zebra alone appears to be actually lost; but all other species which were prized in Cape

Colony are represented by a few specimens here and there. Government is roused, and some landowners preserve strictly. But as men multiply they will have land, and they cannot be prevented from shooting game to eat. Already there is an agitation to do away with the Reserve at Uitenage, where the last survivors of the elephant in South Africa find a narrow home. It may succeed presently; but before those pachyderms vanish they may also have outlived their kindred beyond the frontier. As peace is established in Central Africa population will grow, and in defence of their crops the natives must wage war upon the most destructive of all animals—putting ivory and "sport" aside. The hippopotamus, the rhinoceros, which do not seek the shelter of dense forests, will even predecease the elephant. Buffalo will last longer, no doubt; but the antelopes, all of which haunt pasture-land, and are all food, will not hold their own so long. And the great felines must go with them.

It is the same in Asia. Elephants have been preserved for a good many years now in the Indian and Cingalese jungles, where they still exist. But these jungles narrow continually. The Census returns published a few days ago show an increase of twenty-two million souls, the vast majority of whom belong to the agricultural class. They encroach on the forests and the waste lands year by year. It is cultivation, not slaughter, which thins wild beasts. There is a pathetic passage in Sir Samuel Barker's recent work. He tells of a visit paid—in 1878, if we remember rightly—to the hunting grounds of his youth in Ceylon. Not a head of game could he find in districts which teemed with deer and buffalo thirty years before. Thirty years hence, so far as we can see, big game will be extinct in Ceylon.

It is all for the best, no doubt. Wild beasts have become a sort of anachronism all over a world full of beasts that are not ostensibly wild. But something of interest will vanish from human life when they are lost. Increase and multiply and replenish the earth is a divine command, but in fulfilling our destiny faster and faster, we seem to be exterminating the beautiful. Nor is it by any means assured that Nature will not exact compensation. But a month ago one would have declared with absolute confidence that the extinction of alligators would be a blessing unmixed. Not a redeeming virtue of any kind do those brutes possess, we thought, and all who know them had been rejoicing to hear that the demand for alligator leather threatened their existence. But now we learn that the waning of their numbers is spreading panic in Florida. The musk rat increases so fast that riverside plantations have been ruined. And the danger grows more serious month by month. An act has been hurried through the Legislature, imposing a fine of one hundred dollars on the man who wilfully kills an alligator, under any circumstances, during the next three years. No stronger instance could be found of the peril that attends human interference with the system of Nature.—*Saturday Review.*

ELEPHANT-CATCHING OPERATIONS IN MADRAS.

The success that has attended its elephant-catching operations has induced the Madras Forest Department to extend them. The operations were inaugurated in North Malabar in 1884, since when the capture of elephants has been confined to North and South Malabar and South Coimbatore. Thirty-one elephants have been captured, of which

17 are now working; one escaped; one was sold, and the remainder died. Of the last the death of four are attributed to the gross ill-treatment and neglect of the Forest subordinates, who have been brought to task and dismissed the service, 16 of the elephants were caught in North Malabar, 12 in South Malabar, and 3 in South Coimbatore. More elephants would have been taken in South Coimbatore, where operations only began last year, but for the exceptional dryness of the season, owing to the failure of the South-West and North-East monsoons. The operations have been carried out under the supervision of the Forest Officers, Messrs. Morgan, Hadfield and Porter, and great credit is due to them. The pit system is the one employed for the capture of elephants, for it is considered by these officers superior to the khedda system, there being little or no risk of injury if sufficient precautions are taken and reliable men are told off for the work. The estimated cost of the capture of an elephant is about R250, viz., actual cost of capturing R50; mahout for 5 months, while under training, R60; cavity R35; fodder and rations, R75; supervision and sundries R30. The value of the elephants at present possessed by the Department is estimated at R10,500. After capture and removal from the pit unnecessary severity is avoided, and the animals are trained, being kindly treated and receiving as rewards jaggery, sugar-cane or other delicacies. In about five months the training is complete and the elephants put to work with others in dragging timber etc. As there is a certain amount of personal risk incurred in the work of capture, rewards not exceeding R100 are proposed to be granted to the subordinates employed for each elephant captured and properly trained and which is in good condition at the end of six months.

