

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

FIRE PROOF PAPER.—A fire-proof paper is said to have been invented in England, consisting of vegetable fibre, one part; asbestos, two parts, borax, one-tenth part; and alum, two-tenths of a part. The principal ingredient in the ink to be used with this incombustible paper is graphic.

THE years between 17 and 20 are, in most cases, the best years of a woman's life for uninterrupted study. Her health should then be vigorous; she should then have the enthusiasm of youth; should not be burdened by social duties or domestic cares; should be prepared for the college course by her training in the public or in private schools, and should find those last years of study years of thorough enjoyment as well as of increasing mental and physical strength.

In Hesse a very old custom was that of punishing a hen-pecked husband by removing the roof of his house, on the ground that "a man who allows his wife to rule at home does not deserve any protection against wind and weather." If two women fought in public they were each put in a sort of closed sentry-box, which only left their heads exposed, and than posted opposite to each other in the market-place, where they remained for an hour face to face, but unable to use their hands or feet.

STANDARD WEIGHTS.—For grain, seed, etc., per bushel:

Wheat should weigh.....	60 pounds
Corn, shelled.....	56 "
Corn, on the cob.....	70 "
Rye.....	58 "
Oats.....	38 "
Barley.....	46 "
Buckwheat.....	52 "
Irish potatoes.....	60 "
Sweet potatoes.....	50 "
Onions.....	57 "
Beans.....	60 "
Clover seed.....	64 "
Timothy seed.....	45 "
Flax seed.....	45 "
Hemp seed.....	45 "
Blue grass seed.....	14 "
Dried peaches.....	38 "

DETECTING ARSENIC.—Professor Hager recommends the following method for detecting this dangerous class of arsenical colors, which we may remark, are not confined to green alone, for red sometimes contains arsenic: A piece of the paper is soaked in a concentrated solution of sodium nitrate (Chili saltpetre) in equal parts of alcohol and water, and allowed to dry. The dried paper is burned in a shallow porcelain dish. Usually it only smoulders, producing no flame. Water is poured over the ashes, and caustic potash added to a strongly alkaline reaction, then boiled and filtered. The filtrate is acidified with dilute sulphuric acid, and permanganate of potash is added slowly as long as the red color disappears or changes to a yellow brown upon warming, and finally a slight excess of ammonium solution is present. If the liquid becomes turbid, it is to be filtered. After cooling, more dilute sulphuric acid is added, and also a piece of pure clean zinc, and the flask closed with a cork split in two places. In one split of the cork a piece of paper moistened in silver nitrate is fastened, in the other a strip of parchment paper dipped in sugar of lead. If arsenic is present, the silver soon blackens. The lead paper is merely a check on the presence of sulphuric acid. According to Hager, the use of permanganate of potash is essential, otherwise the silver paper may be blackened when no arsenic is present.

UNDER THE SURFACE.—A glance into what is called "society" will show how unreal everything around us is, and that many of its attractions turn out to be nothing more nor less than social mirages, that cannot bear approach, and which entirely vanish when one comes in close contact with them. There is, everywhere we go, a tendency towards keeping up false appearances. Conventionalities of society are half of them founded upon hypocrisy and built up with affectation. Every one affects a hatred of humbug, but not a day passes that it is not brought into play in some form or other, either in a greater or less degree. A meets B, whom he wishes at the other end of the globe, and dislikes beyond measure; but watch them when they make their salutations, and it would appear that the terms in which they greet each other are indicative of the warmest friendship. Mrs. C. is perpetually applying the epithet "dear" to Mrs. D., when in her company; but words are not sufficient to express her feelings of dislike for the "dear creature" the moment Mrs. D.'s back is turned. The apparently amiable and pleasant man in society very often is found to be a very brute at the domestic hearth. The demonstrative pair, who in public, apparently, have no other object but to live for each other, no thought but of each other, whose affection is the subject of general remark, and who outwardly continue the loving cooing of the honeymoon, in the privacy of their homes lead the most miserable cat-and-dog life, and for days together are not on speaking terms. The pleasant smiles and loving epithets, which have deceived the world, are seemingly dropped at the thresholds of their houses, or put aside with the well brushed hat or latest sweet thing in bonnets, the scowl of anger and the nagging tongue being assumed for domestic purposes. All that we have described are every day incidents which happen among people who pride

themselves upon the fact that they exist in our matter-of-fact age.

