

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

PLAGUE AND AGUE.—In the *Reminiscences of Holland House* we find the following anecdote of Voltaire, which will be new to most if not all of our readers: While learning the English language (which he did not love), finding that the word *plague*, with six letters, was monosyllabic, and *ague*, with only the last four letters of *plague*, dissyllabic, he expressed a wish that the *plague* might take one-half of the English language, and the *ague* with the other!

THE FIRST U. S. PATENT.—Samuel Hopkins was the first person who ever received a patent from the United States government. It was granted July 30, 1790, and was for the manufacture of pot and pearl ashes. The third was to Oliver Evans, of Philadelphia, so famous for his inventions in high-pressure engines, of whose invention President Jefferson remarked that "it was too valuable to be covered by a patent, and there should be no patent for a thing no one could afford to do without after it was known." This was said in December of that year. For many years afterward the Patent-office was but a clerkship in the State Department.

AN OFFENSIVE REMARK.—An Englishman who had but lately arrived in the United States was astonishing the unsophisticated "natives" in Cleveland the other day by describing the many wonders in Great Britain and the vast superiority of the country over "Yankeeedom." Referring to London he descanted at length upon the immense number of buildings which the "village" contained, concluding with the statement relative to the enormous amount of square miles which they covered. At this point, however, a person in the crowd interrupted him with the query: "That's all well enough, mister, but what I want to know is, has she been fenced in yet?"

A BOWL OF PUNCH AS WAS A BOWL.—A remarkable bowl of punch was made across the water in 1844. It was made in a fountain in a garden, in the middle of four walks, covered overhead with orange and lemon trees, and in every walk was a table the whole length of it, covered with refreshments. In the fountain were the following ingredients: Four hogheads of brandy, twenty-five thousand lemons, twenty gallons of lime juice, thirteen hundred-weight of white sugar, thirty-one pounds of grated nutmegs, three hundred toasted biscuits, and one pipe of dry mountain Malaga. Over the fountain was a large canopy to keep off the rain, and there was built on purpose a little boat, wherein was a boy, who rowed round the fountain and filled the cups of the company. It is supposed more than six thousand men drank from the fountain.

PENALTY OF GALLANTRY.—A story is told of a prominent politician which now, for the first time, finds its way into type. Some years ago this gentleman and Senator M— were in New York, and about to embark for Albany on the Drew. An old German emigrant woman loaded down with baggage, happened to reach the gangplank at the time. The noise and confusion of the scene as the boat was about to start bewildered her. Our political friend, a gallant man, taking the state of affairs at a glance, immediately relieved her of the load, and requested Senator M— to give her his arm. The upper deck was crowded with gay people, many of whom recognized the gentleman in question. Mr. P— then marched them the whole length of the boat, gracefully waving his hand, and exclaiming, "Clear the way! Make room for the bridal party!"

A NATIONAL CUISINE.—It is proposed in England to establish a national school of cookery, in connection with the annual international exhibition at South Kensington. An influential meeting recently held for the purpose of advancing the project agreed to the following resolutions: 1. That such a school should be at once founded, to be in alliance with school boards and training schools throughout the country. 2. That the aim of the proposed school should be to teach the best methods of cooking articles of food in general use among all classes. 3. That an association should be formed with the intention of making the school self-supporting. 4. That it would be prudent to secure a capital, say £5,000. The provisional committee, containing some very eminent names, were authorized to take the necessary measures to establish the school by means of shares, donations, and guarantees. In time it is expected that schools of this description will be established in all the great towns of the kingdom.

AN EAGLE STORY.—Some time ago, a large eagle was observed in the neighborhood of Lochtreig. Lately, however, his liberty was considerably curtailed in the following manner:—One morning two men, who were engaged in thatching a house a good distance from any inhabited house, on arriving at the scene of their labor, found the remains of a rabbit which had been newly killed and eaten close to the house, and on looking round were surprised to find a large eagle vainly attempting to fly. Being afraid to encounter the eagle at close quarters, they took the precaution of covering him with brackets, when he was easily secured. It appears the greedy animal had so gorged himself that he was unable to rise quickly, especially as the day was very calm. He is now chained up, and undergoing a change of diet and exercise.

BEECHER'S ADVICE TO THE YOUNG.—Henry Ward Beecher gives to the young—we think it might fitly be taken by all—this sensible advice:—

"Use fiction as you would spices in your diet.

