

tom. ii. p. 209, pl. 283), inhabiting South America, of which but few specimens have been obtained, having some general resemblance to *M. serrator*, but much more darkly coloured, and *M. australis*, Hombron and Jacquemont (*Ann. Sc. Nat. Zoologie*, ser. 2, xvi. p. 320; *Voy. au Pol Sud, Oiseaux*, pl. 31, fig. 2), as yet known only by the unique example in the Paris Museum procured by the French Antarctic expedition in the Auckland Islands. This last species may perhaps be found to visit New Zealand, and should certainly be looked for there.

Often associated with the Mergansers is the genus *Merganetta*, the so-called Torrent-Ducks of South America, of which three species are said to exist; but they possess spiny tails and have their wings armed with a spur. Whether they should be referred to the *Merginae* or the *Erismaturinae*—the Spiny-tailed Ducks proper—is a question that further investigation must decide. (A. N.)

MERGUI, a district of British Burmah, between 9° 58' and 13° 24' N. lat. It forms the southernmost district of the Tenasserim division, and is bounded on the N. by Tavoy, E. and S. by Siam, and W. by the Bay of Bengal, with an area of 7810 square miles. Two principal ranges cross Mergui from north to south, running almost parallel to each other for a considerable distance, with the Tenasserim river winding between them till it turns south and flows through a narrow rocky gorge in the westernmost range to the sea. Amongst these mountain ranges and their subsidiary spurs are several fertile plains, densely clothed with luxuriant vegetation. Indeed, the whole district, from the water's edge to the loftiest mountain on the eastern boundary, may be regarded as almost unbroken forest, only 73 square miles being under cultivation. The timber trees found towards the interior, and on the higher elevations, are of great size and beauty, the most valuable being teak, *then-gan* (*Hopea odorata*), *ka-gnyeng* (*Dipterocarpus tuberculatus*), &c. The coast-line of the district, studded with an archipelago of two hundred and seven islands, is much broken, and for several miles inland is very little raised above sea-level, and is drained by numerous muddy tidal creeks. Southwards of Mergui town it consists chiefly of low mangrove swamps alternating with small fertile rice plains. After passing the mangrove limits, the ground to the east gradually rises till it becomes mountainous, even to the banks of the rivers, and finally culminates in the grand natural barrier dividing British Burmah from Assam. The four principal rivers are the Tenasserim, Le-gnya, Pakchan, and Palouk, the first three being navigable for a considerable distance of their course. Coal is found in the district on the banks of the Tenasserim and its tributaries. Gold, copper, iron, and manganese are also found in various parts of the district.

From the notices of early travellers it appears that Mergui, when under Siamese rule, before it passed to the Burmese, was a rich and densely peopled country. On its occupation by the British in 1824-25 it was found to be almost depopulated—the result of border warfare and of the cruelties exercised by the Burmese conquerors. At that time the entire inhabitants only numbered 10,000; in 1876 they had increased to 51,846 (26,767 males and 25,079 females). Classified according to religion, there were—Buddhists, 48,750; Mohammedans, 2533; Hindus, 353; Christians and others, 210. The district contains only one town (Mergui) with more than 5000 inhabitants. Only 73 square miles of the district area were under cultivation in 1876, but this area is steadily though slowly increasing. The principal manufactures are sugar-boiling and tinsmelting. Mergui carries on a flourishing trade with Rangoon, Bassein, and the Straits Settlements. The chief exports consist of rice, rattans, torches, dried fish, areca-nuts, sesamum seeds, molasses, sea-slugs, edible birds' nests, and tin. The staple imports are piece goods, tobacco, cotton, earthenware, tea, and sugar. The imperial revenue in 1876 amounted to £18,208. The climate is remarkably healthy, the heat due to its tropical situation being moderated by land and sea breezes. The rainfall in 1876 amounted to 165½ inches. The prevalent diseases are simple and remittent fevers, bronchitis, rheumatism, and small-pox.

MERGUI, chief town of the above district, is situated on an island at the mouth of the Tenasserim river. The population (10,731 in 1876-77) consists of many races—Talaings, Burmese, Malays, Bengalis, Madrasis, Siamese, and Chinese. Considerable trade is carried on with other Burmese ports and the Straits Settlements. The harbour admits vessels drawing 18 feet of water.

MÉRIDA, a city of 7390 inhabitants (1877), in the province of Badajoz, Spain, lies about 36 miles by rail eastward from Badajoz, on the Madrid and Badajoz line, on a small eminence on the right bank of the Guadiana. It is connected by a branch line of rail with Llerena on the south-east. The population is mostly agricultural. The city owes its interest entirely to its Roman remains, which are numerous and extensive. Of these one of the most important is the bridge of 81 arches of granite, erected by Trajan; it is 2575 feet long, 26 feet broad, and 33 feet above the bed of the river; it was unfortunately seriously injured during the siege of Badajoz in 1812. Of the colossal wall that formerly surrounded the town all that remains is a fine fragment, built of dressed stone, on the spot formerly occupied by the castellum, and where the provisor of the order of Santiago afterwards had his residence (El Conventual). In the town are some relics of temples of Diana, Mars, Fortuna, Jupiter, and others; and the Arco de Santiago, 44 feet high, also dates from Trajan's time; it has unfortunately been stripped of its marble casing. Of the aqueduct from the laguna of Albuera thirty-seven enormous piers are still standing, with ten arches in three tiers built of brick and granite. To the east of the city is the circus, measuring some 1356 by 335 feet; the eight rows of seats still remain. Further eastward is the almost perfect theatre, and near it are the remains of the amphitheatre, or, as some prefer to call it, naumachia (Baño de los Romanos).

