

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

come to pass. And probably as we come back into our tenement from that which was the horse's, we are saluted with the information, "A gentleman and lady to see the house, and please would it be inconvenient for them to see every part of it."

Of course, it is inconvenient to us that they should peer, and prance, and pry into the remotest corners of our domestic stronghold. But it behoves us as citizens of the world, as people who may shortly be keen on the discovery of the shortcomings of our own possibly future home, to bid the intruders kindly welcome, and give them a free pass all over our fastness. The worst of it is that we can tell at a glance those who come in a spasm of idle and easily gratified curiosity, from those who come in good faith, hoping that here at last they may find rest for the soles of their feet. And though we can thus easily distinguish between the false and the true, we are compelled by the exigencies of good society to treat them both alike.

Every one who has once moved must swiftly recognise the different types—must surely mark down with unerring eye, those who come in idleness!

How well we know the elderly gentleman who circulates freely through the land in the late summer and autumn months, with a puggaree round his hat, no matter how chill be the winds that are blowing, or how little sun has the heart of grace to shine. As a rule he is a retired military or naval officer, and he bears down upon those unoffending ones at whose gates the board is up, with all the pomp and majesty of a man who holds discipline to be Heaven's greatest gift to fallen mankind. He speaks in short commanding sentences with an air of affable superiority, cavils at the accommodation, or rather at the lack of it, denounces the folly of the fool who built a house that would suit him in every respect if it had three more reception, and five more bedrooms. He declares open war upon anybody's imbecile supposition that he is going to be tricked or "humbugged" into hiring a house that is grossly inadequate in its arrangements to his needs, and finally goes off in a whirl with many fierce shakings of the head, and twirlings of the stick, treating the harassed occupants as if they were a nest of unsuccessful spiders, who had sought to lure him, a wide-awake fly, into their net.

He is infinitely to be preferred, however, to the middle-aged, keen-visioned ladies who come in couples, and between them detect all the weak places in your household in the course of their leisurely progress. These sweep in upon you ruthlessly as you are reading, or writing, or resting from the fatigue consequent on the raid made upon you by the last invader. They poke their umbrellas at the cracked paintwork; they glare at the discolored papers on the wall; and openly look upon you as an unjust steward, in a way that makes you feel inclined to go mad at them on the spot, and thoroughly frighten them.

But the possible, though highly improbable, tenants who exercise one's spirit most severely, are the happy pair who have recently married; who come in with a most oppressive air of recently-married freshness and satisfaction about them. If the others have nearly driven one raving mad, these nearly steep one in supine idiocy after a few moments' observation. They entwine their foolish hands before the eyes of your giggling servants. They address inanities, at which they both blush furiously, on the subject of the disposition of the upper portion of the house, and of the nursery of the future especially. He affects to kindle into animation when he hears there is a "capital wine cellar." She does the same thing when she hears there is "no linen press," and wonders, with all a raw school-girl's delicacy of breeding and perfect tact, "how we can have lived without one so long." They cause one to reflect savagely, that however sweet love's young charm may be to the ones who are dreaming it, that it is a detestably mawkish spectacle to lookers on. They goad one by their tomfoolery into a repellent demeanor, which they by-and-by assert to have been the cause of their not having pushed inquiry further respecting the house. They openly "wonder" at your allowing large dogs to lie about in the drawing-room, telling each other that such an iniquity shall never be committed in their house. They call one another "darling" in accents that are not decently suppressed. And finally they go away to carry on the same little interesting game, probably, in the next house they may see where the board is up.

The last days come, and your household gods are in the hands of the men who are moving you, and you must stand by uncomplainingly while these latter shy about your cherished old china and glass, with what looks like disdainful carelessness, until you discover that they never break anything, and that the carelessness is in reality consummate skill. The carpets are withdrawn from under your tired feet—the chairs and sofas are sitting in the vans outside—the curtains are rolled away round some statuettes, and the sun glares in scorchingly unchecked through the windows—the children are crying for the toys that are carefully packed away in the heart of one of the biggest cases—the dogs are whining for the mats on which they have been wont to lie—your voice echoes through the dismantled rooms—dirt, confusion, disquiet reign in the place that is your home no longer; and you turn your tired mental vision with an effort to the abode of the future, and thank Fate for that the anarchy is nearly at an end which has reigned from the hour the board was put up.

A SOCIETY has been formed at Zurich, under the name of *La Société de la Mort*, the object of which is to found a sect which, at the death of each member, orders and provides for the incineration of his body.

