

CHOLERA TREATMENT.—Dr. Yvert, who claims to have had a large experience in the treatment of Asiatic cholera, reports that by the use of bichloride of mercury he has been able to reduce the mortality from 66 to 20 per cent. He also says, that, used as a prophylactic in those who have recently arrived in a region infected with cholera, it has in every instance warded off the disease.

YELLOW-FEVER IN FLORIDA.—From the best information we have been able to obtain, the reported case of yellow-fever at Sanford, Fla., was a true case. The patient, a Mrs. Dumont, wife of a boarding-house keeper, died April 20.

INSOMNIA.—Insomnia is an affection which is trying to both physician and patient alike, and many are the remedies which have been recommended for its cure. The latest of these is the peanut, eaten *ad libitum* just before retiring. A member of the clergy reports success with the peanut after having tried other means without result.

TOBACCO-SMOKING.—We have recently given the views of different physicians as to the effects of tobacco-smoking upon health, and have also referred to experiments bearing upon the question of the antiseptic power of tobacco-fumes. Additional evidence on these points is constantly accumulating. Dr. Hajek of Vienna has declared that smokers are less liable to diphtheria than non-smokers in the ratio of 1 to 2.8; and Dr. Schiff says that smoking is forbidden in the bacteriological laboratories, because it is known to hinder the development of bacteria in the various culture-media.

ACTION OF ELECTRIC LIGHT ON THE EYES.—A new disease, called photo-electric ophthalmia, is described as due to the continual action of the electric light on the eyes. The patient is awakened in the night by severe pain around the eye, accompanied with excessive secretion of tears. An oculist of Cronstadt is said to have had thirty patients thus affected under his care in the last ten years.

BOOK-REVIEWS.

Physiological Notes on Primary Education and the Study of Language. By MARY PUTNAM JACOBI, M.D. New York and London, Putnam. 12°. \$1.

"If literature were the business of life, or if, as was at one time supposed, education meant nothing else but acquaintance with literature, there would be some logic in the extraordinary prominence habitually assigned in education to the study of modes of expression. But from the modern standpoint, that education means such an unfolding of the faculties as shall put the mind into the widest and most effective relation with the entire world of things, spiritual and material, there is an exquisite absurdity in the time-honored method." Such is the opinion of the author; and such, we are glad to say, is the growing opinion of all observant men and women, except, perhaps, those whose observation is limited by the walls of their classrooms, and who do not discern the signs of the times. Dr. Jacobi gives us, in this book of but one hundred and twenty pages, the account of a most interesting personal experiment in primary education, in which a child was taught algebraic signs as a means of concisely expressing certain relations, long before any attempt was made to learn how to write. It would be interesting, did space permit, to follow in detail this experiment. By the time the child was four and a half years old, she had learned the following elements: straight, curved, slanting, and half-slanting lines; also to distinguish perpendicular and horizontal lines, and to draw either straight or curved lines parallel to each other. She was well acquainted with all forms of the triangle, the rectangle, square, trapezium, trapezoid, pentagon, hexagon, circle, and cube. When five years, the child was taught the equality of any two subjects which were demonstrably equal to the same third. And so the child went on to arithmetic, the meaning of words, and botany, before she was six years old.

The author discusses quite fully the place for the study of language in a curriculum of education. On this subject Dr. Jacobi says that it is necessary to maintain a just proportion between the

study of languages and the other studies of a general curriculum. The effect on mental development and training is to be obtained, if at all, by the age of fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen. By this time the pupil requires the broader and more robust discipline of other knowledge, pursued with the thoroughness of scientific method which will then be practicable. It is undesirable to continue the systematic study of languages at this time (they should be dropped altogether); although the habit of reading in all may be most profitably kept up, and other subjects, especially history, studied through their medium. We must confess a great deal of surprise at some of the results which Dr. Jacobi reached in her experiment with the child already referred to. Had this child's accomplishments been reported to us in ordinary conversation, we should have regarded her as a phenomenon. But it is evident that her teacher believes that what was done with her could be done with the average child; and we have too much confidence in Dr. Jacobi to deny it without due consideration, yet would like to see the experiment carried out on a large scale before deciding that the plan was a feasible one. Having given no little attention to the study of languages, and knowing some of their difficulties, we are astonished to find the author stating that "one great reason for teaching children a reading acquaintance with four or five languages between the ages of eight and fourteen, is, that by the latter age they may really know these languages, and then begin to study something else, or of more immediate practical utility," as if a child could at the age of fourteen have a reading acquaintance with four or five languages, and really know them. We should be glad to learn that the opportunity had been given Dr. Jacobi to carry out her plan on a sufficiently extended scale to determine its practicability, for the results which she claims are certainly much to be desired.