Augusta Emerita was built in 25 B.C. by the emeriti of the fifth and tenth legions who had served in the Cantabrian war under Augustus. It rose to great splendour and importance as the capital of Lusitania. During the Gothic period it became an episcopal see, and several provincial councils known to history were held there. It was taken by Músa in 711, and reconquered by Alphonso in 1228.

MÉRIDA, the capital of the Mexican state of Yucatan, stands in a great plain in the north of the peninsula, on a surface of limestone rock, about 25 miles from the port of Progreso on the Gulf of Mexico, with which it is connected by a railway opened in 1880. It is a well-built city, with broad streets and squares; and the flat-roofed stone houses, after the style introduced by the Spaniards, give a Moorish colour to the general view. Besides the cathedral, an imposing edifice of the 16th century, the bishop's palace, and the Government house (all of which are situated in the principal square), the most notable building is the Franciscan monastery (1547-1600), which once harboured within its high and turreted walls no fewer than two thousand friars, but has been allowed to fall into complete decay since their expulsion in 1820. For a long time Merida has had the reputation of being one of the principal seats of culture in Mexico; and it possesses, besides the ecclesiastical seminary, schools of law, medicine, and pharmacy, a literary institute, a public library, a theatre, and a considerable number of periodical publications. Commercially it has shared in the prosperity which Yucatan in recent years owes to the development of the Sisal hemp trade; and its manufactures embrace cotton goods, cigars, sugar, and rum. The population, estimated about 1840 as 25,000, was found in 1871 to number 33,025. The Mayas still form numerically the strongest element. Previous to the Spanish conquest the site of Merida was occupied by the Maya town of Tehoo, which contained so great a number of artificial stone-mounds that the new-comers had abundant material for all their buildings. The foundation of the

city dates from 1542, and it was made a bishopric in 1561. Compare Stephen's *Yuedan*.

MERIDEN, a city of the United States, in New Haven county, Connecticut, 18 miles from New Haven by rail. It is a busy manufacturing town; the population has increased from 3559 in 1850 to 7426, 10,495, and 18,340 in 1860, 1870, and 1880. The Britannia Company alone employs upwards of 1000 hands, and sends out every year nearly \$3,000,000 worth of Britannia metal and electroplated goods; and tin-ware, cutlery, brass-work, flint glass, guns, and woollen goods are also manufactured in the town. The State reform school had 307 inmates in 1880. A fortified tavern erected by Belcher in 1660 on the road between Boston and New Haven was the nucleus of Meriden; but the place was not incorporated as a town till 1866, and became a city in 1867.

MÉRIMÉE, PROSPER (1803-1870), novelist, archaeologist, essayist, and in all these capacities one of the greatest masters of French style during the century, was born at Paris on September 28, 1803, and died at Cannes on the 23d of the same month sixty-seven years later, having lived just long enough to know that ruin was threatening France. Not many details have been published in reference to his family, but his father seems to have been a man of position and competence. MÉRIMÉE had English blood in his veins on the mother's side, and was always considered, at least in France, to look and behave more like an Englishman than a Frenchman. He was educated for the bar, but entered the public service instead. A young man at the time of the romantic movement, he felt its influence strongly, though his peculiar temperament prevented him from joining any of the coteries of the period. This temperament was indeed exhibited by the very form and nature of the works in which he showed the influence of romanticism. Nothing was more prominent among the romantics than the fancy, as MÉRIMÉE himself puts it, for "local colour," the more unfamiliar the better. MÉRIMÉE exhibited this in an unusual way. In 1825 he published what purported to be the dramatic works of a Spanish lady, Clara Gazul, with a preface stating circumstantially how the supposed translator, one Joseph L'Estrange, had met the gifted poetess at Gibraltar. This was followed by a still more audacious and still more successful *supercherie*. In 1827 appeared a small book entitled *La Guzla* (the anagram of Gazul), and giving itself out as translated from the Illyrian of a certain Hyacinthe Maglanovich. This book, which has greater formal merit than *Clara Gazul*, is said to have taken in Sir John Bowring, a competent Slav scholar, the Russian poet Poushkin, and some German authorities, although not only had it no original, but, as MÉRIMÉE declares, a few words of Illyrian and a book or two of travels and topography were the author's only materials. In the next year appeared a short dramatic romance, *La Jacquerie*, in which all MÉRIMÉE's characteristics are visible—his extraordinary faculty of local and historical colour, his command of language, his grim irony, and a certain predilection for tragic and terrible subjects which was one of his numerous points of contact with the men of the Renaissance. This in its turn was followed by a still better piece, the *Chronique de Charles IX.*, which stands towards the 16th century much as the *Jacquerie* does towards the Middle Ages. All these works were to a certain extent second-hand, being either directly imitated or prompted by a course of reading on a particular subject. But they exhibited all the future literary qualities of the author save the two chiefest, his wonderfully severe and almost classical style, and his equally classical solidity and stateness of construction. For the latter there was not much opportunity in their subjects, and the former required a certain maturity and self-discipline which

MÉRIMÉE had not yet given to himself. These were, however, displayed fully in the famous Corsican story of *Colomba*, published in the momentous year 1830. This, all things considered, is perhaps MÉRIMÉE's best tale.

