

MANORIAL CUSTOMS.

Nobody knows why the maids of Hildington, Oxfordshire, on the Monday after Whitsuntide, had their thumbs tied behind them, and roared after a lamb; who who succeeded in catching and holding it with her mouth, winning the title of Lady of the Lamb, and being installed mistress of the merry-making. When caught, killed, and dressed with the skin hanging still to it, the lamb was tied to a pole, and carried before the Lady and her followers to the green, where every one footed it merrily until night set in. Next day, the lamb was partly boiled, partly roasted, partly baked, and served up at the Lady's Feast; and when the company had disposed of it, the "solemnity," that had nothing solemn about it, was at an end. If the young fellows of Coleshill, Warwickshire, were nimble or clever enough to catch a hare time enough to present it at the parsonage before ten o'clock on Easter Monday, the parson was obliged to give them a calf's head, a hundred of eggs, and a goat in exchange. Puss and parson were associated too in an Easter observance peculiar to Hailaton, Leicestershire; the rector having to provide two hare pies, two dozen loaves, and a quantity of ale, to be scrambled for, in consideration of the benefit he derived from the Hare-crop Leys. The Leys were inclosed a hundred years ago, and another piece of land apportioned to the same purposes. We believe the custom is still continued under somewhat altered conditions. Easter Monday, the rector provides a basket, a sack, and two handless, stringless wooden bottles, holding about a gallon each. The basket is filled with penny loaves, cut into quarters, the bottles with ale, and the sack with two large veal and beacouples, cut into pieces. Men, women, and children turn out and wend their way to Hare-pie bank, a bank with a small trench round it, and a circular hole in the centre. The loaves are scrambled for on the road, but the pies and the ale are jealously guarded until the bank is reached, when they are thrown into the hole, for all comers to try their fortune at a scrambling about. In 1875 Sir William Bank was allowed to inclose twenty acres of land belonging to St. Paul's, upon condition of presenting the clergy of the church with a fat buck and doe every year, upon the days of the Conversion and Commemoration of St. Paul. The buck and doe were carried in procession to the high altar, where the dean and chapter, arrayed in copes and proper vestments, and wearing garlands of roses upon their heads awaited their coming. The buck's body was sent to be baked; but the head and horns being fixed upon a pole, were carried before the cross, round about the church. On reaching the west door, the keeper "blowed the death of the buck," and was answered by sundry horns about the city. For their pains, the bowers received their dinner and three shillings and fourpence; the keeper, two shillings, and a loaf of bread stamped with St. Paul's image; and the bringers of the buck, twelve pence. Among the bedrooms belonging to Hilton House, Staffordshire, was the hollow brass image of a kneeling man, having a large aperture at the back, and a smaller one at the mouth. This effigy was a foot high, and known as Jack of Hilton. Upon New-year's Day, Jack was filled with water, and set by the hall fire, until getting up his steam, he blew it from his mouth in very audible fashion. Then the lord of the adjacent manor of Essington came into the hall with a live goose, which he drove round the fire three times, before carrying it into the kitchen to be dressed and cooked, when he bore it to the table of the lord of Hilton, and received in return a dish of meat for his own dinner. The lord of the manor of Lodebrook, Warwickshire, was by custom entitled to receive three half-pence a year from every tenant for swarf-money, or, in case of default, thirty shillings and a white bull. In his account of the hundred of Knightlow, in the same county, Dugdale says:—"There is also a certain residue unto the lord of the hundred, called wroth-money, or wrath-money, or swarf-money, probably the same with ward-penny. This rent must be paid every Martinmas-day, in the morning, at Knightlow Cross, before the sun riseth; the party paying it must go thrice about the cross and say, 'The wroth-money,' and then lay it in the hole of the said Cross before good witness; for if it be not duly performed, the forfeiture is thirty shillings and a white bull." This curious custom still exists. At the northern end of the village of Stratton-on-Avon, near Rugby, upon an ancient British tumulus, stands the mortice-stone of the old cross of Knightlow, and here the wroth-silver is yet paid.—Chamber's Journal.

AMATEUR MUSICAL SOCIETIES.