FIRE-PROOF PARIS.—A correspondent, who has been studying the cause of the comparative immunity of Paris from fire, says that it is due to "a simple principle of construction." He states the reason as follows: "In building it is understood that there shall be no air-spaces left between floors, or between the plaster of walls and the studding or wall itself; and that the roof must be covered with tile, slate, or metal. There is not such an incendiary thing as a wooden or tar-and-gravel roof in Paris, and, for aught I know, in all France. The spaces between the floors must be filled with cement or plaster-of-Paris, which is here cheap and abundant, and the wooded floors must rest close down on this cement, so that in case of fire there is no air space under the floor. The spaces between the studding in partition walls are also carefully filled up with cement, and against it the plaster is placed, so that there is no chance for fire to get between them to rush up from one story to another or to fly along between floors. When a fire breaks out it spreads so slowly in houses thus constructed that it is always quenched before doing much damage or extending to other buildings. Another precaution is intended to prevent carelessness and incendiarism, so common in American cities. If a fire, no matter how it may happen, does any damage to any other person, he has full recourse at law for all his damages and cost against the person in whose premises the fire broke out. This simple rule of equity and right makes everybody watchful and careful of fire. The gross carelessness everywhere witnessed in American cities is never seen in Paris or France. It don't pay here for a man to set fire to his stock of goods in order to get a high insurance; nor for a landlord who has an idle tenement on his hands, or bad tenants, to fire his premises for the sake of realizing on his policy of insurance; nor has any one an object in effecting large insurance. Indeed the chief insurance taken out in Paris is in the nature of an indemnity against the damage one may have to pay his neighbors in case of fire spreading from his premises to theirs.

THE ANIMAL WORLD OF ASHANTEE.—The animals of Ashantee are very numerous. Elephants, rhinoceroses, giraffes, buffaloes, deer, antelopes, sloths, civet cats, apes, monkeys, baboons, porcupines, and goats, are among the harmless kind; lions, tigers, leopards, jackals, wolves, wild boars, and wild cats among those of a ferocious sort. The rivers swarm with hippopotami and alligators of several species; some of which are eaten by the natives. A gigantic rat, an odoriferous mouse, and a small animal called arompo (man-eater), which digs up and devours dead bodies, seem to be peculiar to Ashantee. The domestic animals are the same as those of Europe, but the horse is scarce, and of bad breed and the sheep peculiar in form. Reptiles are prodigiously numerous; serpents of every size, from the enormous boa to a frightfully venomous creature, scarcely a yard long, infest not only the woods and long grass, but the dwellings of the natives, and the forts of the Europeans. Scorpions (sometimes as big as a small lobster) and centipedes—the wound from which, though not dangerous, is extremely painful—abound in every place; and toads and frogs are not only as plentiful as in Europe, but the former grow to such a size, that Bosman, when he first saw it, took it for a land tortoise. Lizards of all sizes, from the iguana downwards, including two species of cameleons, are found here. Of birds, there are pheasants, partridges, wild ducks (of a beautiful plumage), doves, crown birds, parrots, paroquets, Guinea sparrows, beccaficos, and a multitude of all kinds, great and small, many of them yet unclassified by naturalists. The water-fowl are herons, bitterns, and sea-mews; the birds of prey—eagles, kites, and a peculiar species, which, though not larger than a dove, is bolder and more rapacious than any other. A large and ugly bird, called the pookoe (of great service in destroying field-rats), is peculiar here, as is also a creature, about twice the size of a sparrow, with a remarkable hollow and piercing voice, the sounds of which is regarded by the natives as of evil omen. The general characteristic of the Ashantee birds is extreme beauty of plumage; but pleasing voices are rare among them, the nightingale and thrush being the only songsters known. Sparrows and swallows are very numerous; and the domestic owl are the same as those of Europe. The woods abound in bees; and the destructive species of ant, called termes, is so numerous and rapacious, that a sheep attacked by them during the night has been found a perfect skeleton in the morning. It is said they will attack any animal, even the most powerful and venomous serpent, and destroy him. Fireflies, dragon-flies, a fly exactly resembling the cantharides in appearance and scent, together with all the insect tribes common to the tropics, except the musquito, are found upon the coast, and in the interior. The locust is not wholly unknown, but its destructive visits are rare, owing probably to the great distance of the desert, and the intervention of high mountains between it and Ashantee. Black and hump-backed whales are numerous on the coast between September and December. Sharks are very numerous, are frequently captured, and form the most common food of the Gold Coast negroes. Other sorts of sea fish are very abundant; and the rivers are as well supplied as the sea, yielding, among others, great quantities of oysters and crabs, which feed upon the branches of mangrove and other trees, but are not good for food if the water be fresh.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

CHEESE PUDDING.—Mix two eggs with 5 oz. of cheese and half a pint of boiling milk; put into a pie dish, and bake a quarter of an hour; to be turned out and sent to table on a napkin.