In this connection it will not be uninteresting to summarise what a correspondent, who signs himself "Kurumber," writes to the *Asian*. He prefaces his remarks by referring to the report that Admiral Fremantle, while at Trincomalie, went on a shooting expedition to Vellar plain, 15 miles from Mutur and there bagged two elephants, "a dame and her baby." Can, he asks, this horrible tale be true? If it be so, all he can say is that "some people have curious ideas of what constitutes sport. The wanton butchery of harmless animals that are perfectly useless to the man who shoots them, and very often to every one else, is simple cruelty, and all true sportsmen, who are humane and do not needlessly inflict pain on dumb beasts, can only shudder at such doings." "Kurumber" should not have commented on the Admiral's sport without having made himself acquainted with all the facts of the case. Admiral Fremantle, we may mention, had shot the female when its baby, which had at first bolted, turned round and charged the Admiral and his party, and in self-defence the former shot the innocent suckling. That is all. "Kurumber" then refers to the reprehensible conduct of the Ceylon Government in allowing every big-wig and globe trotter who visits Ceylon to murder the elephants without restriction. This is not, we believe, a fact, for the Government is just as anxious to preserve these mammoths of the forest as "Kurumber." The Madras Government then comes in for a share of this angry correspondent's attack. We will quote what he says, merely remarking that if the Mysore Government wishes to exterminate the elephants in the wholesale manner attributed to it by "Kurumber" it has every right to do so, as far as we can see:—

"Here, in Southern India, the Madras Government looks placidly on whilst a feudatory State (Mysore)

carries on the extermination in a more wholesale manner. For years the wild elephants have been most carefully protected by Government, apparently in order that the Mysore Government should reap the entire profit by catching and selling the animals which the Madras Government has bred for them, and this with the assistance of a trained officer lent by the Supreme Government! It is just the same thing as if you possessed a large and well stocked game preserve, and then assisted your neighbour, with the loan of your game-keeper to shoot down in his small holding the game that you bred and preserved for his benefit! The folly of the Madras Government in looking on whilst lakhs of rupees worth of its elephants are being captured wholesale by the Mysore people with the help of the Government of India, is beyond ordinary comprehension. When the Mysore Government has caught all the elephants belonging to Madras perhaps the Supreme Government will wake up to the fact that they have no more elephants to preserve! Then I presume they will purchase elephants and turn them loose to restock the forest! Our present Governor, Lord Wenlock, is however a very different man to his predecessors, and he has only to discover the terrible damage that is being done to counteract it as soon as possible."—*M. Mail*.

AN ANCIENT VISIT TO ADAM'S PEAK.

Halrat Hájí Hámid Sáhíb leaving the island [Mahal-dib] accompanied by the great sages named Halrat Yusub Sáhíb, Sayid Muhammad Yusub, and Muhammad Yusub, set out on a visit to Bává Adam's mount in *Saiján* which is called by the name Japal Mahpat Nuti and arrived at an island. Halrat Shamsutta Purésuvaliyulla, being one day desirous of eating fish, summoned unto him some of the fishes in the ocean, asking for fire from the passers-by. As he failed to get it from them he summoned the sun, and, roasting the fish in his rays, ate them. The inhabitants of the island unable to bear the heat of the sun prostrating themselves at the feet of Halra Shamsutta Purésu Sabib entreated him with tears to allay the heat. He had compassion on them and sent the sun back to his abode, and collecting together the bones of the fish he had eaten restored them to life as before, by the power of Allakutta Allá and made them again enter the sea. The islanders seeing this went away praising him greatly. Halrat Mirán Sahib visited Kapurumu—parak where Halrat Shamsutta Purésuvaliyulla who had done many more acts like this is laid to rest and having said a Fátihah went to the sea-shore of that island and looking out and not seeing a ship wherein he might set out Halrat, Sáhíb pointing to a big granite stone on the shore, made Halrat Sayid Yásub Sahib and the others sit thereon and himself taking his seat on it asked them all to close their eyes and then to open them. When they opened their eyes they were rejoiced to see that they had crossed the sea and were on the south coast at Galle. Afterwards departing thence they walked along seeing on their way many "uncanny" things (விபரீதம்) and when they sighted the mount of Atam Sápiyulla praised the Mighty God and ascending the summit of the Mount stayed there a few days visiting the spots that were to be visited and saying their Fátihah.