A STRANGER in a Liverpool street-car, when asked for his fare, pull off one of his shoes and drew out a fifty-pound note, remarking that if a little prudence on his part would prevent it, he didn't propose being left penniless in a strange city.

A CORRESPONDENT very truthfully and indignantly asserts that no woman, however nervous she may be, has a right to wake her husband from a sound sleep only to tell him on his inquiring what is the matter, "Nothing, only I wanted to know if you were awake."

In consequence of the judgment of the court-martial the portrait of the ex-Marshal Bazaine has been removed from the well-known Salle des Maréchaux in the Palace at Versailles. Contrary to the usual custom the portrait will not be burnt, but will be covered with a black cloth and consigned to the archives of the Museum.

THE following *Jeu d'esprit* is by a club poet:—"I was asked by a lady to answer her this—How a sermon—a good one—was like to a kiss?"

By preaching or practice the cause I'll impart. Both win through the lips the approach to the heart."

NAPOLEON AT ST. HELENA.—He said of the English, "Their music is vile—the worst in the world!" He thought French music almost as bad as the English, and that only the Italians could produce an opera. He thought English ladies were too fond of drink—brandy and gin.

CHIC.—The Parisian word *ohé*, signifying all that is stylish, elegant and fashionable, and which has been adopted into French, is curiously enough of Teutonic origin, coming from the German word *geschick*, meaning apt or clever. Germans staring at the windows of the Paris shops were wont to say *geschick*, and the Parisians, says "Bertall," borrowed the adjective.

ECCLESIASTICAL ETIQUETTE.—Cardinal Guibert, the Archbishop of Paris, did not go to President MacMahon reception on New Year's day, because of the question of precedence between him and the Bishop of Versailles, who claims to be the first ecclesiastic in the city, now the French capital. The Grand Rabbi, in plain clothes, left his card with the porter, but did not go up.

MOST Frenchmen, when they commit suicide like to do it in a way which will render them celebrated in the papers. A man living at Montmartre invited his friends to dinner one night last week, and on arriving there, instead of finding their host at the head of the table, ruddy and joyous, they discovered him dead, hanging. He had taken the precaution to provide bread, cheese, and wine for his guests.

THERE is a singular tradition in the parish of Varyan, Cornwall, to the effect that when the church clock strikes during the singing of the hymn before the morning sermon, or before the collect against perils at evening prayer, there will be a death in the parish before the next Sunday. It is very rarely indeed (says the *Cornwall Gazette*) that the clock does so strike, and many persons have often noticed that on such occasions a death does follow.

A TOUCHING incident has occurred in connection with the funeral of Rollo, one of the men drowned by the foundering of a steam-tug in the Tyne, which has moved the seafaring population of North Shields deeply. He buried a favourite child on Christmas eve. On leaving the grave-side he was heard to say, "Good-bye, darling; I will come to see you on Sunday;" and on the afternoon of that day his body was placed in the grave alongside his little pet.

GOLD COAST NEGROES.—Speaking of the colored folk on the Gold Coast, a war correspondent says:—"Their tint, by the way, is extraordinarily diverse, varying from the deepest, glossiest black to a light brown." I speak of negroes pure-blooded, of course; the mulatto color is unmistakable. In Dunquah Camp we have even two specimens of red-headed natives, both girls; and at Mansu, a doctor tells me, I shall find a man with a red beard, quite hale and intelligent too—as intelligence goes in Africa. I know a child, also, who has grey eyes, extraordinarily piquant and roguish, in his jetty face. None of these anomalies have the slightest connection with the deformity called albino.

HISTORY OF SHAVING.—Pliny states that the Romans did not begin to shave till the year of Rome 454, when Publius Ticianus brought over a cargo of barbers from Sicily. He adds that Scipio Africanus first set the fashion of being shaved every day. But, according to the same authority, after the age of forty-nine, every man was expected to wear his beard long. Young men underwent their first snipping at the age of twenty-one, and visits of ceremony were paid on that important occasion. This first chin-crop was devoutly inclosed in a small gold or silver box, and then presented as a votive offering to some divinity, mostly Jupiter Capitolinus. The first fourteen Emperors of Rome were shown, down to Adrian, who revived the beard to hide certain blemishes on the imperial skin. Beards held their own till Constantine, whose mother, Helena, became famous as the "inventress" (in the classical sense), or finder, of the True Cross.

AT CAMBRIDGE.—There are three terms in the year—viz., the Michaelmas Term, beginning October 1st, and ending December 15th; the

Lent Term, beginning January 13th, and ending the Friday before Good Friday; and the Easter Term, beginning the Friday after Easter Day, and ending the Friday after the last Tuesday but one in June.