ODD SOUNDS.—Boil them tender, cover them with forcemeat made with oysters, grated bread, and the yolks of two eggs. Roll them in the form of small chickens, skewer them, dredge them with flour, and bake them; serve with egg sauce.

COVERING STRAWBERRY.—Evergreen boughs are excellently adapted for covering newly planted strawberry beds, since they admit air and shield the plants from the sun and wind, which is all they require as the best conditions for wintering.

KEEPING APPLES.—Apples always keep best when protected from currents of air, which change the temperature often. A uniform temperature is best. Hence they do better in barrels headed up than exposed on shelves or in tight boxes.

SOLDER.—A correspondent of the *English Mechanic* writes: "Solder of excellent quality is to be obtained from the joints of old sardine tins or meat tins. I believe it is almost pure tin. I have not analyzed any of it, but from the way it preserves its lustre, it must be very much richer in tin than ordinary solder."

THE MEDICINAL VALUE OF THE CABBAGE LEAF.—Cabbage leaves, according to a recent article in a French medical journal, have proved of special value in disease. The leaf possesses the property of exciting suppuration in ulcers and pustules, and has thus an indirectly curative property, which, however, is thought not to consist in any principle which the leaf yields for absorption, but rather in an affinity which the leaf has for the vitiated secretions. The cure of an ulcer by these leaves, however wide spread and long-standing it may be, is without danger, and relapse is very rare.

GREEN FODDER.—A method of preserving green fodder, such as turnip tops, beet tops, or other succulent vegetables, has been in use for many years in Europe, by which this green fodder is kept in good condition for six or twelve months. A trench two or four feet deep is dug in a dry spot in the field, and the tops of the roots, carefully gathered when free from rain or dew, are thrown into it. They are very compactly pressed down, and when the pit is filled some straw is laid upon the fodder, and the earth is heaped over the whole. In this manner this product, which is generally wasted in a great measure, is utilized.

POSITION IN SLEEPING.—Sleeping rooms should always be so arranged, if possible, as to allow the head of the sleeper to be toward the north. Frequently in cases of sickness, a person will find it impossible to obtain rest if the head is in any other direction, and often a cure is retarded for a long time. A Vienna physician had a patient who was suffering from acute rheumatism, with painful cramps running from the shoulders to the fingers; and while his head was to the south he could do nothing toward his relief. On turning the bed, however, so that the head was toward the north, the patient uttered expressions of pleasure, and in a few hours a great improvement had taken place, and in a few days he was almost entirely cured. Many other cases are given by scientific persons; and people in building houses, should always have this in view.

TO SELECT EGGS.—Encircle the egg with the thumb and the forefinger of the right hand, placing it with its small end towards the tips of the thumb and finger; hold the egg close to a gaslight or the flame of a powerful lamp, and look through it, turning it round on its long axis with the left hand. If the yolk be seen in the centre of the egg, and the white be clear, the egg is newly laid and good; if the yolk be not in the centre, but towards one side or end, the egg is not quite fresh, but is eatable if the white be clear and the yolk not touching the shell; if the yolk be in contact with the shell and very opaque, the egg is unfit to eat; and, if the whole egg be opaque and dark-looking, it is rotten. Due allowance must be made for shells of more than ordinary thickness; but ninety-nine out of every hundred eggs may be sorted in this manner with certainty.

UTILIZING DUST.—An exchange paper says: "The slate dust, which accumulates in such quantity around the quarries, was until quite lately considered a waste product, and was, moreover, a source of annoyance and inconvenience to the stone workers. But it was found that by mixing it with certain ingredients, a paste could be formed which, while plastic and capable of being moulded into any shape, would become perfectly indurated and compact on drying. The compound, then, is neither more nor less than ordinary slate, supposing the latter to be possessed of the additional good qualities which have been secured. It is certainly water-tight, and is claimed to be a reliable defence against fire. At all events it would prevent falling sparks and cinders from igniting the wood work beneath, in the same manner that natural slates do. We see no reason why this liquid slate could not be so tinted by admixture of various mineral oxides as to take the place of the tessellated designs which make ordinary slate roofs, when artistically planned, so much admired. It appears that the new compound had been already adopted quite extensively in Eastern cities, and that in a quiet, business-like manner, its manufacturers have been steadily enlarging its use, while the general public, and all not immediately concerned, were ignorant of its very existence."

