

from the pain of the operation, that some mystery lay there, and, in his time of trial by threats and promises, would probably have said so. The account we have given is that offered by Herodotus, who has been irreverently called "the father of lies." The story is better told by Aulus Gellius, who says Histæus chose for his purpose a slave who had an infirmity in his eyes, and shaved his hair under pretence of healing his diseased vision, and after, when his hair was grown, sent him to Aristagoras, bidding the slave tell that ruler to repeat the operation. By this version the slave's suspicion was less likely to be aroused, but the difficulty of the delay still remains. Aulus Gellius denominates the whole undertaking as "an unexpected and profound wile excogitated by barbaric craft."

Most people have tried their hand at that so-called secret writing which is effected by various vegetable juices, and brought to light by fire or water—here the use of sal ammoniac and juice of onions, of solution of galls, and of coppers, is well known. From the time of Ovid, who advises a young lady in his *Art of Love*—as if, forsooth, young ladies required instruction, at least on that subject—to deceive all prying eyes by a letter written with raw milk, till the present day recipes have been prescribed of various values to this end. One of the most curious is that which recommends an ink to be used made under certain conditions with the ichor of glow-worms. The writing, says the author, may be well read in light of moon or star. This is a sure recipe.

The story of Histæus may be compared with that of Harpagus who rears a letter Cyrus to in a hare; or with that of a certain surgeon, who, wishing to disclose a matter of great importance to a brother of his craft, sent him a live bull-dog to be dissected, to whom he had previously administered a bolus containing the letter he wished kept secret. So his friend was guided by that dumb, dead, dissected beast, as the wise men were guided by a star. Another applied a MS. to a sore leg instead of, or under, the bandage. The sewing of the letter in a shoe is recommended by Ovid, and rolling thin leaves of metal containing the secret into ear-rings by another ancient author; a third directs the communication to be written afterward on a blown bladder, the bladder to be placed in a flask and filled with wine. Letters may be also written on the inside of the sheath of a sword, on an arrow, on a bullet, in an egg, or rolled up in a hollow stick—which last proceeding calls to mind the story of that unfaithful depositary, who hid the trust-money in this manner, and when called before the judge for breach of trust by the depositor, asking the plaintiff to hold his stick while he kissed the Bible with fervent devotion, swore he had returned the money, and it was at that very time in the plaintiff's possession. Another method explained at large by a learned Dutchman, which consisted in first writing the letter in lilliputian character and inclosing it in a hazel-nut, can not, for other reason than want of space be more than alluded to here. Among a hundred other devices suggested by affection or by fear, letters were hidden in women's hair, which would now, we suppose, be represented by their chignons. But we can not refrain from adding one more method which has been proposed for secret transmission of sound. Let a man, says the ingenious author, breathe his words slowly in a long hollow cane hermetically sealed at the farthest end, then let him suddenly and closely seal the end into which he breathed. The voice will continue in the tube till it has some vent. When the seal is removed at the end which was first sealed, the words will come out distinctly and in order, but if the seal at the other end be removed, their inverted series will create confusion. This happy conception, which seems to have been proposed in all good faith by its author reminds us of that famous one of bottled sentences, and may be compared with Joseph's grunt, to which he gave vent in the execution of his trade, and which is preserved, it is said, in crystal among other equally valuable and sacred relics in a celebrated church in Madrid.

A secret message ought, like a telegram, to be composed in as few words as possible, may, in as few letters, like short-hand, since this will save trouble to the writer and to the reader, and will, moreover, render less likely the danger of detection.

PROTESTANT SISTERHOODS.

Mrs. J. M. Parker states, in a weekly paper, that there are now within the Episcopal Church in the United States fifteen well-organized and prosperous communities called Sisterhoods or Associations of Deaconesses. The founder of the first was Dr. Muhlenberg, an acknowledged leader of the Evangelical party. The inspiration of the opposite party, who adopt the more rigorous system, is the Rev. Dr. Dix of Trinity Church, New York, the Chaplain of the Sisters of Mary.

