

The attachment of these pigeons for their native place and the marvellous instinct they display in returning to it, even from remote distances, constitute their chief characteristic traits. Turning to account these curious faculties, a pigeon-house is built in close proximity to the publication office of a paper, and when a pigeon arrives with a despatch his entry is signalled by a bell connected with the editorial room, when he is captured and the contents of the sheet put in type by the busy fingers of the compositor.

The best carrier pigeons are bred in Antwerp, Brussels and Liège, and the method of breeding them in these cities, it will be remembered, was the subject of an illustrated article in *Harpers' Monthly* some months ago. Although usually employed for short journeys they can be rendered serviceable in trips of over five hundred miles, and have frequently been sent from London to Dublin, Brussels, Paris and even Rome. The distances traversed at first appear incredible, but the fact of their having accomplished the feat and in an extraordinarily short space of time is well authenticated. Two of these pigeons carried a dispatch from Paris to their native place in the county of Kent, England, in one hour and a quarter; thence it was dispatched by two others to London in fifteen minutes, the entire trip being made in an hour and thirty minutes.

Experiments, it is said, are being made with a view to establishing a miniature post between Europe and America, with what degree of success we are not informed. The subject is worthy the attention of newspaper managers, and if any means can be devised by which the excessive rates of the telegraphic companies can be avoided to any extent it will be a public blessing by cheapening the cost of production of newspapers. —*American Newspaper Reporter.*

### THE ORIGIN OF MOSS-AGATES.

A correspondent of the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, writing from the plains, says that Prof. Mudge, of Kansas, has found where "moss-agates" come from, and knows just how to get at them. As they are usually discovered in the loose plains gravel, they have been supposed to owe their present deposit to "drift," their original home having been in the North. Professor Mudge has found, however, surprising as it seems, that they originated in the plicene deposits of Kansas. In some localities this plicene consists of a sedimentary silicious deposit, formed of material varying from coarse flint quartz to chalcedony. Oxide of manganese, more or less crystallized in minute moss-like sprigs, extends through the whole strata, which is often eight feet thick. The "agates" are mainly found in the upper six inches, and some of them are remarkably beautiful. The whole mass is very interesting to the mineralogist, as showing the so-called "moss-agate" through the whole process of its formation. The lower portion indicates an imperfect solution of the silica and oxide of manganese, but the upper few inches, where the best specimens are found, evince the deposit in a high state of chemical development. The "moss-agate" deposit forms the cap-rock of all the high hills in the vicinity of Sheridan, on the Kansas Pacific Railway, and also about Fort Wallace. In one instance Prof. Mudge found bones and portions of the tusk of a mastodon, which in process of fossilization had changed to nearly pure silica, and in the change had become infused with fine, sprig-like crystals of black oxide of manganese, thus presenting the strange phenomenon of ivory actually converted into "moss-agate." Some of the specimens cannot be detected in appearance from the real gem. Professor Mudge thinks that the agencies which produced this singular freak of nature must have been similar to the action of the "hot springs" of Iceland and Yellowstone Park, the only known natural agency that will make silica out of organic substances. The fact is a curious one at any rate; and while it may overstock the "moss-agate" market, it furnishes the scientist a revelation of rare interest and value. Professor Marsh, of Yale, is already giving it critical examination, and specimens have been furnished to other prominent gentlemen in his line of business.

### BEAUTIFUL BRIC-A-BRAC.

The Boston *Advertiser* says: "One of the most notable incidents which attended the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to the recent triennial musical festival at Liverpool was the furnishing of the suite of rooms at the Philharmonic Hall for his use. A wealthy collector of Japanese bric-a-brac asked permission to prepare the rooms for the Prince's occupancy, and the privilege was accorded him. He covered the walls with richly patterned paper in crimson and gold, laid a costly Turkish carpet on the floor, and every article of furniture, including chairs and couch, was covered with a magnificent Japanese embroidery, unique in style and brilliant in colour. Wherever the eye rested upon the walls it met some exquisite specimen of Japanese art, and on one side of the principal apartment there was placed an Oriental cabinet of almost fabulous value, containing samples of Satsuma, Kaga, and Japanese enamel, several of them gathered from the imperial palaces of Japan, and literally worth more than their weight in gold. The retiring-room was furnished in ebony and gold, and all the earthenware was of the rarest and costliest china. Each day of the Prince's stay some change was made in the decoration of the reception-room. One day the ornaments were of porcelain, another day they were of lacquer-work exclusively, and a third day of gold and silver work, while the plate and glass on which luncheon was served were of singular beauty and great value. The name of the fortunate owner is James L. Bowes.

### SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

Kossuth, in admitting his annoyance at the recent reports of his destination, proudly says: "It is no discredit to a man who has held the supreme power of a kingdom, and had the absolute control of its millions of resources, that he should retire to private life with his hands empty but clean."

It is believed that the President of the French Republic intends shortly to create a new Marshal of France in place of the cashiered Marshal Bazaine. The Government hesitates, we are told, between the Duc d'Aumale and General Ladmirault. This announcement is a feeler to see what public opinion will bear.

It is on record that simultaneously with the outbreak of an epidemic, like the cholera, birds desert the fated town. This phenomenon has been observed in St. Petersburg, Riga, and in cities of Prussia, in Hanover, Galicia, and Southern Germany. Some scientific men suppose the birds are warned by the poison in the atmosphere, and instinctively fly from it.

It may interest teachers to know that the average salary of certified masters of elementary schools in England and Wales is \$517 per annum. More than one-half, also, are provided with a house, or live rent free. In Scotland the average pay is \$551, and two-thirds live rent free. In Ireland the average is \$232, and only a little over one-fifth have their houses rent free.

It is announced that a second Austrian Arctic exploring expedition is being prepared to start next summer. One half of the expedition will seek to advance to the north, under Lieutenant Payer, by way of East Greenland, and the other half, under Count Wilczek, will proceed by way of Siberia. The object of the expedition is to ascertain if the newly-discovered Franz Land is a continent or an island.

A novel cricket match took place the other day near Aldershot, between twenty-two women, married and single. The married included one old woman of sixty years of age, who, while batting, received a severe blow in the face with the ball, and had to retire rather precipitately. On the unmarried side thirteen runs, the highest, were scored in one innings; one woman made twelve for the other side. At a former match, this being the return, one woman scored over sixty runs.

Extraordinary stories have recently been told of the healing properties of a new oil which is easily made from the yolks of hens' eggs. The eggs are first boiled hard, the yolks are then removed, and placed over a fire, where they are carefully stirred until the whole substance is just on the point of catching fire, when the oil separates, and may be poured off. It is in general use among the colonists of southern Russia as a means of curing cuts, bruises, and scratches.

Baron Brisse, the famous *chef de cuisine*, gives the following receipt for making "snail soup":—"Take one hundred snails, wash them well, boil them with pepper and salt; till they can be extracted from their shells with ease; wipe them in a towel; replace them in the saucepan, powder them with crumbs of bread, add mint, parsley and garlic, then a pint of almonds; before serving on slices of bread add for sauce the yolk of an egg beaten up with oil."

A proposal is on foot in England to make it compulsory on all vehicles plying in the public streets to have india-rubber tires round the wheels. Apart from the danger to pedestrians in crowded thoroughfares which such an innovation would occasion, the number of tires which vehicles in constant use would wear out would render the expense unendurable. The proposal is by no means a new one. It was tried many years ago, although not on a large scale, and was found to be utterly impracticable.

In Brittany there is said to prevail a curious matrimonial custom. On certain fête days the young ladies appear in red petticoats, with white or yellow borders around them. The number denotes the portion the father is willing to give his daughter. Each white band, representing silver, betokens one hundred francs of rent; and each yellow band denotes gold, and stands for a thousand francs a year. Thus a young farmer who sees a face that pleases him has only to glance at the trimmings of the petticoats to learn in an instant what amount accompanies the wearer.

A lady authoress writes kindly of "Child's night-lights." She says: "If a child wants a light to go to sleep by, give it one. The sort of Spartan firmness which walks off and takes away the candle, and shuts all the doors between the household cheer and warmth and the pleasant stir of evening mirth, and leaves a little son or daughter to hide his head under the bed-clothes, and get to sleep as best it can, is not at all admirable. It is after the pattern of Giant Despair, whose grim delight, confided to Diffidence, his wife, over the miseries of his wretched prisoners, always seemed most inimitable—a perfect picture of the meanness of despotism."

Odell, Illinois, has a novel sensation—a well in flames. Some farmers were boring for water the other day, and when the augur reached the depth of eighty feet the water spouted into the air to the height of nearly 200 feet, sending out sand and gravel. After a while gas was found to be issuing from the opening, and a match being lighted, instantly a streak of flame twenty feet high leaped into the air with a roar like that of a city in flames. The hole, which in the beginning was but five inches in diameter, increased to twelve, with the volume of flame enlarging. It is situated on the open prairie, and can be seen for miles. It has been visited by hundreds, who gaze awe-struck upon this weird and wonderful scene.

