

"THE AUTOCRAT."

Oliver Wendell Holmes. Born 1809. Died Oct. 7, 1894.

"The Last Leaf!" Can it be true,
We have turned it, and on you,
Friend of all?
That the years at last have power?
That's life's foliage and its flower
Fade and fall?

Was there one who ever took
From its shelf by chance, a book
Penned by you,
But was fast your friend for life,
With one refuge from its strife
Safe and true?

Even gentle Elia's self
Might be proud to share that shelf,
Leaf to leaf,
With a soul of kindred sort,
Who could bind strong sense and sport
In one sheaf.

From that Boston breakfast table,
Wit and wisdom, fun and fable,
Radiated
Through all English-speaking places.
When were Science and the Graces
So well mated?

Of sweet singers the most sane,
Of keen wits the most humane,
Wide, yet clear,
Like the blue, above us, bent;
Giving sense and sentiment
Each its sphere.

With a many breadth of soul,
With a fancy quaint and droll;
Ripe and mellow,
With a virile power of "hit,"
Finished scholar, poet, wit,
And good fellow!

Sturdy patriot, and yet
True world's citizen! Regret
Dims our eyes
As we turn each well-thumbed leaf;
Yet a glory 'midst our grief
Will arise.

Years your spirit could not tame,
And they will not dim your fame;
England joys
In your songs, all strength and ease,
And the "dreams" you "wrote to please
Gray-haired boys."

And of such were you not one?
Age chilled not your fire of fun.
Heart alive
Makes a boy of a gray bard,
Though his years be, "by the card,"
Eighty-five!

—London Punch.

MANY CURIOUS NOTES.

The largest nugget of gold ever found was taken out of the Byer & Haltman mine at Hill End, New South Wales, on May 10, 1872. It weighed an ounce or two over 640 pounds. It was slab-shaped, 4 feet 9 inches long and about 3 feet 2 inches in thickness. The finder sold it for \$148,000.

The largest advertisement in the world is in the shape of immense flower beds on the side of a hill near Ardenlee, Scotland. The beds are each gigantic letters, 40 feet in length, the whole forming the words "Glasgow News." The total length of the line is 123 feet; area covered by the letters, 11,845 feet. The letters can be distinctly seen from a distance of four and one-half miles.

The organ in the old Mormon Temple at Salt Lake City is one of the largest, if not the very largest, ever constructed in this country. It has 2,704 pipes, each 32 feet long and large enough to admit the body of a man of ordinary size. It also has two towers at either side which rise to a height of 42 feet.

The largest painting ever produced (not including panoramic views) is now in the Grand Salon of the Doges at Venice. It is

by the renowned Jacopo Robusti, and is 84 feet long and 34 feet wide. A panoramic view, called the "Frost King," now in Westminster, London, covers 20,000 square feet of canvas.

The largest hammer and anvil in the world are in use at the Krupp Gun Works, Essen, Germany. The hammer, which was made in 1886, weighs 150 tons, and the anvil and block 191 1-2 tons.

In 1889, before being reduced to its present proportions, Custer County, Montana, was the largest county in the United States. Its area at that time was 36,000 square miles, being greater than the combined areas of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Delaware and Rhode Island.

The three tallest trees in the world are believed to be a sequoia near Stockton, Cal., (325 feet) and two eucalypti in Australia, estimated at 435 and 450 feet, respectively.

Witches and Plants.

In all countries in which the witchcraft delusion now exists, or in which it prevailed in former times, we find folk lore stories connecting those mysterious bogies with the plants of those particular regions. Even the great Shakespeare causes his witches to discourse learnedly on the diabolical properties of "hemlock digg'd i' the park" and of "slips of yew silvered in the moon's eclipse." They are supposed to have had their favorite flowers as well as plants, and in England at the present time foxglove is spoken of as "witch bells" and hellebells a "witches' thimbles." The common ragwort is well known as the "witches horse," the tradition being that the mounted rank growths of that species of weed and "rode the skies," just as the dame with the painted hat rides the broom in the familiar picture. In Germany and throughout Northern Europe it is the belief that witches float from place to place on beds of hay, composed largely of witches' blossoms and "devil spikes," this last being a species of dwarfed slough grass. St. John's wort, which is now so popular for shoulder and button-hole bouquets on St. John's Eve, was formerly worn for the express purpose of averting the crafts and subtleties of the witches, bogies, ghosts and spirits, which the European peasantry believed walked abroad on "that night of witching mysteries."

