

## MISCELLANEA.

**CANADIAN ROCK-SALT.**—Six beds of solid rock salt were recently passed through in boring at Goderich, Ontario, having an aggregate thickness of 26 ft. A considerable portion of this thickness Professor S. Hunt found to be almost chemically pure, containing over 90½ per cent. salt, and a shaft is about to be sunk to work these beds. The quantity of salt made in the whole of the Ontario region in 1876, was probably quite equal to that of the previous year, which amounted to between two and three millions of bushels.

**PRESERVATION OF EGGS.**—The most effective preservative for eggs that has yet been proposed, is linseed oil, or cotton-seed oil may be used instead. By carefully coating *fresh* eggs with either of these oils, and packing them, small end downwards, in any dry, porous substance, that is a non-conductor of heat, such as chaff, cork-cuttings, or maple sawdust, they have been kept in perfect condition and without loss of weight for 6 months.

**UNION OF THE CASPIAN AND BLACK SEAS.**—The present century has witnessed several remarkable achievements in maritime engineering, such as drainage of extensive arms of the sea in Holland, the construction of the Suez Canal, and the deepening of the estuary of the Mississippi; and these not being enough, still more gigantic schemes have been projected. It has been proposed to admit the Mediterranean into two extensive tracts of the Sahara, which would give water communication to a large portion of Algeria, and make a sea-port of Timbuctoo. Neither plan is likely to be put speedily into execution.

**INGENIOUS EQUIVOQUE.**—A prisoner being brought up to Bow-street, the following dialogue passed between him and the sitting magistrate:—"How do you live?" "Pretty well sir; generally a joint and pudding at dinner."—"I mean, sir, how do you get your bread?"—"I beg yer worship's pardon; sometimes at the baker's and sometimes at the chandler's shop."—"You may be as witty as you please, sir; but I mean simply to ask you, how do you do?"—"Tolerably well, I thank yer worship: I hope yer worship is well."

**EBONY STAINS.**—The wood should be brushed over two or three times with a strong decoction of logwood chips, and when it is dry give it a coat of vinegar in which pieces of rusty iron, such as old nails, have been placed. For a polish for the stain, dissolve beeswax in turpentine by setting it in a hot place, and apply while warm with a brush; it must be rubbed till it shines, which will cost some little time and exertion.

**ANOTHER.**—Wash the wood repeatedly with a solution of sulphate of iron, made by dissolving 2 oz. of sulphate in half-pint of hot water. When the wood is dry after the above application, apply a hot decoction of logwood and nut-galls two or three times. When dry, wipe it well with a wet sponge, and when again dry, polish it with linseed oil. Beech, pine, oak, or boxwood will take the stain very well, but box is the best.

**ELECTRIC PLANT.**—The *Gazette Horticole de Nicaragua* publishes some information respecting a plant of the family of *phytolaccas*, which grows in that country and which possesses electro-magnetic properties. When a branch is cut off, the hand holding it experiences an electric sensation similar to that from a Ruhmkorff battery, and the electrical influence of the plant has been observed several paces from the plant by the deviation of the needle of a small compass. When the compass was placed by the experimenter close to the plants, the needle turned completely round. The soil is said by the *Moniteur Industriel* to contain no trace of iron or other magnetic metal, so that the property is inherent in the plant itself. The intensity of the phenomenon varies with the hour of the day—at night it is almost *nil*, and most intense during the two mid-day hours or in a wind; during rain it was weak. No birds or insects have been seen to rest upon the *Phytolacca electrica*.

**MOTHERS, STUDY HYGIENE.**—Writes Mrs. Diaz in her charming little volume of "A Domestic Problem": "Will not you who know the inevitable influence of the mother upon her children—will you see to it that some portion of the time devoted to her education is spent in preparing for her life-work? Suppose the young women of 30 years ago had been thoroughly instructed in hygienic laws, would not the effects of such instruction be perceptible in our present health rates and death rates? Let us begin now to affect the health rates and death rates of 30 years hence, and it will do no harm to instruct young men in these matters. Even now there comes to me a report from the State Board of Health, in which it is shown, by facts and figures, how our death rates are affected by ignorance—ignorance as ex-

hibited in the locating, building and ventilating of dwelling-houses, drainage, situation of wells, planting of trees, choice of food and cooking of the same, as well as the management of children. Can any subjects compare in importance with these? For humanity's sake, let our young people take time enough from their Latin dictionaries to learn how to keep themselves alive."