He had already obtained a considerable position in the civil service, and after the revolution of July he was *chef de cabinet* to two different ministers. He was then appointed to the more congenial post of inspector of historical monuments. MÉRIMÉE was a born archaeologist, combining linguistic faculty of a very unusual kind with the accurate scholarship which does not always accompany it, with remarkable historical appreciation, and with a sincere love for the arts of design and construction, in the former of which he had some practical skill. In his official capacity he published numerous reports, some of which, with other similar pieces, have been republished in his works. He also devoted himself to history proper during the latter years of the July monarchy, and published the numerous essays and works of no great length, chiefly on Spanish, Russian, and ancient Roman history. He did not, however, neglect novel writing during this period, and numerous short tales, almost without exception masterpieces, appeared, chiefly in the *Revue de Paris*. He travelled a good deal, both for his own amusement and on official errands; and in one of his journeys to Spain, about the middle of Louis Philippe's reign, he made an acquaintance destined to influence his future life not a little—that of Madame de Montijo, mother of the future empress Eugénie. MÉRIMÉE, though in manner and language the most cynical of men, was a devoted friend, and shortly before the accession of Napoleon III. he had occasion to show this. His friend Libri was accused of having stolen valuable manuscripts and books from French libraries, and MÉRIMÉE took his part so warmly that he was actually sentenced to and underwent fine and imprisonment. He had been elected of the Academy in 1844, and also of the Academy of Inscriptions, of which he was a prominent member. Between 1840 and 1850 he wrote more tales, the chief of which were *Arsène Guillot* and *Carmen*.

The empire made a considerable difference in MÉRIMÉE's life. He was not a very ardent politician, but all his sympathies were against democracy, and he had therefore no reason to object to the Bonapartist rule, especially as his habitual cynicism and his irreligious prejudices made legitimism distasteful to him. But the marriage of Napoleon III. with the daughter of Madame de Montijo at once enlisted what was always the strongest of MÉRIMÉE's sympathies—the sympathy of personal friendship—on the emperor's side. He was made a senator, and continued to exercise his archaeological functions; but his most important rôle was that of a constant and valued private friend of both the "master and mistress of the house," as he calls the emperor and empress in his letters. He was occasionally charged with a kind of irregular diplomacy, and once, in the matter of the emperor's *César*, he had to pay the penalty frequently exacted from great men of letters by their political or social superiors who are ambitious of literary reputation. But for the most part he was strictly the "ami de la maison." At the Tuileries, at Compiègne, at Biarritz, he was a constant though not always a very willing guest, and his influence over the empress was very considerable and was fearlessly exerted, though he used to call himself, in imitation of Scarron, "le bouffon de sa majesté." His occupations during the last twenty years of his life were numerous and important, though rather nondescript. He found, however, time for not a few more tales, of which more will be said presently, and for two correspondences, which are not the least of his literary achievements, while they have an extraordinary interest of matter. One of these consists

of the letters which have been published as *Lettres à une Inconnue*, the other of the letters addressed to Sir Antonio Panizzi, the late librarian of the British Museum. Various, though idle and rather impertinent, conjectures have been made as to the identity of the *inconnue* just mentioned. It is sufficient to say that the acquaintance extended over many years, that it partook at one time of the character of love, at another of that of simple friendship, and that Mérimée is exhibited under the most surprisingly diverse lights, most of them more or less amiable, and all interesting. The correspondence with Panizzi has somewhat less personal interest. Mérimée made the acquaintance originally by a suggestion that his correspondent should buy for the Museum some MSS. which were in the possession of Stendhal's sister, and for some years it was chiefly confined to correspondence. But Mérimée often visited England, where he had many friends (among whom the late Mr. Ellice of Glengarry was the chief), and certain similarities of taste drew him closer to Panizzi personally, while during part of the empire the two served as the channel for a kind of unofficial diplomacy between the emperor and certain English statesmen. These letters are full of shrewd *aperçus* on the state of Europe at different times. Both series abound in gossip, in amusing anecdotes, in sharp literary criticism, while both contain evidences of a cynical and Rabelaisian or Swiftian humour which was very strong in Mérimée. This characteristic is said to be so prominent in a correspondence with another friend, which now lies in the library at Avignon, that there is but little chance of its ever being printed. A fourth collection of letters, of much inferior extent and interest, has been printed by M. Blaise de Bury under the title of *Lettres à une autre Inconnue*. In the latter years of his life Mérimée suffered very much from ill health. It was necessary for him to pass all his winters at Cannes, where his constant companions were two aged English ladies, friends of his mother. The terrible year found him completely broken in health, and anticipating the worst for France. He lived long enough to see his fears realized, and to express his grief in some last letters, and he died on September 23, 1870.

Mérimée's character (which has been unwarrantably slandered by those to whom political differences or his sarcastic intolerance of "pose" in literature made him obnoxious) was a peculiar and in some respects an unfortunate one, but by no means unintelligible, and perhaps in a minor degree not uncommon. Partly by temperament, partly it is said owing to some childish experience, when he discovered that he had been duped and determined never to be so again, not least owing to the example of Beyle, who was a friend of his family, and of whom he saw much, Mérimée appears at a comparatively early age to have imposed upon himself as a duty the maintenance of an attitude of sceptical indifference and sarcastic criticism. He certainly succeeded. Although, as has been said, a man of singularly warm and affectionate feelings, he obtained the credit of being a cold-hearted cynic; and, although he was both independent and disinterested, he was abused as a hanger-on and toad-eater of the imperial court. Both imputations were wholly undeserved, and indeed were prompted to a great extent by the resentment felt by his literary equals on the other side at the cool ridicule with which he met them. But he deserved in some of the bad as well as many of the good senses of the term the phrase which we have applied to him of a man of the Renaissance. He had the warm partisanship and amiability towards friends and the scorpion-like sting for his foes, he had the ardent delight in learning and especially in matters of art and belles lettres, he had the scepticism, the voluptuousness, the curious delight in the contemplation of the horrible, which marked the men of letters of the humanist period. Like them he was a man of the world, and a man who without any baseness liked a king's palace better than a philosopher's hovel. Like them he had an acute judgment in matters of business, and like them a singular consciousness of the nothingness of things. Even his literary work has this Renaissance character. It is tolerably extensive, amounting to some seventeen or eighteen volumes, but its bulk is not great for a life which was not short, and which was occupied at least nominally in little else. About a third of it consists of the letters already mentioned, which will always be to those who delight in personal literature the most attractive part, and which, though in a fragmentary fashion, are really important