Dr. Dix has written several papers in defence of the revival of Community life, of which his two pamphlets entitled "The Two Estates" and "Religious Orders and the Community Life" have attracted much attention. It is understood that a new treatise upon the restoration of the confessional is now in the hands of the printer.

These sisterhoods are not so accessible to new members as some may imagine. They are not intended as asylums for the world-weary, but households of disciplined, unwearying workers.

A comparison of the published rules of the various organizations reveals a striking similarity. The Sisters of St. Mary, New York, may be considered the prototype of the orders under the Rigorous System, and the prosperity and growth of these communities is given as proof of the necessity of a strict sacramental system for the perpetuity of an order. The work and the religious life are strikingly similar to that of the Roman Catholic sisterhoods. The difference is in matter of faith. No sister—and the statement is made upon reliable authority—has yet "progressed" to Rome.

The sisterhoods most firmly established and endowed with members, zeal, and financial strength are those under the Rigorous System. The Sisters of St. Mary, the Sisterhood of St. John, at Washington, D. C., and the Sisterhood of the Holy Child Jesus, recently organized at Albany, N. Y., come under this head. But classify the various communities as we may—either as Lax or Rigorous, High or Low Church—one aim they have in common—a desire to serve the Master in humble quietude, seeking no publicity, renouncing all worldly ties, that a consecrated life may be given without hindrance to the poor.

"They who lead this life," writes Dr. Dix, "must have every help which human nature requires for perseverance. An organization, a uniform, a rule, a ritual; a devotional system much more minute than we need in the world; a pastoral

supervision much more intimate and searching—these will be found in practice essential to the realization of the idea of an unworldly, sacrificial, and devoted life. The oratory, the hours of prayer, the religious picture, the crucifix, the devotional manual, the coarse dress, the minimum of personal expenses, the simple fare, the narrow bed, the severely plain room—all these belong to the life, and will be preferred by those who lead it."

There is no vow from which even a confirmed sister may not be honourably released. The Sisters of St. John engage with the order for a term of not less than one year and not more than three; the Sisterhood of the Holy Communion three years. The Good Shepherd, at Baltimore, admits the candidate as a full sister after a probationary term of two years, upon the supposition that the applicant intends a life service. The Sisters of St. Mary require no vow, yet they regard the perpetual vow as within the limits of a Christian woman's liberty. If a sister desires to consecrate her life to the work she is not denied the privilege. "We who take this strict view," says Dr. Dix, "do not contend for vows. She who could not make her vow and keep it has not the spirit needed in this vocation and is not the right stuff for a Sister of Mercy." In the words of another, "No vow binds them. The love of Christ and of their neighbour holds them."

DICKENS'S ADVICE TO HIS SON.

The following letter was written upon the youngest of his children leaving home in September, 1868, to join his brother in Australia: "I write this note to-day because your going away is much on my mind, and because I want you to have a few parting words from me, to think of now and then at quiet times. I need not tell you that I love you dearly, and am very, very sorry in my heart to part with you. But this life is half made up of partings, and these pains must be borne. It is my comfort and my sincere conviction that you are going to try the life for which you are best fitted. I think its freedom and wildness more suited to you than any experiment in a study or office would have been; and without that training you could have followed no other suitable occupation. What you have always wanted, until now, has been a set, steady, constant purpose. I therefore exhort you to persevere in a thorough determination to do whatever you have to do as well as you can do it. I was not so old as you are now when I first had to win my food, and to do it out of this determination; and I have never slackened in it since. Never take a mean advantage of any one in any transaction, and never be hard upon people who are in your power. Try to do to others as you would have them do to you, and do not be discouraged if they fail sometimes. It is much better for you that they fail in obeying the greatest rule laid down by our Saviour than that you should. I put a New Testament among your books for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes, that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child. Because it is the best book that ever was, or ever will be, known to the world; and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature, who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty, can possibly be guided. As your brothers have gone away, one by one, I have written to each such words as I am now writing to you, and have entreated them all to guide themselves by this Book, putting aside the interpretations and inventions of man. Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it. I hope you will always be able to say in after-life that you had a kind father. You cannot show your affection for him so well, or make him so happy, as by doing your duty."

