

## English Jottings.

The census returns are full of suggestive and interesting reading. It seems that Ireland suffers most from decrease of population, which, indeed, is just one-half what it was 50 years ago. In 1841 the population numbered 8,000,000 now it counts under 5,000,000. In the last ten years the decrease exceeds half a million. In England the only great town registering a decrease is Liverpool; but this is accounted for by the tendency of city people to pitch their tents in the suburbs or the country. Cardiff has in ten years added 50 per cent. to its numbers.

Just as the Darwinian theory of our monkey ancestry had waxed cold, except among savants, Professor Garner, of that mischievously restless country, America, revives it, imbuing it with new life. If his thesis be true we must succumb to the inevitable, and each of us hang up among our family portraits, the handsome presentment of an ape! The professor elects to have discovered monkey language, by the phonograph. In this way. He "separated a pair of monkeys and received in his phonograph the disconsolate chatter of the female, afterwards releasing it in the ear of her mate. The result was very gratifying to the experimenter, the monkey responding at once and extending his paw into the trumpet of the phonograph in search of his lost companion. Then Professor Garner entered upon a laborious personal study of the sounds produced by monkeys, and soon became convinced that one particular and oft-repeated monkey-word meant drink of some sort—probably milk. This word the professor himself repeated to a strange monkey who sat in a cage with an empty pan near. The monkey, we read, was astonished—very naturally; but he recovered his presence of mind quickly enough to seize the pan and offer it to be filled. This triumph was followed by others, and eight or nine more simian words were speedily added to the professor's vocabulary." Where this gentleman, says my authority, will stop there can be no telling. "The whole animal world is before him, and no doubt lions and tigers, birds and fishes, will in course of time yield up their lingual secrets to Professor Garner and his phonograph. Then a school of animal language will be formed and nobody will be considered liberally educated who cannot chat pleasantly with a kangaroo, or exchange greetings with a flying fish from the deck of a P. and O. steamer. Simian or some lower language may take the place of the discarded Greek in public schools, and the tribulation of the schoolboy be added to by a cow lexicon and a camel accident."

We have heard almost too much about Manipur lately, and yet how few of us have any definite ideas about what sort of a place it is. I must say that my own ideas were of the vaguest possible, till I picked up the *Nineteenth Century* for June, and came across Sir James Johnston's paper on the subject. I kept the following clipping for the enlightenment of others:—

"It is scarcely two months since all India and England were startled by the news of a great disaster in Manipur, and the cry instantly arose 'Where is Manipur?' most people in India being quite as ignorant of its whereabouts as inhabitants of the United Kingdom. Yet Manipur is a country with many features of much interest, it contains scenery of surpassing beauty, every variety of climate, and is the home of an intelligent people, quite distinct from any other Indian race, and having a history and civilization of their own. The valley of Manipur, the heart of the country, and the only part where the pure Manipurs live, is an open plain 650 square miles in extent and of irregular shape, its extreme length from North to South being perhaps thirty-five miles, and its breadth from East to West twenty-five. With the exception of the villages, which are well planted, and a few sacred groves here and there left for the benefit of the sylvan gods, the country is devoid of timber. The capital, called Imphal, is a large mass of villages, and from the neighboring heights presents the appearance of a forest; it covers a space of about fifteen square miles. Every house in the capital is in its own well planted garden, hence the large space covered. The population at the census of 1881 showed it to contain 60,000 inhabitants; the remainder of the valley had another 60,000; while the hill tracts accounted for 100,000—making in all a population of 220,000; the extent of the state, hill and plain together, being 8,000 square miles, or a little larger than Wales."

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I have not the honour of being personally acquainted with Miss Baskett, of "Captain Verney" fame, nor do I aspire to be numbered among her friends, for I should be excessively chary as to my future safety were I to allow myself any little pleasantries which might perhaps be looked upon as harmless by anybody else in this wicked world but the aforesaid damsel. Her latest appeal for notoriety bids to even outdo her previous exploits in the witness-box at the Old Bailey, whence her extreme purity induced the judge to send Captain Verney to jail for one year.

After this pleasant little episode in the young lady's life, she unblushingly requests the good vicar of her parish to send the following letter to the *Daily Telegraph*:—

SIR,—I am asked by Miss Baskett, as her vicar, to let it be known that as soon as ever legal proceedings were over, Captain Verney prepared to do all that was in his power to show his regret for the pain he had caused her, and that within the last day or two the sum of £100 has been forwarded to her by his solicitor.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ALLEN EDWARDS, Jun.

South Lambeth, June 8.

If this is not downright shameless impudence, I don't know what is. Here is a woman who gets a man condemned to prison for no other ostensible crime than stroking her gloved hand, and when she has the satisfaction of getting him there, coolly advertises the fact that she has received from the poor prisoner £400 in return for her kind act. That Verney should have been such a blatant idiot I quite understand, but that Miss Baskett should wish to advertise the fact—but stop! I have it. She is probably putting in a cheap advertisement for a husband now that she has some money. Much good may it do the future Benedict!

The Queen has lost another of her old servants. William Ross, Her Majesty's well known head piper, died suddenly at Windsor Castle on Wednesday, aged 69. He was a well-known feature on all occasions on which the Queen appeared in public, and had been for nearly 40 years in the Royal service. He was originally in the 42nd Black Watch, and was Pipe-Major there when he entered the Queen's service. He was one of the best pipers going, and was a handsome, sturdy Highlander.

A strange thing—or, more poetically, a fickle goddess—is Fashion. In dress, the ladies, and the ladies' dressmakers, tell us we are coming round again to the fashions and modes of some hundred odd years ago. In art, too, perhaps, the same thing has a tendency to take place. It must strike anyone who has spent any time in the galleries at Windsor Castle and has looked at the beautiful miniatures there, what a lost or neglected art is that of miniature-painting at the present day. But we may, nevertheless, be coming back to it. Since the excellent work in this line coming from the brush of Lord Bennett, I have seen nothing to equal this delicate handicraft like that of a rising young amateur painter, at whose studio I saw some very good and promising work the other day. Mr. Montagu Wilson will do well to re-establish this once popular branch of art. His miniatures of the pretty Miss Hammersleys and others are excellent in detail and careful delicacy of finish.

Last year we had a sensational marriage when H. Stanley led Miss Tennant to the altar at Westminster Abbey with all the show and fuss that could possibly be arrayed; and now this season has seen one of the greatest sensations finished up by a quiet wedding. On Wednesday morning Sir William Gordon-Cumming was married to Miss Garner at Holy Trinity Church, Sloane street. Had they only known, all fashionable London would have crowded there. But they didn't, so half a-dozen casual people were the only spectators. The bride was quietly dressed in grey, and carried her gloves in her hand, and was bright and gay, while the bridegroom looked worried and careworn. The ceremony was performed at the side altar, and the bride was given away by Lord Thurlow. I am sure