

the olive been tried? We have nowhere seen any account of such an attempt. One would suppose that it would grow well, and in that case could not fail to be very remunerative. The people are well-to-do, and the rate of wages is good. When one, however, compares what is done here and in the United States in the way of irrigation works, in the scientific investigation of the country with reference to mining and agricultural pursuits, and in the collection and examination of the objects of scientific interest, one cannot but feel that there is a sad lack of enterprise and energy in the colony. The Cape Town Museum seems to be in a semi-starved condition.

The white population of Natal is almost entirely English, the Dutch having withdrawn for the most part as soon as the English Government decided on interfering. Sugar seems likely to form the staple of the colony. It is cultivated with the aid of coolie labour, although the Zulus are to the white population as sixteen to one.

In the Transvaal and the Orange Free State the Dutch form the agricultural, the English the town and trading population. Mr. Trollope seems to possess that genial disposition which draws out the bright side of the people with whom he is brought in contact. Although, therefore, he finds the Boer wanting in cleanliness, education, sociability, and enterprise, he finds in him many good points, and is far from thinking him so bad or so hopeless as the author of "The Great Thirst Land." The Boer has improved of late years, and in some cases considerable pains are taken with the education of the children. As Mr. Trollope says, "The Dutch Boer is what he is, not because he is Dutch or because he is a Boer, but because circumstances have isolated him."

Three chapters are devoted to the diamond diggings, and a very interesting plan of the great Colesberg Kopje is given. The author has very little sympathy with diamond-digging, and the only satisfaction he finds there is the civilising influence which the employment of so many natives cannot fail in time to exert. Mr. Trollope has devoted considerable thought and attention to the native question. His opinion is one well worthy of attention, though it is not likely, he thinks, to be regarded with favour either by Exeter Hall or the Colonists whose lands lie uncultivated for want of labour. He visited several of the Missionary Institutions, all of which, with the exception of M. Esselin's self-supporting one at Worcester, seem to have been more or less failures. He thinks that work, steady and regular but voluntary, will be found to be the best and most effective civilising agents. Unfortunately the natives' wants are so few and so easily satisfied, that there is at present no spur to regular work.

The account of Bloemfontein as a sanatorium for consumptive people is that of a man of "heroic mould" equal to the feat of dining twice daily, such as Mr. Trollope must be, seeing that at his age he makes light of, and seems to have enjoyed, the rough travelling by mail-carts, cape-carts, and otherwise, of considerably over two thousand miles. One regrets that he has not mentioned whether there is here the same change between morning, midday, and evening climate as he observed at Pretoria; also whether he came across any consumptive people, and how they fared. He also forgets that deal benches and chairs constructed with an equal regard to

human anatomy, judging from the fact that easy chairs cost 13*l.* 10*s.* each, are not the seats most likely to conduce to the comfort of an invalid.

An excellent map accompanies the book. The type, paper, and "get-up" are all that can be desired, and the number of misprints is small. W. J. L.

OUR BOOK SHELF

The Science of Language. By Abel Hovelacque. Translated by A. H. Keane. (Chapman and Hall, 1877.)

WE have already had occasion to review at length the original French text of this work, which is now presented in an English dress. M. Hovelacque is one of the most distinguished representatives of the school of comparative philologists who would include their study among the physical sciences, and his book illustrates both the faults and the excellences of the view he upholds. In spite of the limitations thus introduced into the science of language, in spite, too, of the many inaccuracies which occur in his descriptions of the various groups of language at present existing in the world, the clearness and vigour of his style make his book one well worth translating, and it is satisfactory to see that it has been put into competent hands. Mr. Keane has added to the value of the work by a philological map, and a tabulated list of the languages described by M. Hovelacque, together with their characteristics and geographical position. From time to time, too, he has introduced foot-notes and even insertions in the text; many of these give fresh information or correct the statements of the author; others of them, however, had better been left unwritten. Thus his reference to Raabe's attempt to connect Aryan and Semitic grammar is not very happy, and he is unfair towards his author when he accuses him of inconsistency in being at once a Darwinian and a polygenist. No doubt "the impossibility of reducing man now to, say a mollusc, is no argument against the original identity of man with a mollusc" (or rather of his descent from the same form of life as a mollusc); but that is because there are intermediate links and stages of development between the mollusc and man, and M. Hovelacque believes—and with good reason—that such intermediate links do not exist between the manifold families of speech that are scattered over the world.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- [The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]
- [The Editor urgently requests correspondents to keep their letters as short as possible. The pressure on his space is so great that it is impossible otherwise to ensure the appearance even of communications containing interesting and novel facts.]

Age of the Sun in Relation to Evolution

IT has been urged by Mr. Plummer (pp. 303 and 360) as a fundamental objection to the theory that sun-stars are formed from the collision of stellar masses, that if the theory be true there ought to be many of the stars moving with great velocities, which he affirms is not the case. But I am unable to understand upon what grounds he bases his assertion. I freely admit that if it could be proved that none of the stars has, as he seems to suppose, a proper motion of more than thirty or forty miles per second, it would at least be a formidable difficulty in the way of accepting the theory. For it would indeed be strange, as Mr. Plummer remarks, "that amid all the diversity of dimensions of the heavenly bodies, it should invariably happen that the resultant movement of the combined masses should be reduced to such insignificant figures as the above." But how does Mr. Plummer arrive at the conclusion that something like this must invariably