as throwing side lights on history. Rather more than another third consists of the official work which has been already alluded to—reports, essays, short historical sketches, the chief of which latter is a history of Pedro the Cruel, and another of the curious pretender known in Russian story as the false Demetrius. Some of the literary essays, such as those on Beyle, on Turguénief, &c., where a personal element enters, are excellent. Against others and against the larger historical sketches—admirable as they are—M. Taine's criticism that they want life has some force. They are, however, all marked by Mérimée's admirable style, by his sound and accurate scholarship, his strong intellectual grasp of whatever he handled, his cool unprejudiced views, his marvellous faculty of designing and proportioning the treatment of his work. It is, however, in the remaining third of his work, consisting entirely of tales either in narrative or in dramatic form, and especially in the former, that his full power is perceived. He translated a certain number of things (chiefly from the Russian); but his fame does not rest on these, on his already-mentioned youthful supercherries, or on his later semi-dramatic works. There remain about a score of tales extending in point of composition over exactly forty years, and in length from that of *Colomba*, the longest, which fills about one hundred and fifty pages, to that of *L'Enlèvement de la Redoute*, which fills just half a dozen. They are unquestionably the best things of their kind written during the century, the only *nouvelles* that can challenge comparison with them being the very best of Gautier, and one or two of Balzac. The motives are sufficiently different. In *Colomba* and *Mateo Falcone*, the Corsican point of honour is drawn on; in *Carmen* (written apparently after reading Borrow's Spanish books), the gipsy character; in *La Vénus d'Ille* and *Lokis* (two of the finest of all), certain grisly superstitions, in the former case that known in a milder form as the ring given to Venus, in the latter a variety of the were-wolf fancy. *Arsène Guillot* is a singular satire full of sarcastic pathos on popular morality and religion; *La Chambre Bleue*, an 18th-century *conte*, worthy of Crébillon for grace and wit, and superior to him in delicacy; *The Capture of the Redoubt* just mentioned is a perfect piece of description; *L'Abbé Aubain* is again satirical; *La Double Méprise* (the authorship of which was objected to Mérimée when he was elected of the Academy) is an exercise in analysis strongly impregnated with the spirit of Stendhal, but better written than anything of that writer's. These stories, with his letters, assure Mérimée's place in literature at the very head of the French prose writers of the century. He had undertaken an edition of Brantôme for the Bibliothèque Elzévirienne, but it was never completed.

Mérimée's works have only been gradually published since his death. The latest, *The Letters to Panizzi*, which have also appeared in English, bears date 1881. There is as yet no uniform or handsome edition, but almost everything is obtainable in the collections of MM. Charpentier and Calmann Lévy. (G. S.A.)

MERINO. See SHEEP and WOOL.

MERIONETH (Welsh *Meirionydd*), a maritime county of North Wales, is bounded N. by Carnarvon and Denbigh, S.E. by Denbigh and Montgomery, and W. by Cardigan Bay. It is triangular in shape, its greatest length north-east to south-west being 45 miles, and its greatest breadth north-west to south-east about 30 miles. The area is 385,291 acres, or about 600 square miles. Next to Carnarvon, Merioneth is the most mountainous county in Wales. If the scenery is less bold and striking than that of Carnarvon, it excels it in richness, variety, and picturesque beauty. Its lofty mountains are interpenetrated by dark deep dells or smiling vales. The outlines of its rugged crags are softened and adorned by rich foliage. The sea views are frequently fine, and rivers, lakes, and waterfalls add a romantic charm to the valleys. The highest summits in the county are the picturesque Cader Idris (which divides into three peaks,—one, Pen-y-Gadair, having an altitude of 2914 feet), Aran Fawddwy (2955), Arenig-fawr (2818), Moel-wyn (2566), Rhobell-fawr (2360). The finest valleys are those of Dyfi, Dysyni, Talyllyn, Mawddach, and Festiniog. The river Dyfrdwy or Dee rises 10 miles north-west of Bala, and, after passing through Bala Lake, flows north-east by Corwen to Denbighshire. The Dyfi rises in a small lake near Aran Fawddwy, and expands into an estuary of Cardigan Bay. The Mawddach or Maw, from the north of Aran Fawddwy, has a course of 12 miles south-west, during which it is joined by several other streams. The Dwyrhyd and other streams unite in forming the estuary of Traeth Bach. The finest waterfalls are the

Rhaiadr-y-Glyn near Corwen, Rhaiadr Du, and Pistyll Cain, the latter 150 feet high. The lakes are very numerous, but small, the largest being Bala Lake, or Pimblemere (in Welsh, Llyn Tegid, fair lake), 4 miles long by 1 broad, and Llyn Mwyngil (lake in a sweet nook) in the vale of Talyllyn. Both are much frequented by anglers. On account of frequent indentations the coast-line is about 100 miles long. Sandy beaches intervene between the rocky shores. Frequent shoals and sandbanks render navigation very dangerous. There are only two harbours of importance, Barmouth and Aberdovey.

