

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

MANUFACTURE OF PIPE-STEMS.—At Constantinople the jessamine is extensively grown for the manufacture of pipe-stems (*Chibouques*). For this purpose stems are carefully trained until they have attained the desired length and thickness, care being taken to protect the bark by a covering of varnished linen or calico. Two or three times a year the bark is sponged with citron-juice, which is said to give it the light color so much sought after. Some of these pipe-stems are over sixteen feet in length, and sell for so much as £20 each.

A JAPANESE BIOGRAPHICAL WORK.—At Japan "A Life of Washington" is to be brought out by a Yeddo publisher. This literary novelty is published in no less than forty-four volumes, in the Japanese characters, and is profusely illustrated in the highest style of art. Washington is represented in the clothes and fashion of the present day, and with a moustache, carrying a cane, and accompanied by a Skye terrier. He is gazing at a lady with a train, a Grecian bend, and a hideous waterfall. As it is the first attempt of the kind, and as it is a great curiosity in itself, the book would be a great addition to the collection of bibliomaniacs.

TIT FOR TAT.—A clergyman who enjoys the substantial benefits of a fine farm was slightly taken down, a few days ago, by his Irish ploughman, who was sitting at his plough, in a tobacco-field, resting his horse. The reverend gentleman, being a great economist, said, with much seriousness, "Patrick, wouldn't it be a good plan for you to have a stubscythe here, and be hubbing a few bushes along the fence while the horse is resting?" Pat, with quite as serious a countenance as the divine wore himself, replied, "Sir, wouldn't it be well for you to have a tub of potatoes in the pulpit, and when the congregation are singing to peel 'em awhile to be ready for the pot?"

A CAREFUL LAIRD.—It is told of a very careful laird in the Highlands, that he was waited on by a neighbor to request his name as an accommodation to a "bit bill" for £20 for three months, which led to the following characteristic colloquy:—"Na, na, I canna dae that." "Why for no, laird? Ye hae dune the same thing for others." "Ay, ay, Tammas, but there's wheels within wheels ye ken naething about: I canna dae't." "It's a sma' affair to refuse me, laird." "Weel, ye see, Tammas, if I was to put my name till't, ye wad get the siller frae the bank, and when the time cam round ye wadna be ready, and I wad had to pay it; see then you and me wad quarrel; see we may just as well quarrel the noo, as lang as the siller's in ma pouch."

CONSUMPTION OF PAPER.—Every American uses annually 10½ pounds paper, while Mexico, with Central America, consumes only 2 pounds, and British America 5½ pounds per head. The consumption in European countries is 11½ pounds per head in Great Britain, 8 in Germany, 7½ in France, 3½ in Austria and in Italy, 1½ in Spain, and in Russia but 1 pound. But these figures by no means justify us in drawing any rigid conclusions as to the literary occupations or mental acquirements of the respective countries, though they give us a general idea thereof. It must be remembered that one-third of all this immense quantity of paper consists of paper hangings, pasteboards, shavings, and wrapping sheets, one-half of all the production is printing paper, and the remaining sixth is writing paper.

THE MANUFACTURE OF SHIRTS.—Burlock & Co., large shirt manufacturers, Bridgeport, Conn., employ about six hundred hands, and make one hundred dozen shirts per day, consuming three thousand yards of muslin and seven hundred of linen each day, and \$9,000 worth of thread every year. One hundred sewing machines are constantly running, from seven o'clock in the morning until eight in the evening. These machines are worked by steam and managed by young girls, the majority of whom are skilled performers; some of these experienced hands earn as high as \$75 per month. Every part of a shirt is manipulated by different hands; each piece is finished in a room designed for the kind of work. It takes sixty women to make all the parts of a shirt, and yet it only requires two minutes to make this all important garment.

HUGE UMBRELLAS.—Two palanquin umbrellas of enormous size have been recently manufactured by a firm at Glasgow, Scotland. They were ordered by a firm trading in Africa, and are supposed to be designed as presents for some of the chiefs. They are nearly thirty-three feet in circumference, sufficiently large to afford protection to about twenty-five persons. One is made of a fine damask silk, with a handsome variegated wool fringe nine inches deep. The other one is made of a rep silk, with a pure silver fringe, and lined with white silk. At the top of each is a handsome gilt ornament; the ribs are of whalebone, each thick enough for a walking-cane. The stick which is of birch wood, ornamented and polished, is five yards long, is jointed in the centre to make the umbrella more portable, and has a heavy spike at the end for fixing in the ground.

