

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

A NEW sort of umbrella has been invented in England. A spring runs through the cane, and at the part where the tips of the ribs come, when the umbrella is closed, is a cap which fits down upon the ribs, and so holds the umbrella neatly and securely. The revolving principle has been introduced, so that the chances of tearing and breaking when coming into contact are greatly reduced.

SINGULAR DEFORMITY.—M. W. P. Bush, of Monroe City, Mo., is in possession of a calf, the body of which presents a shape very similar to the letter S, its head being twisted far to one side, curving in a curious manner, and its hind-quarters drawn around to the opposite side in the same way. One eye is on the top of the head, looking up; the other is under the bottom and turns immediately down.

THE "FLOWING BOWL."—A remarkable bowl of punch was made across the water in 1844. It was made in a fountain, in a garden, in the middle of four walks, covered overhead with orange and lemon trees, and in every walk was a table, the whole length of it covered with refreshments. In the fountain were the following ingredients: Four hogshheads of brandy, twenty-five thousand lemons, twenty gallons of lime juice, thirteen hundred weight of white sugar, thirty-one pounds of grated nutmegs, three hundred toasted biscuits, and one pipe of dry mountain Malaga. Over the fountain was a large canopy to keep off the rain, and there was built on purpose a little boat, wherein was a boy, who rowed round the fountain and filled the cups of the company. It is supposed more than six thousand men drank from the fountain.

ANSWERING LETTERS.—A great many people are shamefully negligent about answering letters. Nothing is more annoying. In European countries it is regarded as the height of ill-breeding to allow a letter which needs reply to go unanswered; and so it ought to be considered here. This is a point on which parents should lay great stress to their children. They should be taught to consider it as rude not to reply to a letter which needs attention. The busiest people are generally those who are the most exact in this respect. The late Duke of Wellington, who, it will be admitted, had a good deal on his hands at different times of his life, replied to every letter, no matter from how humble a source. Once a clergyman, who lived in a distant part of the kingdom, wrote to his grace, on whom neither he nor his parish had a claim, to beg for a subscription to build a church. By return mail came back a letter from the Duke, to the effect that he really could not see why in the world he should have been applied to for such an object; but the parson sold the letter as an autograph for £5, and put the Duke down for that amount among the subscribers.

ORIGIN OF "BLINKERS."—Every established custom has some simple origin; and the adoption of blinds for horses' eyes is traced back to the time of Queen Victoria's father. The Duke of Kent was at one time woefully in debt. Being a prince he could not be sued at common law or arrested, but a ribbon stretched across the sidewalk must not be broken by the debtor. His creditors contented themselves by using this ribbon to compel him to take to the street, or go back. So he had to travel in a coach-and-four. His officer got "wall eyed." The duke could not buy another team, and this white eye made the horse unpleasant to look upon. Poverty and no credit ruled the roost, and it seemed that his Royal Highness would have to go on foot, until one of his drivers lit upon the blinker idea, and one was fitted to the head of the ailing horse. It completely hid the white eye, and then a blind was put on the other horses to make things even and uniform. Our stages were once driven through the country with four blinkers on the horses, i. e., one on the outside of each head-stall, and that fashion continued many years, or until one-horse wagons came in vogue, and then two blinkers were placed on each head-stall.

A WOULD-BE MONARCH'S ABODE.—The Count of Chambord, with an income of £20,000, is content to inhabit the ground floor of Frohsdorf Castle, his residence. His reception-room is plain. The furniture represents the style of the latter part of the last century, the proprietor having an extreme dislike of what he calls "gewgaws." The prospect from the windows is splendid, embracing a range of hills thickly wooded with fir-trees. His closet contains a large variety of heavy walking sticks, their owner being lame, and an equally varied assortment of sporting implements, the Count having inherited from his grandfather, Charles X., who was the crack shot of his time, a decided taste for sporting. His favorite seat is an easy chair, made entirely from gigantic stag-horns and upholstered with stag-skins. His father, the Duke of Berri, was very corpulent, and the Count inherits the paternal obesity. His stature is less than five feet nine inches, and his age is fifty-three. He speaks a good deal of Versailles, and thinks that the bed of Louis XIV. is there ready for him to sleep in. His wife, three years his senior, is more cautious and bolder than her husband, and is regarded as his superior in intelligence and force of character.

