

OPHIR.

A correspondent of the London Athenaeum writes as follows:—
January 29, 1869.—Some years ago there appeared in London, "Notes and Queries" an account of a trip to the ruins of an ancient city in Africa which has since been suggested to be the Ophir of Scripture; and it may be interesting to some of your readers to know some particulars of these ruins as could be ascertained by a traveller who did not actually reach the site himself.

North-German Confederation. We gather from his pages that the proposed copyright is to last thirty years from the author's death. The Baron's chief suggestions are, that the copyright of German works should not be confined to the subjects of these States which form the Confederation, and that the Confederation should set an example to foreign countries in the matter of international copyright. These two proposals go beyond the ideas of legislators, to judge from the sections of the projected law which Baron Tauchnitz quotes, as well as from the English Acts on the subject. But the last decision of the House of Lords (Routledge vs. Low) accords with Baron Tauchnitz's suggestion, and makes it all the more valuable.

FIRE AND BURGLAR PROOF SAFE CHAMPION SAFES!
PHILADELPHIA, January 18, 1869. Messrs. FARREL, HERRING & CO., No. 629 Chesnut Street.
Gentlemen:—On the night of the 18th inst., as is well known to the citizens of Philadelphia, our large and extensive store and valuable stock of merchandise, No. 902 Chestnut street was burned.

MARVIN'S PATENT Alum & Dry Plaster FIRE PROOF SAFES
Are most desirable for quality, finish and price.
MARVIN'S SPHERICAL BURGLAR SAFES
Cannot be Sledged! Cannot be Wedged! Cannot be Drilled!
BANK VAULTS, VAULT DOORS, EXPRESS BOXES, FAMILY PLATE SAFES, COMBINATION LOCKS
MARVIN & CO., 721 CHESNUT STREET, (MASONIC HALL), Philadelphia.

INSURANCE. DELAWARE MUTUAL SAFETY INSURANCE COMPANY, Incorporated by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, 1855.
Office B. E. corner of THIRD and WALNUT Streets, Philadelphia.
MARINE INSURANCES On Vessels, Cargo, and Freight to all parts of the world.
INLAND INSURANCES On goods by river, canal, lake and carriage to all parts of the Union.
FIRE INSURANCES On Merchandise generally, on Stores, Dwellings, Houses, &c.

INSURANCE. STATEMENT OF THE CONDITION OF THE METROPOLITAN INSURANCE CO. On the First Day of January, 1869.
FIRST. Capital Stock \$300,000.00
Amount of assessments or instalments on stock paid in cash 300,000.00
SECOND. The value as nearly as may be of the Real Estate held by the Company 3,000.00
Cash on hand 16,738.84
Cash in hands of Agents in course of transmission 6,000.00
Amount of Loans secured by bonds and mortgages, constituting the first lien on Real Estate, on which there is less than one year's interest due and owing 149,324.19
Amount of Stock owned by the Company, specifying the number of shares and their par and market value, \$204,800.00
Amount of Stock held by the Company as collateral security for Loans, with the amount loaned on each kind of stock, its par and market value 75,884.77
Interest on investments due and unpaid 2,816.25
Accrued interest not yet due 8,677.11
Other available miscellaneous assets 69,253.31
THIRD. Amount of losses during the year, adjusted but not due 5,707.97
Amount of losses reported to the Company but not reported to us 25,624.20
Amount of dividends due and unpaid 1,650.00
Amount of all other claims against the Company, contested or otherwise 2,776.28
Amount required to satisfy reinsure all outstanding risks 61,707.28
FOURTH. Amount of cash premiums received... 194,827.55
Amount of premiums earned... 190,018.35
Interest received from investments... 23,849.17
Income from all other sources, specifying what sources... 5,188.69
FIFTH. Amount of losses paid during the year 120,748.72
Amount paid and owing for reinsurance premiums 2,738.19
Amount of dividends paid 21,216.60
Amount of dividends declared during the year 10,500.00
Amount of claims paid during the year, including commissions and fees paid to agents and brokers of the Company 54,017.02
Amount of losses due and unpaid None.
Amount of taxes paid by the Company 10,105.47
Amount of all other expenses and expenditures 20,342.11
SABINE & ALLEN, AGENTS, N. E. Corner FIFTH and WALNUT Sts., PHILADELPHIA.

—Ehrenberg has communicated to the Academy of Sciences, Berlin, of which he is a member, a short notice of the specimens brought up from the sea-bottom by soundings during the North-German Polar Expedition of last season. The specimens are thirty-nine in number, collected from latitude 73 degrees to 80 degrees north—an area extending from the Bear Islands and beyond Spitzbergen to the coast of Greenland. Six of them were taken, it appears, between 80 degrees and 81 degrees, and in longitude 13, 14, 15, and 16 degrees east from Greenwich. As regards depth, thirty-two of the specimens were brought up from less than 100 fathoms, four from 135 to 170 fathoms, two from 140 to 250 fathoms, and one from 300 fathoms. This latter was in latitude 76 deg. 38 min. north, and longitude 15 degrees 52 minutes East. These depths, though not great, have, as Professor Ehrenberg remarks, the advantage of certainty, which cannot ways be claimed for soundings at 1000 or 2000 fathoms. The scientific character and value of the specimens have yet to be made out, and for this they must undergo a rigorous cleansing from the tallow of the sounding lead by which they were lifted. But after Ehrenberg has had them under his microscope, we shall not have long to wait for explicit information on these points; and further light will be thrown on the question which, in his opinion, is the most important of all, namely, whether the six classes of microscopic creatures already described in "Microzoologie" are to be admitted as mixed with other, hitherto unknown, forms within the Polar Circle? To obtain conclusive proofs of the relations of organic life in its minutest forms throughout the globe would be worth all the cost and labor bestowed in obtaining them. Moreover, according to the nature of the specimens brought up, whether fine or coarse, silmy or powdery, will, as is thought, be the evidence of streams, currents, or quiescence in the depths of the ocean. Should Mr. Petermann and his friends attempt another expedition in the coming summer, it is to be hoped they will rely more on the dredge than on the sounding-lead for specimens from the bottom. Taken in connection with the results obtained by the expedition under Drs. Carpenter and Wyville Thomson (an interesting report of which has been printed in the "Proceedings of the Royal Society"), a higher value attaches to the specimens brought home by the German expedition.

