

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

WILKIE COLLINS says he felt the illness of Dickens in the first chapter of "Edwin Drood," and could read no further.

BALLOON.—Another newspaper concern is to attempt the passage of the Atlantic by balloon. This time it is the *Evening Herald* of Philadelphia. It is to be a hot air balloon, and is now in process of construction.

NICHOLSON PAVEMENT.—The Nicholson pavement, as generally laid, does not have a good foundation. Were this attended to, and proper care used in the selection of the blocks, wooden pavements would be very durable.

A PHILADELPHIA Quaker complimented one of his sect, who had joined an Episcopal Church, on the new organ used there. "Why, I thought thee objected to church music?" "Ah, so I do," was the reply; "but if thee must worship God my machinery, I want thee to have the best."

PRECIOUS STONE AS CHARM.—A wine-colored amethyst, set in a ring, was a specific against intoxication and its consequences; a hyacinth stone, similarly set, acted as a charm to produce sleep; an agate had wonderful power in curing amaurosis and other diseases of the eye; a jasper showed its value in cases of dropsy and fever; while a coral was an antidote against nervousness and causeless fears. That many imaginative cures have been wrought by such means, who can deny?

SAGACITY OF BIRDS.—Certain facts render it probable that birds, in some manner, become aware of cholera infection in the air. Recent European journals state that at Munich, where several cases of cholera have occurred, the rooks and crows, which flew about the steeples and through the trees of the public promenades, have all emigrated; and the same thing happened during the cholera seasons of 1836 and 1854. According to Sir Samuel W. Baker, the same phenomena occurred at Mauritius, where the martins, which exist in immense numbers the year round, wholly disappeared during the prevalence of the cholera.

EMBALMING THE DEAD.—In the Vienna Exposition there were several specimens of the embalming of parts of the human body. Those exhibited by Dr. Marini, of Naples, were particularly to be noted. One of these was a large round table made of muscles, sinews, etc., of a dark brown color, with a handsome polish. Among his other exploits he petrified Thalberg, the deceased pianist, and the widow is said to keep the corpse in her drawing room. He also embalmed Mazzini, and so well that some of the more economical admirers of that statesman urged that the body should be set up in Rome as a statue, and thus save expense.

CHILD'S CAUL.—This name is given to a membrane which is sometimes found on the head of an infant at birth, nearly encompassing the head. It is a rare occurrence, and the rarity has led to great importance being attached to it. The child itself will be lucky; and the owner of the caul in after years will be shielded from many troubles that affect his neighbors. The superstition came from the East, where it had its origin in remote ages. Many diseases were believed to be curable by the wearing of a caul; and to this day some sailors—even English sailors in the second half of the nineteenth century—have a faith in the efficacy of a child's caul to preserve them from drowning at sea.

HOW TO IRON LINEN.—A *Hearth and Home* correspondent says linen that is placed immediately after being ironed near the stove or in the hot sun, is stiffer when dry than if it is permitted to dry slowly. It is a good plan to lay collars and small articles on a waiter, and set them on a kettle or other support on the stove, till they are quite dry. Sometimes the iron will stick in a manner quite unaccountable; if it is rubbed on a board on which fine salt has been sprinkled, and then passed over a brown paper with wax in its folds, the sticking propensities will be checked. A bowl of clear water and a clean old linen cloth, are useful to remove any specks the linen may acquire before or while being ironed.

MANNERS IN A TELEGRAPH OFFICE.—Some years ago, when Lord Russell was the Minister in attendance upon Her Majesty at Balmoral, there came a messenger to Aboyne—a little old man, buried in a greatcoat—with a telegram from his lordship to one of his Ministerial colleagues in London. The message was handed to the clerk in charge, a peremptory person, who, seeing that it did not bear a signature—it was in the days of the old companies, when a signature was necessary—threw it contemptuously back, with the authoritative command, "Put your name to it; it's a perty your master doesn't know how to send a telegram." The name was added, and the message handed back. "Why, you can't write, either!" cried the enraged clerk, after vainly endeavouring to make out the signature.—"Here, let me do it. What's your name?"—"My name," said the little old messenger, very deliberately, "is John Russell." It was the veritable Lord John himself.