[Translated from a Tamil biography of the Halrat Miran, Sáhíb, *Kalarathu Miran Sakipu Andavarkal Kávana Saritratram, Karaikkál*]

A CONDUCTOR'S ENGLISH—A
CURIOSITY.

[Looking through some old papers, I came across the enclosed. I think it can't easily be beaten.—*Cor.*]

R ———, 21st July 1878.

Sir,—I Beg the honor of inform Master, a Splendid Cow last time Send by Mr. R. W ———, in grazing in the meadow, has fallen through the hill, an dangerously wounded, Three bones hurted out of the ribs, and the horns gone to pieces, and in a state of unbelief of living the poor animal, though I am in physic it from yesterday, on or about 2 o'Clock. While this happened.—I am your Most Obedient Servant
S ——— K ———
Conductor.

FIFTY YEARS IN CEYLON.*

That an autobiography edited by the daughter of the writer should be encumbered with some superfluous details was inevitable. To an affectionate and near relative, at a distance of time, no incidents appear trivial or petty. They are thought to illustrate self-reliance, independence, and other valuable qualities. Like the Irish orator's speech, the life seems "all pith." It is very hard for any of the family to play the part of Aristarchus, and the result is that conversations about nothing in particular, little episodes in barrack-life, and official letters about employment and promotion, swell this volume beyond the margin of what has been termed legitimate literary tumefaction. We say this more by way of regret than of censure. For Major Skinner did a good deal of hard duty worth record. The son of a soldier, he entered the Ceylon Rifles at the age of fifteen; spent nearly half a century in that colony; lived in the jungles; shot all kinds of game from the snipe to the elephant; figured as principal in one duel, and very nearly received his "quietus" while acting as second in another affair of the same kind; was commended and trusted by Sir Edward Barnes, who was twice successful Governor of Ceylon and also Commander-in-Chief in India; owed not a step to favour or jobbery; and retired on a pension of 1,000*l.* a year in 1867. Now, as Major Skinner was never in action as far as we can see, and happened to be at home on furlough during the rebellion of 1846-7, in the administration of the late Lord Torrington; and as, moreover, Ceylon presents few of those splendid opportunities for active work and distinction which India offers both to the soldier and the civilian, it may be asked how his career justifies the publication of the autobiography which is ushered into the world with a modest preface by the Bojen Professor of Sanscrit? The answer to this is simple. Major Skinner was in the truest sense a pioneer of civilization. His style and language are quite in keeping with his character. We are interested in his adventures because they are told without puffery and exaggeration; and he gives us a glimpse of what Ceylon was in its infancy, twenty years after we had been considerate enough to relieve the Dutch of such an encumbrance, and only three years subsequent to the deposition of the native King of Kandy in 1815.

There is a well-known Greek legend that the Athenians, as descendants from Hephæstus, were famous as road-makers; and their achievements in this respect are commemorated in an iambic verse made up of three words, which is the admiration of all scholars and candidates for the Porson Prize.

* *Fifty Years in Ceylon*. An Autobiography. By the late Major Thomas Skinner, C.M.G., Commissioner of Public Works, Ceylon. Edited by his daughter, Annie Skinner. With a Preface by Sir Monier Monier-Williams, K.C.I.E. London and Calcutta: Allen & Co.

