

(For the Canadian Illustrated News.)

NATURE.

"Nature is the Latin *Natura*—about to be born."
ARCHBISHOP TRENCH.

O teachers of the Tuscan lore,
Who taught Rome's sons to word their wills,
What was the thought "Natura" bore,
When spoken on the Seven Hills?

O sibyl-seers, wise and wild,
Interpreters 'twixt brain and tongue,
What was the theme of which you sung—
The Mother or the Coming Child?

Those sages of the past, I fear,
My thirst for truth will hardly quench,
But what saith one whom I revere,
Who bears the name of Richard Trench?

"Unborn, but growing to its birth,
A 'child of promise' in the womb,
Of leaping in the womb for mirth
With prescience of the life to come,"

I hail the thought, my great book-friend,
Though gently shaded by a doubt—
For "ura" is a common end
Some Latin words look queer without.

But men are wiser than they think,
Though seldom when they think they're wise,
And common ends may touch the brink
Of vast and awful mysteries.

For is not Nature, after all,
The babe that lies in Wisdom's womb,
Waiting the promised hour to come
Which all its powers to life shall call?

JOHN READE.

Miscellaneous.

Law vs. Medicine.

Sir Henry Holland was one day engaged in hot argument with Bobus Smith, an ex-Advocate-General, touching the merits of their respective professions. "You will admit," said Holland, "that your profession does not make angels of men." "No," retorted Bobus; "there you have the best of it. *Fours* certainly gives them the best chance."

A Monster Distilling Apparatus.

A monster distilling apparatus, consisting of a set of cisterns and about four thousand feet of galvanised iron pipe for distilling and condensing sea, marsh, and bush waters, so as to make them useful for drinking purposes, has been sent out to the Gold Coast from Woolwich for use, either at Cape Coast Castle or at some other station, as the commander of the expedition may direct. The largest of these cisterns will contain about six thousand gallons.

Consumption of Writing Paper.

According to Dr. Rudal of Vienna, the English are undoubtedly the most scribbling nation in the world—if the annual amount of paper consumed be taken in evidence. Thus, each English man, woman, and child, uses 11½ lbs. of paper per annum. The United States comes next, with 10½ lbs.; then Germany, 8½ lbs.; France, 7½ lbs.; British America, 5½ lbs.; Italy and Austria, 3½ lbs.; Mexico and Central America, 2½ lbs.; Spain 1½ lb.; while Russia concludes the list with 1½ lb. per person.

No, You Don't!

A gang of sharpers last week induced a simple-faced countryman, who was apparently lost at a London railway terminus, to accompany them and have some agreeable, choice, and extensive refreshments. At the end thereof they wanted to show the countryman how to take care of his money, then to play at cards, and then at skittles, all of which the rustic declined. Thereat they were rude and overbearing, and demanded "his card." He gave it—Sergeant C—(detective), &c., &c.

A Submarine Vessel.

It is stated that there is now being constructed at Cronstadt a submarine vessel of enormous dimensions. In it two thousand tons of iron and steel have been employed. It is propelled by two powerful air engines, will be armed with a formidable ram, and will carry all the means for fixing to the hulls of vessels large cylinders of powder which it can afterwards explode by electricity. Two glass eyes will enable the crew to find their way about, and they may choose their course at what depth they please below water.

Emerson and the Artist.

Mr. Emerson, while in Rome last winter, visited the studio of an American artist, whose smallest bits of canvas bring an almost incredible price. The artist, wishing art to pay a tribute to genius, took from its hanging a picture handsomely framed and presented it to his guest. The next day Mr. Emerson, overtaken by a stinging conscience, came again, and in his hand was the empty frame, which he handed to the artist, with this remark—"I accept gladly your painting, but I must return the frame, for I cannot keep anything of so great a pecuniary value."

Apropos of the Comte de Chambord.

A story is told of the Comte de Chambord in the late Lord Lytton's *Parisians*, which seems to us happily characteristic of the exiled and visionary Prince. When Louis Napoleon was President of the French Republic, and when gloomy fears as to the future of the country were abroad, it was suggested to the Comte de Chambord that he should come forward and save his native land by offering himself as a candidate for the throne. "No," he is represented as replying, with a calm smile on his face, "the wrecks come to the shore, the shore does not go to the wrecks."

A Flash of Lightning.