JET.—Everything earthy has an humble origin, so we meekly accept the fact that the pretty jet ornaments so popular with ladies are made from a species of coal; and the sparkling material made by the hand of the artistic workman into a "thing of beauty" once formed the branch of a stately tree, whereon the birds of the air rested, and under which the beasts of the field reposed; yet geologists assure us such is really the fact. They describe it as a variety

of coal, which occurs sometimes in elongated uniform masses, and sometimes in the form of branches, with a woody structure. It is, in its natural state, soft and brittle, of a velvet black color, and lustrous. It is found in large quantities in Saxony, and also in Prussian amber mines in detached fragments, and, being exceedingly resinous, the coarser kinds are there used for fuel, burning with a greenish flame, and a strong bituminous smell, leaving an ash also of a greenish color. Jet is likewise found in England, on the Yorkshire coast.

MARK TWAIN'S ACTIVE JOURNALISM.—Buffalo has many reminiscences of Mark Twain, and of his remarkable attempt at publishing a newspaper on an entirely new plan. After his return from the Holy Land (per Quaker City,) Mark took a wife and purchased the third interest in the Buffalo Express, owned by A. M. Clapp, Public Printer. They say that Mark's style of newspaper work was unique. He is not an early riser, and is as slow of movement as of speech, consequently he didn't get to the office very early in the morning. And when there his movements were not characterized by nervous haste. Seating himself in a capacious pivot-chair, his first move was to deposit his boots in the waste basket, and replace them with roomy slippers. Then elevating his slippers to a comfortable cushion on the exchange papers (their only legitimate use in his estimation), it was his wont to lay back in his chair, swinging himself lazily on his pivot, and tell stories of wit and wisdom by the hour to the associate editors. This was vastly pleasant to all concerned, but somehow it did not work in the way of making a new paper, and at the end of six weeks Mark came to the conclusion that publishing a newspaper was not his forte. He, however, retained his interest in the Express for about a year and a half, though, as aforesaid, he did not take part in the "active" management for more than six weeks.

NATIONAL SONGS.—The composer of the "Wacht am Rhein," who has just died, was happy enough to enjoy the full success and celebrity of his composition. No such early tribute of national recognition gladdened the ears of the composer of that far grander piece of war music, the "Marsellaise." The "Wacht am Rhein" was not an inspiration of high artistic genius, but it was an inspiration of its kind, and it hit a long-prevailing mood, and came to be the expression of the national sentiment on the very eve of battle. From the earliest days of the war in France it superseded all the older and greater hymns of German nationality. Long after events had definitely settled that there was no need of protecting the Rhine, and long after the "Watch" had left her to take care of herself and gone to pursue the French into Paris, the strains of the popular anthem still proclaimed in every city in the world the resolve of Germany to stand by her river. Carlyle calls the "Marsellaise" "the luckiest musical composition ever promulgated, the sounds of which will make the blood tingle in men's veins, and whole armies and assemblages will sing it with eyes weeping and burning, with hearts defiant of death, despot and devil." There is none of this passionate and stormy grandeur about the "Wacht am Rhein" which is only at best a song of encouragement and defence, without passion or despair, and not by any means up to the level of the unparalleled national triumph which was awaiting Germany at the time when it began to be popular. Still, there can be little doubt that it will pass into public memory in association with the events of 1870, as Arndt's song of the German fatherland is remembered in connection with those of 1813; as "Partant pour la Syrie" is enshrined with Napoleonism, and "Lillibullero" brings with it recollections of the fall of divine right in England.

THE POOR PLAYER.—A strangely pathetic scene, very significant of the sadder side of the actor's life, was witnessed a few evenings ago on the stage of the Prince of Wales' Theatre, at Birmingham, England. The play was Shakespeare's "Henry V.," Mr. Charles Calvert representing the King. The house was crowded. It was apparent to the audience that Mr. Calvert was laboring under severe indisposition from the beginning of the play, but he struggled through with evident suffering until about a quarter to ten o'clock. He had uttered the words—

"O God of battles, steel my soldiers' hearts!" when he walked to the front of the stage, and said, in an almost inaudible whisper, that he felt as if his last hour had come. The pallor of his countenance, the sweat on his brow, and his evident breathlessness, gave the audience cause for the greatest alarm. Amid the breathless silence of the assembled spectators, Mr. Calvert proceeded, still speaking with broken utterance and gasping for breath, to say that he had struggled for three weeks and suffered, God only knew what, in his endeavor to keep that engagement. He had come on the stage that night knowing that it was at the risk of his life. He was no craven, and his past history would prove that he did not easily give way, but he was now entirely defeated, and could not proceed. He wished for their sympathy as Christian men (a voice: "We do sympathize with you; say no more"). His sufferings, he almost felt he was right in saying, were those of a dying man (sensation; the weeping of women behind the scenes was heard.) The moment his remarks were at an end, Mr. Stoyie, Mr. Dixon, and other members of the corps dramatique, who had been waiting at the wings, rushed to the footlights and supported the now almost swooning man off the stage. The curtain fell, and the audience slowly dispersed.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

CONSUMPTION OF COAL.—The consumption of coal for the purpose of gas illumination in Great Britain is estimated at fourteen millions of tons per annum, valued at sixty millions of dollars. The total annual production of coal in England is one hundred millions of tons.