Major Skinner was emphatically the κλειθο-ποιος of Ceylon. He was for a time employed in the Survey, but his chief title to the respect of Englishmen and natives is that he opened up the jungle; connected Colombo the sea-port with Kandy the old capital; and did for the whole island what the immortal General Wade did for the Highlands of Scotland. When he first began work there was hardly a cart-track in the plains. Travellers threaded the jungle-paths in hot and uncomfortable palanquins. Guns, when wanted in any expedition, had to be dragged by main force over sands and rocks. Supplies and ammunition were put on the shoulders of the men. It took a traveller weeks to get on foot from Colombo on the coast to Kandy in the hills. The sanatorium of Newera Ellia was inaccessible. The interior of the island was as unknown as darkest Africa. Nobody dreamt of plantations of coffee, tea, or quinine. By the exertions of Major Skinner a complete revolution was effected after 1820, but mainly between 1840 and 1860. Rivers were bridged. More than 2,550 miles of good road were opened for carriages, and a mail-coach, properly horsed and driven by native coachmen, ran along the sea-shore between Galle and Colombo, and mounted 2,000 feet from the latter place to Kandy. It is a singular fact and one which admits of neither denial nor palliation, that some of our early administrators in the East have been very slow to recognize the vital importance of roads. In one large Province of India forty years ago, there were not a dozen miles of road over which a carriage and horses could be driven during the rainy season of five months. Judicial courts were built, schools were erected, to which between June and October suitors and scholars might be conveyed by boats or where they waded through mud and slush. Ceylon was even in a worse condition. The rainy season was prolonged, the rainfall excessive, and the vegetation dense. In order to open up whole Provinces, to render it possible for troops to get to Trincomalee from the west coast without going nearly all round the island by sea, Major Skinner had to train labourers, to ascend ridges of hills and clear the jungle before he could take an observation, to live on biscuits, tea, and lean fowls—the latter not always procurable—to brave the chances of fever and dysentery, to suffer from drought at one season and to be half-drowned at another. The constitution of the author must have been exceptionally sound and strong to have enabled him to stand these vicissitudes of climate. When a very young officer he was nearly bled to death by an ignorant doctor, on the principles of Sangrado, and dosed with calomel sufficient to impair the constitution of an elephant. He himself tried the former remedy on a huge sergeant of infantry and, strange to add, saved him, apparently, from dying of jungle fever. He practised walking and running without shoes, till he could make a march of sixty miles, barefooted, over jagged rocks. He amazed his patron Sir Edward Barnes, by leaving his station at 2 P.M., riding twenty-three miles to Negombo, making a ground plan for some barracks to be erected in the old fort at that place, and then returning in time to dine with his Excellency the same evening. Not very long after this feat he won a bet of 50*l.* by riding fifty miles on a dashing little Arab horse, in the dark, between eleven at night and six o'clock the next morning. At this time he weighed very little more than eight stone. He was an enthusiastic sportsman, but with the exception of one remarkable encounter with an elephant, which he was fortunate enough as a lad to despatch with a single bullet from an old flint and steel musket, we have not to complain of a plethora of oft-told anecdotes. Tigers, it is well known, are not found in Ceylon; nor, we think, the black partridge, though deer, jungle-fowl, and water-fowl are still abundant. One experience of elephant life is new. The author determined to watch a large herd of these animals as they resorted by night to bathe and drink in a small tank, which was almost the only water available for miles. It was bright moonlight, and Major Skinner, having extinguished his camp fires and sent

away his followers, took up his post in the branches of a huge tree. In all probability the leader of the herd scented danger, for two hours elapsed, though close at hand, before it ventured into the tank, followed by males, females, and calves. When this mass of animal life, *studio gestive lavandi*, was disporting itself and almost drinking the tank dry, the snapping of a twig put them to flight "like a herd of frightened deer." Major Skinner was a believer in the possibility of neutralizing the poison of the ticpolonga snake, which is thought to be more deadly than the cobra of India. He vouches for the fact that he cured two men bitten—the one in the arm and the other in the foot—by gashing the wound with a penknife and blowing it up with gunpowder. A sceptic might suggest that possibly the snake may not have been the ticpolonga at all, but one of the harmless sort common in Eastern jungles.