A mountain tract of the county 15 miles from north to south by 10 from east to west, stretching from the coast inland, is of the Cambrian age, composed of grits, quartzose, and slates, and comprising the Merionethshire anticlinal. This tract is enclosed on the north, east, and south by the Menevian, Lingula, Tremadoc, and Arenig beds, which are pierced by numerous dykes and intrusive masses, mostly greenstone. Rhobell-fawr is one of the greatest igneous masses in the whole area of the Lingula beds. The Arenig beds are interstratified with and overlaid by accumulations of volcanic ashes, felspathic traps, or lava flows, which form the rugged heights of Cader Idris, the Arans, the Arenigs, Manod, and Moel-wyn; and these are in turn overlaid by the Llandeilo and Bala beds, the latter including the Bala limestone. Extensive slate quarries are worked near Festiniog, mostly underground, in strata of the Llandeilo age, giving employment to about 4000 men. Gold, lead, copper, and manganese have been obtained in various places.

Climate and Agriculture.—The climate varies much with the elevation, in some places being bleak and cold, and in others remarkably equable and genial. At Aberdovey it is proverbially mild, and the myrtle grows in the open air. All attempts to introduce fruits have proved abortive in most parts of the county. The soil is generally thin and poor, with fertile tracts in the valleys. A great portion of the moss has been reclaimed within late years. According to the agricultural returns for 1882, there were 154,406 acres, or considerably less than half the total area, under cultivation. Of this as much as 119,133 acres were permanent pasture, and 13,755 under rotation grasses. Of the 17,312 acres under corn crops, 11,232 were under oats and 4807 under barley. Potatoes occupied 2392 acres, and turnips only 1496 acres. The area under woods extended to 15,049 acres.

The total number of horses in 1882 was 6088. A breed of ponies is peculiar to this county and Montgomeryshire. The rearing of horned cattle and dairy farming are largely carried on, but the number of cattle (37,643) is considerably under the average of Wales generally. On the other hand the number of sheep in 1882 was 400,553, a larger number than in any other county of Wales, and much beyond the general average in the principality. They are a small hardy breed, which grow heavy fleeces. Goats frequent the loftier crags.

According to the latest return the number of proprietors was 1695, possessing 303,374 acres, with a gross annual value of £183,253. Of the owners 1044, or 62 per cent., possessed less than 1 acre, the average extent of the properties being 189 acres, and the average value per acre a little over 12s. There were ten proprietors who possessed over 5000 acres, viz., Sir W. W. Wynne, 20,295; R. J. L. Price, 17,718; T. P. Lloyd, 16,975; Mrs Kirkby, 13,410; Hon. C. H. Wynne, 10,504; A. J. G. Corbet, 9347; Sir E. Buckley, 8788; W. E. Oakeley, 6018; W. O. Gore, 5497; and R. M. Rickards, 5701.

Manufactures.—Woollen goods are manufactured in various places, especially at Dolgelly. They are principally coarse druggets, kerseymeres, and flannels. The knitting of stockings was a great industry at the close of last century, the value of the sales at Bala being estimated at from £17,000 to £19,000 annually.

Railways.—The Cambrian Railway skirts the coast from Portmadoc to Aberdovey. At Barmouth Junction a branch of the same crosses to Dolgelly, where it is joined by a branch of the Great Western Railway. Another branch of the Great Western unites Bala and Festiniog, and the latter place has railway connexion both with Llandudno Junction and with Portmadoc.

Administration and Population.—Merionethshire comprises five hundreds and thirty-three civil parishes. It has one court of quarter sessions, and the number of petty sessional divisions is six. Ecclesiastically it is partly in the diocese of Bangor, partly in that of St Asaph. The county returns one member to parliament. There is

no municipal or parliamentary borough. The towns returned in 1881 as urban sanitary districts are Bala (1653), Barmouth (1512), Dolgelly (2457), Festiniog (11,272), and Towyn (3363). Since 1801 the population has nearly doubled. From 29,506 in that year it had increased in 1851 to 38,963, in 1871 to 46,598, and in 1881 to 64,793, of whom 27,576 were males, and 27,217 females.

History and Antiquities.—Originally Merioneth belonged to the territory of the Ordovices, and under the Romans it was included in *Britannia Secunda*. There are many Celtic, Roman, and mediæval remains. Caer Drewyn on the Dee, near Corwen, was a British camp. There are numerous cromlechs in various parts of the county, especially near the sea-coast. The *Via Occidentalis* of the Romans passed through Merioneth from south to north, and at Tomen-y-Mur was joined by a branch of the South Watling Street, the Roman station of Heriri Mons. The immense ruin of Castell-y-Bere was originally one of the largest castles in Wales, but has not been occupied since the time of Edward I. During the Wars of the Roses the castle of Harlech, still a fine ruin, was held by the Lancastrians, and was the last in Wales to surrender. Of ecclesiastical remains the most important is Cymmer Abbey, founded by the Cistercians in 1198, a very fine ruin containing architecture of various periods from Norman to Perpendicular. There are numerous interesting old churches.

MERLIN. See FALCON.