HUMOROUS SCRAPS.

"If there is anybody under the canister of heaven that I have in utter excrecence," says Mr. Partington, "it is the slanderer going about like a boy constructor, circulating his calomel upon honest folks."

Those old soakers never lack for arguments. Lately one replied to a temperance lecturer by the following poser: "If water rots the soles of your boots, what effect must it have on the coat of your stomach?"

It is suggested that the immense door-plates worn by the ladies on their belts might be utilized by engraving thereon the wearer's name, age, residence, fortune or expectation, and stating whether her heart is free or engaged.

THE famous wit and beauty, Lady Wortley Montague, made the most sarcastic observation ever published about her own sex. "It goes far," she said, "to reconcile me to being a woman, when I reflect that I am thus in no danger of ever marrying one."

JONES has got a wonderful dog, a trusty dog, for if he is lying on a rug, you can't get it away unless you pull it from under him; and such a watch dog—if he is lying in the passage there is no getting into the house unless you step over him. He is not a bit afraid of rats, for he is such a sagacious dog, he knows that if he lets them alone they won't trouble him. The other day he came home with a tin kettle tied to his tail, and Jones says it was quite affecting the way he smelled at it, to see if there was any thing to eat in it.

ONE day last summer a gentleman from the country hailed a cab in the Strand, but, before getting into it, drew his watch from his pocket, pointed out the time to the cabby, and said, "I shall hire you by the hour. Drive first to No. 010, Oxford Street." He entered the cab, was driven to his destination, and from a quarter-past three the unusual sight of a stout gentleman asleep in a hansom cab in Oxford Street was visible to the passers-by. At last a young "Arab" of the district addressed the Jehu—"I say, cabby, what's yer fire up to?" "You can see very well—he's asleep." "Why don't yer wake him?" "Oh, he took me by the hour!"

AN old gentleman, one evening during the recent heavy fog, was making his way from the City to dine with a friend at the Union Club, when, somewhere in the region of the Strand, he became so hopelessly involved as to be unable to ascertain his exact whereabouts. He walked on and on, until at last he found himself descending some steps, and jostled violently against a man who was ascending them. "Hallo!" said the old gentleman. "Hallo!" said the stranger. "Can you tell me where I'm going to?" asked the old gentleman. "Certainly," replied the stranger; "if you go straight on, you will walk into the Thames, for I've just come out of it."

ROBERT Hall, the celebrated preacher and writer, could make a sharp repartee upon occasion. It is related of him that while in his prime, and before the painful disease which afflicted him for so many years had come upon him, he paid his addresses to Ann Steele, the distinguished poetess, but was met with a decided repulse on her part. One evening in company, not long after his unsuccessful courtship, he was rallied by a sprightly maiden lady, who said to him, "My dear Mr. Hall, why do you not try again? We are not all cold and selfish. If you have courage, you may find somewhere a heart that is not all steel!" "No," replied Hall, looking unutterable things; "but I might find what would be far worse—heart minus, and face all brass!"

A SERVANT-girl of no strong intellect, who lived with a lady, one day surprised her mistress by giving up her place. The lady inquired the cause, and found it was that fertile source of dissension between mistress and maid-servant—a lad. "And who is that lad?" inquired the mistress. "Oh, he's a nice lad—a lad that sits in the kirk just forment me." "And when does he intend that you and he shall be married?" "I dinna ken." "Are you sure he intends to marry you?" "I dare say he does, mem." "Have you had much of each other's company yet?" "Not yet." "When did you last converse with him?" "Deed, we hae nae conversed any yet." "Then how can you suppose that he is going to marry you?" "Oh," replied the simple girl, "he's been lang lookin' at me, and I think he'll soon be speakin'."

At the beginning of the French Revolution a Marquis, about to quit Paris, was required to give up his name at the barriers. "I am Monsieur le Marquis de Saint-Cyr," he said. "Oh, oh, we have no Messieurs now!" objected the official of "the sovereign people." "Put me down as the Marquis de Saint-Cyr, then." "All titles of nobility are abolished," opposed the stolid Republican. "Call me De Saint-Cyr only," suggested the nobleman. "No person is allowed to have 'De' before his name in these days of equality," explained the servant of the "one and indivisible." "Write Saint-Cyr." "That won't do either—all the saints are struck out of the calendar." Then let my name be Cyr," cried the marquis, in desperation. "Sire!" exclaimed the Republican ("Cyr" is so pronounced)—"that is worse than all. Sires, thank goodness, are quite done away with!"