NEW MATERIAL FOR MAKING PAPER.—An English journal is informed that it is intended to carry out in that country, in an extensive way, the French invention of making paper from the sheath of the hop stock, when the outer skin has been removed. The substance made from this material is of a great suppleness and

delicacy, and by its employment in this manufacture a new and considerable source of profit will be opened for the hop-grower. The importance of this discovery to Kentish farmers cannot well be exaggerated, for if the season should not prove favorable, and should fail to produce first-rate hops, the paper making material will compensate for the deficiency in this respect. No doubt the growth of hops will be introduced in future into many districts where they are not known at present, as the large amount of material which they will supply for paper-making will alone insure a good return for their cultivation. The price of the article is very high at present.

A GLIMPSE OF FATHER MATHEW.—One afternoon as she bent over her ironing table, improvised from a chair, she was conscious of a sudden hush throughout the queer high room. Looking up from her little round-edged iron, she saw a group of gentlemen just within the door. The pleasant-faced superintendent often came here. Katey had seen him many times. He beckoned to her now, as Elsie left her work, and the girl, struck with strange awe, made continual obeisance, bowing to the floor, yet not for him. "This is Father Mathew," said he kindly, as the child with her little hot, red face stood before him. She noticed then that some of the party wore long straight coats like that of the old priest who went up and down popular Street sometimes; and at these words, one in advance of the others who had been speaking to Elsie, took her little hand, still hot from the iron, in his with a murmur of kind words. Long afterwards she remembered the hand-clasp and the gentle tones of his voice, when all recollection of the face or figure of the great reformer had faded from her mind.

THE GIANTS OF OLD.—St. Simeon Stylites for seven-and-thirty years lived on the top of his pillar. During the first four years, it was six cubits high; for the ten years ensuing, it was twenty-two; and for the last twenty, it was forty cubits high. The tomb of Abel, on the way to Baalbec, is, according to Maundrell, thirty yards long. The tomb of Eve at Jiddah is, according to Burton, two hundred paces long. The tomb of Seth, on the slopes of Antilibanus is sixty feet in length. Indeed, it would have been twenty feet longer, but the Prophet Seth, who came here preaching to the people, who worshipped cows, was killed by them, and was hastily buried with his knees doubled under his legs. Noah's tomb, on the opposite side of the valley, was one hundred and twenty feet long. The tomb of Joshua was disgracefully short; indeed, it only covered thirty feet. Thus there were giants in those days, just as there are Positives in ours who consider the seal which Louis Napoleon has left as a talisman to his imperial son about as valuable an heirloom as the throne of Republican France.

RESTORING OLD BOOKS.—A Paris paper states that in the French capital an industrial art is prosecuted, of the existence of which few people have any knowledge whatever. This art consists in the restoration of old books and manuscripts, and has been raised by a few experts to a marvelous perfection. The skill of these artists is, indeed, so great that no book is considered by them beyond their transforming touch. They take out the most inveterate stains and marks; they re-instate the surface where holes have been gnawed by rats or eaten by worms; they replace missing lines and leaves in such a way that no one can discover the interpolation; they remake margins giving them exactly the color of the original; in fact, so well is all this done that frequently the most discriminating judge cannot tell the restored copy from the perfect original work. Ornamental frontispieces, editor's marks, vignettes, coats-of-arms, manuscript or printed pages, all are imitated to a degree of accuracy that tasks even the most practised eye. Such restoration, however, if of course expensive. Thus, at a sale of books some time ago, a tattered filthy, and repulsive, but in some respects quite a unique, copy of the "Breviary of Geneva" brought only \$100 on account of the damaged condition it was in. The purchaser took it to a book restorer, who stated his terms to be \$100 and that the process would require a year.

MADONNA FLOWERS.—The early Christians consecrated an herbarium to the Virgin Mary, white flowers in particular, such as the white rose, the white climatis, the white hyacinth, the stately white lily, the lily of the valley, half covered up by its green hood, and the snowdrop, peeping with cup whiter than shield of crescent moon, and looking fair even on the bosom of the snow. Our Lady's Thistle, with the milky streaks on its leaves, which were believed to be medicinal in dropsy, jaundice, and the plague; Our Lady's Mantle, with its circular broad leaf, scalloped and plaited in regular folds, a decoction of which was a rural cosmetic, a clearer of the complexion; Our Lady's Smock, the lovely little pale lilac flower that blows at the time of the Annunciation; the Lady's Slipper, with its four purplish petals in the form of a cross, and the yellow nectary in the centre, shaped like a shoe, dedicated by the French, Germans, and Italians to the foot of the Virgin—are all embalmed in the hearts and enshrined in the imaginations of the faithful. Therefore it is that we are shocked at Our Lady's Glove being also known as the fox-glove, and shudder at the young shoots of the Lady's Seal being boiled as asparagus, a use to which it would be impossible to put the seal of Napoleon. Our Lady's Bed Straws, however, cannot be served up at table, although its thick tufts of tiny yellow flowers smell like honey.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

To show, probably that "the pen is mightier than the sword," Mr. W. D. Wilson, of Odell, Illinois, has written 1170 words—a large part of the Gospel of St. Mathew—on one side of a postal card. As a dissemination of that portion of St. Mathew, it will probably be regarded as a failure, the penmanship being too absurdly small for popular perusal.