A little variety was given to a somewhat monotonous life by a trip to the Straits Settlements and a visit to the island of Java. Singapore seemed a capital instance of the benefits of Free-trade. In 1822 there was not a decent house on the island in which an Englishman could live. There were only a few native huts. By the year 1830, the date of Skinner's visit, Singapore had become an emporium for the whole of the Malay Archipelago, and nearly four hundred vessels were riding at anchor in the harbour. The English officials and merchants on the island still kept up the old and inconvenient practice of dining at three o'clock, or the very hottest time of the day, and doing no work afterwards. We notice here a curious error. Major Skinner's visit to the Straits and to Java is more than once stated to have taken place in 1830. At Batavia he has a conversation with the Dutch Governor about the French Revolution (of *Juillet*), the news of which had just been received by his Excellency with regret, as boding no good to Continental States in general and to Holland in particular. About the same time he hears of the death of the King of England, whom he calls William IV. Obviously this is a mistake for George IV. But on the principles now applied to the dissection of the Homeric Poems, this chapter must be a modern adaptation by a different hand. In the language of advanced critics this would be so transparent as not to admit of a shade of doubt.

In Java Major Skinner was hospitably treated: driven all over the island in a carriage, with four small ponies or splendid greys; and saddle-horses to ride, and aides-de-camp to attend on him; dined at five p.m.; and witnessed the extraordinary spectacle of a Chief Justice having to do duty, and mount guard as one of the Skutiri, like any ordinary citizen. The Skutiri were a sort of militia of horse and foot, raised during an insurrection of native chiefs which it took the Dutch five years to suppress. In the main object of his mission Major Skinner was not successful. Sir Edward Barnes had deputed him to obtain permission from the Dutch authorities for some time-expired soldiers, presumably of the Ceylon Rifles or other local corps, to return to Java.* This, after the usual amount of smooth phrases and absurd excuses, was refused by the Dutch Governor, who, appropriately enough, bore the name of Vanden Bosch. The aims and scope of Netherlandic Colonial policy were soon detected by Major Skinner, as it has been by subsequent travellers. Java is governed entirely in the interest of the Dutch, and not in that of the natives. The latter are compelled to labour for no remuneration, each man for sixty days, on public works. Coffee and other staple products are sold at rates fixed by the Government, and, practically, are monopolies of the State.

The remarks on the rebellion, or rising, of 1846-7† are

* An extraordinary mistake: the object of Major Skinner's Mission being to obtain permission to recruit for the native force in Ceylon. The Dutch would not permit this and it was against their wishes that some time-expired men were landed at Batavia.—*Ed. L. R.*

† Of 1848.—*Ed. L. R.*

not without their value. Major Skinner had just gone home when it occurred, but it caused him no surprise. He had himself been employed in putting down a previous small rising in 1835, and had then arrested a native chief who, it seems, was guilty of nothing but hard drinking. The whole affair, indeed, is dismissed by the author with contempt. The later rising of 1847 was more serious, and the news caused some consternation in England, when coupled with the announcement that the authorities had found it necessary to "hang a priest in his robes." The moral British public immediately went into fits, and even the sensible and practical Sir R. Peel, in the House of Commons, was not proof against the infection. It was afterwards explained that the culprit was merely led to execution in the ordinary yellow garment worn every day by all Buddhist priests, and this was thought more decent than the alternative of hanging him *in puris naturalibus*. The origin of the rebellion is ascribed by Major Skinner to want of proper knowledge of the feelings and habits of the native population; to a sudden decline in the legitimate influence of the native chiefs and headmen; to the introduction of a system of governing the very opposite to that which had proved so successful in India, where the population is controlled, disciplined, and guided by Magistrate-Collectors; and to the migration of low Singhalese from the coast into the interior. At the same time, it never occurred to the author that these evils would be remedied and that future discontent would be prevented by the establishment of any representative Government. We have no doubt that in a larger field Major Skinner would have risen to eminence, and, as it is, these memorials of a practical, quiet, and very useful life in a Crown colony ought to find readers at home and imitators abroad.—*Saturday Review*.