MERMAIDS and MERMEN, in the popular mythology of England and Scotland, are a class of beings more or less completely akin to man, who have their dwelling in the sea, but are capable of living on land and of entering into social relations with men and women.¹ They are easily identified, at least in some of their most important aspects, with the Old German Meriminni or Meerfrau, the Icelandic Hafgufa, Margygr, and Marmennill (mod. Marbendill), the Danish Hafmand or Maremind, the Irish Merrow or Merruach, the Marie-Morgan of Brittany and the Morforwyn of Wales;² and they have various points of resemblance to the vodyany or water-sprite and the rusalka or stream-fairy of Russian mythology. The typical mermaid (who is much more frequently described than the merman) has the head and body of a woman, usually of exceeding loveliness, but below the waist is fashioned like a fish with scales and fins. Her hair is long and beautiful, and she is often represented, like the Russian rusalka, as combing it with one hand while in the other she holds a looking-glass. At other times, like the rusalka, she is seen engaged in the more prosaic occupation of washing or beating clothes; but this, as, for example, in Hugh Miller's terrible Loch Slin legend, is a sign of some impending calamity. For a time at least a mermaid may become to all appearance an ordinary human being; and from a very striking Irish legend ("The Overflowing of Lough Neagh and Liban the Mermaid," in Joyce's *Old Celtic Romances*) it is evident that a human being may also for a time be transformed into a mermaid.

The mermaid legends, both English and other, may be grouped as follows. A. *A mermaid or mermaids either voluntarily or under compulsion reveal things that are about to happen.* Thus the two mermaids (merewip) Hadeburc and Sigelint, in the *Nibelungenlied*, disclose his future course to the hero Hagen, who, having got possession of their garments, which they had left on the shore, compels them to pay ransom in this way. According to Resenius, a mermaid appeared to a peasant of Samsøe, foretold the birth of a prince, and moralized on the evils of intem-

¹ The name *mermaid* is compounded of the A.-S. *mere*, a lake, and *mægd*, a maid; but, though *mere wif* occurs in *Beowulf*, *mere-maid* does not appear till the Middle English period (Chaucer, *Roman of the Rose*, &c.). In Cornwall the fishermen say *merry-maids* and *merry-men*. The connexion with the sea rather than with inland waters appears to be of later origin. "The Mermaid of Martin Meer" (Roby's *Traditions of Lancashire*, vol. ii.) is an example of the older force of the word; and such "meer-women" are known to the country-folk in various parts of England (e.g., at Newport in Shropshire, where the town is some day to be drowned by the woman's agency).

² See Rhys, "Welsh Fairy Tales," in *Y Cymmrodor*, 1831, 1882.

perance, &c. (*Kong Frederichs den andens Krønike*, Copenhagen, 1680, p. 302). B. A mermaid imparts supernatural powers to a human being. Thus in the beautiful story of "The Old Man of Cury" (in Hunt's *Popular Romances of the West of England*, 1871) the old man, instead of silver and gold, obtains the power of doing good to his neighbours by breaking the spells of witchcraft, chasing away diseases, and discovering thieves. John Reid, the Cromarty shipmaster, was more selfish,—his "wishes three" being that neither he nor any of his friends should perish by the sea, that he should be uninterruptedly successful in everything he undertook, and that the lady who scorned his love should scorn it no more. C. A mermaid has some one under her protection, and for wrong done to her ward exacts a terrible penalty. One of the best and most detailed examples of this class is the story of the "Mermaid's Vengeance" in Mr Hunt's book already quoted. D. A mermaid falls in love with a human being, lives with him as his lawful wife for a time, and then, some compact being unwittingly or intentionally broken by him, departs to her true home in the sea. Here, if its mermaid form be accepted, the typical legend is undoubtedly that of *Melusina*, which, being made the subject of a full-fledged romance by Jean d'Arras, became one of the most popular folk-books of Europe, appearing in Spanish, German, Dutch, and Bohemian versions. *Melusina*, whose name may be a far-off echo of the *Mylitta* (*Venus*) of the Phœnicians, was married to Raymond of Lusignan, and was long afterwards proudly recognized as one of their ancestors by the Luxembourg, Rohan, and Sassenay families, and even by the emperor Henry VII. Her story will be found in Baring Gould's *Myths of the Middle Ages*. E. A mermaid falls in love with a man, and entices him to go and live with her below the sea; or a merman wins the affection or captures the person of an earthborn maiden. This form of legend is very common, and has naturally been a favourite with poets. Macphail of Colonsay successfully rejects the allurements of the mermaid of Corrievrekin, and comes back after long years of trial to the maid of Colonsay.¹ The Danish ballads are especially full of the theme; as "Agnete and the Merman," an antecedent of Matthew Arnold's "Forsaken Merman"; the "Deceitful Merman, or Marstig's Daughter"; and the finely detailed story of Rosmer Hafmand (No. 49 in Grimm).

In relation to man the mermaid is usually of evil issue if not of evil intent. She has generally to be bribed or compelled to utter her prophecy or bestow her gifts, and whether as wife or paramour she brings disaster in her train. In itself her sea-life is often represented as one of endless delights, but at other times a mournful mystery and sadness broods over it. The fish-tail, which in popular fancy forms the characteristic feature of the mermaid, is really of secondary importance; for the true Teutonic mermaid—probably a remnant of the great cult of the Vanir—had no fish-tail;² and this symbolic appendage occurs in such remote mythological regions as to give no clue to historical connexion. The Tritons, and, in the later representations, the Sirens of classical antiquity, the Phœnician Dagon, and the Chaldean Oannes are all well-known examples; the Ottawas and other American Indians have their man-fish and woman-fish (Jones, *Traditions of the North American Indians*, 1830); and the Chinese tell stories not unlike our own about the sea-women of their southern seas (Dennis, *Folklore of China*, 1875).

Quasi-historical instances of the appearance or capture of

¹ See Leyden's "The Mermaid," in Sir Walter Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*.