It is necessary to reside two-thirds of every term, that it may count for a degree. Nine terms' residence is required for each of the degree B.A., LL. B., and M.A. Students are not to engage lodgings for themselves without the consent of the censor, nor for more than one term in advance. In considering any proposed lodgings, they are advised to ascertain clearly whether the price charged includes (1) attendance, (2) boot-cleaning, (3) firing, (4) lights for passages or for rooms, (5) cooking, (6) use of linen, articles for the table, crockery, and all other requisites.

THERE are thirty ex-Confederates in the present Congress, three in the Senate and twenty-seven in the House. Four were major-generals, five brigadier-generals, eight colonels, four lieutenant-colonels, five majors, two captains, and two privates. Three are Republican in politics, and the remainder Democrats.

ABOUT NOSES.—There are three national noses among civilized peoples, and only three—the Jewish, the Grecian, and the Roman. Each is of a description totally different from the other two, and all three have a distinct character of their own. The Jewish is the only national nose now remaining; the Greek and the Roman are occasionally reproduced among modern nations, but as national characteristics exist no longer. That the ancient Jews attached no slight importance to this feature is evidenced from Leviticus xxi. 18, where "he that hath a flat nose" is ranked with the blind and the lame, the crooked, the scurvy and the scabbed, and is forbidden to take part in the service of the sanctuary.

The Greek nose has come down to us in the Greek sculptures, and certainly accords better with our northern ideas of personal beauty than any other. Seen in profile, the outline in almost a continuation without curve or deviation of the outline of the forehead, and would seem, phrenologically considered, quite in harmony with the unparalleled progress of the Greeks in art, science, and philosophy. Among us moderns the perfect Greek nose is extremely rare, save on the canvas of our painters.

The Roman nose is the very incarnation of the idea of combativeness, and suggests the notion that it was borrowed from a bird of prey.

RIVALRY OF ACTORS.—It is said that some of the best tragic actors have descended so far as to cut out whole speeches from a rival's part and to put them in their own, spoiling the play, but getting the applause. One indeed, it is stated, not only did this habitually, being manager, but would spoil, in a new play, the heroine's part so as to get "all the plums in his own pudding;" and he defended the practice. Nor must we condemn it. There are many actors far superior to such jealousy, but they do not rise in their profession. Applause is simply their life-blood. An actor who is merely a good solid useful performer, and who never strikes fire out of the pit and moves the gallery, will not attract sufficiently to please the manager. "Ah, you—villain!" cried a man in the gallery to Iago. The actor turned and bowed—it was his first appearance, and he knew that he would henceforth win his way. A story is told of an Irishman who, after delivering a message, came forward with some fustian verses merely to get a little applause. And it is to be noted that, beside the real art, the public will always applaud certain sentiments. But this matters little to the actor, and he will "gag," or introduce popular conceptions for the claque which is sure to follow. Again, the dramatic authors have certainly not been true to virtue, though they have been truer in England than in France, putting out of sight Wycherly and Aphra Behn, who are quite as coarse as any French author.

GILLINGHAM.—Gillingham was in Birkenhead the other day, and while attending to his business there he had a strong premonition that something was the matter at home, so in order to satisfy himself, he determined to run over to Manchester by the next train. In the mean time, his mother-in-law sent him a despatch to this effect: "Another daughter has just arrived. Hannah is poorly. Come home at once." The lines were down, however, and the despatch was held over, and meanwhile Gillingham arrived home, and found his wife doing pretty well, and the nurse fumbling around with an infant a day old. After staying twenty-four hours, and finding that everybody was tolerably comfortable, he returned to Birkenhead without anything being said about the despatch, his mother-in-law supposing that of course he had received it. The day after his arrival the lines were fixed, and that night he received a despatch from the telegraph office dated that very day, and conveying the following intelligence: "Another daughter has just arrived. Hannah is poorly. Come home at once." Gillingham was amazed and bewildered. He couldn't understand it. Daughters appeared to him to be getting entirely too thick. He walked the floor of his room all night trying to get over the thing, and the more he considered the subject the more he became alarmed at the extraordinary occurrence. He took the early train for Manchester, and during the journey was in a condition of frantic bewilderment. When he arrived he jumped into a cab, drove furiously to the house, and scared his mother-in-law into convulsions by rushing in in a frenzy and demanding what on earth had happened. He was greatly relieved to find that there were no twins in the nursery, and to learn how the mistake

occurred. But he is looking now for the telegraph clerk who changed the date of that despatch. Gillingham is anxious to meet him. He wants to see him about something.

