

"Another tomb with perfect stairway has been discovered, but it is much more plain. Foundations of villas, and baths with leaden pipes in great quantity, have been exposed. I hear to-day that the government has ordered the excavation of a mile and a half of the old Via Latina in this neighborhood, and much interesting discovery is anticipated."

We will only add to our correspondent's account the fact that the Basilica of St. Stephen had been sought for in vain previously to this discovery by Signor Fortunati. The great explorer, Bosio, failed to find it, and Aringhi, writing just two hundred years ago, says, "Formerly upon the Via Latina stood the church erected with great pains in honor of the most blessed Stephen, the first martyr, by Demetria, a woman of pristine piety; of which the Bibliothecarius, in his account of Pope Leo the First, thus makes mention: 'In these days, Demetria, the handmaid of God, made the Basilica of St. Stephen on the Latin Way, at the third mile-stone, on her estate: . . . which afterward, being decayed and near

to ruin through the long course of years, was restored by Pope Leo the Third.' Of this most noble church, which was one of the chief monuments of the Christian religion, as well as an ornament of the city of Rome, no vestige at this day remains."

It is remarkable that a church restored so late as the time of Leo III. [A. D. 795-816] should have been so lost without being utterly destroyed, and so buried under the slowly-accumulating soil of the Campagna, that the very tradition of the existence of its remains should have disappeared, and its discovery have been the result of scientific archaeological investigation.

The disappearance and the forgetting of the Church of St. Alexander were less remarkable, because of its far greater distance from the city, and its comparative inconspicuousness and poverty. Scarcely a more striking proof exists of the misery and lowness of Rome during many generations in the Dark Ages than that she should thus have forgotten the very sites of the churches which had stood around her walls, the outpost citadels of her faith.

LITERARY NOTICES.

The Aquarium: An Unveiling of the Wonders of the Deep Sea. By P. H. Gosse. Second Edition, revised and enlarged. With Illustrations. London: 1856.

The Common Objects of the Seashore; including Hints for an Aquarium. By the Rev. J. G. Wood. With Illustrations. London: Routledge & Co. 1857.

We trust that many of our readers, stimulated by the account of an Aquarium which was given in our number for February, are proposing to set one up for themselves.

Let no one who has been to Barnum's Museum, to look at what the flaming advertisement elegantly and grammatically terms "an aquaria," fancy that he has seen the beauty of the real aquarium. The sea will not show its treasures in a quarter of an hour, or be made a sight of for a quarter of a dollar. An aquarium is not to be exhausted in a day, but, if favorably placed where it may have sufficient direct sunshine, and well stocked with various

creatures, day after day develops within it new beauties and unexpected sights. It becomes like a secret cave in the ocean, where the processes of Nature go on in wonderful and silent progression, and the coy sea displays its rarer beauties of life, of color, and of form before the watching eyes. Look at it on some clear day, when the sun is bright, and see the broad leaves of ulva, their vivid green sparkling with the brilliant bubbles of oxygen which float up to the surface like the bubbles of Champagne; see the glades of the pink coralline, or the purple Iceland-moss covered with its plum-like down, in the midst of which the transparent bodies of the shrimps or the yellow or banded shells of the sea-snails are lying half hid. See on the brown rock, whose surface is covered with the softest growth, the white anemone stretching its crown of delicate tentacles to the light; or the long winding case of the serpula, from the end of which appear the purple, brown, or yellow feathers that decorate the head of its timid oc-

cupant. Or watch the scallop with his turquoise eyes; or the comic crabs, or the minnows playing through the water, in and out of the recesses of the rocks or the thickets of the seaweed. There is no end of the pleasant sights. And day after day the creatures will grow more tame, the *serpula* will not dart back into his case when you approach, nor the *pecten* close his beautiful shell as your shadow passes over it. Moreover, the habits of the creatures grow more entertaining as you become familiar with them, and even the dull oyster begins at last to show some signs of individual character.

And it is easy to have all this away from the seashore. The best tanks, so far as we know, that are made in this country, are those of Mr. C. E. Hammett, of Newport, Rhode Island. But the tank is of little importance, if one cannot get the water, the seaweed, and the stock; and therefore Mr. Hammett undertakes to supply these also. He will send, not the water itself, but the salts obtained by evaporation from the quantity of water necessary for each aquarium. These are to be dissolved in clear spring-water, (previously boiled, to insure its containing no injurious living matter,) and then the aquarium, having first had a bed of cleanly-washed sand put upon its bottom for about an inch or an inch and a half in depth, and this in turn covered with a thin layer of small pebbles,—though these last are not essential,—is to be filled with it. Then the seaweed, which is sent so packed as to preserve its freshness, is to be put in. It will be attached to small bits of rock, and these should be supported by or laid upon other pieces of stone, so raised as to secure a free passage for the water about them, and so afford places of retreat for the animals. The stock will be sent, if it is to go to any distance, in jars, and anemones, crabs, shell-fish of various kinds, and many other creatures, will be found among it. The seaweed should be a day or two in the tank before the creatures are put into it.