A ROMANCE OF WAR.

Sympathy has been roused by a family drama which has just occurred in the Vosges. A young married soldier was hurried away with one of the contingents hastily got together at the outbreak of the war. In one of the first battles, while flying with his comrades, he threw away his knapsack to lighten himself, escaped death, but was made prisoner. Another soldier brought back to the fight after having also thrown away his knapsack, picked up the one the first had thrown down, fought, was killed, and, recognised by the number of the kit he carried, was set down among the dead under the other man's name. The official announcement of his death was made to his widow, who was mourning for him until 1873. For some reason or other, the soldier taken prisoner did not return to the village till last month. He found his wife legally married to one of his friends and mother of a child only a few months old. The perplexity of justice how to give each man his own may be imagined, though this sort of painful complication is not so rare as is believed. An adventure almost similar happened some years ago in the environs of Cattaro. In a house, which on one side looked upon the street, and on the other overhung a canal, lived a woman, still young, who had been married for five years to the brother of her first husband, whose death had been officially registered in the account of the wreck of a vessel of which he was the captain. Five years after her second marriage, in the middle of the night, and while she was alone in the house, her husband having remained at Cattaro, some one knocked at the street door. On opening the chamber window to ascertain who was knocking she beheld her first husband, who, overjoyed, informed her of his having been unexpectedly saved from the wreck, and of his return. Instead of opening the door, the woman ran to the back of the house and plunged into the canal, where she was found dead. Two days after both brothers, in deep mourning, each holding a child by the hand, followed the hearse of their unhappy wife to the grave.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S DREAM.

"On the afternoon of the day on which the President was shot, there was a Cabinet Council at which he presided. Mr. Stanton, being at the time commander-in-chief of the Northern troops that were concentrated about here, arrived rather late. Indeed, they were waiting for him, and on his entering the room, the President broke off in something he was saying, and remarked: 'Let us proceed to business, gentlemen.' Mr. Stanton then noticed, with great surprise, that the President sat with an air of dignity in his chair instead of lolling about it in the most ungainly attitudes, as his invariable custom was; and that instead of telling irrelevant or questionable

stories, he was grave and calm, and quite a different man. Mr. Stanton, on leaving the Council with the Attorney-General, said to him, 'That is the most satisfactory Cabinet meeting I have attended for many a long day. What an extraordinary change in Mr. Lincoln!' The Attorney-General replied, 'We all saw it before you came in. While we were waiting for you, he said, with his chin down on his breast, "Gentlemen, something very extraordinary is going to happen, and that very soon." To which the Attorney-General had observed, "Something good, sir, I hope?" when the President answered very gravely: "I don't know; I don't know. But it will happen, and shortly too!" As they were all impressed by his manner, the Attorney-General took him up again: "Have you received any information, sir, not yet disclosed to us?" "No," answered the President; "but I have had a dream. And I have now had the same dream three times. Once, on the night preceding the Battle of Bull Run. Once, in the night preceding such another (naming a battle also not favourable to the North). His chin sank on his breast again, and he sat reflecting. "Might one ask the nature of this dream, sir?" said the Attorney-General. "Well," replied the President, without lifting his head or changing his attitude, "I am on a broad rolling river—and I am in a boat—and I drift—and I drift—but this is not business,"—suddenly raising his face and looking round the table as Mr. Stanton entered—"let us proceed to business, gentlemen." Mr. Stanton and the Attorney-General said, as they walked on together, it would be curious to notice whether anything ensued on this, and they agreed to notice. He was shot that night."