—A reader of a very old astronomical book was puzzled and rather frightened, by finding that the moon went round the earth in something between four and five minutes. He had to ponder until he found out that the minute mentioned was the minute of a year. In the old sexagesimal division, the sixtieth part of anything was called its minute; the sixtieth part of the minute was called the second, and so on. Thus, the minute of a year is a little more than six days; the minute of a mile upwards of 23 yards. In 1851 a certain Maurice Bressius published his "Metric Astronomy," in which sines are sexagesimally represented. His radius was 60 degrees, and so his sine of 73 degrees 20 minutes was 58 degrees, 22 minutes, 57 seconds.

—The distinction between the *vero* and the *ben trovato* made by the Italians is that of truth and good fictitious description. The stories of the two classes only differ in this, that the first often have an improbability which the second dare not reach. The true stories of absent men cannot be exceeded. We know the man who has—more than once or twice—put on his spectacles to help him to look for them. We know the man who had forgotten the name of—say A, and the first time he met a man who knew it, burst out with "I have forgotten A's name; what is it?" We are inclined to believe, from the manner in which it first reached us, the anecdote of Sir Thomas Strange, the Indian judge, who, on paying a visit, that his friend was not in, and that he had forgotten his own name. "I'll call again; never mind my name.—Sir! master always likes to know the names of gentlemen who call.—Why, to tell the truth, I have forgotten my name.—That's strange, sir.—So it is, my man. You've hit it!—and he went away, leaving the servant quite in the dark. But we suppose the following anecdote of Robert Simson must be *ben trovato*; though the tradition is strong. He used to sit at his open window on the ground-floor, as deep in geometry as a Robert Simson ought to be. Here he would be accosted by a beggar, he would rouse himself, hear a few words of the story, make his donation, and dive. Some wags one day stopped a mendicant one day on his way to the window with "Now! do as we tell you and you will get something from that gentleman, and a shilling from us besides. He will ask who you are, and you will say Robert Simson, son of John Simson, of Kirktonhill." The man did as he was told; Simson gave him a coin and dropped off. He soon roused himself and said, Robert Simson! son of John Simson, of Kirktonhill! why, that is myself! that man must be an impostor! Lord Brougham gives this anecdote, with less detail than in the version received by us.

—The existence of the ruins above referred to, or similar ones, has been known for many years, and they have been alluded to in several old travels; and apparently in connection with the gold trade, but of course such accounts must be taken for what they are worth, as they contain many absurdities. In "The Modern Part of an Universal History" (London, 1781), the most considerable gold mines are placed in the district of Manica, the name of either the river Sabia or the Limpopo; and in "A Collection of Voyages and Travels" (London, 1745), and several other similar works, is an account of a Portuguese journey in 1569, in which reference is made to ruins of "structures built with stones, lime and timber" being met with in different parts of the country; and in one account the name Afr is given as that of one of the ruins, or perhaps of the whole district; but I cannot ascertain whether this name existed there on the first discovery by the Portuguese, or whether they called it Afr because they wished it to be the real Ophir. From this coincidence, however (if it is one), and the name of the river Sabia (or Sababa), combined with the recent discovery of large gold fields in the same neighborhood, some persons go so far as to conclude that the Biblical account is but a short history of Bunyau.

—What are these ruins? Are they the remains of defensive buildings, or mercantile emporia of a past civilization, or the works of some ancient religious order? As this part of Africa is now being drawn into notice, and many are leaving England, some attracted by the prospects of gold and others with the idea of a successful sporting or trading venture—it would be well if a traveller could be induced to make notes of and compare such things as he may observe in the customs and languages of these tribes, with a view to assisting ethnologists, rather than swell his published account into what is often little better than a butcher's diary. J. D. R.

Foreign Items. —Gold diggings in the north of Scotland will be a surprise to many persons; but there they are, in the shire of Sutherland, and with a number of diggers who are collecting alluvium from the borders of the Homeall river, and washing it in the stream. The quantity hitherto collected is not great, perhaps £200 worth, but the quality is described as good, and the color bright; and diggers who have worked in Australia are of opinion that when proper means are taken the yield will be something considerable. Are we about to witness a "rush" to the Sutherlandshire diggings? and shall we see the wild strath in which the gold lies buried, sprinkled with tents, and noisy with the eager labor and outcry of an excited population?

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