

ringing an electric alarm-bell. Being inexpensive and easily fitted, it should form an indispensable acquisition to the up-to-date ship.—'Chambers's Journal.'

ALFRED RUSSELL WALLACE.

An interesting communication was recently received by Mr. S. B. J. Skertchly from Alfred Russell Wallace, the veteran traveller and naturalist, who, simultaneously with Charles Darwin, elucidated what is known as the Darwin theory of the origin of species. The letter—which we reproduce here in full, as well, as a facsimile of a portion of it—was due to the publication of Mr. Skertchly's pamphlet on "The Story of the Noble Opal," which first appeared in the "Nature Study" page of the "Queenslander" under the title "Opals and Kangaroos." It is written from the naturalist's home at Old Orchard, Wimborne, England, and is as follows:—

My dear Mr. Skertchly.—It must be, I think, about 25 years since we last saw each other, and for a good many years I have not known where

little value, are, you say, of extreme beauty. As you have no doubt got a considerable collection of these mineralogical or "common garden" opals perhaps you could spare me a few little bits of no value, as specimens of the colour and lustre they possess.

Though I have had a rather bad illness last Christmas, and quite recently a bad eye inflammation which kept me more than a month in a shaded room unable to read or write and under treatment by an eye specialist, I have been otherwise fairly well. Fortunately that eye is now quite well again, but has left a weakness and general disturbance of the system from which I am slowly recovering. I have just begun a new book, which I trust I may finish, as it will almost certainly be my last. It will be a study of "Evolution" on somewhat novel lines.

I am still as fond of gardening as ever, and have here 3 acres of wild wood garden and a small greenhouse. About four years ago I raised from seed the great Queensland lily, Doryanthe Palmore, which, no doubt, you are well acquainted. It has now a cluster of about 30 leaves, mostly 4ft. long and 4in. wide, each with a curious rolled up fleshy point 2in. long, withering away in the older ones. What is the

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Yours truly yours, Alfred R. Wallace

FACSIMILE OF PORTION OF LETTER FROM ALFRED RUSSELL WALLACE.

you were; I think you had left Borneo for China. A few weeks back I saw your little book "The Story of the Noble Opal" offered at the "Spiritualists' Alliance," and thinking it was a real "story" of more or less "Occultism" connected with an "opal" I bought a copy, and to my great surprise found that it was published only last year at Brisbane, that you had been in the Queensland Government as Geological Surveyor and were apparently settled there. I found, too, that instead of a mere work of imagination and legend, I had got an instructive and delightful scientific treatise on a subject of which I was absolutely ignorant, not even knowing that Queensland was an opal country!

I hardly remember having ever seen a collection of opals, though I must have done so in my youthful days when I frequented the Mineralogical Gallery of the British Museum; but that was before the Queensland opals were discovered, and the few exhibited were lost amid the numbers of other precious stones of every tint, colour, and brilliancy.

Your book is enough to make me long to go off to Queensland to try and pick up a few of those commoner specimens, which, though of

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(Mr. Skertchly informs us that he has been able, with the assistance of Messrs. Flavelle, Roberts, and Sankey, to secure a very nice little collection of opal specimens, which has been forwarded to Sir Alfred.—Ed. "Q.")

THE CAUSE OF CONSTIPATION.

The most common cause of constipation is a lack of exercise necessary to keep the muscles of the bowels active. That is why constipation is often brought on by too frequent use of purgatives. They act violently, performing the work of the bowels for them, and so weaken them that they will not act without their assistance. Chamberlain's Tablets will cure constipation because instead of doing the work of the bowels they gently stimulate them to voluntary action. Their frequent use will not injure the most delicate person.*