In Paris Dejazet's benefit is still all the talk, and her age especially is very much discussed. It appears certain that in 1811 she played the fairy *Nadette* in the "Sleeping Beauty of the Wood." She was then about fifty years of age, consequently she is close upon her seventy-eighth year. Some people say she is only twenty—for the fourth time. In 1835, nearly thirty years ago her age was already a topic of conversation, as the following passage by Jules Janin may prove. He says: "That woman still breathes the gaiety of youth. She does not know how to grow old. If you talk of her age she laughs and sings a drinking song. She is twenty! Twenty—that age that other human beings live but once—it is always hers."

A writer on Milwaukee topics relates the following:—"Selling berries by the foot is a new idea, the offspring of a Milwaukee girl's brain. The young lady, who was on a marketing expedition, desired to purchase some berries wherewith to add zest to her evening repast, but she wouldn't trust the fraudulent little boxes which the grocers with pleasing fiction called 'quarts.' She wanted full scriptural measure, and proposed to the dealer to adopt her shoe as the standard of quantity. Visions of Cinderella floated through the huckster's brain, and, in a moment of forgetfulness, the deluded man accepted the proposition. Off came the shoe and in went the berries. Box followed box, until the dealer, with sadness in his

eyes and half his stock in the girl's shoe, gently waved his customer away and closed up his shop."

Freemasonry has been professed publicly in England by a long line of noble and Royal personages. The Prince of Wales is a "Mason," so were the late Dukes of Sussex, York, Clarence, and Cumberland, and the Prince Regent; so in the previous generation were the Dukes of York and Gloucester. So, too, were the Emperor of Germany, in the year 1735, and our own King William III. fifty years earlier. And to go back further still, we find that Henry VI. was instituted a Freemason in 1450; that nearly a hundred years earlier still King Edward III. revised the Constitutions of Masonry, and, mounting higher still up the paths of history, we learn that Prince Edwin formed a Grand Lodge at York in 926, the very year in which King Athelstan granted to the Freemasons a royal charter.

The Bishop of Exeter lectured the other day to the Young Men's Improvement Society on self-culture. He pointed out that the mental culture of mankind depended upon the degree in which they could understand each other, and the world in which God put them; whatever brought the mind in contact with those of others, either by study or conversation, had a power in cultivating the intellect. Men studied for different reasons—some with a view to improve their position in life; others with a view to becoming more really men by enlarging their understanding. Study, to be of real value, must be gradual, and it was necessary that the student should enter into whatever he undertook. Nor should he be discouraged by the slowness of his progress. Above all things he must avoid vanity, and remember that the greatest students felt that their greatest learning served only to show their own ignorance.

The apothecary's oath in mediæval days, read thus, according to *The Medical and Surgical Reporter*:—"I take to witness, before all, God, the Creator of the universe, in three persons, that during the whole of my life, I will observe that which follows: 'I will live and die in the Christian faith. I will honour my parents. I will honour the physicians and master under whom I have studied. I will never say anything that shall be injurious to the seniors of our order, or to others. I will adorn with my best the dignity of the art, and I will not reveal its secrets. I will do nothing imprudently nor through hope of gain. In acute sickness I will not give purgatives without the order of the physician. I will keep the secrets of the patients. I will administer no poison, neither will I allow it to be administered, even to my enemies. I will not alter the prescriptions of physicians. I will never substitute one remedy for another without their knowledge. I will discourage the fatal practice of empirics. I will refuse to no one my legitimate assistance. I will not keep in my pharmacy stale or badly-prepared medicaments. In making and observing these rules, may God assist me. Ainsi soit-il.'" This is not such an antiquated oath but that we should like to see it revived and respected.

The *London Globe* says: "For the last few years the milliner's idea has been to dress her customers as like men as possible, to give them stand-up collars and leather belts, to arm them with umbrellas hanging from the waist as if they were swords, to supply them with gentlemen's watch-pockets and gentlemen's watch-chains. Even in fashion the world must advance, and the move for the coming winter is decidedly a move forward. Fashionable ladies, who have been dressed like men, must now dress like wild animals. All the new tissues are to resemble furs, and as a few years ago young ladies were said to wear Dolly Vardens, so now they will put on their 'camels.' This is the generic name by which the Parisian *modistes* have called this year's fabrics, though of course there is a variety allowed, and a young lady may appear as a rein-deer, as a bear, as a northern elk—in fact, as any rough-skinned animal she may select. But it is necessary that the skins should consist of as few pieces as possible. The 'camel' and a collar which will be known in the fashionable world as a dog's collar, will complete the costume. But this new invention of the French dressmakers has not so much originality after all. The idea is merely a development of the Ulster great coat, which was borrowed a couple of years ago from the Irish peasantry. This desire for the roughest materials and the rudest make has produced already strange results. In Switzerland Englishmen are dressed so like guides that it is difficult to distinguish them."