The too common practice of moaning over our mistakes, and bewailing them constantly, and referring to them all the evils that afflict us, is most injurious to our future, and a great hindrance to real improvement of character. One of the chief causes of mistakes in action is allowing impulse rather than reason to control. Consequently mistakes will be best avoided by carefully submitting sudden impulses to the searching ordeal of reason before acting upon them. Then if one is governed by principles, and steadfastly adheres to the right, he is in possession of the best safeguards against mistakes.

A learned professor intimates that all who die under one hundred years of age are guilty of suicide! The process of reasoning by which he arrives at this conclusion is something as follows: Duration of life is measured by the time of growth; the camel is eight years in growing, and lives five times eight years; the horse is five years in growing, and lives twenty-five years; man, being twenty years in growing, should live five times twenty years. So Providence having intended man to live a century, he would arrive at that age if he did not kill himself by unwholesome modes of living, violent passions, and exposure to accidents. Surely, according to this theory, the human race might well adopt new and more healthful modes of eating, sleeping, working, and recreating, in the hope of becoming centenarians.

PAPER-HANGINGS for walls are known to everybody. It is now proposed to use hangings made of metal; and an account of this new invention, which comes to us from Paris, has been read before the Society of Arts. The metal employed is tinfoil, in sheets about sixteen feet long, and from thirty to forty inches wide. The sheets are painted and dried at a high temperature, and are then decorated with many different patterns, such as foliage, flowers, geometrical figures, imitation of wood or landscapes. When decorated, the sheets are varnished and again dried, and are then ready for sale. Tinfoil is in itself naturally tough; and the coats laid upon it in preparing it for the market increase the toughness. The hanging of these metallic sheets is similar to paper-hanging, except that the wall is varnished with a weak kind of varnish, and the sheet applied thereto. Thus in this way a room or a house may be newly painted; without any smell of paint to annoy or harm the inmates.

A FARMER'S BAROMETER.—The common camphor bottle makes a very cloudy index of atmospheric weight and weather changes, on which the following is a beautiful improvement:—Dissolve 2½ drams of camphor in 11 fluid drams of alcohol. Put 38 grains nitrate of potash (saltpetre), and 38 grains of muriate of ammonia (sal ammoniac) into 9 fluid drams of water; when all are perfectly dissolved, mix the two solutions. Shake them well in a two-ounce or four-ounce white glass vial, cork very loosely, or better, tie over the orifice a piece of linen or cotton cloth, and place the instrument in a good light out of the sunshine, where it can be observed without handling. When the weather is fine and clear, the fluid is also; but on the least change, the chemicals, which lie as a sediment, rise in beautiful frond-like crystals proportionately, and again duly subside. By watching these changes one soon becomes able to predict the changes of weather probable, for a few hours to come in any locality, but not for all alike. This instrument may be recommended also as a pretty philosophical toy with a problem annexed.

CHEAP SUGAR.—In the French world of industry and science another great sensation has been produced by an alleged discovery, the importance of which, if it turns out to be true, it is at present impossible to calculate, nor the effect it may have on the sugar trade of the future. It is asserted that the French engineer, Mr. Jougllet, has succeeded in making artificially beet-root sugar, which however, is not real beet-sugar, but a composition or chemical sugar, if we may be allowed to use such a term. Already has the eminent Mr. Berthelot succeeded in making alcohol by a synthetic process; but the new discovery is of much more practical value, as it affects a commodity of such general use. Provided the accounts published in the French papers are not exaggerated (although such exaggeration is very likely), this new discovery may possibly bring about a change in the manufacture of sugar, for it is announced that by the new process sugar can be made not costing more than 5 francs per 100 kilogrammes, or one farthing per pound; and that in order to make it, it is only necessary to bring together certain common articles, which, after being liberated from the coarser elements with which they are combined, are known to have a chemical affinity to each other, and produce a sugar said to be equal to that made from cane-juice or beet-root. Henceforward, then, the manufacture of sugar would be placed in the hands of the maker of chemicals. It is added that the discoverer, M. Jougllet, has already sold his invention to a company for the sum of 1,200,000 francs, who intend to work the patent on a grand scale.

