

Odds and Ends.

AMONGST the many industries for which England had a deserved reputation, and which are rapidly declining, the most serious decrease is in that of watch-making. So bad is the present state of the industry that it can scarcely be said to exist as an English manufacture. The reason for this serious decline is not far to seek, and it is extremely simple. It has been the habit of the British watch-manufacturers to allow the jewellers and shopkeepers to stamp their names and addresses upon the watches they sell; and not only do they permit this, but they themselves place the name and address upon the watches that are bought by various shopkeepers. Consequently such a thing as a great name in the watch-making trade is almost unknown whilst there are many jewellers' shops which have a great reputation for their watches. These are actually made, regulated, finished off, and sent out by some firm or other which never receives the credit. Another curious thing about this manufacture is that watch-springs are not made in this country, the steel being actually sent to Switzerland where it is cut up by a machine—invented by the Swiss who entirely monopolise the trade—into the thin delicate strips that form the mainspring, which are then sent to England. These spring-cutting machines may be bought for a very low price, but oddly enough they are not used in England.

HALF a dozen drops of spirits of nitre in a spoonful of water, if applied with a feather to ink-stains in mahogany, rosewood, or black walnut furniture will instantly remove them. As soon as the ink disappears the place should be rubbed with a cloth that has been wetted in cold water, or the nitre will leave a white spot that will not be easily removed. If the ink remains after the application of the nitre, a second trial will be found effective. Here, too, are some useful hints with regard to the treatment of *passementerie* and jet trimmings that have become dull and rusty, as is so often the case. It is quite easy to clean them by wetting a piece of soft black cloth in alcohol that has been diluted with a little water, and then rubbing it over the trimmings. Shoe-polish will always renovate those portions of the *passementerie* that have become brown with wear. The *passementerie* should be brushed with it.

GENEVA is the great centre for the manufacture of musical boxes, thousands of men, women, and children being employed in the factories. The different parts are made by men who are experts, and who do nothing else year after year. The music is marked on the cylinder by a man who has served an apprenticeship of many years; another man inserts pegs which have been filed to one length. The comb or set of teeth which strikes these pegs and makes the sound is arranged by a workman who does nothing else. When all the parts are completed and put together, the cylinder is revolved to see that each peg produces its proper tone, and the most delicate and difficult work of all is the revising of each peg, this being done by a man who has a good ear for music. He sees that each peg is in its proper place and bent at the proper angle, so that the comb in catching it may produce the required sound. When finally the instrument is in its case an expert examines it most carefully to see that the time is perfect.

"BELITTling our neighbours is a sure sign that we are on a low level ourselves and desire to pull them down so that they may stand no higher than we do."

"To understand how to rest is of more importance than to know how to work. The latter can be learned easily, the former takes years to learn, and some people never learn the art of resting. It is simply a change of scenes and activities. Lounging may not be resting. Sleeping is not always restful. Sitting down with nothing to do is not restful. A change is needed to bring into play a different set of faculties and to turn the life into a new channel. The woman who works hard finds her best rest in playing hard. The woman who is burdened with care finds relief in something that is active yet free from responsibility. Above all we should keep good-natured and not abuse our best friend—the digestion."

It is a common superstition that moonlight has great influence upon animate and inanimate objects, and many people believe that a person can be driven mad by sleeping with unshuttered windows when the moon is shining. But moonlight is only reflected sunlight, and neither the quality nor the quantity of its light is what is generally imagined. Astronomers say that it would take 618,000 full moons to give the same amount of light emitted by the sun, and that there is only sufficient space in the sky for 75,000 of these planets. A certain amount of heat comes from moonlight, but in so small a degree that it cannot be measured by the ordinary astronomical instruments, and the great scientist Flammarion declares that the whole heat emitted by a full moon at the zenith, cannot possibly be more than one eighty-thousandth part of the amount given by the sun at noon on a July day.

CURVED or stooping shoulders may be easily straightened by the daily and patient following of this exercise. Stand in a perfectly upright position with the heels together and the toes at right angles. Drop the arms by the side inflating and raising the chest to its full capacity, keeping the chin well drawn in and the crown of the head in exactly the same position as if it were attached to a cord fastened in the ceiling above. Then slowly rise upon the balls of the feet as far and as high as possible, thus exercising all the muscles of the legs and body, and drop into the standing position without moving the body out of its upright position. Repeat the exercise afterwards upon one foot and then the other, and in a short time the effect will be observed not only in the curve of the shoulders but in the greater expansion of the lungs.

AN American professor has invented a cooling stove, which he claims will reduce the temperature of a room during the hottest summer day to one of cool comfort. Salt, a small quantity of ice, and a patented chemical are the fuel of this novel invention, and so great is the cold induced that it is as dangerous to touch this stove when it is in operation as it would be to place the hand on an ordinary stove when fully heated. The skin is instantly taken off, the effect produced being exactly like that of a burn.

AUSTRIA has been described as "the paradise of old ladies." In no other country are elderly ladies treated with such deference. No Austrian would ever dream of receiving a lady's extended hand without bowing to kiss it, and girls and young married women of the highest station never consider it beneath their dignity to kiss the hands of ladies who have attained a certain age.

ONE of the medical students at the Royal Free Hospital, in the Gray's Inn Road, London, is the Hon. Ella Scarlett, a sister of Lord Abinger's. Miss Scarlett was presented at Court and went into society for two seasons, but she soon wearied of an existence of mere pleasure, and, meeting a Russian lady-surgeon abroad, gladly allowed herself to be persuaded to give her time and energies to the alleviation of human suffering. For two-and-a-half years she has been working hard at the Royal Free Hospital, and when her course is finished there, will go to the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin. The training lasts five years, and during that time Miss Scarlett is going to learn Hindustani, so that she may practice in India when she has taken her degree. She hopes to be appointed to the court of one of the rajahs. Miss Scarlett holds a surgical post in the Royal Free Hospital. Whilst speaking of women doctors, it is interesting to note that out of ninety serious operations performed at the New Hospital for Women in the Euston Road, where all doctors are women, there have been only two deaths.

It is generally supposed that a snake in killing its prey always bites it. But a naturalist, who for many years has studied the habits of these reptiles, declares that this is not the case, and that snakes cannot possibly bite because their jaws are connected only by a cartilage, and are not hinged and therefore cannot be brought together with any force. The snake simply hooks the fangs that are placed in its upper jaw into its victim, the lower jaw not coming into action at all, exactly in the manner in which anybody in a boat fixes a boat-hook in a chain or on to a pier.

THAT much-used preservative against the ravages of moths, camphor, comes from Japan where, however, the tree only grows in certain localities that are within reach of the sea breezes, and that always face towards the south. The tree is of remarkably slow growth, growing only one and a half inches a year, and a camphor tree plantation of about two and a half acres will yield quite £2,000 worth of camphor annually. Owing to a careless and indiscriminate felling of the trees, there are now very few available and the price of the product has naturally increased. Chips from the stumps and roots of trees cut down years and years ago are used by the Japanese farmers for making crude camphor, but the process by which it is obtained is so wasteful that it is estimated that only a very small percentage of the camphor actually contained in the chips is extracted. This crude camphor contains only from ten to fifteen per cent. of the camphor oil which in its turn yields fifty per cent. of pure camphor. There is a large district in the island of Formosa entirely covered by camphor forests, and it is from these, it is said, that the future supply of camphor will come.