No man takes a quart of cloves, nor exhausts the cruet, at a single meal. These things may be used with moderation to season one's food with, but they are not to be used alone; and so fictions, while they are not to be resorted to exclusively, may be used with discretion to season life with. If you find that using them brings you back to duty with more alacrity, with more cheer, and with more aptitude, if you find that it makes you better in your relations to your fellow-men, then it does not hurt you, and you are at liberty to use them. But if you find that using them makes you morose; if you find that it gives you a distaste for work; if you find that it inclines you to run into a hole that you may get away from your fellow-men; if you find that it makes you unkind, disobliging, and selfish—then you may be sure that whether it injures any body else or not, it injures you."

A PATRIARCH.—The *Anglo-Brazilian Times* claims the acquaintance of a living Brazilian who was born on the 29th May, 1695, and who is consequently in his 178th year. Don Jose Martins Coutinho is we are assured, still in possession of his mental faculties, and the only bodily ailments he complains of is "stiffness in the leg joints," which in a gentleman of his years is hardly to be wondered at. In his youth Coutinho fought as a soldier in Pernambuco against the Dutch, and remembers the most notable facts in the reigns of Don John V., Don José, and Donna Maria I. It is added that he can count 123 grandchildren, 86 great grandchildren, 23 great great grandchildren, and 20 great great great grandchildren, which is, perhaps, the least astonishing part of the story.

BEAUTY'S BOOT.—The following is at once a joke and an argument for separate sleeping cars for the fair and for the other sex: A gentleman occupied the upper berth in a certain section and the lady the lower. In that dim, uncertain daylight which dawns on the travelers in heavily curtained "sleepers," the gentleman referred to tried to find his boots, but nowhere about his narrow bed could he see more than one of them. Looking downwards he thought he saw another on the berth below him; so reaching down he tried to lift it up. Strange to say, it lifted to a certain height and then fell from his hand. He tried again with the same result, and yet again with no better luck, when suddenly the boot apparently became endowed with life and evaded his grasp. Then the situation flashed upon him and he became contrite. Contrition is a good thing, but it may also become a nuisance, for fancy a gentleman in the upper berth apologizing to the lady in the lower for mistaking her boot on her own foot for his own.

ECONOMY IN THE GHETTO.—Anna Brewster writes: "Ghetto has altered more than any other quarter in Rome within the last two or three years, especially in regard to cleanliness. It is an extremely interesting place to visit, and I counsel every tourist in Rome to make two or three walks through the Ghetto. It is a veritable beehive. I have often mentioned that you never find beggary there. I have never been asked for alms by a Jew, man, woman, or child, since I came to Rome. You see apparent poverty in the Ghetto, but no absolute indigence, and the most patient, cheerful industry. They sit at their doors occupied in sewing, sorting out rubbish, and always on the social lookout for custom. I noticed at many of the house entrances great heaps of old shoe soles and small bits of old leather. The rag and rubbish gathering men whom you can see in the streets of Rome every light or early morning, with a bag on their shoulders, a lantern and a stick pointed with iron in their hands, and they examining closely every dirt-heap and drain, gather old shoes out from among the offal and take them to their Ghetto homes. There the shoes are cleaned, taken apart, the leather soaked, and new ones of smaller size made out of the pieces. Economy of every nature and the smallest kind is practiced in that curious place."

THE CULTIVATION OF FRENCH FIELDS.—From Havre to Paris (says a correspondent) there is scarcely an acre of uncultivated ground, with the exception of the Parks belonging to large estates. The villages all look very old, the houses are of gray stone, with sharp-pointed roofs rising one above the other, with a little old church half fallen to decay in their midst. Every house has a flower garden, even to the railway stations. It looked so pretty and so strange to see so many flowers in November. The little gardens were one mass of color—purple heliotrope, tea-roses, scarlet geraniums, red rosebuds and pink; always framed in with the dark, glossy, green leaves of the ivy, that grows everywhere with the greatest luxuriance. There are no fences around the fields, they are simply laid out in very straight rows, and planted with different kinds of vegetables, with occasionally a grass-plot or small field of grain between: the different shades of green give a most beautiful effect to the landscape. There is not a stone or a stick to mar the perfect smoothness and beauty of these fields, nor an inch of ground left uncared for. They are intersected at intervals by roads bordered on either side by rows of tall poplars; roads so smooth, so hard and white, that one longs to gallop over them.

