

Equus Przewalski, a new species of wild horse discovered in Central Asia. It was killed by hunters who were sent from the post of Zaisan, and its skull and skin were sent to the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. M. Poliakoff discusses at length the relations of this new species of horse to our domestic horses, and illustrates his memoir with drawings of the new horse and of its anatomical features.

SIR JOHN DALZELL'S ANEMONE.—Many of our readers will be glad to hear of the good health and wonderful activity of this celebrated sea anemone. From the annual address of the president of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, as published in the recently issued part of this Society's *Transactions*, we learn that the late Dr. James M'Bain was the faithful custodian of that *Actinia mesembrianthemum*, which, among naturalists, has long borne the honourable appellation of "Granny," and which, though having entered upon her fifty-second if not her fifty-ninth year of existence, has not yet ceased to people the waters with her progeny, for from the 4th day of March, 1879, to the 4th day of October in the same year, on which occasion the last official registry of birth occurs, she has given origin to twenty-seven young ones. This is nothing to her prolific powers in 1857, for in one single night in that year she gave birth to no less than 240 young ones. This would have put Priam himself to shame, seriously alarmed Malthus, and taxed all the energy of all the accoucheurs in Edinburgh and its surrounding districts. She was gathered from the rocks at North Berwick by Sir John Dalzell, and at his death was handed over to the care of Prof. John Fleming, then to Dr. James M'Bain; he on the prospect of his decease was most solicitous to find a proper guardian for such a treasure. Some to whom he spoke declined to undertake so responsible a duty, till at last Mr. Sadler, the curator of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Edinburgh, cordially responded to the request, and when last heard of the old lady was doing well.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

AT the meeting of the Geographical Society on March 14 Mr. James Stewart, C.E., of Livingstonia, read a paper on Lake Nyassa and the Water-route to the Lake-region of Africa. In his preliminary observations he remarked upon the fact that, though the lake is but 350 miles in length, no fewer than seven different languages are spoken on one side only, all belonging to the Great Bantu group, and that natives from the south end cannot understand those at the north end. He dwelt upon the advantages the Livingstonia missionaries enjoyed for performing geographical work at an exceedingly small cost, though their other duties prevented them from doing very much. Mr. Stewart afterwards gave an account of his journey up the western side of the northern part of the lake and thence to Tanganyika and back. During this he passed one stream, the Mera, which he thinks may be considered one of the most remote of the sources of the Congo. Mr. Stewart concluded by stating that he was shortly about to return to Lake Nyassa, where he hoped to have opportunities for resuming his geographical work in opening a route to the south end of Lake Tanganyika.

WE have the new numbers of several geographical journals before us. In the March number of *Petermann's Mittheilungen* Herr Richard Buchta describes his journey, in considerable detail, to the Nile Lakes in 1878. To accompany a map of the South Argentine Pampas Herr H. Wichmann summarises the latest information we have on that region. M. Sibiriakoff describes his journey in the *Oscar Dickson* to the mouth of the Jennissei in 1880. This number contains the geographical necrology of the past year, besides the usual monthly summary.—In the *Zeitschrift* of the Berlin Geographical Society Herr C. J. Büttner in a long paper gives some valuable directions for the study of the Bantu group of languages. Herr K. Himly has a short paper on some of the forms of Turkish, Mongolian, and Chinese names of places in books of geography. Herr Gustav Niederlein describes in a long paper some of the scientific results of an Argentine Expedition to the Rio Negro in Patagonia. Appended is a reproduction on a large scale of Dr. Kiepert's map of the new boundaries in the Balkan Peninsula.—In the *Verhandlungen* of the same Society is a paper by Herr K. Kessler on the Caucasus and their exploration, and some valuable remarks on the thickness of the ice formed each year in the Arctic regions, and its connection with Arctic temperatures.—The first number of vol. iv. of the *Deutsche geographische Blätter* (Bremen) contains a long paper by Dr. Lindemann on

the woods of the Bavarian Spessart, and by the same author a summary of recent Arctic work.—To the December number of the *Bulletin* of the French Geographical Society M. De Castries contributes a paper on the region of the Wed Draâ; M. Ch. Velain, geological notes on Upper French Guiana; and M. H. Duveyrier, on the question of the sources of the Niger.

