

count of foreign competition. He points out the vast difference between laboratory experiments and practical pottery, especially with reference to leadless glazes. He believes that the adoption of the second and third recommendations, together with monthly medical inspection of all workers, would put an end to the evils of plumbism.

THE *Zeitschrift für angewandte Chemie* gives an account of a recent explosion in a Swiss school in connection with experimentation on oxygen. The oxygen was contained in a glass gasometer, which had been previously completely filled with water, and had been generated from potassium chlorate. Unknown to the teacher, the gasometer had earlier been used for acetylene and the water had not been renewed. It seems probable that sufficient acetylene had been dissolved by the water to give an explosive mixture with the oxygen.

In the *Philosophical Magazine* for June, Gerald Stoney gives an interesting comparison of the amount of oxygen in the atmosphere and in the exterior of the earth. Above a square centimeter of the earth's surface are 234.5 grams oxygen. The same amount would be contained in a column of water of the same section and 264 centimeters deep, and in a still shallower column of the earth. Considering the earth's 'crust' to be of approximately constant composition to a depth of seventeen miles, the amount of oxygen in it would be more than ten thousand times as great as that in the atmosphere.

At the recent Royal Society's *Conversazione*, Sir Wm. Crookes exhibited photographs of lines high in the ultra violet region, characteristic of a new element associated with yttrium and separated from it by long fractionation. The element has an atomic weight, probably near 117, and its oxid in the purest state yet prepared is of a pale brown color. The name of *victorium* has been given to the element.

NOTE was recently made of the investigations of Parmentier, tending to show that fluorin is not present in certain mineral waters, as had been previously held. In a succeeding number of the *Comptes Rendus* Charles Lepierre maintains that minute traces of fluorin have been

detected in many mineral waters, and no less than ten or twelve milligrams per litre are present in the Gerez water (north Portugal). This water is considered very efficacious in liver diseases.

A PAPER was recently read before the Royal Society by David Gill on the presence of oxygen in the atmosphere of certain fixed stars. A study of the spectrum of δ Crucis reveals the presence of all the stronger oxygen lines as well as all the known helium lines. On the other hand, no trace of true nitrogen lines are found in the spectrum. Hydrogen is present, and probably carbon and magnesium. The spectra of δ and ϵ Canis Majoris and probably δ Centauri are practically identical with that of Crucis.

J. L. H.

CANNIBALISM IN QUEENSLAND.

EUGENE F. RUDDER contributes to a recent number of *Science of Man* (Vol. 2, No. 3, Sydney, April 21, 1899) interesting personal observations on the Blackfellows of Queensland. Accidentally he stumbled on a silent but apparently ceremonial feast on the flesh of 'a very powerful, well-conditioned black,' who had been shot in an attempt to escape from capture for some offense the day before. The skin had been removed entire and was drying before the fire on five spears set in the ground; and, on detection, the group of blacks deserted their work and did not reappear. Inquiry among other blacks yielded little connected information concerning the case, except that 'It make 'im blackfellow strong fellow'; but more general inquiries elicited the information that the anthropophagy was commonly limited to the bodies of those killed in battle or by accident, and that the feast was ceremonial and usually limited to the kinfolk of the deceased. In one case a girl was speared and eaten by two rivals for her hand; the body was cooked on a sort of platform of green poles, laid above the glowing coals of a large fire when nearly burned down. Another case was the killing and eating of a female child by the mother; this is said to be an established custom in case of excess of female children, or in case of deformity, the custom being enforced by capital punishment, and the

belief underlying the custom being the characteristic notion that the powers of the consumed are thereby conveyed to the consumer. A related belief finds expression among the same people in the practice of opening the abdomen of an enemy killed in battle, extracting the caul fat and anointing with it the body of the victor, the ceremony taking place while the body of the victim is still warm, or, if practicable, before his death. In all cases, of anthropophagy the skins were carefully removed, dried, and then hung in high trees to be blown about by the winds.

W J M.

*PROPOSED INSCRIPTION FOR THE STATUE
OF DARWIN.*

WE recently quoted from the London *Academy* inscriptions proposed for the statue of Darwin. Mr. Edward Montgomery, of Hemstead, Texas, suggests the following substitute :

Charles Darwin, whose painstaking biological investigation has demonstrated the developmental ascent of lowest to highest forms of life, proving Evolution to be the master-key to the secrets of nature, and opening to striving humanity the inspiring prospect of natural perfectibility.

We have also received from 'Milner Kenne' the following sonnet :

CHARLES DARWIN.

Father of Science, versed in Nature's lore,
Toilsome unraveller of her mystic laws,
Tracing by painful thought effect to cause
Till, like Columbus, thou new worlds explore ;
Say, shall we ever see thy equal more ?
Modest as great, yet fearless without pause,
Careless alike of censure or applause,
Steering still onward to the unknown shore.
To thy keen sight, thy patient thought and clear,
The newer science owes nativity.
Thy sunlike mind bids ignorance disappear
Till Nature's wonders seem to mirror thee,
And to us mourning say in words of cheer,
Si monumentum quaeris, aspice !

THE NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL PARK.

THE following circular letter has been sent by the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution to officers of the army serving in the Philippines, Cuba, Porto Rico and Hawaii and on other outside stations :

The Secretary, on behalf of the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, and with the permission of the Honorable the Secretaries of State, of War and of the Navy, calls the attention of officers of the United States on foreign stations to the fact that there is at the capital a National Zoological Park, established by an Act of Congress approved April 30, 1890, which provides :

That the National Zoological Park is hereby placed under the direction of the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, who are authorized to transfer to it any living specimens, whether of animals or plants now or hereafter in their charge ; to accept gifts for the Park at their discretion, in the name of the United States ; to make exchanges of specimens, and to administer the said Zoological Park for the advancement of science and the instruction and recreation of the people.

That the heads of the executive departments of the government are hereby authorized and directed to cause to be rendered all necessary and practicable aid to the said Regents in the acquisition of collections for the Zoological Park.

This Park, of which some idea may be formed by the accompanying map and illustrations, has been established in an unusually beautiful site near the city of Washington. It is intended to form here a representative national collection which, while especially rich in our native American animals, shall also contain specimens from all parts of the world, and shall be to America what the zoological gardens at London, Paris and Berlin are to their respective countries.

For several years Congress made no appropriation for the purchase of animals, and the Park is still largely dependent upon gifts to increase the collection, which is far from adequate as an exhibit in a national institution.

If officers stationed abroad who may be interested in animal life would bear in mind the necessities of the Park many additions could be made to the collection. Almost any foreign animals would be gladly received.

Expenses of boxing and of land transportations, where necessary, will always be paid by the Zoological Park.

Purchase of animals can be made only in exceptional cases, but if the opportunity for any especially desirable acquisition arises the Secre-