And now, having got the aquarium in order, comes the point how to keep it in order,—how to keep the creatures alive, and how to prevent the water from growing cloudy and thick. The main rule is to secure sunlight,—hot enough to raise the water to a temperature above that of

the outer air,—to remove all dirt and floating scum, and to furnish the tank on every cloudy day with a supply of air and with motion by means of a syringe. The creatures should never be fed in warm weather with any animal substance, its decay being certain to corrupt the water. A little meal or a few crumbs of bread may now and then be given; but even this is not necessary; for Nature furnishes all the food that is needed, in the spores thrown off by the seaweed, in the seaweed itself, whose growth is generally sufficiently rapid to make up for the ravages committed upon it, and in the host of infusoria constantly produced in the water. If any of the creatures die, their bodies should be immediately removed,—though sometimes the omnivorous crabs will do this work rapidly enough. As the water evaporates, it should be filled up to its original level with fresh spring-water,—the salts in it undergoing no diminution by evaporation. If, suddenly, the water should grow thick, it should be taken from the tank, a portion at a time, and filtered back into it slowly through pounded charcoal, the process being repeated till the purity seems to be returning, and at the same time the rocks and seaweed should be removed and carefully washed in fresh water. If, however, the water should by any ill chance grow tainted and emit a bad odor, nothing can be done to restore it, and, unless it is at once changed, the creatures will die. To meet such an emergency, which is of rare occurrence, it is well to have a double quantity of the salts sent with the tank to secure a new supply of water. But we have known aquariums that have kept in order for more than a year with no change of the water, a supply of spring-water being put in from time to time as we have directed; and at this moment, as we write, there is an aquarium at our side which has been in active operation for six months, and the water is as clear as it was the day it was put in. If, spite of everything, the seawater fail, then try a fresh-water aquarium. Use your tank for the pond instead of the ocean; and in the spotted newt, the tortoise, the tadpole, the caddis-worm, and the thousand other inhabitants of our inland ponds and brooks, with the weeds among which they live, you will find as much entertainment as in watching the wonders of the great sea.

A camel's-hair brush, a bent spoon on a long handle, a sponge tied to a stick, and one or two other instruments which use will suggest, are all that are needed for keeping the sides of the tank free from growth or removing obnoxious substances from its bottom.

If, on receiving the animals, any of them should appear exhausted by the journey, they may sometimes be revived by aerating the water in which they are by means of a syringe. It should always be remembered, that, though living in the water, they need a constant supply of air. And it would be well, in getting an aquarium, to have the tank and the seaweeds sent a few days in advance of the stock, so that on the arrival of the creatures they may be at once transferred to their new abode.

There are no American books upon the subject, and, in the present want of them, the two whose names are given above are the best that can be obtained. Mr. Gosse's is expensive, costing between four and five dollars. "The Common Objects of the Seashore," to be got for a quarter of a dollar, contains much accurate, unpretending, and pleasant information.

The American Drawing-Book: a Manual for the Amateur, and a Basis of Study for the Professional Artist. Especially adapted to the Use of Public and Private Schools, as well as Home Instruction. By J. G. CHAPMAN, N. A. New York: J. S. Redfield. 4to. pp. 304.

DRAWING-BOOKS, in general, deserve to be put into the same category with the numerous languages "without a master" which have deluded so many impatient aspirants to knowledge by royal (and cheap) roads. A drawing-book, at its very best, is only a partial and lame substitute for a teacher, giving instruction empirically; so that, be it ever so correct in principle, it must lack adaptation to the momentary and most pressing wants of the pupil and to his particular frame of mind; it is too Procrustean to be of any ultimate use to anybody, except in comparatively unimportant matters. It is well enough for those who need only amusement in their drawing, and whose highest idea of Art is copying prints and pictures; but for those who want assistance from

Art in order to the better understanding of Nature, no man, be he ever so wise, can, by the drawing-book plan, do much to smooth the way of study.

All that another mind could do for us by way of teaching Art would be to save us time,—first, by its experience, in anticipating our failures; second, by its trained accuracy, to correct our errors of expression more promptly than our afterthought would do it,—and to systematize our perceptions for us by showing us the relative and comparative importance of truths in Nature. In the first two respects, which are merely practical, the drawing-book, if judiciously prepared, might do somewhat to assist us; but in the last and most important, only the experienced and thoughtful artist, standing with us before Nature, can give us further insight into her system of expression. A good picture may do a little, but it is Nature's own face we need to study, and that neither book nor picture can very deeply interpret for our proper and peculiar perception.

In the practical part, again, the drawing-book can give us no real assistance in regard to color. And thus the efficacy of it is reduced to the communication of methods of drawing in white and black. This Chapman's book does to the best purpose possible under the circumstances, in what is technically termed the right-line system of drawing,—that is, the reduction of all forms to their approximate geometrical figures in order to facilitate the measurements of the eye. Thus, it is easier by far to determine the proportion which exists between the sides of a triangle formed by the lines connecting the three principal points in any figure than any curvilinear connections whatever. The application of the rectilinear system consists in the use, as a basis of the drawing, of such a series of triangles as shall at once show the exact relation of the points of definition or expression to each other; but the successful application of this depends much on the assistance of the trained eye and hand of a master watching every step we make.

When we leave this section of the "American Drawing-Book," we leave all that is of practical value to the young artist. The prescription of any particular mode of execution is always injurious, (if in any degree effective,) for the reason that the student must not think of execution at