**OIL GOLD SIZE.**—Take of gum animi and asphaltum each 1oz., of red lead, litharge of gold, and umber, each 1½oz. Reduce the coarser of these to a powder, mix, and put them with a pound of linseed oil into a pipkin; boil, gently stirring with a stick till about as thick as tar, strain through flannel, put in a closely stoppered bottle ready for use.

As an illustration of the rapid growth of the now celebrated *Eucalyptus globulus*, we (*Nature*) may mention that in the more elevated parts of Jamaica trees now exist about 60 ft. high, the trunks of which measure a foot in diameter near the ground. These trees have been raised from seed introduced to the island about six years ago. It is proved that in the lowland districts the tree does not thrive, thus upsetting its suitability for regions in which it was at one time specially advocated.

It has been found that the method of bleaching wool by means of oxalic acid, combined with glycerine, or used alone, has the effect of causing the fibres of the wool to become felted. This is now remedied by saturating the oxalic acid with soda, potash, or ammonia, thus forming a soluble oxalate. The bleaching is effected in the same manner, that is to say, pure water, exempt from lime, and the wool preserves all its suppleness and soft touch.

The rats have made a conquest of Pitcairn's Island in the Pacific. Some of them are as large as rabbits; all of them are hungry, and they have swept across the island, devouring the grain in the barns and the flour in the store-rooms, and attacking the natives with a ferocity that is uncommon. What a harvest for Parisian kid-glovers might be created here!

**PICTURE FRAMES.**—First give the moldings a coat of size. You must then make a template of thin sheet iron to fit the surface of the moldings; make a preparation by mixing gilders' whitening and size to about the thickness of paste, and apply it warm to the moldings with a brush, give each a coat separately, and draw the template lightly over from one end to the other until the surface becomes even. After doing this let them dry; when dry repeat the process two or three times. You will get a nice smooth surface on the moldings, and they will be ready for joining.

**EXPERIMENTS** with killing superannuated horses with dynamite in London have been successful, and it is proposed to slaughter cattle in the same way, as hundreds may be killed instantaneously without suffering. A small primer of dynamite, with an electric fuse attached, is bound upon the animals forehead, and discharged by means of an electric machine, when the animals fall dead without a struggle.

**COLORING ZINC ROOFS.**—Among recent German inventions is a simple process, depending on the use of acetate of lead, by which every kind of color is applicable to sheets of zinc. By mixing black lead, for instance, with the salt, a very agreeable light brown hue is obtained. It is by this process that the cupola of the synagogue at Nuremberg has been painted. A sufficient length of time has already elapsed, it is said, to show that the atmosphere has had no influence on the zinc sheeting of the roof, thus showing the practical value of the process in such cases. By the addition of other coloring matters, light or dark shades of yellow or gray may be produced.

**HOW TO COOK SNAILS.**—Throw them in boiling water in which you have put some wood ashes, leave them in till they have thrown their cover wide open, which will take about fifteen minutes; then take them off, put them out of the shell with a fork, place them in lukewarm water and leave two hours; next rub them in your hands, and then soak in cold water; rub them again with your hands, in cold water, two or three times, changing the water each time, so as to take away most of their sliminess. Wash the shells in lukewarm water with a scrubbing brush, and drain them when clean. Then put in a stew-pan four ounces of butter for fifty snails, and set it on a good fire; when melted sprinkle in it a teaspoonful of flour, stirring awhile; then add a teaspoonful of parsley chopped fine, two sprigs of thyme, a bay leaf, a pint of white wine, and then the snails, which you have previously put back into their shells; cover the whole with warm broth, boil gently till the sauce is reduced and the snails are cooked, and serve them mouth upward, and filled with sauce.

—*New York Tribune.*