AMONG THE PUBLISHERS.

GINN & Co. have just issued "A Vocabulary to the First Six Books of Homer's Iliad," by Professor Thomas D. Seymour of Yale College. It is claimed that a concise special vocabulary to the Homeric poems, or to parts of them, is open to far fewer objections than a similar vocabulary to any other work of Greek literature, since the words are found more nearly in their original significations and constructions. This vocabulary has not been compiled from other dictionaries, but has been made from the poem itself. The maker has endeavored to be concise,—to give nothing but what is important for the accurate and appreciative reading of the Iliad,—and yet to show the original and derived meanings of the words, and to suggest translations which should be both simple and dignified. A confident hope is felt that the concise form of this vocabulary will save much time for the beginner in Homer. More than twenty woodcuts, most of which are new in this country, illustrate the antiquities of the Iliad.

—*The Index of Current Events* (Montreal) was originally intended as a weekly for the use of editors only, and the amount of the annual subscription was decided upon with due regard to the comparatively limited possibilities in the way of circulation among the class it was intended to serve. It has since been suggested that an index of this character might have a much wider utility, and that in particular all those whose calling it is in any way to educate and mould public opinion would find such a publication of considerable service. *The Index of Current Events* is therefore offered at one dollar per annum, post free.

—T. Y. Crowell & Co. will publish soon George Brandes' "Impressions of Russia," in which are included chapters on Russian literature, which has been translated by Samuel C. Eastman of Concord, N.H., who spent last summer in Denmark, and worked under Brandes' supervision.

—Houghton, Mifflin, & Co. have nearly ready a collection of poems by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, the eminent Philadelphia physician, entitled "The Cup of Youth," which will be published in shape similar to his former volume, "A New Year's Masque;" and a volume by Mrs. A. J. Woodman, a niece of the poet Whittier, entitled "Picturesque Alaska," giving an amusing account of experiences on a trip to Alaska, illustrated with photographs of the most

striking scenes at various points of the journey. Mr. Whittier has written an introduction to the volume.

— Ginn & Co. announce, in the Library of Anglo-Saxon Poetry, Vol. VI. "Cynewulf's Elene," edited by Charles W. Kent, M.A. The introduction of this work will contain an account of the manuscript, author, sources, theme of poem, etc., as well as a discussion of the versification, particularly of rhyme. The text is accompanied by the Latin original at the foot of each page. The notes, intended as aids to the student, will be full, and frequent reference will be made to Cook's Sievers' "Grammar."

— Mr. E. I. Brill of Leyden, Holland, announces the publication of J. Büttikofer's work on "Liberia," founded on investigations made in 1879-82 and 1886-87. At the present time, when the suppression of African slave-trade attracts so much attention, a study of the republic of Liberia will be very welcome to many readers, and Americans will be particularly interested in it on account of the enormous amount of labor and money devoted by our countrymen to the establishment and development of this republic. The author, who has devoted much of his time to studies on the natural history and ethnology of this country, gives a description of his journey, and sketches of life in the republic, as well as among the little-known aboriginal tribes. The illustrations are taken from photographs and sketches made by the author.

— Little, Brown, & Co. have now ready a volume entitled "The United States," by Professor J. D. Whitney. The volume is made up from the article written for the "Encyclopædia Britannica," modified in such a manner that it appears as originally written, with the facts and figures illustrating the physical geography of our country and its material resources, corrected down to the beginning of the present year. They have also just issued the index volume to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," completing the work.

— "Bell Hangers' Hand-Book," by F. B. Badt, is just the book for those engaged in selling, installing, or handling electric batteries, electric bells, elevator, house, or hotel annunciators, burglar or fire alarms, electric gas-lighting apparatus, electric heat-regulating apparatus, etc. It is said to be the only book of the kind, and is published by the Western Electric Company, Chicago.

— E. & F. N. Spon will issue shortly, "Sewerage and Land Drainage," by George E. Waring, jun., and announce as in press "A Theoretical and Practical Treatise on the Strength of Beams and Columns," in which the ultimate and the elastic limit strength of beams and columns is computed from the ultimate and elastic limit compressive and tensile strength of the materials, by means of formulas deduced from the correct and new theory of the transverse strength of materials, by R. H. Cousins. This firm further announces a "Treatise on Water-Supply, Drainage, and Sanitary Appliances of Residences: including Lifting Machinery, Lighting and Cooking Apparatus, etc.," by Frederick Colyer; and "The Voltaic Accumulator; an Elementary Treatise," by Emile Reynier, translated from the French by J. A. Berly, C.E.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*.*Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as proof of good faith.

The editor will be glad to publish any queries consonant with the character of the journal.