² Karl Blind, "New Finds in Shetlandic and Welsh Folk-Lore," in *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1882.

mermaids are common enough,³ and serve, with the frequent use of the figure on signboards and coats of arms, to show how thoroughly the myth had taken hold of the popular imagination.⁴ A mermaid captured at Bangor, on the shore of Belfast Lough, in the 6th century, was not only baptized, but admitted into some of the old calendars as a saint under the name of Murgan (*Notes and Queries*, Oct. 21, 1882); and Stowe (*Annales*, under date 1187) relates how a man-fish was kept for six months and more in the castle of Orford in Suffolk. As showing how legendary material may gather round a simple fact, the oft-told story of the sea-woman of Edam is particularly interesting. The oldest authority, Joh. Gerbrandus a Leydis, a Carmelite monk (ob. 1504), tells (*Annales*, &c., Frankfurt, 1620) how in 1403 a wild woman came through a breach in the dike into Purmerlake, and, being found by some Edam milkmaids, was ultimately taken to Haarlem and lived there many years. Nobody could understand her, but she learned to spin, and was wont to adore the cross. Oeca Scharlensis (*Chronijk van Friesland*, Leeuw., 1597) reasons that she was not a fish because she could spin, and she was not a woman because she could live in the sea; and thus in due course she got fairly established as a genuine mermaid. Vosmaer, who has carefully investigated the matter, enumerates forty writers who have repeated the story, and shows that the older ones speak only of a woman (see "Beschr. van de zoogen. Meermin der stad Haarlem," in *Verh. van de Holl. Maatsch. van K. en Wet.*, part 23, No. 1786). As for the stuffed mermaids which have figured from the days of Bartholomew Fair downwards, it is enough to mention that exhibited in the Turf Coffee-house, London, in 1822, and carefully drawn by Cruikshank (compare Chambers, *Book of Days*).

The best account of the mermaid-myth is in Baring Gould's *Myths of the Middle Ages*. See also, besides works already mentioned, Pontoppidan, who in his logically credulous way collects much matter to prove the existence of mermaids; Maillet, *Telliamed*, Hague, 1755; Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, i. 404, and *Aldân. Heldenlieder*, 1811; Waldron's *Description and Train's Hist. and Stat. Acc. of the Isle of Man*; Folklore Society's *Record*, vol. ii.; Napier, *Hist. and Trad. Tales connected with the South of Scotland*; Sébillot, *Traditions de la Haute Bretagne*, 1882, and *Contes des Marins*, 1882. (H. A. W.)

MEROE, in classical geography (Strabo, xvii. 2, 2; Pliny, ii. 73, v. 10; Ptol., p. 201), was the metropolis of Æthiopia, situated on an island of the same name between the Nile and the Astaboras (Atbara). The "island" is only an inaccurate name for the fertile plain between the two rivers. This Meroe, first mentioned by Herodotus (ii. 29 sq.), succeeded an older Ethiopian kingdom of Napata lower down the Nile, originally subject to and civilized from Egypt, but which afterwards became independent and even sent forth an Ethiopian dynasty to reign in Egypt, to which the So and Tirhaka of the Bible belonged (see ETHIOPIA). The name of Meroe in the form Merawi is now given to Napata. The later Meroe retained its independence when Egypt fell under foreign sovereigns. Diodorus (iii. 6) describes it as entirely controlled by the priesthood till a native prince Ergamenes destroyed the sacerdotal caste in the time of Ptolemy II. Queen Candace (Acts viii. 27) was probably sovereign of Meroe; see Lepsius's *Letters Eng. tr.*, pp. 196, 206; and comp. Strabo, xvii. 1, 54 for

³ Compare the strange account of the quasi-human creatures found in the Nile given by Theophrastus, *Historia*, viii. 16, pp. 299-300 of Bekker's ed.

⁴ See the paper in *Jour. Brit. Arch. Ass.*, xxviii., 1882, by H. S. Cuming, who points out that mermaids or mermen occur in the arms of Earls Caledon, Howth, and Sandwich, Viscounts Boyne and Hood, Lord Lytton, and Scott of Abbotsford, as well as in those of th. Ellis, Byron, Phené, Skeffington, and other families. The English heralds represent the creatures with a single tail, the French and German heralds frequently with a double one.

Queen Candace in Augustus's time when the Romans under Petronius advanced to Napata. Meroe was visited by Greek merchants; and the astronomical expedition of Eratosthenes determined its latitude with great accuracy. An exploring party in the reign of Nero found that the country below Meroe, formerly the site of many towns, had become almost wholly waste (Pliny, vi. 29). From the 6th to the 14th century of our era the Christian (Jacobite) realm of Dongola occupied the place of the older kingdom. The ruins of Meroe and Napata were fully explored by Lepsius in 1844, and the monuments are pictured in his *Denkmäler*.

MERSEBURG, the chief town of a district of the same name in the Prussian province of Saxony, is situated on the river Saale, 10 miles to the south of Halle and 17 to the west of Leipsic. It consists of a quaint and irregularly built old town, with two extensive suburbs, and contains six churches and several schools and charitable institutions. The cathedral is an interesting old pile, with a Romanesque choir of the 11th, a transept of the 13th, and a Late Gothic nave of the 16th century. Among its numerous monuments is that of Rudolph of Swabia, who fell in 1080 in an encounter with his rival Henry IV. It contains two paintings by Lucas Cranach. Contiguous to the cathedral is the Gothic chateau, formerly the residence of the Saxon princes and the bishops of Merseburg. The town-house, the post-office, and the "ständehaus" for the meetings of the provincial estates are also noteworthy buildings. The industries of Merseburg consist of the manufacture of cardboard and coloured paper, dyeing, glue-boiling, machine-making, calico-printing, tanning, and brewing. Its population in 1880 was 15,205.