NOTES ON MR. SIDDI LEBBE'S
NEW BOOK:

THE "HIDAYATUL CASIMIYA."

(Published by request.)

The want of education among the Mahomedans and the evils consequent thereon, are now engaging the serious attention of the Government and the public. This unfortunate state of things is due to the peculiar notions of these religionists in regard to their education. It is a well known fact that the Mahomedans of Ceylon, and perhaps everywhere else, do not send their children to any other school in the first instance than one where the reading of Arabic is taught. Their education therefore must begin with Arabic, and unless a child is first taught Arabic, he generally remains uneducated for the rest of his life. If the present system of teaching Arabic is examined, it will be found to be extremely faulty, for it takes about five years to teach reading alone, during the whole of which time the children are made to remain at school more than 8 or 9 hours every day, except a part of Friday. It is no wonder that after such an amount of drudgery, without the slightest improvement of the mind, the pupil should acquire an aversion to the study of anything else. The failure of all efforts up to the present time to educate the Moors must be traced chiefly to this cause.

Mr. Siddi Lebbe, the well-known Proctor of Kandy, purposes to introduce a new and rational system of teaching, so that those who adopt it might be able to read, understand and speak Arabic. The system will completely obviate the necessity of devoting so long a time as five years to the teaching of reading alone, and will help to utilise that time, or even much less time while teaching the pupil to read, towards the acquisition of knowledge of the language itself. The pupil will thus be able to read and understand books, and also to speak Arabic with ease and fluency. Mr. Sidde Lebbe intends to publish a

series of progressive school books in Arabic and Tamil (the latter being the language by means of which he proposes to teach the former) based on the most approved English systems, consisting of a first, second, third, fourth and fifth book, which, while teaching the pupil to read, will at the same time acquaint him with the peculiarities of the language, in connection with the meanings of words and phrases. The author also intends to publish a work on Arithmetic, one on Geography and a third on Arabic Grammar in three parts.

One difficulty he meets with, at the very threshold, in the way of introducing these works is the want of teachers to carry out his system. As a means of overcoming this difficulty, he has published a preliminary work in Arabic and Tamil (it forms no part of the works just referred to) which will enable those who are already able to read Arabic to learn to speak that language in a comparatively short time. For long years, Tamil has been the language of the Ceylon Mahomedans, leading to the idea that the race is of Tamil origin. This knowledge of Tamil has been utilised, Arabic characters being used to spell the Tamil words whose equivalent in Arabic is also expressed. This work is somewhat similar in plan to the method adopted by Ollendorff for teaching to read, write and speak a language in 6 months.

In the introduction to this work Mr. Siddi Lebbe points out that it is easier to read Arabic than Tamil or English. In Tamil there are seven vowels not counting the corresponding long or the short vowels, and in English there are about 13 vowels which are represented by only 5 characters, each of which, as well as each consonant, has a multiplicity of sounds. Letters too in English are employed without being sounded, as in *through*, a word which has only three sounds, but is spelt with seven letters. In Arabic, on the contrary, there are only 3 vowels and each consonant represents one sound, and with certain rare exceptions all letters are sounded. Consequently, he argues that it is easier to read Arabic than Tamil or English. But the system in use, which he shows was adopted several centuries ago from the Hindostanee, is so faulty, that it takes, as already stated 5 years to impart a knowledge of mere reading, while with a good and rational system, it would not take more than a few months.

And again, those few who wish to prosecute their studies beyond mere reading, and desire to acquire a knowledge of the language itself, begin first to learn Grammar on the native system, and read a work consisting of 8 books, which takes about 4 or 5 years to go through. At the end of that time, what they possess is only a rudimentary knowledge of the rules of grammar, without any knowledge of the language itself. Another 4 or 5 years are taken up in reading certain religious works, and after all this long course of study they acquire some knowledge of religion, but none of general literature, Arithmetic or Geography, in the latter two of which subjects they have no books to use in this country. The books which Mr. Siddi Lebbe proposes to publish will lead the pupil to an intelligent acquaintance with the language; and he is very sanguine that if his system be adopted, the language of his ancestors will become the spoken language of the Moors. Most of his intelligent countrymen have promised to co-operate with him, and this makes him expect the most satisfactory results for his labours, in which we heartily wish him all success.—*Examiner*.