### ODDITIES.

Moonlight mechanics is the latest for burglars.

"Darwin's Darlings" is the suggestive name of a newly organized negro minstrel troupe at the west.

The keeper of a restaurant in New York announces "paroxysmal stews" as a specialty on his bill of fare.

The Count de Chambord duly notifies his friends to hold themselves in readiness for any event. The general impression out West is that Chambord must be going to treat.

A contemporary prescribes as a certain means to remove dandruff: "Go out on the plains and insult the Indians." It is also a speedy method of raising a head of hair.

A Michigan farmer complains that he is not receiving half the campaign speeches this year necessary to light his fires, and he has had to make a shaving contract with a cooper shop.

An attempt was to have been made last week to get up another woman's crusade in Cleveland, but three or four of the leaders were disappointed about their Fall bonnets and the affair didn't come off.

A rich but parsimonious old gentleman, on being taken to task for his uncharitableness, said: "True, I don't give much, but if you only knew how it hurts when I give anything, you wouldn't wonder."

A Morayshire farmer recently sent the following message to the lady of his love:—"Tell her," he said, "that gin she doesna' ha' me, I winna kill myself, but I'll pine awa'!"

Lord Lyons is said to have remarked in his quiet way that as a money-making profession diplomacy could hardly be called a success; but there were compensations: one did get a great many excellent dinners.

The other day a Saratoga clergyman asked a stupid fellow who was digging by the road-side if he could tell him where Mr. J.—lived. "Wa'al, no," was the reply: "but if you'll ask the chap what keeps the simmetry, he kin tell you, 'cause he knows where everybody lives, whether they're dead or alive."

An American youth, while travelling in California, was ambitiously displaying a small pistol before a brawny miner, whose belt was weighed down with two heavy six shooters, when the miner asked what he had there. "Why," replied the youth, "that is a pistol." "Well," said the rough, "if you should shoot me with that, and I should find it out, I'd lick you like fun."

A Mississippi bootman with immense feet stopping at a public-house on the levee, asked the porter for a boot-jack to pull off his boots. The colored gentleman, after examining the stranger's feet, broke out as follows: "No jack here big nuff for dem feet. Jackass couldn't pull 'em off, massa, without frakting de leg. Yuse better go back about tree miles to de forks in de road an' pull 'em off dar."

"My father was a farmer before me, and I thank God that I am a farmer born." Such was the soap Porter expected to soothe the grangers with on Fourth of July last. It reminded Col. Geo. Stanley of the Illinois orator who addressed a rural audience: "Gentlemen," said he, "I am proud to be one of you. My father was a farmer, and I am a farmer born. Yes, I may truly say, I was born between two rows of corn." At this juncture a tipsy agriculturalist at the further end of the house hiccupped out: "A (hic) pumpkin, by George!"

A somewhat curious circumstance recently took place in Miegie parish Church. The precursor, after proclaiming the banns of matrimony between a young couple, concluded by saying: "If there be any objections they can now be stated." A youth, an old admirer of the intended bride, noticing the eyes of a portion of the congregation fixed upon him, rose up and exclaimed, "I have no objection for my own part!" to the astonishment of all about him, and resumed his seat as if he had done a mere formal piece of business.

The excellent Mrs. Partington having returned to Boston from Newport, has commenced writing those pleasant little things for which she is celebrated. Noticing a toy steam-engine, she observed to Isaac: "Of course all boys ought to be instructed in steam-engines; but, Isaac, you must be very careful, for you know those things are apt to explode if any vacuity occurs in the safety valve; and, Isaac, when you get the tickets, be sure and not buy a contributor's ticket, as I am told the door-keeper is a very pecuniary man, and has orders to confiscate any contributory tickets that are transferred, and I don't see how we are going to get in without transferring our tickets to the door-keeper."

Lucy Lee, who says that she is of good birth and education, has put a strange advertisement in a Mississippi paper, informing the world of her willingness "to marry an editor, as she believes herself able to support one." The *Standard* says:—"What fascination an editorial sanctum can have for Miss Lee will be a subject of wonder to those who are familiar with the life of a newspaper office. Whether she is anxious to obtain the first news about everything, and purposes to assist her husband in opening telegrams, or whether she is afflicted with the *cacoethes scribendi*, and wishes to ensure the publication of a series of articles on subjects of feminine interest, is not apparent; and we think that Miss Lee ought to give editors more information about herself if her willingness to marry one is at all tempered with anxiety. We do not hold the young lady's choice to be a wise one; it is, indeed, about the worst she could make. As a rule, we can assure her editors are exceedingly irritable and domineering; and, from the late and uncertain hours which they are obliged to keep, are not at all likely to grow into good husbands and make home happy. Perhaps, however, Miss Lee is gifted with a sort of feminine Mark Tapscottism, and wishes to show that she can be jolly under the most trying circumstances. The winding-up of her advertisement, that she believes herself able to support one! may not signify that she is possessed of wealth, but that she has a good opinion of her capacity for putting up with the trials of this life, even when they fall as thickly as they frequently do in editorial homes. We hope that Miss Lee may find a suitable editor, and that she may not find that she has over-estimated her powers of endurance."