Merseburg (i.e., "march-town") is one of the oldest towns in Germany. From the 9th century down to 1007 it was the capital of a countship of its own name, and from 968 to 1543 it was the seat of a bishop. In the 10th, 11th, and 12th centuries it was a favourite residence of the German emperors, and at this time its fairs enjoyed the importance afterwards inherited by those of Leipsic. The town was repeatedly visited by destructive conflagrations in the 14th to 17th centuries, and also suffered severely during the Thirty Years' War. From 1656 to 1788 it was the residence of the dukes of Saxe-Merseburg. The great victory gained by the emperor Henry I. over the Huns in 933 is believed to have been fought on the Keuschberg near Merseburg.

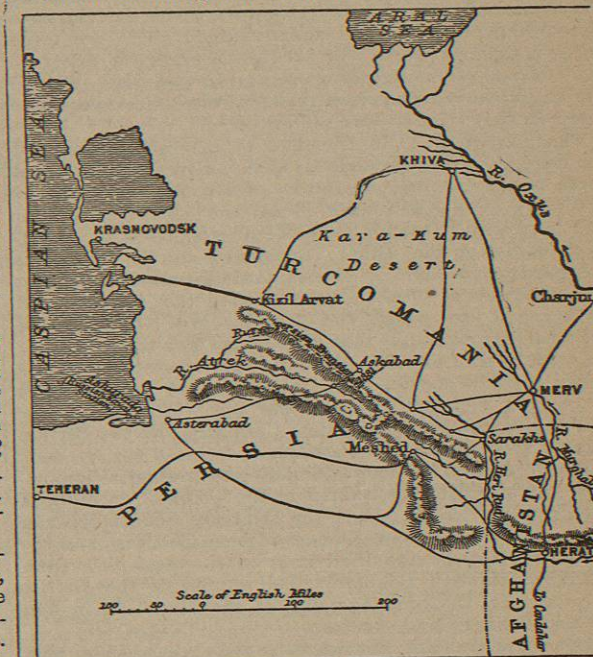
MERTHYR TYDFIL, or MERTHYR TYDVIL, a parliamentary borough and market-town of Glamorganshire, South Wales, is situated in a bleak and hilly region on the river Taff, and on several railway lines, 25 miles north-north-west of Cardiff and 30 east-north-east of Swansea. The town, which consists principally of the houses of workmen, is for the most part meanly and irregularly built, and at one time, on account of its defective sanitary arrangements, was frequently subject to epidemics of great severity. Within recent years great improvements have taken place, and the town now possesses both a plentiful supply of pure water and an excellent system of sewage. There are also some good streets with handsome shops, while in the suburbs there are a number of private residences and villas inhabited by the wealthier classes. Apart from its extensive iron and steel works, the town possesses no feature of interest. It is situated in the centre of the South Wales coal basin, and the rich coal-mines in the vicinity supply great facilities for the iron industries. At Merthyr Tydfil, which is said to have received its name from the martyrdom of a British saint Tydfil, there were smelting-works at a very early period, but none of any importance until 1755. From about forty years ago until 1875 the manufacture of bar iron developed with great rapidity, but since then the production of steel has largely taken its place. The borough returns two members to parliament. The population of the urban sanitary district in 1871 was 51,949, and in 1881 it was 48,857; the population of the

parliamentary borough, which includes the parish of Aberdare and parts of the parishes of Llanwonno and Merthyr Tydfil and of Vainor (Brecon), and has an area of 29,954 acres, was in the same years 97,020 and 91,347.

MERV, MERU, or MAOUR,¹ a district of Central Asia, situated on the border-land of Iran and Turan.

The oasis of Merv lies in the midst of a desert, in about 37° 30' N. lat. and 62° E. long. It is about 250 miles from Herat, 170 from Charjuï on the Oxus, 360 from Khiva, and 175 from Gawars, the nearest point in the newly acquired (1881) Russian territory of Akhal.

The great chain of mountains which, under the name of Paropamisus and Hindu-Kush, extends across the Asiatic continent from the Caspian to China, and forms the line of ethnic demarcation between the Turanian and Indo-Germanic races, is interrupted at a single point; that point is on the same longitude with Merv. Through or near the



Neighbourhood of Merv.

trouée or gap which nature has created flow northward in parallel courses the rivers Heri-rud (Tejend) and Murghab, until they lose themselves in the desert of Kara-kum—that large expanse of waste, known also as Turcomania, which spreads at the northern foot of the mountains, and stretches from the lower Oxus to the Caspian.

Whether as a satrapy of Darius and subsequently as a province of Alexander, whether as the home of the Parthian race, whether as a bulwark against the destructive waves of Mongol invasion, or later as the glacis of Persian Khorasan, the valleys of those rivers—the district of Merv

¹ Merv is the modern Persian name. The river *Margus*, now the Murghab, on which was built the ancient city, is derived from *Margu*, the name of the province as recorded in the Behistan inscriptions of Darius. Spiegel connects the name *Margu* with old Bactrian *merogho*, bird, in allusion to the numerous swarms of birds that gather there. So, too, the river name Murghab means bird-water. The district appears to have been known in the 5th century as Mar-i-rud, so that the river was then the Marv. The name *Merv* for the district occurs in the Armenian geography ascribed to Moses of Khorene, written probably in the 7th century (ed. Patkanoff). Maour is the Uzbek name, and of comparatively recent date.