RAILWAY TRAFFIC IN GREAT BRITAIN.—The passengers carried by the railways of Great Britain in 1872 reached the enormous total of 428,000,000. The total number carried in 1850 was only 78,864,422. The increase is mainly owing to the construction of underground and other suburban lines leading out of the large cities.

SQUEAKING BOOTS AND SHOES.—To prevent the soles of boots or shoes from squeaking, rasp, with a coarse rasp, the outsole and insole, and every other piece of leather that comes in contact in friction by the action of the foot. Then apply freely good wheat or rye paste. If this is well attended to from heel to toe, the boot or shoe will not squeak.

LABOR SAVING MACHINES.—In the course of an interesting paper on coal-cutting machines, read at Bradford by Mr. William Firth, of Leeds, mention was made of the extraordinary power of these machines in dispensing with hand labor. One man, a youth, a boy, and a machine, can compass the work of twenty men, thus reducing "that hard physical labor" by seventy-five per cent. Moreover, the machine in use at Ardsley showed great power in grappling with a difficult seam, and reduced the cost of production by 1s. 7d. per ton.

A SUBSTITUTE FOR INDIA-RUBBER.—The *Scientific American* states that a substitute for India-rubber has been found in a gum from the milkweed plant, or other plants of the *Aselepias* tribe, and from flax and other seeds. This process consists in macerating and fermenting the substances, and then by evaporation reducing the liquid so obtained to a thick gummy mass. The gum produced in this manner is alleged to possess many of the valuable qualities of India-rubber; it is insoluble in water, and may be vulcanized with sulphur. The price of pure rubber is now very high, and the discovery of an economical substitute is a matter of great importance in the arts.

IMPROVED GLOVE FASTENING.—Charles H. Hall, Trenton, N. J., and Robert Knott, Brooklyn, N. Y., have patented an invention which consists of a little bar with a series of notches in each edge and wide portions between the notches, hinged to a clip fastened to the glove at one side of the slit for the wrist, and a notched hook on a clip fastened to the glove at the other side, so arranged that it can engage the bar behind any one of the enlargements to fasten the glove tight or loose, as may be desired. The clips by which the bar and the hook are fastened to the glove consist of thin plates of silver, gold, or any ductile metal, with spurs formed on them to fasten them to the glove, by punching them out of the metal in the ordinary way of making such fastenings.

TO REMOVE THE BITTER TASTES OF MEDICINES.—Sugared substances in concentrated solution much diminish bitter tastes. Thus, while the infusion of gentian is excessively disagreeable, its syrup can be very well taken if it be not diluted with water, thus weakening the action of the sugar. But the body that seems to enjoy this property in the highest degree is liquorice. By its aid we can almost immediately dispel the bitter taste of quinine, colocynth, aloes, quassia, &c.; it is only necessary to chew a morsel of liquorice-root. Aloes may thus be powdered and sifted without inconvenience. The liquorice must be kept in the mouth for a longer time in proportion as the bitterness of the substance to be overcome is intense or its solution more concentrated.

TO DESTROY FIELD MICE.—Smoke, it is well known, will soon destroy these little pests, but how to introduce it into their holes in an easy way may interest some of our readers. Professor Neesler, of Carlsruhe, has devised a sort of pellet which gives off great quantities of smoke when burning, so that it is only necessary to put some of these into the holes and ignite them in order to suffocate the mice. Their preparation is nearly as follows: Some fibrous substance, such as jute, is soaked in a concentrated solution of saltpeter, dried, then dipped in tar, and, when half dry, flowers of sulphur are sprinkled over it. When fully dry the jute fibers are cut into little pieces like pills and are ready for use. As soon as they are ignited they are stuffed into the hole, which is then stopped up with earth.

THE VIENNA PRIZES.—Seventy thousand articles have been exhibited at the Vienna show, and 26,002 awards have been distributed. Of this aggregate number of premiums, 421 were diplomas of honor, 8024 medals for progress, 8,800 medals for merit, 8,328 medals for good taste, 978 medals for art, 1,998 medals for co-operation, and 10,465 diplomas of merit or honorable mention. These were awarded as follows: Austria (without Hungary) 5,991, Germany 5,066, France 3,142, Italy 1,908, Hungary 1,604, Spain 1,157, England and colonies 1,156, Russia 1,018, Switzerland 722, Belgium 612, Norway and Sweden 534, Turkey 470, Portugal 441, United States 411, Denmark 309, Holland 284, Roumania 238, Japan 217, Brazil 202, Greece 183, China 118, Egypt 75, Republics of Central and South America 44, Persia 29, Morocco, Tunis and Tripoli 20, Madagascar etc., 10, Monaco 9, Mexico, Siam and Turkestan, each 1.