Lord's Prayer in 32 Languages.

The Russians now have possession of the Mount of Olives, the spot where the Lord's Prayer was first uttered. The apex of the mount is nearly 200 feet above the hill upon which Jerusalem is built, 2,700 feet above the level of the Mediterranean and about 3,900 feet above the sluggish waters of the Dead Sea. On this elevation, upon the exact spot which tradition says the Prayer was first spoken, the Carmelite Sisters have, through the kindness of Mme. de la Tour d'Auvergne, who furnished the necessary funds, built a large convent. The exact, or what is claimed to be the exact, spot pressed by our Saviour's feet on that celebrated occasion, is marked by a pure white polished marble cross, and the walls of the convent have the Prayer inscribed upon them in 32 different languages. In some instances, the letters forming the prayer are engraved in marble panels; in others, they are letters of wood, glued to backgrounds suitable to their colors. The Russian portion of this wonderful collection of inscriptions is said to be in letters of pure gold, each capital stem being six and a fourth inches long and four-fifths of an inch in width. Among the languages which one would hardly expect to find represented are the Hebrew, the Chinese, the Coptic, the Tartarian, and the Japanese. The Arabian, as it had been

a task to relinquish Mohammedism, ends with "Great is Christ."

A Bridge 636 Feet High.

The highest bridge of any kind in the world is the Loe River viaduct, on the Antofagasta Railway, in Bolivia, South America. The place where this highest railway structure has been erected is over the Melo rapids in the Upper Andes, and between the two sides of a canon, which is situated 10,000 feet above the level of the Pacific. Counting from the surface of the stream to the level of the rails, this celebrated bridge is exactly 636 1-2 feet in height. The length of the principal span is 80 feet, and the distance between abutments (total length of bridge) is 802 feet. The largest column is 314 feet 2 inches long, and the batter of the pier, what is known to bridge-builders as "one in three." The gauge of the road is 2 feet 6 inches, and trains cross the bridge at a speed of 30 miles an hour.

Sporting Spurs.

Why do most Rugby foot-ball players wear long hair? and how is it that barbers are disgusted when the Rugby season opens, while surgeons are delighted? The answer to the last question is obvious, but I have never heard the first satisfactorily replied to.

"I want to give brother Tom some little gift before he leaves for college. What would you get?" "Florence—" "I saw some lovely hair brushes with silver monogram, and—" "You silly girl; don't you know he belongs to a football team?"

The first sportsmen's exposition ever held in America will take place at Madison Square Garden next spring. This exposition will embrace every department of field sport and will illustrate not only present conditions but the history of sport. Canada will be well represented, no doubt.

Largest Family on Record.

In the Harlein Manuscript, Nos. 980 and 78, in the library of the British Museum, mention is made of the most extraordinary family that has ever been known in the world's history. The parties were a Scotch weaver and his wife (not wives), who were the father and mother of sixty-two children.

The majority of the offsprings of this prolific pair were boys, (exactly how many of each sex is not known) for the record mentions the fact that forty-six of the male children lived to reach manhood's estate, and only four of the daughters lived to be grown-up women. Thirty-nine of the sons were still living in the year 1630, the majority of them then residing in and about New-Castle-on-Tyne. It is recorded in one of the old histories of Newcastle that "a certyne gentleman of large estaytes" rode "thirty and three miles beyond the Tyne to prove this wonderful story." It is further related that Sir J. Bowers adopted ten of the sons, and that three other "landed gentlemen" took ten each. The remaining members of this extraordinary family were brought up by the parents.

How to Clean Oily Bottles.

To cleanse glass bottles that have held oil, place ashes in each bottle and immerse in cold water, then heat the water gradually until it boils; after boiling an hour let them remain till cold. Then wash the bottles in soapsuds and rinse in clear water.

A Desperate Effort.

Cobble—I put my best suit on last night and called on my girl's father.

Stone—Did he seemed pleased?

Cobble—He seemed pleased with the suit. He tried his best to get a sample lot.