FROZEN MEAT.—The beef-eaters of England are not so fortunate as they thought they were going to be. The attempt, which we noted a short time ago, to introduce into that country fresh Australian meats in a frozen state has failed. However, it is hoped that this failure is

temporary and accidental. The ship Norfolk, which carried the twenty tons of frozen meat, was only seventy-nine days in making the voyage from Australia, and before departure meat which had been for eighty-five days subjected to the same process as that she carried had been eaten by a large company at a public luncheon, and declared to be exactly like newly-killed meat. The experiment seemed to promise thorough success. But there was some defect in the construction of the apparatus; the freezing brine from the ice and salt upon the top of the meat-tanks wasted too rapidly, and consequently the ice provided could not last out the voyage. Most of the meat was thrown overboard on the thirty-fourth day; only one ton was taken safely as far as the Azores, when it was thrown away, the ice failing entirely. Probably more care in the arrangement of a cargo and a more accurate calculation of the leakage of the brine will yet carry Australian beef and mutton safely to London dinner-tables.

THE TURN OF LIFE.—From the age of forty to that of sixty a man who properly regulate himself may be considered in the prime of life. His matured strength of constitution renders him almost impervious to the attacks of disease, and all the functions are in the highest order. Having gone a year or two past sixty, however, he arrives at a critical period of existence; the river of death flows before him, and he remains at a stand-still. But ahead of this river is a viaduct called "The Turn of Life," which, if crossed in safety, leads to the valley "Old Age," round which the river winds, and then flows beyond without a doubt of causeway to effect its passage. The bridge is, however, constructed of fragile materials, and it depends upon how it is trodden whether it bend or break. Gout, apoplexy, and other bad characters, are also in the vicinity, to waylay the traveller and thrust him from the pass; but let him gird up his loins, and provide himself with perfect composure. To quote a metaphor, "the turn of life" has a turn either into a prolonged walk or into the grave. The system and power having reached their utmost expansion, now begin either at close, like flowers of sunset, or break down at once. One injudicious stimulant, a single fatal excitement, may force it beyond its strength, whilst a careful supply of props, and the withdrawal of all that tends to force a plant, will sustain it in its beauty and vigor until night has nearly set in.

A CROCODILE STORY.—A cayman from the neighboring lagoons of Lyson's estate, in St. Thomas's in the East, that used occasionally to poach the ducks and ducklings, having free warrant about the water mill, was taken in his prowl and killed. All sorts of suspicion were entertained about the depredator among the ducks, till the crocodile was surprised lounging in one of the ponds, after a night's plunder. Downie, the engineer of the plantation, shot at and wounded him; and though it did not seem that he was much hurt, he was hit with such sensitive effect that he immediately rose out of the pond to gain the morass. It was now that David Brown, an African wainman, came up; and before the reptile could make a dodge to get away, he threw himself astride over his back, snatched up his fore-paws in a moment, and held them doubled up. The beast was immediately thrown upon his snout; and though able to move freely his hind feet, and slap his tail about, he could not budge half a yard, his power being altogether spent in a useless endeavor to grub himself onward. As he was necessarily confined to move in a circle, he was pretty nearly held to one spot. The African kept his seat. His place across the beast being at the shoulders, he was exposed only to severe jerks as a chance of being thrown off. In this way a huge reptile, eighteen feet long—for so he measured when killed—was held *manu forti* by one man, till Downie reloaded his fowling-piece, and shot him quietly through the head.

FROM WEALTH TO WANT.—A gentleman who has been spending a few days at Baden, a watering-place about twenty miles from Vienna, tells the following story: "Two years ago I was in Europe, and met an American lady in Paris, and afterwards in Rome, who resided in Chicago and had come abroad for a vacation. She was a most charming personage, well educated, brilliantly accomplished, and perfectly correct in her deportment. I returned to America and heard nothing more of her. At Baden last week, as I was passing along the hall of the hotel and near the door of one of a suite of rooms belonging to a Russian countess, I saw a plainly dressed woman. She looked around as I approached, and then retreated hastily; the single glance convinced me that it was my acquaintance of two years ago. That evening I was introduced to the Russian countess, and asked her if she knew Mrs. —, an American. On her saying that she did know her, I asked if I had not seen her in the hotel. She then told me that the lady was in Baden, and was her companion, and "her history," she said, "is a strange one. She was in Europe two years ago, with an abundance of money, and supposed herself wealthy. Her husband was in business in Chicago, and at the time of the great fire there he was burned to death and all their property was swept away. The morning after the fire she was a widow with no money except what she possessed at the time. I had known her for some time, and when I heard of her misfortunes I asked her to travel with me and be my companion. She consented, and is now with me. She dresses plainly as you saw her, and bears her misfortune very patiently. She declines to go into society any more, and devotes herself entirely to me. She is a very worthy lady, and I shall always befriend her."