HUMOROUS SCRAPS.

THE Seneca Falls ladies are singing:
"The moth-eaten bustle,
The old iron bustle,
The cloth-covered bustle that hung on so well,"

An old colored minister, in a sermon on hell, pictured it as a region of ice and snow, where the damned froze throughout eternity. When privately asked his purpose in representing Gehenna in this way, he said: "I don't dare to tell dem people nuffin else. Why, if I were to say that hell was warm, some o' dem old rheumatic niggas, would be wantin' to start dar de berry fust frost!"

A TRUE BILL.—A few days since, a well-dressed couple, in the prime of life, stopped at a hotel in a neighboring town, and sending for a Justice of the Peace, informed that functionary that they wished to be married. The Justice said, "All right," and inquired their names. After being told, it struck him that he had performed the same service for the lady some years before. Upon inquiring if such was not the case, the lady said she had been married previously. "Have you a bill from your former husband?" asked Mr. Justice.

"Yes," she replied, "I have a bill."
This being satisfactory, the ceremony was performed, and the couple were declared "man and wife." As they were about departing, the Justice who had never seen a "bill of divorce," and having a strong desire to behold the document, thought this an excellent opportunity to satisfy his curiosity. He therefore said to the lady,

"Have you the bill with you?"
"Oh yes," she objected.
"Have you any objections to allowing me to see the bill?" said our friend.
"None whatever," she replied; stepping to the door, and calling to a little boy some three or four years of age, she said,
"Here, Bill, come here quick, here is a gentleman that wishes to see you." The gentleman wilted.

THE IDEAL LOVERS.—The following is a good story. The hero is Augustus, who is employed in a Broadway establishment which deals in wearing apparel for men. The clerk having saved from his earnings, went to a Saratoga, Newport or Long Branch hotel, no matter which, to spend his money and his holiday. He was well dressed, and on the piazza he one day formed the acquaintance of Marie, a young lady beauty, and arrayed in the height of the mode. The impression was made upon the mind of Augustus that Marie was wealthy and high-born. He fell in love with her, carefully concealed from her his occupation. He mysteriously talked of stocks and made her believe that he was a man of large capital. After the holiday Augustus returned to town and resumed his position behind the counter.

It was a week or two after his return, and Augustus' soul was not yet in his vocation. Already the heavier woollens were coming in for the fall trade, and Augustus smiled, albeit sardonically, at the change which overtakes all fashions and things, as he stood at his familiar counter. But an extra and peremptory order for custom-made shirts obliged him to visit one of the many seamstresses employed by the emporium. As Augustus turned down the narrow street of a remote, unfashionable locality, and rung the bell of a modest tenement house, his mind reverted to the past, and he glanced nervously up and down the street, lest Marie from a passing carriage should detect him with the ominous parcel under his arm. He was relieved when the opposing door enabled him to enter. But as he did so the bundle slipped from his nerveless fingers. For there, seated at a sewing-machine, with her pretty fingers on the plate and her slim foot on the treadle, sat Mary Jones—Marie of his dreams.

RUFF AND ROUGH KISSING.—A few evenings since a Detroit chap was courting a girl, who wore an Elizabethan ruff. Expecting his coming, she had dressed for the occasion, and her ruff, stiff as an unrestricted use of satin-starch gloss could make it, was of the most stunning character. The lover came at the orthodox time, and was ushered into the parlor, where the enchanting maiden and her father and mother were seated. He was cordially received, and the evening passed pleasantly, although the old folks sat up a good deal longer than the youngsters thought necessary. Finally, however, they went to bed, and the twain were left alone. After a certain amount of preliminary bashfulness, the maiden assented to her lover's request for a kiss. He assayed to take it, but was met at every point by a bristling wall of tarlatan and lace. He came up to her in front and was gouged in each eye. He sidled up to her, and the right-hand prong cut one of his ears half off. He attempted to reach the prize over her right shoulder, and a *chevaux de frise* of lace tickled his nose until he was obliged to take his seat and sneeze. Then the maiden came to the rescue, and held down one side of the provoking ruff, and again the lover advanced. Just as he had all but reached her blooming cheek, the damsel lost her grip, and the razor-like decoration flew up with a force that took an "under bit" out of his right ear. Then he got mad. Then she got mad. Then they both got mad, and an anticipated wedding has come to a premature end.