### THE HOUSEKEEPER.

**Stewed Steak.**—Place one pound of beef steak in a round cake tin, with two tablespoonfuls of water, a chopped shallot, and two finely crumbled sage leaves, no pepper or salt; cover tightly with a plate, and cook in a moderate oven for two, or even three hours. Serve in its own gravy.

**To Remove Dry Ink Stains from Carpets.**—Make a paste of arsenic and water and spread it upon the stain; when it has dried, wash it up and repeat the process until the stains are removed. Of course great care should be employed in the use of a substance so poisonous as arsenic.

**A Breakfast Dish.**—A friandean of rabbit makes a capital dish for breakfast and is not difficult to dress. This is how it should be done: Take a young rabbit which has hung till tender; having duly prepared it, lard it from one end to the other, cut it into medium-sized pieces simmer them in enough stock to cover them, adding a little white wine and one or two slices of bacon. When cooked take out the pieces, strain, and reduce the stock to a jelly, and with it glaze the *friandean*, which serve with sauce according to taste.

**Chicken Cutlets.**—The remains of cold chicken can be converted into very nice little cutlets. The meat should be cut into as many small outlets as possible, and as nearly the same shape as can be managed. Dip each into clarified butter mixed with the yolk of an egg; cover them with bread crumbs seasoned with half a teaspoonful of finely minced lemon peel, a little cayenne, and salt. Fry them for five minutes, and then arrange them on fried sippets of the same shape, the cutlets to be piled high in the dish. A sauce made as follows should be ready, which pour round: For the sauce, put one ounce butter into a stew pan, add two minced shallots, one small bunch of savory herbs, including parsley, a few slices of carrot, six peppercorns, with just a suspicion of mace; fry altogether for ten minutes, then pour in half a pint of gravy made from the chicken bones. Stew all together for twenty minutes, strain carefully, and serve.

**Broiled Ham.**—Ham for broiling or frying should be cut into thin slices the evening before, trimmed, and laid in a pan of boiling water, which, near bed-time, should be changed for cold water, and very early in the morning for boiling water, in which it should lie half an hour to soak still longer. If ham is not well soaked previously, it will, when broiled or fried, be disagreeably hard and salt; the salt frying out to the surface and forming a rough unpleasant crust, which will create thirst in the eaters for hours after. Much of the salt of a ham goes off in boiling, but if it is not boiled or soaked, the salt comes on to the surface, and there it sticks. The slices being cut thin and nicely trimmed, they should be broiled on a very clean gridiron over a clear fire, and so well done that they incline to curl up at the edges. Dish them hot, and lay on every slice a very small bit of fresh butter, and sprinkle them with pepper.

**Oyster Pie.**—Having buttered the inside of a deep dish, line it with puff-paste rolled out rather thick; and prepare another sheet of paste for the lid. Put a clean towel into the dish (folded so as to support the lid), and then put on the lid; set it into the oven, and bake the paste well. When done, remove the lid, and take out the folded towel. While the paste is baking, prepare the oysters. Having picked off carefully any bits of shell that may be found about them, lay them in a sieve and drain off the liquor into a pan. Put the oysters into a skillet or stew-pan, with barely enough of the liquor to keep them from burning. Season them which whole pepper, blades of mace, some grated nutmeg, and some grated lemon-peel (the yellow rind only), and a little finely minced celery. Then add a large portion of fresh butter, divided into bits, and very slightly dredged with flour. Let the oysters simmer over the fire, but do not allow them to come to a boil as that will shrivel them. Next beat the yolks of three, four, or five eggs (in proportion to the size of the pie) and stir the beaten egg into the stew a few minutes before you take it from the fire. Keep it warm till the paste is baked. Then carefully remove the lid of the pie; and replace it, after you have filled the dish with the oysters and gravy. The lid of the pie may be ornamented with a wreath of leaves cut out of paste, and put on before baking. In the centre place a paste-knot or flower. Oyster pies are generally eaten warm; but they are very good cold.