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

The *Scientific American* recommends as a cure for nose-bleeding, to extend the arm perpendicularly against a wall or post, or any convenient object for a support. The arm on the side from which the blood proceeds is the one to elevate.

Artificial butter is being made from beef suet in America and the inventor hopes to be able completely to drive genuine butter out of the markets; the flavouring or essential butter fat is made chemically. We see no reason why this should not be, as the fat, from what source, is of the same constitution, and therefore equally useful as an article of diet.

DISINFECTATION.—Carbolic acid is the best and most trustworthy disinfectant now known to us, and both public and private purchasers will do well to obtain it in the crystalline form, and to make for themselves a solution in water containing five per cent. of the crystals—that is, eight ounces in an imperial gallon. With this solution all drains and waste-pipes and all collections of refuse may be freely and frequently flooded, not only with at least as great a degree of security against infection as can be afforded by any other agent, but also with the incidental advantage that the smell of the acid, if detected in the family drinking water, will prove the existence of some unsuspected leakage.

CLOTHING.—For all persons, especially invalids, an under material of wool gauze, next to the skin in the safest and the best, because it is a non-conductor and carries heat from the body more slowly than cotton, linen or silk. The warmer the weather the more need for wool next the skin. All garments worn next the skin during the day should be removed at night and spread out for a thorough airing and drying. Cotton is the best material to be worn next the skin at night. All changes from a heavier to a lighter clothing in the summer should be made by putting on the lighter clothing first thing in the morning. It is safer for children, for invalids and old persons to have too much clothing than too little.

A VALUABLE INVENTION NOT PATENTED.—The cheapest, most simple, and practical fire-alarm for ordinary household purposes is a small weight of lead or iron made to adhere to the ceiling of each room with a piece of wax. When the temperature becomes elevated above that of the ordinary atmosphere, the wax will lose its adhesiveness and allow the weight to drop. The weight can be attached by a wire to all the bells in the house, or to sound any alarm extemporized for the purpose. The weights should be kept away from stove pipes and out of the sun, and one should be placed on each room and hallway. They will not fall to give the alarm when there is excessive increase of temperature, and no house should be without them. This alarm is not patented, and is free to be used by all without money and without price.—*Manufacturer and Builder.*

The origin of freckles has been thus explained: In the spring, the skin, from the warm covering which the body has had in winter, and from various other causes, is peculiarly sensitive. The heat of the sunbeams now draws out drops of moisture, which do not dry as rapidly as in summer. These drops operate like a convex glass, to concentrate the rays, which are thus made to act powerfully on the Rete Malpighii, and the carbon which it contains is half acidified, and this substance, in this state, always has a dark colour. In the same manner arises the dark tint which the skin in general assumes in summer, and which fire communicates to artisans who labour constantly in its immediate vicinity. The only bad effect of freckles is that they induce ladies to keep themselves shut up from the influence of the weather, or to apply injurious washes to the face to remove them.

TOBACCO AND THE MENTAL FACULTIES.—A distinguished French savant, the Abbe Moigno, contributes to the discussion of the tobacco question some interesting observations on the influence of the weed upon his own mental powers. For many years he had been addicted to the habit of snuff-taking, though conscious of injurious results flowing from the practice. He renounced it again and again, but a relapse always followed. In 1861 his daily allowance of snuff was over twenty grammes, and he observed a rapid decay of the faculty of memory. He had learned some fifteen hundred root words in each of several languages, but found these gradually dropping out of his mind, so as to necessitate frequent recurrence to dictionaries. At last he summoned resolution to break finally with the use of tobacco in any form, and after six years of abstinence, writes as follows: It has been for us the commencement of a veritable resurrection of health, mind and memory; our ideas have become more lucid, our imagination more vivid, our work easier, our pen quicker, and we have seen gradually return that army of words which had run away. Our memory, in a word, has recovered all its riches, all its sensibility. That tobacco, especially in the form of snuff, is a personal enemy of memory, which it has destroyed little by little, and sometimes very promptly, cannot be doubted. Many persons with whom we are acquainted—M. Dubrunfant, the celebrated chemist, for example—have run the same dangers and escaped them in the same fashion, by renouncing tobacco, which we do not hesitate to say harms the greatest part of those who employ it, since for one smoker or snuffer who uses it there are ninety-nine who abuse it.

HUMOROUS SCRAPS.

