

## WAIFS AND STRAYS.

WISDOM, says Javalan, frequently conquers fortune.

Silence is a virtue in those who are deficient in understanding.

Obedience to duty, at all costs and risks, is the very essence of the highest civilised life.

We have all of us, encoined Rochefoucauld, sufficient strength to bear the misfortunes of others.

Fame is like a river that braveth up light things and drowns those that are weighty and solid.—BACON.

As we pity the blind and lame, so those who are blinded and maimed in the faculties which are supreme should be pitied.

'The holiday spirit is an all-pervading one,' remarked a father, as he bought his little boy a sixpenny toy; 'but it costs money.'

We suppose that the only real pleasure that can be felt by the collector of antique furniture is to realize how uncomfortably somebody else used to live.

There are three classes into which all the women past seventy that ever I knew were to be divided:—1. That dear old soul; 2. That old woman; 3. That old witch.—COLERIDGE.

The truly great man is he who does not love his child-heart. He does not think beforehand that his words shall be sincere, or that his actions shall be resolute; he simply always slides in the right.

**ABOUT SNAPPISHNESS.**—Married couples that coo as harmoniously as ringdoves in public are sometimes mere snapping-turtles behind the scenes. Mrs. Candler, according to her own account, was as mild as a zephyr in society, but she was a white squall in a nightgown when she 'turned in.' Her lectures were all 'snap,' and it is surmised that the whole celebrity they acquired when printed was mainly attributable to the force and accuracy with which they illustrated the experience of thousands of married men. Unfortunately for the peace of families, all husbands are not Caudles. Some of the persecuted—perhaps the majority of them—instead of taking refuge in assumed deafness, resort violently, and hence domestic tempests fierce and frequent. This is bad. A mild answer turneth away wrath, and absolute silence generally cools it if it does not extinguish it. We suggest the former as the best remedy. Husbands should be considerate. Their helpmeets have much to try their tempers. The home department is not an Elysium, as the 'man of the house' would find to his sorrow if he were to try it for a single day.

**ABOUT ALPHABETS.**—It isn't always a hard thing to learn the alphabet, nor on the other hand, is it always easy. It all depends upon the country you were born in and the size of the alphabet used there whether it comes hard or easy. To those of you who know only one alphabet—the one that contains 26 letters from A to Z—this sounds like an absurd sort of thing to say; but in reality it is not. The Sandwich Island boy, who has only his own alphabet to learn, has a much easier time getting his lessons than most of us have, for his alphabet contains but 12 letters, while the Ethiopic and Tartarian boy—poor fellows!—have to learn 202 letters before they can truthfully say that they know their alphabet. Other alphabets have letters as follows: The Burmese, 19; the Italian, 20; the Hungarian, 22; the Hebrew, Syriac, Chaldee, Samaritan, and Latin, 22 each; the French, 23; the Greek, 24; the German and Dutch, like our own, 26; the Spanish and Slavonic, 27 each; the Arabic, 28; the Persian and Coptic, 32; the Georgian, 35; the Armenian, 38; the Russian, 41; the Muscovite, 43; the Sanscrit and Japanese, 50; and, finally, the Ethiopic and Tartarian, as we have already seen, 202.

**A DANGEROUS CONSPIRATOR.**—Probably no well-meaning poet was ever more taken by surprise than was M. Pécabatic, a gentle and mild-mannered French dramatist of the 17th century, who was one day arrested for high treason as he was peacefully eating his dinner at a village inn. The landlord of the inn where he was in the habit of dining discovered on a table a piece of paper on which were written some unintelligible phrases, and below, in a plain, bold hand, 'Here I will kill the king.' The landlord consulted with the chief of police. Clearly this clue to a conspiracy ought to be followed up. The person who had left the paper had already been remarked for his absent air and gleaming eye. That man was Pécabatic. The chief of police instructed the landlord to send for him the next time the conspirator came to dinner. When Pécabatic was shown the evidence of his guilt he forgot the awful charge against him, and exclaimed, 'Well, I am glad to see that paper. I have looked everywhere for it. It is part of a tragedy I am writing; it is the climax of my best scene, where Nero is to be killed. It comes in here; let me read to you, and he took a thick manuscript from his pocket. 'Monsieur, you may finish your dinner and your tragedy in peace,' said the chief of police, and he beat a hasty retreat.

