

NEWS AND NOTES.

M. Victor Saint Paul has placed \$5,000 at the disposal of the Paris Academy of Medicine as a prize to any person, whatever may be his vocation or nationality, who shall succeed in discovering an infallible means of curing diphtheria.

At Chester, Illinois, diggers in a clay bank unearthed, September 20, a number of fossilized remains, among which was the tusk of a mastodon, five feet six inches long, and its root measuring eight inches in diameter. The skull was also found, but was too much decayed to be removed entire.

During a hurricane in the neighborhood of Bologna the other day, a black cloud was seen apparently settling upon the wooded sides of the adjacent hills. Bursting not long afterwards, it ejected a countless number of leaves and tiny twigs, which the fury of the wind had torn off the trees. In addition to this strange burden, the wind had also carried up a small quantity of small toads, which fell, a living rain, from the sky.

A drawing of the skeleton of the gigantic fossil reptile known as *Brontosaurus excelsus* has been made by Prof. O. C. Marsh. Nearly all the bones illustrated belong to a single individual, which was nearly or quite fifty feet in length when alive, and must have weighed more than twenty tons. It had a small head, massive feet and legs, and a large tail. Its small brain indicates that it was a stupid, slow-moving animal. It was more or less amphibious, and its food was probably aquatic plants.

The Westminster Aquarium has a baby walrus, which is believed to be the second of its kind ever caught alive. It is about five months old. The little fellow was captured in Davis Straits by the crew of the whaler Polyna, who killed its mother as she was floating asleep on the water. As the men neared the old walrus the baby suddenly appeared and was taken into the boat, but its piteous cries brought two big walruses to its help, and the crew had a severe fight before killing the would-be rescuers. On board ship the young walrus soon became very docile and a perfect plaything of the sailors, while now he is so fond of human society that he growls and grumbles vigorously if left alone.—*Ex.*

A new thing in stilbite has been found at Black Rock, N. S. The peculiarity in this mineral is its color which varies from light green to dark purple. No complete analysis has yet been made. Associated with it is laumontite running through the same colors.

The population of China is estimated by E. C. Baber, Chinese secretary to Her Majesty's Legation, Peking, in a paper read before the Royal Geographical Society at only 250,000,000. He estimates the population of Peking at less than 500,000, and Hankow at no more than 500,000. The native census is entirely untrustworthy.

House plants have very little effect on the occupants of a room where they are; they consume carbonic acid gas and give out oxygen, but not in quantities to make any appreciable difference in the healthfulness of the atmosphere. But care should be observed in the use of fertilizers; the air of a room may be contaminated by emanations from some kinds of house-plant fertilizers, unless the room is kept constantly ventilated; that is, unless the ventilation is sufficient to change the air completely three or four times in twenty-four hours. The plants should be set in earth that has been thoroughly enriched with stable manure, and long enough to have combined with it; by this combination the earth disinfects the manure by absorbing and neutralizing any noxious gases that may exist.—*Hall's Journal of Health.*

BATHING IN SALT LAKE.—In the water of Salt Lake a bather can lie on the surface of the water without any exertion whatever, or by passing a towel under his knees and holding the two ends he can remain in any depth of water kneeling, with the head and shoulders out of water, or by shifting it under the sole of the feet he can sit on the water. The one exertion, in fact, is to keep one's balance; none whatever is required to keep afloat. The only danger, therefore, arises from choking by accidentally swallowing some of the water, for the strength of the brine is so intense that the muscles of the throat are convulsed, and strangulation ensues. All the same, I have myself dived several times into Salt Lake, and have survived.—*Phil. Robinson, in October Harper's.*