The length of a flash of lightning is generally greatly underestimated. The longest known was measured by M. F. Petit at Toulouse. This flash was ten and a half miles in length. Arago once measured a series which averaged from seven to eight miles in length. The longest interval ever remarked between a flash and the report was seventy-two seconds, which would correspond with a distance of fourteen miles. Direct researches have shown that a storm is seldom heard at a greater distance than from seven to ten miles, while the average are barely heard over four to five miles off.

A New Sect.

We hear from Russia of a number of fair sectarians—for with one exception they were all of one sex—dwelling in the Russian town of Porchov, and named Seraphinns. Their creed was implicit belief in their reverend leader; their practice consisted in cutting off the hair. Women were converted in crowds, and soon there would have been little or no long hair left in Porchov, when the police were moved to inquire into the subject. They discovered that Father Seraphinus had a brother who dealt in oilclothes, and that monk and barber united to drive a very pretty trade in the tresses sacrificed by the devotees. The seraphic doctor now lies in prison, with leisure to meditate on the disadvantages of combining religion and business.

Mixed.

In the hurry of newspaper work things get badly mixed sometimes. Recently a St. Louis paper issued an extra containing some Cuban news and the announcement of Queen Victoria's death. Two of the head-lines were as follows: "The Death of Queen Victoria Announced on the New York Cotton Exchange—A Meeting to be Held Expressive of the Indignation of the Citizens." The St. Louis *Globe* thinks this almost equal to Governor Dennison's telegram on the night of the Presidential election in 1869. The Governor wanted to announce two important facts to the Mayor of Cincinnati, and he did it in the following despatch: "The Nell House is on fire. Lincoln has carried the State by 60,000 majority. Send two steam fire-engines to put it out."

Agony Aids.

There are several advertisements occasionally of a very amusing character elsewhere than in the "agony column" of the *Times*. Here is an extract from another contemporary:—"P. P. P." "I am very much pushed just now," and that is all the information vouchsafed. "L." says to "Emily" of Ealing, "whenever shall I see that dear face again, to make the longed-for lip impression?" Then, from the oculatory sigh, the gentleman plunges into the commonplace statement: "I have not entirely recovered from the last tumble I had down your stairs." The use of the word "last" clearly implies that he is in the habit of tumbling down fair Emily's stairs. Is it a case of being systematically kicked down? Another "spongy" person complains about the jolting of tramways, and abruptly breaks off to tell his beloved that he is quite ill for want of a letter.

See Naples and—Eat.

An American visiting Naples describes the excellence and the cheapness of the hotel fares in that city. He says he had an "excellent breakfast of tea, bread and butter, with fresh eggs, for one franc (twenty cents) each, lunch for a franc and a half (thirty cents), hot meats, wine, &c., and a capitally cooked dinner of seven and eight courses, including good claret, for the enormous sum of three francs. "Fancy," he continues, "sitting down to a dinner consisting of excellent soup, delicious fish, well-cooked meats and poultry, a profusion of vegetables, including quantities of green peas, most delicate birds and well-dressed salad, excellent cheese, pastries, jellies, 'Charlotte,' &c., oranges, figs, raisins, and the freshest and most delicate nuts I ever tasted—all this, together with half a pint of claret, for sixty cents."

Thirteen at Table.

A curious dinner was given recently at one of the principal Parisian restaurants. Thirteen covers had been laid, but to the surprise of the waiters a single guest made his appearance, who, after pushing twelve chairs close to the table, as if they were engaged, quietly sat down and dined alone. The mystery was afterwards explained. Twenty years ago thirteen friends—amongst whom were Alfred de Musset, Théophile Gautier, Count de Flébac, &c.—met at the restaurant in question, and agreed to dine together every year on the same day, keeping the places of those who had died, as if their guests were to be present. The next year they were only eleven in number, two years after ten, then seven, and so on. The last but one was Count de Flébac, who lately departed this life. The solitary guest at present was Mr. Rubelles, a painter of some repute, aged 84.

The Ashantee Capital.

Camassie, the Ashantee capital, is a beautiful country, and is about a mile and a half long by a mile broad. The streets are wide, the houses are mostly uniform in structure, and built in blocks or squares. The side next the street is called a public seat, the floor of which is raised two or three feet above the street level, and open to it, so as to afford persons walking through the town ready protection from the rain or sun. The front is also ornamented with rude geometrical figures in relief, coloured with red, and above the ground floor whitewashed. At one side of the public seat is a door, communicating with the inner square. The rooms on three sides of this are open on the inside, and occupied day and night by the several members of the household. The open space of the square is used for cooking and other domestic purposes. The framework of the house is of sapling timber, fastened together with cordage made from climbing plants, and thatched with bamboo leaves, woven into a kind of matting.