One of the most effectual agencies in the spread of musical knowledge is the amateur musical society. In our time we have been connected with a number, and have a knowledge of many more. It may be that these jottings may prove interesting, or even useful, to others similarly situated. The most pretensions class is the Philharmonic Society, especially in London. Such societies are the chief regular purveyors of good music of all kinds, except cultro opera. The conductor must be a musician of the highest standing. The band and chorus are of the best material, and thoroughly drilled. A good many of the choruses are amateurs; but the band is professional to the backbone, and many of its members are

famous soloists with several instruments. Oratorios, cantatas, symphonies, overtures, and miscellaneous operatic selections, form the staple of the programmes, which are always interpreted by the aid of artists of the first eminence. For a young artist to gain a hearing at such concerts is a first step to fame. The audiences can hardly be described. They will represent, more or less, the three millions or more of London, city and suburbs. Then we have the provincial Philharmonic, or harmonic, or musical society. This is generally something more than a mere concert-giving institution. It is a social feature of the town. To it must subscribe every one with any pretence to taste or culture,—including, of course, many whose only claim is the pretence,—and every one else who aspires to belong to the "upper classes." The dress places are, consequently, largely occupied by people decently dressed, who will yet talk all through a song, treat any more noisy performance as a well-devised cover for conversation, and enter or depart without scruple in the middle of a performance. The cheaper seats are chiefly occupied by people who actually seem to have come for the music alone. It is true you see most copies of the score when a work is performed. The conductor is probably a musician of mark, hailing from London, and running down merely for the concert and one rehearsal before it. The "grinding" is necessarily done by some sub-conductor or chorus-master, before the great man comes. The principal members of the band have similar engagements in London and the provinces, and lead the same nomadic existence as their chief. The band may also include some amateurs; and the chorus is mainly composed of amateurs, with a few semi-professional church singers as leaders. The performances by such societies of oratorio and instrumental works will sometimes reach quite to the metropolitan standard, constituting an admirable local school of music. It is, however, to societies of more modest pretensions and more private character that the term "amateur musical society" more properly belongs; and, verily, their name is legion, and their variety infinite. There is the ordinary private society, whose members subscribe and defray all expenses, providing generally their own music. They employ a professional man or a talented amateur, and give occasional concerts, admission being by invitation, or in aid of a charity. Their work is generally confined to choral music, and they seldom have more than pianoforte accompaniment; yet, with a clever conductor, and members admitted by test, they will sometimes excel the more pretentious public societies. The individual standard of musical attainment being higher, they will get through more music, and perhaps do it better, than in the larger societies, where the sympathy and attention of the conductor is apt to be more devoted to the instruments than to the voices. Then we have the church choir, whose weekly practice has gradually developed into a small choral society, under the presenter or organizer's members will do psalmody, anthems, glees, and even make a frantic attempt—more gallant than wise—at one of the easier masses or oratorios. Lastly, there comes the most rudimentary of all—the "singing class," composed generally of very young folks, who have everything to learn. Hullah's system and the Tonic Sol-fa notation have greatly promoted the success of these, by facilitating the acquirement of right-singing. A combination of the latter with the old notation, called the "union notation," may prove even more useful as a stepping-stone to learners. Such classes will learn simple harmonies with astonishing speed.—Once-a-Week.

A HINDOO STORY.

A tiger, prowling in a forest, was attracted by a bleating calf. It proved to be a bait, and the tiger found himself trapped in a spring cage. There he lay for two days, when a Brahmin happened to see that way. "O Brahmin!" piteously cried the beast, "have mercy on me; let me out of this cage." "Alas! but you will eat me." "Eat you? Devor my benefactor? Never could I be guilty of such a deed," responded the tiger. The Brahmin, being benevolently inclined, was moved by these entreaties and opened the door of the cage. The tiger walked up to him, wagged his tail, and said,—"Brahmin, prepare to die; I shall now eat you." "Oh, how ungrateful! how wicked! Am I not your savior?" protested the trembling prey. "True," said the tiger, "very true; but it is the custom of my race to eat a man when we get a chance, and I cannot afford to let you go." "Let us submit the case to an arbitrator," said the Brahmin. "Here comes a fox. The fox is wise; let us abide by his decision." "Very well," replied the tiger. The fox, assuming a judicial aspect, sat on his haunches with all the dignity he could muster, and, looking at the disputants, he said,—"Good friends, I am somewhat confused at the different accounts which you give of this matter; my mind is not clear enough to render equitable judgment, but if you will be kind enough to act the whole transaction before my eyes, I shall attain unto a more definite conception of the case. Do you, Mr. Tiger, show me just how you approached and entered the cage,

and then you, Mr. Brahmin, show me how you liberated him, and I shall be able to render a proper decision." They assented, for the fox was solemn and oracular. The tiger walked into the cage, the spring door fell and shut him in. He was a prisoner. The judicial expression faded from the fox's countenance, and turning to the Brahmin, he said,— "I advise you to go home as fast as you can, and abstain, in future, from doing favors to rascally tigers. Good morning, Brahmin; good morning, tiger."