HUMOROUS SCRAPS.

SOMEBODY says, "I never saw a sick man yet who didn't behave like an overgrown baby, or inspire all in the house to pray either for his speedy recovery or his early translation."

An afflicted husband was returning from the funeral of his scolding wife, when a friend asked him how he was. "Well," said he, pathetically, "I think I feel the better for that little walk."

A LADY who rouged very highly inquired of a gentleman, under the plea of indisposition, how he thought she looked. "I really cannot tell, madam," he replied, "unless you uncover your face."

A LITTLE beggar girl, in New York, recently presented a certificate to a person to whom she had applied for alms, certifying that "the bearer is a widow with five children in destitute circumstances."

"WHAT makes your cows so cross?" asked an old lady of her milkman.—"My cows cross! What do you mean, madam?"—"Why, as your milk is always sour, I thought the cows must be a cross lot."

"I CANNOT imagine," said an alderman, "why my whiskers should turn gray so much sooner than the hair on my head."—"Because," observed a wag, "you have worked much harder with your jaws than with your brains."

FIVE thousand persons in North Carolina, who had assembled to witness a hanging scene, expressed themselves to the effect that they had been shamefully "imposed upon" by the timely commutation of the condemned man's sentence.

TWO young ladies and Mr. Thaddeus O'Grady were conversing on age, when one of them put the question, "Which of us do you think the elder, Mr. O'Grady?"—"Sure," replied the gallant Irishman, "you both look younger than each other."

AN old lady in Tennessee, living in a sickly district, being asked how she accounted for the unusual mortality in her neighborhood during the present season, said, "Dear me! I can't tell; so many people are dying this year that never died before!"

"AT what a rate that girl's tongue is going!" said a lady, looking complacently at her daughter, who was discussing some subject of apparent interest with a handsome young clergyman.—"Yes," replied a satirical neighbor, "her tongue is going at the cu-rate."

"Do you think I am a fool?" a violent man asked of his pastor.—"Well, really," replied the clergyman, "I would not have ventured the assertion; but now that you have raised the question, I must say that I shall require some time for reflection before coming to a conclusion upon it."

TWO French ladies were looking for the little daughter of one of them in a group of baby carriages.—"Do you see him?" asked the friend of the mother.—"Him? I am looking for her nurse."—"Her nurse?"—"Yes, all children look alike. I know the nurse, and I can find the child best in that way."—"As for myself, I think all *bonnes* look alike."—"How do you find yours, then?"—"Oh, I know the soldier who is her beau."

I HEARD (says a traveller) a genuine Yankee story from one of the party on deck. I was inquiring if the Hudson was frozen up or not during the winter? This led to a conversation as to the severity of the winter, when one man, by way of proving how cold it was, said, "Why, I had a cow on my farm up the river, and last winter she got in among the ice, and was carried down three miles before we could get her out again. The consequence has been, that she has milked nothing but ice-cream ever since."

AN engaged young gentleman got rather neatly out of a scrape with his intended. She taxed him with having kissed two young ladies at some party at which she was not present. He owned it, but said that their united ages only made twenty-one. The simple-minded girl thought of ten and eleven, and laughed off her pout. He did not explain that one was nineteen and the other two years of age. Wasn't it artful? Just like the men!

"Do you smoke?"
"I do, sir."
"Have you a spare cigar?"
"I have sir." (Extends a short six.)
"Now, sir, what is the first duty of a lawyer?"
"Collect fees, sir."
"Right. What is the second?"
"To increase the number of clients."
"When does the position towards clients change?"
"When making out a bill of costs."
"Explain."

"We then occupy the antagonistic position. I become the plaintiff and he becomes the defendant."

"Suit decided, how do you stand with the lawyer on the other side?"
"Cheek by jowl!"

"Enough, sir. You promise to be an ornament to your profession, and I wish you success.—Now, are you aware of the duty you owe me?"

"Perfectly."
"Describe it."
"It is to invite you to drink."
"But suppose I decline?"
Candidate scratches his head.
"There is no instance of the kind on record in the books. I cannot answer the question."
"You are right. And the confidence with which you make the assertion shows conclusively that you read the law attentively.—Let's take a drink, and I will sign your certificate at once."