A FORTUNE IN ITSELF.—Civility is a fortune in itself; for a courteous man generally succeeds well in life, and that even when persons of ability sometimes fail. The famous Duke of Marlborough is a case in point. It was said of him by one contemporary that his agreeable manners often converted an enemy into a friend; and by another that it was more pleasure to be denied a favour by his Grace than to receive a favour by most men. The gracious manner of Charles James Fox preserved him from personal dislike, even at a time when he was politically the most unpopular man in the kingdom. The history of every country is full of such examples of success obtained by civility. The experience of every man furnishes, if we may recal the past, frequent instances where conciliatory manners have made the fortunes of physicians, lawyers, divines, politicians, and, indeed, individuals of all pursuits. In being introduced to strangers, his affability, or the reverse, creates instantaneously a prepossession in behalf of, or awakens unconsciously a prejudice against him.

A female club in London has often been talked about, but it is at last to become one of the institutions of the English metropolis. Premises have been secured in St. James's-street. There is to be an institution called a "Husbands' Hall" in connection with the club. This is to be a room where husbands may wait for their wives till they are ready to go home, and which is to be extensively stocked with female rights literature.

North Adams has a tailor long known for his keen, pungent wit. Not long since a well-known clergyman called at his shop with a pair of pantaloons, and asked him if they could be repaired. The knight of the shears unrolled them, held them up in a most artistic manner, carefully examined them, and replied, "Yes, yes, the knees are the best part of them." The reverend gentleman saw the joke, smiled blandly and gracefully bowed himself out.

Literary Notes.

An English penny newspaper has been started at Venice, called the *Venice Mail*.

The late Dr. Strauss has left unfinished biographies of Beethoven and the poet Lessing.

A volume containing a collection of letters of the late Mrs. Julius Hare, entitled "Words of Hope and Comfort to those in Sorrow," which was printed for private circulation a few years ago, will, says the *Athenæum*, be shortly issued in England, and will be dedicated by express permission to her Majesty.

A remarkable paper on the Book of Jonah by M. Astruc, Grand Rabbi of Belgium, will, says the *Indépendance Belge*, appear in a forthcoming number of the *Revue de Belgique*. The author places the date of the book two centuries later than the time of the prophet himself, and regards it as utterly unhistorical.

William Cullen Bryant disrelashes being called the Nestor of the press. He enjoyed it the first nine or ten thousand times he was so designated, but he now thinks the epithet is becoming a little worn. He even says in pure Attic what may be freely translated into "I can punch the head of any fellow who refers to me as the Nestor of anything."

A new weekly paper is announced for the special use and benefit of "Fanciers," or those who breed for exhibition any kind of pet birds or animals, such as dogs, poultry, pigeons, birds, rabbits, cats, &c. It is to be called *The Fanciers' Gazette*, and will be under the editorship of Mr. Lewis Wright, so widely known by his various writings on poultry.

"The Cyclopaedia of Costume; or, a Dictionary of Dress, Regal, Ecclesiastical, Civil and Military, from the earliest period in England to the reign of George the Third," is the title of a work, by Mr. J. R. Planché, F.S.A. It will be published by Messrs. Chatto & Windus, in twenty-four monthly parts, at five shillings, profusely illustrated by wood engravings.

The *Manchester Evening News* says:—A London correspondent writes that a movement has been set on foot to raise a subscription for Mrs. Moxon, widow of the eminent publisher. The recent lawsuit with Mr. Payne, although it terminated in Mrs. Moxon's favour, has virtually ruined the lady. Mrs. Moxon has a personal claim upon the public sympathy which ought not to be forgotten. She was the adopted daughter of Charles Lamb, and she nursed both the gentle "Elia" and his sister with tender assiduity during their last illness. Lamb constantly spoke and wrote of her as his "little brown maid."

Mr. William Black, author of *A Princess of Thule*, was almost unknown in his own country, and a year ago unheard of here. After some years' service on the editorial staff of a Glasgow paper, he went to London, seeking literary employment, and working hard for some time without success. Finally he got work on the magazines, and published in the *St. James's The Monarch of Mincing Lane*, which was not remarkable as a fiction. His *Daughter of Beth* was much better, and proved an immediate and great success. His last work has been equally successful, and Mr. Black may be now reckoned among the best English novelists.