A STUDENT undergoing his examination was asked what was the action of disinfectants and replied:—They smell so badly that the people open the windows and fresh air gets in."

VICKSBURG offers a reward for the recovery of an old lady, aged one hundred and eleven, who, it is supposed had been kidnapped by some felonious journalist from a rival city, desirous to secure her obituary for his own local items.

A MAINE woman ate four quarts of oysters at one sitting, the other day, and won one hundred dollars by so doing, which, after deducting her burial expenses, eighty-five dollars, left her fifteen dollars to commence the next world with.

AN imaginative Irishman gave utterance to this lamentation: "I returned to the halls of my fathers by night, and found them in ruins! I cried aloud, 'My fathers! where are they?' And echo answered, 'Is that you, Patrick McCarthy?'"

THE *Congregationalist* advises its readers to sit at the feet of a horse and learn humility. "Just so," says the *California News-Letter*. "Sit down at the feet of a mule, and if he don't humiliate you pull his tail and tickle the inside of his legs with a stable fork."

AN epitome of a certain class in the society of Augusta, Ga., is the following advertisement, which was in the *Chronicle*: "The gentleman who dropped his slungshot in the Opera House Arcade can obtain the same by calling at this office and proving properly."

PRISONER (to learned magistrate).—"Has any one a right to commit a nuisance?" Learned magistrate—"No, sir, not even the mayor—no, sir, not even the governor." Prisoner.—"Then you can't commit me; for I was arrested as a nuisance, and you have decided that I am one."

WHEN an enthusiastic editor describes a bride as bonny, and an envious compositor sets her up as bony, as was done at Jacksonville the other day, hope for a season bids the world farewell, and freedom shrieks as the compositor falls at his form, brained by the brother of the blooming bride.

A BARRISTER had been puzzling and perplexing a lady some time with questions, when in one of her replies she happened to use the word humbug. "Madam," said he, "you must not talk unintelligibly; what is the jury or the court to understand by the word humbug!" The lady hesitated. "I must insist, madam," said the barrister, "before you proceed further with your evidence, that you state plainly and openly what you understand by a humbug." "Why, then, sir," says the lady, "I know not how to exemplify my meaning better than by saying that if I were to meet any persons who, being at present strangers to you, should say that they expected soon to meet you in some particular company, and I were to tell them to prepare to see a remarkably pleasing-looking man, that would be a humbug."

MR. O'CLARENCE'S NEW PAIR COMPARED.—The Danbury *News* says that Mr. O'Clarence purchased a new pair of pants, Saturday. When he got home his wife was mixing bread. She wiped her hands on her apron, and made a careful examination of the pants. First she pinched one leg of them, and asked him what he paid for them, and then pinched the other, and asked him if he didn't think it was too much. After that she stood off away so she could get a look at the fit, so to form a right opinion of it. Then she asked him if he couldn't draw them up higher, as they touched the floor. He said he couldn't without splitting himself in two, which then appeared no urgent necessity for his doing. She pinched them again, taking up his leg and eyeing it thoughtfully, while he clutched the table with his hand, and hopped around on the other leg to rest himself. She was not quite confident they were not all cotton—those clothing people do lie so—but she was not quite sure. However, she could tell better at the window, and drew him over there to the imminent danger of tipping him over and breaking his spine. She rubbed them again, and turned up the leg to see the other side, and all the while her mind gathered doubts and forebodings. If he had only said he was going to buy a pair of pants she would have went with him herself, and picked them out. But tailors know that a man can't tell one kind of cloth from another, and will put off anything on him. Then she abruptly dropped his leg and went to the back door and called Mrs. Mugent. Mrs. Mugent came in, and being made acquainted with the particulars, pinched Mr. O'Clarence's leg herself, and asked him why he didn't buy the cloth and have his pants made at home. Mr. O'Clarence didn't like the bother, and Mrs. O'Clarence explained that he always would have his own way. Mrs. Mugent said an uncle of Mr. Mugent, who lived in Bridgeport, got a pair of all wool pants last April for five dollars, and you (Mr. and Mrs. O'Clarence) would have thought they cost ten dollars if a cent; the cloth was just as fine and firm as anything could be. Mr. Mugent would sometimes get the impression that he must have his pants ready made, but he always got cheated. She was positive there was not a bit of wool in these pants, and if they were Mr. Mugent's she would have them taken back. That is exactly what Mrs. O'Clarence thought, and in spite of Mr. O'Clarence's protestations he took them back and got another pair. The other pair was a little short in one leg, and pinched his stomach, but there was wool in them, Mrs. Mugent said."