

FABLES.

A queer discovery of a mare's nest is reported last week re Irish Fenian matters in England. Some wise man has found out that previous to the murder of Burke and Cavendish the Irish League held their meetings at a house almost within a stone throw of the Palace of Westminster, and that Parnell himself occupied a room therein. This is unlikely enough; but when the public is asked to believe that the actual weapons used in the murder—the knives—were ordered to be bought, were actually bought there, and bought bare blades, having to be sent to a Fenian cobbler, forsooth, to be covered with leather and then packed up carefully in a lady's bonnet-box and forwarded to Dublin, we feel rather more than startled.

There was once a man called Titus Oates, who was a considerable manufacturer of plots and lies generally; but if this sort of thing is to go on, history will take but little account of him in future, and the name of the fortunate, or unfortunate, inventor of the above wonderful sensational fabrication will take his place as the modern Ananias.

We can see the able leader of the Irish party setting out on a foggy evening, shrouded in a cloak, to visit some remote cutler to purchase the deadly weapons. He casts suspicious glances on all sides as he goes. Then the preliminary visit to the Fenian cobbler. "Wilt thou stitch this leather for thy country's sake?" His hesitation. The partial confidence made to him that the weapons were to meet other sheaths before long. Interrogatively he whispers, "Blood?" The reply comes back low and hoarse, "Blood,"—and he puts his awl in it.

Evidently some obscure reporter who furnishes material to be sent to the press on this side has mistaken his vocation; he ought to write dime novels, or penny dreadfuls, or dramas for the Bowery in New York, or the Surrey in London.

But how do the press on this side come to accept and insert such trash?

LETTER RECEIVED FROM A PROPOSED MELANCHOLY CONTRIBUTOR.

TIMBUCTOO, June 1st, 1886.

DEAR ARROW,—Received your letter all right, but did not understand you wanted an answer at once. I shall be too glad to do anything. I have been thinking *hard* ever since; but thinking on purpose, thoughts won't come. You know how naturally modest I am, and I have been probably over anxious about so important an effort. But some day—somewhere—suddenly—possibly unexpectedly—the inspiration will come, and have vent. Shoot me some old arrows; possibly from them an echo may arise in my mind. The principle of reproduction pervades all nature; ideas induce ideas, as well as cats induce kittens. I am getting more able to concentrate my thoughts upon what I am doing; perhaps that is a state unnecessary or even adverse to the kind of work you require. At any rate, when I can so seclude myself to the forgetting of all else, I'm almost happy. Hear from me soon.

TA TA.



A sweet subject.

FRENCH FICTION.

AN ALLEGED EXTRACT FROM ONE OF ITS MASTERPIECES.

French and American fiction now seem to be the rage—a revival of the old fiction of France, and a continuation of the new fiction of America. The following is an extract from a masterpiece of French fiction:

M. De Makeshift, when the file of soldiers left him, found himself in a dungeon. Not a ray of light penetrated the dismal abode, but De Makeshift's eyes gradually became so accustom'd to the darkness that he saw a broom straw lying in a corner. He caught up the broom straw, uttered a stifled cry, and pressed it to his head. Then, in his despair, he tickled his nose with the straw and laughed.

"Why laughs?" demanded a voice.

"I do."

"Who are you?"

"De Makeshift. Who are you?"

"The Abbe So-Long."

"Ah."

"Ah, ha."

"How long have you been here?"

"I have now, alas, no method of reckoning time. but I must have been here since sunrise this morning."

De Makeshift groaned. "Where are you now?" he asked.

"In a tunnel," the abbe replied.

"A tunnel?"

"Yes."

"You make my heart beat. Where did you get the tunnel?"

"Made it."

"You astonish me?"

"Ah."

"Ah, ha. Where did you get your shovel?"

"Had none."

"Then how did you make the tunnel?"

"Listen."

"I will."

"I scooped it out with a shirt button. Have you a button on your shirt?"

"No."