ANECDOTES OF EARLY TIMES IN CALIFORNIA.

In those days miners would flock in crowds to catch a glimpse of that rare and blessed spectacle, a woman! Old inhabitants tell how, in a certain camp, the now went abroad early in the morning that a woman was come! They had seen a calico dress hanging out of a wagon down at the camping ground—sign of emigrants from over the great plains. Everybody went down there, and a shout went up when an actual bona-fide dress was discovered fluttering in the wind! The male emigrant was 'lelible. The miners said: "Fetch her out!" He said: "It is my wife, gentlemen—she's sick—we have been robbed of money, provisions, everything, by the Indians—we want to rest." "Fetch her out! We've got to see her!" "But, gentlemen, the poor thing, she—" "Fetch her out!" He fetched her out, and they swung their hats and sent up three rousing cheers and a tiger; and they crowded around and gazed at her, and touched her dress, and listened to her voice with the look of men who listened to a memory rather than a present reality—and then they collected \$2,500 in gold and gave it to the man, and swung their hats again and gave three more cheers, and went home satisfied. Once I dined in San Francisco with the family of a pioneer, and talked with his daughter, a young lady whose first experience in San Francisco was an adventure, though she herself did not remember it, as she was only two or three years old at the time. Her father said that, after landing from the ship, they were walking up the street, a servant leading the party with the little girl in her arms. And presently a huge miner, bearded, belted, spurred and bristling with deadly weapons—just down from a long campaign in the mountains, evidently—barr'd the way, stopped the servant and stood gazing, with a face all alive with gratification and astonishment. Then he said, reverently: "Well, if it ain't a child!" And then he snatched a little leather sack out of his pocket and said to the servant: "There's a hundred and fifty dollars in dust, there, and I'll give it to you to let me kiss the child!" That anecdote, is true. But see how things change. Sitting at that dinner table, listening to that anecdote, if I had offered double the money for the privilege of kissing the same child, I should have been refused. Seventeen years have far more than doubled the price.—Mark Twain.

TASTES.

The pure elementary tastes are few in number, and may be comprised under the following heads: Sweet, sour, bitter, and salt. But the compound tastes and flavor are infinite in number, and it is in arranging them according to their affinities that the art of cookery consists. This art is almost entirely empirical. Dishes are dressed to suit the taste, and the cook takes his own taste as the standard of what will be agreeable to those whom he serves. But why certain things are blended together—why certain mixtures form pleasing compounds, these are points upon which we can offer no explanation. It is probable that there may be reasons in the back-ground, but they are of too subtle a kind for our observation. No classification of flavors beyond the very simple and elementary one that we have given above has ever been found possible, because when we get away from the primary sapor we soon arrive at very mixed and complicated flavors, which are difficult to describe in words, and which, for anything we know, may not convey to others the same impression that they do to ourselves. As we have said, those things only which are soluble in the fluids of the mouth can be tasted, because thus only can their sapid particles penetrate the superficial layer covering the tongue, and come in contact with the nerves which lie beneath it. For the same reason fluids are more quickly and easily tasted than solids, because they mix more readily with the secretions of the mouth. In order, therefore, to taste any substance, the best way is to make a solution of it, and then the solution should be moved rapidly over the surface of the tongue and discharged from the mouth. Such is the practice followed by tea and wine tasters, and it is astonishing how many varieties they can distinguish in rapid succession, and with what nicety of discrimination. Indeed, it is marvellous to what a degree of perfection the sense of taste can be educated. Thus Dr. Carpenter tells us that "the taster to one of the extensive cellars of sherry at Cadix or Seville has not the least difficulty in distinguishing the butt from which a given sample may have been drawn, although the number of different varieties of the same kind of wine under his keeping may not be less than five hundred."