A CINCINNATI paper relates the following amusing incident: "A few days ago a 'lady' walked into an engraver and stationer's establishment on Fourth street, and asked a young red-headed country boy, who is an apprentice in the establishment, to show her some samples of visiting cards. The boy, anxious to receive an order during the absence of his employer,

made haste to comply, and showed the lady quite an assortment. On some of the most fashionable looking cards, ornamented with the names of our 'pure aristocracy,' the lady noticed the mysterious letters, P. P. C. 'What is the meaning of these letters?' she asked. The red-headed boy, who, although a genuine country rooster, did not believe in the policy of acknowledging his ignorance, readily replied that P. P. C. were words which all the 'big bugs' always used on their cards. So the lady ordered two hundred, with strict orders to copy the talismanic letters. The order went to the engraver. The cards were done the next day, and the lady called as she promised, and meeting the red-headed boy's boss, she ventured to ask if the P. P. C. stood for any thing else but 'good family.' The proprietor opened his eyes and mouth wide, and explained to the lady the meaning of the words. 'Good gracious!' said she, 'I have come to live here permanently; just left Chicago last week.' The lady objects to paying for the cards, and the boss is going to stop the price of them out of the red-headed boy's salary.

A DREADFUL SACRIFICE.—A strange and tragic story is that of a crazy woman who wanders among the mountains about Partenbeim, in Bavaria. A short time ago she was the handsome and happy wife of a man who had but one evil habit—that of poaching. One night he was pursued by a forester, and, turning, he shot the man. The deed was seen by others, and he was obliged to fly. With his wife and two children, one of them an infant, he went toward the Austrian frontier, and at night, while all were sleeping, concealed in a thicket, the sound of hoofs were heard. Touching his wife's arm, the husband whispered, "The gendarmes!" She started so suddenly and so violently that the infant resting in her arms awoke and began to cry. The father ordered her to keep it quiet, and the poor mother held the little one closer, endeavoring to stop its cries, while the gendarmes had halted and seemed to be listening. Then her husband laid his hand upon the child's mouth and held it there for the ten minutes his pursuers remained quiet. When, at last, they rode away, the child was dead. The family went on its way, and at the frontier the Custom House officers inquired if they had anything to declare. "Nothing," said the murderer; but the unhappy mother, uncovering her dead infant, told her wretched story, only to lose her reason in the conflict of wifely and motherly affection.

GATE, writing to the Chicago Tribune, of Mrs. Dahlgren's pamphlet on Washington etiquette, thus details her statement of the proprieties of a State dinner: "The length of time preceding the dinner invitation marks the degree of formality. Eight or ten days commonly precede a State dinner. You may wait for the President, if he is late, fifteen or twenty minutes. To great dinners men wear delicately tinted gloves, and remove them at the table, and white chokers. Ladies wear *grande toilette*. After dinner gentlemen do not replace their gloves, but the waiters must not take theirs off. A very elegant waiter "ought to have his thumb wrapped in a damask napkin"—somewhat, we presume, like the steward in the parable who wrapped his one talent in a napkin and hid it away. The scriptural waiter, however, was not understood by his uncultured master, and was kicked either into the coal-hole or into the back-yard; for the account says "outer darkness." It must have been the back-yard. The host and hostess take the central seats, opposite each other; the ends of the table should be left open; folks opposite ought to be previously introduced. One wine at a time, and delicate wines at that—Rhenish, Claret, or even the light American! The caterer, or chief steward, should serve the courses, and the host and hostess forget that it is being served. Dress your own table, and hire no flery to set it off. Rising from the table, the hostess leads the way to the drawing-room, where small cups of coffee are served, and one hour later the hostess herself serves tea. The men stay at the table and smoke as they like."

THE CURSE OF CHINA.—A San Francisco reporter has explored the Chinese quarter of that city, and gives the following description of an opium den: "The bold explorer finds himself in a room ten feet square, fitted up like the steerage of a ship. The half-dozen bunks, one above the other, occupy three sides of the dark, filthy apartment, and strips of matting form the only covering. An apology for a pillow rests at the head of each bunk, and a single blanket is within the reach of the occupant, when he shall need it. The room is feebly lighted with a lamp, and its rays do not penetrate far into the Plutonian blackness of even the small room, leaving the forms curled up in the blankets on the shelves indistinct and uncertain. A yellow skeleton-like human being sits before the table upon which rests the lamp, and before him are several bone vials, steel wires, and uncouth pipes. The occupation of two men lying upon their sides in one of the bunks reveals the character of the place. A lighted taper burns in a saucer full of oil between them, and one of the men is inserting one of the steel wires, upon the end of which is a dark substance, apparently glutinous in its character, into the flame of the taper, and afterwards through the minute orifice of the bowl of the pipe, at which the other slowly puffs, sending thin blue streams of smoke from his nostrils. The same operation is repeated whenever the supply in the pipe is exhausted, until the smoker sinks to slumber and reaches that heaven of untold joys, or finds he has reached the antipodes of elysium, where pain racks the frame and shapes of horrible mien burst upon him at every turn."

