

Odds and Ends.

THERE seems to be no limit to the uses to which the bicycle may be put. The cowboys in a cattle ranch near the Cheyenne River, in America, have been using the machines during the past summer in place of the horses with which they used formerly to collect their masters' herds. When the owner of the ranch first suggested that the cowboys should ride bicycles instead of horses for the work amongst the cattle on the level parts of the ranch, the men looked upon him as being little short of insane. But he persisted, and, the experiment being tried, was found so successful, that the men now declare that they have done better work in some cases than they would have done with horses. When the deep snow renders the use of the bicycles impossible, the horses will again be called into requisition, but not before.

"To know how to learn, so that when need arises knowledge may be quickly attained, is a better provision for the business of life than is afforded by the largest or richest store of information packed away in the memory—perhaps so packed as to be inaccessible when wanted."

"If ever the happy time should arrive when we are more interested to discover the excellences of our friends and neighbours than their defects, and more anxious to study their ideals than to insist upon our own, a great impetus will be given to moral progress and to the true and cordial brotherhood of man."

A VERY wise edict has lately been put in force in Massachusetts. This entails a penalty upon the wearer of the skin or feathers of any bird which is protected by the laws of that State, as well as upon the person who kills it. Thus any girl or woman who buys these feathers or birds from a milliner to decorate her hat or bonnet runs the risk of a fine or imprisonment as much as the man who has shot the bird. The law is certainly drastic, but the indifference of women to the total extinction of certain species of birds in order that they themselves may be adorned is so great and so increasing, that it needs restrictive measures to bring them to a proper sense of kindly feeling and humanity.

WE are not generally aware that whilst we are awake we are continually winking. Every five minutes or so the upper eyelid suddenly drops down, and each time it does so a tear is swept across the eye and washes away any speck of dust or dirt that may have lodged upon it. This action on our part is quite unconscious; but this moisture is perpetually clearing the vision. The eyes themselves frequently become weak from improper use, such as reading by too bright a light, or not sufficient light. Women often ruin their eyesight over fancy work in which the colours are dazzling and the designs intricate. Happily fancy-work is no longer so fashionable as it was, but that, and fine embroidery and lace-work have much to answer for with regard to the short-sightedness of many women, for whose eyes the strain necessitated by the keen attention to minute stitches has been too great.

IN China everything is done backwards. The men wear skirts and the women wear trousers; the Chinese compass points to the South instead of to the North, and whilst the men wear their hair in a pigtail, the women coil theirs into a knot, and oddly enough the dressmakers are men and the women act as labourers. The written language is not spoken, and the spoken language is not written; books are read backward, and they write from the right to the left-hand side of the paper, instead of from the left to the right. White is the colour of mourning, and black is the colour for bridal, the bridesmaids being old women. When a Chinaman meets a friend he shakes his own hand, and he commences his dinner with dessert, ending with soup and fish. Their vessels are launched sideways and they always mount their horses on the off side.

FINLAND is a country of which comparatively little is ever heard, but its women are much more advanced in education and social progress than those of almost any other country in Europe. During the past twenty-five years the schools have been free to both sexes, and in the University of Helsingfors—the capital—there are now two hundred women-students. Two flourishing clubs in the country are solely supported by women, whilst over a thousand women are engaged in the public service, such as post-offices, railroads and telegraph offices. Nearly another thousand are teachers in schools of various grades, it being no uncommon thing to see young men of eighteen who are preparing for a commercial or academic career amongst their pupils. Business engrosses the time and attention of three thousand of the Finnish women, and out of the eighty poor-houses in the country, fifty-two are managed by women superintendents. The population of Finland being small, the total of these figures represent a large percentage of the women of the nation.

THE Emperor Menelik of Abyssinia has become better known to Europe during the last two or three years, owing to the disastrous Italian campaigns against him and the missions that both France and England have sent to his court. Most of the Biblical manuscripts which have passed into the possession of European countries have come from Abyssinia, and it is said that there are still large quantities remaining in the Emperor's keeping. When Ethiopia was invaded by the Mahomedans in the sixteenth century, the Abyssinians placed all their manuscripts in an island of Lake Zana called Debra-Sina, where they were carefully guarded by the inhabitants, who looked upon the books as tutelary deities. The Emperor of Abyssinia has now conquered these "holy islands," and has built a great library in his capital for the safe keeping of the mass of manuscripts he found. The time may come when European savants will have free access to these treasures, many of which are supposed to bear directly upon the earlier history of the Christian religion.

IT is just a hundred years ago since the art of lithography was discovered. Mozart's opera, *Don Juan*, had been most successfully produced at Munich, and after the performance a man named Sanefelder, whose duty it was to stamp the tickets of admission to the opera house, began to stamp the tickets for the following day. When he went to his room he had three things in his hand, a polished whetstone for sharpening razors, a ticket-stamp still wet with the printing-ink, and a cheque for his week's salary. As he placed this cheque upon the table, a draught of wind caught it, and, carrying it up almost to the ceiling, finally deposited it in a basin of water. Sanefelder dried the cheque and then pressed it flat with the whetstone, upon which he had before carelessly placed the ticket-stamp. When he took the cheque from under the stone the next morning, he found that the letters of the stamp were printed upon it with faithful accuracy. It then occurred to him that by this means he could probably simplify his work of copying out the parts of the chorus of the various operas, so he purchased a large stone, and, after making several experiments, discovered the art of lithography, or, in other words, the art of printing from stone.

THE national flower of England, the rose, is the oldest flower of which the world has any record. Its origin has never been stated, and it is not mentioned in the Bible before the reign of Solomon; but then it is spoken of in such terms as to indicate that it had already been well known for a long time. It is found drawn upon some of the earliest Egyptian monuments, and upon the tomb of an Egyptian princess being opened only a year ago, several vessels, hermetically sealed, were found, which contained attar of roses. From the Egyptians the manufacture of attar of roses or rose-essence was doubtless taken by the Greeks and the Jews, as it was common to both peoples. It is an extraordinary fact that wild roses grow upon every continent on the globe with the exception of Australia, and even in the Polar regions, where the summer is only of two months' duration, they are to be found, travellers in Greenland, Kamschatka, and Northern Siberia constantly gathering them, as well as at Spitzbergen.

BY some extraordinary oversight there is absolutely no public official record of the birth, baptism or confirmation of Queen Victoria. As the Queen was only three degrees removed from the throne at the time of her birth, it would be thought that some document setting forth the fact of her entrance into the world would have been found amongst the mass of public archives, but it appears that the announcement of the birth was all that was deemed necessary by the State officials, whose duty it was to be personally aware of the fact; consequently there is nothing in our public records to show the birth of one of our greatest sovereigns. Of course, there are the private entries of birth, baptism and confirmation in the royal registers kept for the purpose.

A NATURALIST who has been observing ants very closely for some years, and who has written much about them says that each ant of one particular species is regularly washed by another ant who for the time being acts as lady's-maid. They were examined beneath a microscope, and on an ant waking up the assistant ant began by washing its face and then going over the whole body, the insect expressing all the signs of extreme pleasure and gratification during the process. These particular ants, the naturalist found, slept for three hours at a time in relays, the toilet operation being performed upon each set as it awoke.