CHEAP SUGAR.—It is reported in England that a French firm has discovered a method of making artificial sugar from materials so cheap that it can be sold at a farthing a pound. Concerning which the *Manufacturer and Builder* says: "When we consider that sawdust is cheap and rich in lignite, which by chemical treatment with mineral acids may be changed into grape sugar, we should not at all be surprised that the above report turns out to be true, and the sawdust is the material from which this cheap sugar is obtained. Changing old linen rags into sugar is a well-known chemical experiment. Such rags are almost pure lignite, while sawdust also consists of lignite, however, with some other ingredients, easily removed. From rags to sawdust is but one step.

CHRISTMAS IN ROME.—The Romans celebrate Christmas in their own way. Christmas-eve is dedicated completely to the eating of fish. The Church forbids any kind of meat on that day; but a man may eat to repletion of fish. And the Romans keep the fish festival, not so much from religious feelings as from carnal gratification. The fish market, which is certainly not a most elegant place, possesses then a certain artistic importance. The dark and dingy porticoes of the Temple of Ottavia are during the whole night brilliantly illuminated by torches. The fish dealers, in enormous numbers, never cease shouting, and in some instances sell by auction the finest stock. This scene continues throughout the whole night, and the concourse of purchasers and idlers is extraordinary. There is not a family, however humble in rank, which does not indulge in the luxury of fish, and a Trastevere family supper is worth seeing.

DISAGREE TO AGREE.—There is a remarkable freemasonry in the French press; editors may fight like Christians, abuse each other, exchange shots and sword-thrusts, when dynamite leaders fall to convince; but against the Prussians they are round shoulder to shoulder. Thus, by a unanimity most strange, a *mot d'ordre*, not an opinion of what Germany expressed on the Bazaine verdict has found notice in the journals. Curious also, in private conversation there is not the slightest anxiety to know it either.

FRANÇOIS HUGO AS A TRANSLATOR.—The death of François Victor Hugo, last surviving son of the great poet, removes one who in his time has done good service to English and French literature by mingling the literary wealth of both countries. His great feat—that by which he deserves to be gratefully remembered—was the translation of Shakespeare's works—plays, poems, and sonnets—into French literal prose. This labor occupied him twelve years, for it was faithfully performed, each play being accompanied with an introduction in essay form, which attested the research and scholarship of the translator. Save in François Victor Hugo's book, French readers are without a literal transcription of Shakespeare.

QUEER DEVICE.—An ingenious invention for Bonapartist propagandism is a portrait of the Prince Imperial on a small square of paper not much bigger than a postage stamp, and bearing the inscription, "Appeal to the people," and "Everything for and by the people." These little bits of paper are gummed at the back, and may be stuck upon walls, windows, door-posts, &c., with little risk on the part of the persons who circulate them of being found out. It is said that as many as three millions have been struck off. The party is sticking to it.

LITERARY EMPLOYMENT.—It is surely not the least advantage of literary employment, that it enables us to live in a state of blissful ignorance of our next door neighbor's fortune, faith, and politics: that produces a state of society which admits of no invasion on domestic privacy, and furnishes us with arms against *ennui*, which supersedes the necessity of a standing army of elderly female moralists and domestic politicians.

THE ACTOR'S LIFE.—"The worst of being an actor," says Taine, "is that it eats into your soul. In the company of actors we become actors. It is in vain to wish to keep clean if you live in a dirty place; it cannot be." All actors are more or less conscious of this. Liston, a gentleman of feeling and education, discharged his servants if he found that they had seen him act. Why is this? To deny the feeling would be to deny the experience of the best actors—of the great Molière, Lekain, Garrick, Kean, the Kembles. "How proud you be of must the applause you get! Why the pit rose at you!" said a young fellow to a great actor. "Yes, I am at the time, my boy—there's no greater pleasure in the world—but it's so short, and afterwards I am but a poor play-actor, only an actor!"

THE DODO.—Ever since their discovery, the bones of the Dodo have been bones of contention. They have been weighed, measured, built up, reconstructed, and their original owner made to represent a fat old washerwoman of a bird, with a leering, intoxicated look that must have been extremely disgusting to any descendant variety of allied species of the said-to-be-extinct feathered biped. At last we have an announcement that the Dodo is not extinct; more, that a living specimen has been captured. Our savans were all agog, and expectation was at the highest pitch, when down comes Professor Owen with a wet blanket, and declares that the supposed Dodo is but a Dodlet—a degenerate descendant, only about one-sixth the size. "Tis true, 'tis pity; and pity 'tis, 'tis true." Mem. for the future: always take strange poultry with a pinch of salt.