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

COVERING FOR STRAW TYPES.—Loose paper is wrapped round the pips and painted with thin syrup; and this is painted with a mixture of 4 bushels of loam, 8 bushels of sand or coke-dust, 3 pails of syrup, and 30 pounds of graphite; the mass is put on 20 mm. thick, and painted with oil or tar.

NEW PHOTOMETRE.—A simple arrangement, which may be exceedingly useful for many purposes, has been devised by M. Yvon. A piece of paper or card is folded in the middle, and placed upright on a table in such a manner that the two halves form right angles. In the line bisecting the angle thus formed, and at some little distance from its apex, is placed a tube, blackened in the interior, through which the observer looks at the edge of the paper or card. The sources of illumination to be compared are placed at opposite sides of the card. So long as the two surfaces are unequally illuminated, the observer has a perception of relief; when however, the light is perfectly equalized, he sees what appears to be a plane surface.

TANNING LAMB-SKINS WITH THE WOOLON.—Wash the pelts in warm water, and remove all fleshy matter from the inner surface; then clean the whole with yellow soap, and rinse the soap thoroughly out. When this is done apply to the flesh side the following mixture for each pelt: Common salt and alum, one quarter of a pound of each, and half an ounce of borax, dissolved in a quart of warm water; add to this enough rye-meal to make a thick paste, and spread the mixture on the flesh side of the pelt. Fold the skin lengthwise and let it remain two weeks in an airy and shady place, then remove the paste from the surface; wash and dry. When nearly dry scrape the flesh side with a knife, working the pelt until it becomes thoroughly soft.

A NEW WEATHER VANE.—The old weather-cock has two essential faults; it indicates a direction when there is a dead calm. It gives no means of learning the force of the wind; while it fails to show the true course of the same, by exhibiting merely its horizontal component. M. Tany proposes the arrangement to be attached to the ordinary lightning-rod. Just above a suitable shoulder on the latter is placed a copper ring, grooved and made into a pulley easily rotated in a horizontal plane. Around this passes a knotted cord, the ends of which are secured to the extremities of a short stick or metal rod, to which is secured a simple streamer. Thus constructed the vane indicates a calm by falling vertically, and besides shows the strength of the wind by being blown out more or less from the lightning-rod. As is evident, it is capable of motion in every direction, so that if there exist in the wind an upward tending vertical component, the same will be shown.

HINT FOR PROJECTORS OF TOWNS AND STREETS.—It is worthy of remark that the arranging of the streets according to the cardinal points involves a sanitary objection of no mean import. No fact is better established than the necessity of sunlight to health, and no constitution can long endure, without ill effects, the total privation of its health-giving power. Every house on the South side of a street running East and West must have its front rooms, which are generally its living rooms, entirely deprived of the sun during the summer. This fact, coupled with that of the indoor life of American, and particularly Western women, is enough to account for a very large share of the nervous debility which so generally prevails. If the rectangular system must be adhered to in city arrangement, it would be far better that the lines of streets should be Northwest and Southeast, and the cross streets at right angles with them, than as now disposed; in this case the rooms in front or rear of a house enjoy at least sunshine in the morning or evening. A strong proof that sunshine is wholesome is found in the fact that during epidemics people occupying rooms not exposed to sunlight are comparatively much worse off than those who enjoy that blessing.—*Manufacturer and Builder.*

THE THERAPEUTIC USE OF DRY POWDERED BLOOD.—Dr. De Pascale, of Nice, several years ago published some observations on the very beneficial effect of warm blood taken the moment when extracted from the calf or ox, killed for general domestic use. He described at that time several cases of hæmoptysis, in which a complete cure had been effected by this treatment. In a paper recently published he states that finding among his English and American patients at Nice an unconquerable repugnance to such a remedy, he was led to adopt the plan of giving the blood in the form of dry powder. This is merely the revival of a practice which was in vogue many years ago, and which has occasionally been tried in this country. The blood of the ox, after being dried in a water-bath, is reduced to a very fine powder, and grated through a sieve. Dry blood can be taken for any length of time, being almost tasteless, and no repugnance is likely to be felt, as is often the case with raw meat. It can be taken as any common powder, mixed with soups, milk, marmalade, or chocolate, or enclosed in a wafer. In some cases, where even the name of blood might have offended the patient, Dr. De Pascale has given it, mixed with a small quantity of pepsin, under the name of "nutritive powder." The quantity he prescribes has varied according to the age, sex, or the state of health and digestive power of the patient. In general, he begins with thirty grains, which is increased according to circumstances; but the quantity must be left to the discretion of the physician.