A Jovial Life.

A contemporary mentions that some one says:—"Insects generally must lead a truly jovial life. Think what it must be to lodge in a lily. Imagine a palace of ivory or pearl, with pillars of silver and capitals of gold, all exhaling such a perfume as never rose from human censer. Fancy, again, the fun of tucking yourself up for the night in the folds of a rose, rocked to sleep by the gentle sighs of the summer's air; and nothing to do when you awake but to wash yourself in a dewdrop, and fall to eat your hedonclothes." This is highdown and sentimental. We prefer a more practical view.—Fancy, again, the delight of jumping into white sheets, and taking a series of somersaults over a well-nourished human body, indulging in a sip of claret every time you alight. Picture, moreover, the mad excitement of the chase when your temporary residence gets up and lights the candle, and keeps catching nothing at all between his thumb and finger, while you survey the hunt from his left shoulder!

Lost Affinities.

Says a writer in the Boston *Transcript*: "In the matter of matrimony, if in no other matter, Providence evidently intends we shall take care of ourselves. If a predestined mate is intended for each lover, why not have the happy pair born with corresponding birthmarks on each, so that Ferdinand would have nothing to do but to level his eye-glass calmly at his adorer's until he discovered, under the hair or behind the ear, the magic 'xy-14,' or whatever his own esoteric designation happened to be; while Garaphella might flirt on regardless of consequences, and even forego all cap-setting and every palpitation until she espied the fatal fraction imprinted on some lover's glowing cheek. But things are not so arranged, though they might be, and if there be somewhere awaiting an introduction somebody whose nature is just the complement of each, it is certain that most people get snapped up before their other half is found, either too impatient to wait or too indolent to search for the lucky number."

An Independent Man.

The following characteristic story is told of Thomas Landseer, brother of Sir Edwin. After repeated refusals, he was at length induced to answer the summons of Her Majesty to present himself at Windsor Castle to teach her some easy branch of his art. Windsor is some distance from London, and the engraver's time was gold. He was kept waiting in an ante-chamber for two hours after the appointed time for reception, when Prince Albert made his appearance, saying that the Queen did not feel like taking lessons that day, but she would send for him when she did. He thereupon commenced haggling about terms, although the engraver had previously stated his price, which, I think, was £10 a lesson. Thomas Landseer retired, so filled with contempt for the great that no royal commands could ever after induce him to go near the Court. He was never knighted. This incident was told me by Thomas Landseer himself, who said he could earn all he required without royal patronage, and not even a Queen should keep him waiting like a servant in an ante-chamber. Sooner than submit to such disrespect he would starve. So incensed was Sir Edwin at "Tom's" attitude, which

he vainly endeavoured to alter, that a coolness arose between the brothers.

How Basaine Once Saved His Judge.

"X." relates in the Norfolk *Landmark* that among other interesting items to be found in Veron's reminiscences, souvenirs, and *historiettes* of Trianon is the following anecdote told by a very aged man, who was once under other régimes an *attaché* of the place. "It was in the spring of 1882," said the old man, "and Louis Philippe had run down to Trianon, accompanied by several of his children. One of them, a lad of ten years of age, tired by the close confinement of travelling, as soon as he got well on the grounds, in spite of the admonitions of his tutor, started off in a wild, harum-scarum scamper over the garden, and in his headlong gait tumbled very unroyally into an artificial lake. 'I heard,' said he, 'the boy's cries, and ran to the spot, but when I reached the lake I found he had been pulled out by a young 'sergent de service' who had been taking a turn in the garden. The young Prince, shivering with cold and dripping like a drowned rat, begged the officer and myself not to let his father and his tutor know of his mishap, and requested me to conduct him privately to his apartments. That boy is to-day the Duc d'Anjou, who presides as Judge over a military court convened at the same Trianon to try the case of Marshal Bazaine, who was then simply the Sergeant Basaine who saved the drowning Prince."

A Little Boy Imagining Himself to be a Monkey.

