

## THE STRYCHNINE OF COMMERCE.

The source from whence this poison, which has gained so world-wide a celebrity recently, is obtained, is thus noticed in *Dickens' Househo'd Words*.

In Ceylon, and several districts in India, grows a moderate sized tree with thick, shining leaves, and a short, crooked stem. In the fruit season it is readily recognized by its rich orange colored berries, about as large, as golden pippins. The rind is hard and smooth, and covers a white, soft pulp the favourite food of many birds, within which are the flat, round seeds, not an inch in diameter, ash gray in color, and covered with very silky hairs.—The Germans fancy they can discover a resemblance in them to gray eyes, and call them crow's eyes, but the likeness is purely imaginary. The tree is the strychnine nux vomica, and the seed is the deadly poison nut. The latter was early used as a medicine by the Hindoos, and its nature and properties understood by Oriental doctors, long before it was known to foreign nations. "Dog Killer," and "fish scale," are two of its Arabic names. It is stated that at present the natives of Hindostan often take it for many months continuously, in much the same way as opium eaters eat opium. They commence with taking the eighth of a nut a day, and gradually increasing their allowance to an entire nut, which would be about twenty grains. If they eat directly before or after food, no unpleasant effects are produced ; but if they neglect this precaution, spasms result.

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**RAILWAY SAFETY.**

It appears from the best statistics, that in the last four years the risk to each passenger of being killed in travilling one mile, was ; by railroad in France, 1 in 100,000,000 ; in England, 1 in 65,360,000 ; in the U. S., 1 in 47,164,000 ; and by steamers, 1 in 240,000. If these estimates are correct the chances of being killed are not near so great as most travelers are willing and often anxious to risk, or we should hear of more frequent and urgent requests to railroad companies to reduce the speed and thereby increase the safety.

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