DR. RAE sends us the following extract from a letter to him by Capt. Howgate, dated Washington, March 4, 1881:—"I write . . . to tell you that Congress has given the appropriation asked for the continuance of our work *viâ* Lady Franklin Bay, and also for an expedition *viâ* Behring Strait—ostensibly to look after the *Jeannette*, but also to prosecute the work of discovery in that direction. In addition to this it is probable that the Signal Service will this year establish the Point Barrow station, making a noble programme of Arctic work for the United States, and one in which I take just pride, for it is the direct result of my persistent work, since 1877, in raising public interest in the cause."

THE preparations for the commencement of the survey of Eastern Palestine are now complete. The War Office have granted to the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund the services of Lieut. Conder, who executed most of the survey of Western Palestine, and Lieut. Mantell, both of the Royal Engineers. The party will include the two non-commissioned officers (now both pensioners) Black and Armstrong, who first went out in the year 1871. Lieutenants Conder and Mantell started for Beyrout on Tuesday evening, March 15, and the men will follow with the instruments. The work will be commenced in the north—the land of Bashan.

FROM a Buenos Ayres paper we learn that the long-promised exploring expedition to Neuquen, the most fertile spot perhaps in all South America, and part of the territory secured by General Roca's memorable expedition, has at last started, and important results are expected from it. This territory lies along the foot of the Andes, is watered by innumerable streams flowing from the great range into the Rio Neuquen, one of the two rivers which form the Rio Negro, and presents facilities for agriculture unknown in any other part of the Republic.

THE current number of *Les Missions Catholiques* contains a long letter from Père Schmitt, written from Mboma on the Lower Congo, in which he describes a journey lately made to the foot of the Yellala Falls. He paid a visit to the station of the Livingstone (Congo) Inland Mission at Matadi or Matavi, which is situated on the left bank of the Congo, opposite Mr. Stanley's settlement at Vivi. Owing to the whirlpools in the river, landing at Matadi was accomplished with great difficulty. From Père Schmitt's account, the spot hardly appears to have been well chosen, being a melancholy sort of place, covered with rocks, as its name imports. The mission establishment consists of five or six tents, the interior of which reminded the visitor of a bazaar. On the return journey Père Schmitt spent a few days at Noki, where he had an opportunity of collecting information respecting the Congo region from the son of the king, who had been educated at St. Paul de Loanda.

ACCORDING to the *London and China Express*, the sole obstacle to the contemplated maritime surveying operations in China and Japan, under the direction of the United States Hydrographic Office, has been removed by the consent of the Russian Government to the occupation of an astronomical station at Vladivostock by United States naval officers. They are to proceed there at once, and by telegraphic exchange of time signals, working from Vladivostock through Japan and China to Madras, will determine with great exactness the longitudes of Yokohama, Nagasaki, Shanghai, Amoy, Hong-kong, Manila, Saigon, and Singapore.

THE Wellington correspondent of the *Colonies and India* states that the New Zealand Government have just succeeded in acquiring a large tract of land at Rotorua, in the famous Hot Lake district, every acre of which the Maoris have hitherto jealously preserved. Even now tourists from all parts of the world visit this wonderful and beautiful district, but, when it is made more accessible, it is thought that Rotorua will become a great sanatorium for India and the colonies.

KING OSCAR of Sweden has just conferred decorations on Prof. Virchow, Dr. Nachtigal, and Herr William Schönlanck, in recognition of their services in the cause of geographical discovery and commerce.

DR. BAYOT has been deputed by the French Minister of Marine to explore the upper part of the Niger.