The same thing, in a less degree, is often seen in those who devote much of their attention to the pleasures of the table. These, then, are the conditions under which the sense of taste is most perfectly exercised:—when the sapid substance is in a fluid form, when it is passed rapidly over the surface of the tongue and then ejected from the mouth; thus the nerves are excited without being exhausted, and one flavor may be tasted in rapid succession after another. But if a contrary method is adopted, and if the sapid substance is allowed to remain long in the mouth, the sensitive filaments of the nerves are exhausted, and become incapable of distinguishing one flavor from another. A familiar example of this is afforded by an experiment which may be tried at the dinner table. After taking a couple of glasses of some strongly flavored wine (such as port or sherry) in rapid succession, it will be found impossible with the eyes closed to distinguish whether the third glass is port or sherry. The nerves of taste are not merely exhausted, but the previous sapor has left an impression behind them which interferes with the discrimination of subsequent flavors. In a similar manner, if we may borrow an illustration from another sense, when colors are presented to the eye in rapid succession, the organ is unable to appreciate them, and the result is an appearance of white light. This is an optical illusion which is exhibited. As the sense of taste, like the other senses, depends upon the integrity of those parts of the body through which it is transmitted to the brain, the reader will be surprised to learn that, in those extremely rare cases which are on record of children born without any tongue, taste has nevertheless been found present. One remarkable instance of this has been related by M. de Jussieu, in the "Mémoires de l'Académie Royale des Sciences." A girl, aged fifteen, was seen by him whose tongue was altogether wanting, and who could nevertheless speak distinctly, swallow without difficulty, and distinguish tastes with nicety. No doubt in such a case as this the nerves, which ordinarily supply the tongue, terminated in the floor of the mouth, and the adjacent parts, and thus received impressions from sapid substances.—Gleason Edwards.

The University boat-race, about which we read so much in the papers for a month before it comes off, seems to require as many curious and technical terms as "our own correspondent" imports into his account of a horse-race. The Cambridge men, we are told, are not "up to sailing." Though many readers of the paper will not understand this phrase, few probably will connect it at this season with exercise on the ice. From general to the particular. The Pall Mall says: "Turnbull (6) is young and overgrown; he is short in his swing back; at the same time he is improving daily. Lecky-Browne (4) has a 'bucket' forward, and finishes his stroke in his lap instead of at his chest, but he does plenty of work. Robinson (8) is not in such good form as last year; his recovery from the chest is very dead, and he has no beginning to his stroke." This stroke without a beginning is perhaps more singular than the bucket forward, or Mr. Robinson with the dead recovery from the chest. To turn to the Oxford crew, we find they are "tidy on the feather,"—which expression has, probably, no reference at all to their feathering on the tide. In the interests of readers who are not awestruck at the doings of the sporting world, we wish that reports of races of all sorts could be managed with a little less slang. We believe they would be quite as intelligible as they are at present.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

Three minute diamonds which were said to have been discovered in the mineral called Xanthophyllite, found among the Ural mountains, turn out to be merely hollow cavities in the stone, produced by the action of acids. At least so asserts Dr. Knop of Carlsruhe, Germany. THE native bread fungus of Australia was described not long since, at a meeting of the Edinburgh Botanical Society. It occurs as a cluster of tubers, joined to one another by slender roots, the largest tuber being as big as a man's head. The interior looks like rice pudding, and to Europeans seems much too insipid for food, although highly esteemed by the aborigines. SPECKS IN COCHINEAL DYES.—It has long been noticed that fabrics colored with cochineal are apt to exhibit black specks, which have been ascribed to the presence of iron. According to Guignet, however, these are due to the formation of a carminate of lime, which occurs in the form of black powder, insoluble in water. This salt, of a red color, is soluble in acetic acid, without decomposition; and appears, on the drying of the solution, as a black residuum. NICKEL-PLATED TYPE.—Type, electro-plated with nickel, are not only superior to copper-plated in their resistance to friction and pressure, being 10 times as durable as ordinary type, on account of the almost steel-like hardness of their surfaces, but, by reason of the smoothness of the coating even when the nickel is deposited in a very thin film, they render the finest lines more perfectly, and possess the decided advantage of allowing the use of inks of all colors, while the copper-plated change some of these inks, and are acted upon by others, as vermilion, &c. AN EROSY STAIN FOR WOOD.—Apple, pear and walnut wood, especially of fine grain, give