Twenty copies of the number containing his communication will be furnished free to any correspondent on request.

A New Mountain of the Bell.

I HAVE just returned from a journey of four weeks in the Desert of Mount Sinai, made with the especial object of studying the Jebel Nagous in connection with the joint researches of Dr. Alexis A. Julien and myself on musical sand. The "Mountain of the Bell" is situated on the Gulf of Suez, about four hours and a half from Tor by the roundabout camel-route. It was first described by Seetzen in 1808, since which time it has been visited by Ehrenberg, Gray, Wellstedt, Rüppell, Ward, Newbold, and the late Professor Palmer, as well as by large numbers of pilgrims. My observations confirm in the main their accounts of the acoustic phenomena heard, but my measurements differ widely from those of all the travellers save Professor Palmer,

The name "Jebel Nagous" is given by the Bedouins to a

mountain, nearly three miles long and about 1,200 feet high, composed of white sandstone bearing quartz pebbles and veins. On the western and northern sides are several large banks of blown sand inclined at high angles. The sand on one of these slopes at the north-west end of the mountain has the property of yielding a deep resonance when it slides down the incline either from the force of the wind or by the action of man. This bank of sand I distinguished from the others by calling it the "Bell Slope." It is triangular in shape, and measures 260 feet across the base, 5 to 8 feet across the top, and is 391 feet long (high). It has the high inclination of 31° quite uniformly. It is bounded by vertical cliffs of sandstone, and is broken towards the base by projecting rocks of the same material. The sand is yellowish white, very fine, and possesses at this inclination a curious mobility, which causes it to flow, when disturbed, like molasses or soft pitch, the depression formed being filled in from above and advancing upward at the same time. The sand has none of the characteristics of sonorous sand found on beaches. When pulled downwards by the hands, or pushed with the feet, a strong vibration is felt, and a low note is plainly heard resembling the deep bass of an organ-pipe. The loudness and continuity of the note are related to the mass of sand moved, but I think that those who compare it to distant thunder exaggerate. The bordering rocky walls give a marked echo, which may have the effect of magnifying and prolonging the sounds, but which, as I afterwards ascertained, is not essential. There are no cavities for the sand to fall into, as erroneously reported. The peak of Jebel Nagous rises above the Bell Slope to the height of 955 feet above the sea-level, as determined by a sensitive aneroid.

After studying the locality and phenomenon for several days, I formed the opinion that it could not be unique, as hitherto supposed, and accordingly I tested every steep slope of blown sand met with on the caravan-route northward to Suez. On April 6 I examined a steep sand-bank on a hillock only 45 feet high, and was rewarded by the discovery of a second Nagous. This new Nagous is in the Wadi Werdan, only five minutes off the regular caravan-route, and one and a half days by camels from Suez. The hillock is called by the Bedouins "Ramadan," and forms the eastern end of a range of low hills about one-quarter of a mile long. Being the only hills in the Wadi, the locality can easily be found by travellers. The hills consist of conglomerate and sandstone, and towards the west of gypsum. They slope up gradually from the north, and end in bold cliffs on the south side. Sand blown by the north wind is carried over the cliffs, and rests on the steep face at two inclinations, — 31° above, and 21° or less below. By applying the usual tests with the hands to the fine-grained sand, I found, that, wherever it lies at the requisite angle to produce mobility (31°), it yielded the bass note, though not so loud as on the Bell Slope of Jebel Nagous. In one instance my friend and fellow-traveller, Henry A. Sim, Esq., of the Madras Civil Service, who kindly aided me in my investigations, heard the sound while standing 100 feet distant. The Nagous sand occurs at intervals throughout the quarter-mile of low cliffs; the main bank at the east end being 150 feet wide and 60 feet high, measured on the incline. I stirred up the sand pretty thoroughly on this slope, and the next day it failed to give the sounds, not having recovered its properties. The intervening night was very cold (53°).

I feel confident that this phenomenon is not very rare in the desert, though the spontaneous production of sounds by sliding of the sand without man's agency, as at Jebel Nagous, may be. Whether the Rig-i-Rawan north of Cabul is caused by similar conditions remains to be determined, but I am informed that the peculiar relations existing between England and Russia will prevent my visiting northern Afghanistan at present.

The Bedouins who accompanied us were greatly astounded at my discovery of a new Nagous, and I fear that their faith in a monastery hidden in the bowels of Jebel Nagous has received a severe shock.

It is interesting to note that the Nagous, or wooden gong, is in daily use in the monastery of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai. I photographed Jebel Nagous and vicinity, as well as my new Nagous, and collected specimens of the rocks, sand, etc. This is merely a preliminary notice, fuller details being reserved for the work on musical sand in preparation by Dr. Julien and myself. I shall be