"HISTORY OF COFFEE." MR. PETER BROHIER'S TRANSLATION.

Kandy, 18th May 1891.

To the Editor of the "Ceylon Literary Register."

DEAR SIR.—I was glad to see in the *Register* the translation of the "History of Coffee" from the Dutch of Valentyn. This translation was made, about 35 years ago, by Mr. Peter Brohier (the father of the

present assistant Auditor-General), who was then a retired public servant and had been chief clerk of the revenue branch of the Audit Office. Mr. Brohier, (who was the son of the late Captain John Brohier Provincial Judge of Puttalam,* was a good Dutch scholar and an accomplished musician. After his retirement from the Government service, he spent much of his time in translating Dutch works. The translation in question was originally a contribution to one of your contemporaries. The planters of the day and others were much pleased with the work, and a leading European gentleman wrote to the translator, that apart from the merits of the translation, he was quite delighted with the humorous summaries which headed each chapter; and that above all, he was charmed with the little Turkish poem which was rendered so felicitously into English. This contribution afterwards appeared in a Pamphlet form, and at the suggestion of Mr. Hew Stewart, the facetious editor of the "Times" a copy of it was forwarded to Mr. Alexander Brown, the Secretary of the Planters' Association, whose attention was called to the fact that a preparation very much like "Pale Ale" might be prepared from the coffee husk or shell. And the worthy Scotch Secretary, whilst thanking the learned translator for the copy sent to the Association, informed him, that he did not believe the planters were just then prepared to try the experiment suggested, as the coffee berry "pure and simple" was paying them hand over fist.

—Yours faithfully,
SIGMA.

* Captain Brohier, the Provincial Judge of Puttalam, wrote the "Historical Account of Ceylon" which appeared in the *Ceylon Literary Register* of last year.

Advertisements.

GUIDE TO COLOMBO, With a Map. To which is added a Compendium of Useful Information for the Traveller and Resident. By G. J. A. SKEEN. *Second Edition*. R1.50; postage 5c.

Publications from the "Observer" Press DURING 1890-91.

(In Jan. 1890.)—TEA CULTURE AND PREPARATION: Practical Questions and Answers, by PLANTERS. Cash R1, credit R1.25; postage 2c.

(In Feb.)—ALL ABOUT ALOE AND RAMIE FIBRES, DYE and TANNING STUFFS, DRUGS &c. Cash R1, credit R1.25; postage 2c.

(In May.)—TAXATION IN CEYLON: with special Reference to the GRAIN TAXES. Cash R2.75, credit R3.50; postage 14c.

(In June.)—REVIEW OF SIR ARTHUR GORDON'S ADMINISTRATION OF CEYLON 1883-90) by "Kosmos."—50c. including postage.

(In July.)—"FERGUSON'S CEYLON HANDBOOK AND DIRECTORY for 1890-91."—R10; postage 58c.

(In September.)—GENERAL DIRECTORY OF ADRESSES—R1.

(In October.)—HANSARD 1889-90 R5; postage 16c.

(In Feb.)—MR. GRUBB'S SERMONS. R1.25

(In March)—TRIP to Labugama. 50c.

(In April)—Trip from Colombo to Nuwara Eliya via Jaffna, Batticaloa and Badulla &c., and to Anuradhapura. R1.

In the Press: Some Volumes and Pamphlets.

EXCHANGE and Freight Calculator, by H. W. De Vos. 1 large Vol. R12.50 cash, R15 credit, postage 26c.

"OBSERVER" BOOKSTORE.

March 2nd st, 1891.

Printed and Published by A. M. & J. FERGUSON.