During my journey north last week, writes Frank Buckland, I saw, when inspecting a salmon river, a remarkably strong, active, intelligent little boy between four and five years old, playing about a weir. The father told me a very curious story about the child. Last Christmas he was taken to see a pantomime in which monkeys performed a great part. The scene so impressed the child's mind that the next morning he imagined himself to be a monkey. He would not speak, and no kindness or threats would make him speak a single word, he would not sit at the table with his brothers and sisters at meals, but would only eat out of a plate placed on the ground, out of which he ate his food, being on all fours. If anything to eat was presented to him he always put it to his nose and smelt it just as a monkey does before eating it. He was continually climbing up trees and throwing down boughs and grinning at the people below like the monkeys in the cocoa-nut trees in the pantomime. When his father tried to correct him the little fellow, still on all fours, ran after him and bit him on the leg. He would serve his brothers and sisters the same if they teased him. This curious monkey fit lasted until a few weeks ago, the idea has now quite passed out of his head. I wonder if this story may possibly be of any use to Mr. Darwin.

A Good Story.

Not long ago died the Col. Russell known in the South-West as "Owl Russell," who was once Henry Clay's private secretary. He was a man of intense egotism, whose chief object in life was to be admired and notorious. Years and years ago, while in the Missouri Legislature, he got the *soubriquet* which clung to him all the rest of his life, and actually carried him out of his political career. It was during a violent debate in which he had shown an absurd pomposity, that one of his political comrades rose and quietly told a little story. He said that one night Russell, while travelling through the woods, lost his way, and being a stranger in that part of the country, became rather nervous. While in this sorry plight he suddenly heard a voice not far away, calling out, "Who, who, who are you?" The answer was loud and prompt: "I am Col. William H. Russell, for many years a prominent member of the Kentucky Legislature, was School Commissioner for the southern district of Kentucky, am now the Representative of Calloway County in the Missouri Legislature, am spoken of as a Whig candidate for next Congress, and I am lost. Who are you?" Of course the question was repeated, and the answer was again returned with all its linked dignity until the audience screamed with laughter and greeted poor Russell whenever he dared to rise with "Who, who, who are you?" And so he got his name of "Owl Russell."

A Journalist of the Encyclopædic Era.

The journalists of the time of Louis XV. were queer souls, who lived in garrets and dined chiefly off fried potatoes, served in a paper by the stove-woman round the corner. Almost every big street had its journalist, and an own particular print, which this lean but indefatigable being published on candle paper once a week. The man was known down the thoroughfare. He chronicled the marriages, births, or connubial woes of his neighbours. He was welcome to a dinner now and then, and it was always remembered that he ate much. If he showed himself eloquent in praising the comeliness or good wares of the fruiterers down stairs may be he had a smile and bag of apples given him for nothing; if he went on the opposite tack he risked having a saucy saucerful of kitchen water emptied over him next time he passed. In either case apples or kitchen water diminished in no respect the amicable relations he kept up with the neighbourhood; and the grocers of the district called him an honest rogue good humouredly. It was no great matter to him if he were paid for the copies of his journal, which he personally hawked about, in cash or kind, and a pound of sausages for three copies, two rush dips for a single number, or a pair of breeches for a whole half-year's subscription, were remunerations he could not afford to despise. People confided to him their grievances, and besought him to libel their neighbours, which he did obligingly enough if he had no special reason for refusing, and, as a natural consequence, he had always a few grudges stalking after him, though these desisted in time, for the journalist had a soothing tongue.

A French Tlohorbo Case.

The troubles of the French nation are manifold: the war with Germany, the Commune, discord in the Assembly, the Bazaine court-martial, and other evils to which it is unnecessary here to allude. We learn, with feelings of the deepest sympathy for the sufferings yet in store for them, that they are upon the eve of what the *Figaro* terms "our Tlohorbo case." Such intelligence cannot fail to have an alarming effect upon their highly wrought sensibilities. That journal asserts that a lawsuit has been commenced by a young man claiming to be the representative of one of the oldest French families, who was at one time an ornament of Paris society. The only son of a widowed mother, he volunteered to serve during the war; this is admitted on both sides. He was, however, among the missing at one of the battles round Orleans, and as no news could be obtained of his having been made prisoner, his mother, after making every inquiry and awaiting the return of all the captives, gave him up for dead. Last year she received a communication from Germany to the effect that her son had been taken prisoner, but that he had lost his reason and was in a lunatic asylum near Minden. It was added that he was gradually recovering, upon which the mother begged that he might be brought to Paris that she might have him under her care. Upon his arrival, she found herself in the presence of a man in whose scarred and mutilated visage she could recognise no feature of her son. In fact, she repudiated him altogether and acted in concert with her nephews and nieces to resist his claim. Soon after the case had been entered upon, the supposed mother was induced, consequent upon facts which "the claimant" had revealed to her, to change her mind altogether, and she has clasped to her breast the long-lost son. But the other relations will not give way, and hence a lawsuit.