**CONCERT EXPERIENCES.**—A prominent singer, who began his career in giving concerts about the country, has some extraordinary experiences in towns where such entertainments were of rare occurrence. One night, when he was persistently applauded, he returned to sing a second song, but was surprised by a stentorian voice from the audience: 'Oh, we don't want nothin' new! Sing the first piece over again!' At another time the audience was so wildly appreciative that it refused to consider the concert at an end, and clamoured loudly for 'just one more.' It was given, and then another demanded. Patience failed the singer at this point, and he begged his manager to go before the curtains and state that he really was unable to sing any more. And thus was the statement worded: 'Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Martin can't sing no more tonight. He can't, honest. His wind's give out!' A similar story comes from another singer, who could not refrain from telling it, although her 7-year-old niece, a fastidious little lady, pronounced it 'put a very pretty story, auntie!' The lady had been taken ill after eating some oysters of ancient luster at the hotel, and sent her manager word that she really could not sing. He accordingly appeared before the disappointed audience, and announced: 'Ladies and gentlemen, Miss Merriam ain't here tonight. She couldn't come. She ain't in fit circumstances to sing. She's eat some bad lobster, and it's troubling her!'

## BOOKS AND BOOK-MEN.



MR DU MAURIER.

WE colonials chiefly know Mr George Du Maurier through the pages of *Punch*, in which he weekly satirizes the manners and customs of London society. It may be thought, therefore, that he is misplaced under the heading of this column. But all who have read 'Peter Ibbetson,' a very quaint and decidedly clever novel, will admit that the well-known artist has a right to be dubbed a bookman. He is, moreover, at present engaged on another novel, which will, his friends hope, make his name as famous in connection with the pen as it has been with the pencil. Mr Du Maurier has a great advantage in being able to illustrate his own books. The illustrator is too often at utter variance with the writer, and most readers of fiction must have time and again marvelled at the apparent utter inability of the artist to grasp what picture the author meant to call up. So much is this the case that illustrated books are generally detested by imaginative people, who suffer acutely when their ideal of the hero is ruthlessly slaughtered by some villainous picture.

LOVERS of Dickens whose appetite for reminiscences is unsatiable, will read with delight the new memoirs of the great master by Miss Maimie Dickens, his daughter.

DICKENS was the man who was always in time. Unpunctuality, indeed, was the sin against Dickens: 'There never existed, I think, in all the world, a more thoroughly tidy or methodical creature than was my father. He was tidy in every way—in his great, generous, and noble mind, in his handsome and graceful person, in his work, in keeping his writing-table drawers, in his large correspondence—in fact, in his whole life. I remember that my sister and I occupied a little garret room in Devonshire Terrace, at the very top of the house. He had taken the greatest pains and care to make the room as pretty and comfortable for his two little daughters as it could be made.'

'EVEN in those early days he made a point of visiting every room in the house once each morning, and if a chair were out of its place, or a blind not quite straight, or a crumb left on the floor, woe betide the offender. And then his punctuality! It was almost frightful to an unpunctual mind! This again was another phase of his extreme tidiness; it was also the outcome of his excessive thoughtfulness and consideration for others. His sympathy, also, with all pain and suffering made him quite invaluable in a sick-room. Quick, active, sensible, bright and cheery, and sympathetic to a degree, he would seize the "case" at once, knowing exactly what to do, and do it.'

MISS DICKENS corrects the impression that her father was a gourmet who constantly revelled in dainty dishes: 'In very many of my father's books there are frequent references to delicious meals, wonderful dinners and more marvellous dishes, steaming bowls of punch, etc., which have led many to believe that he was a man very fond of the table. And yet I think no more abstemious man ever lived. In the "Cad's Hill" days, when the house was full of visitors, he had a peculiar notion of always having the menu for the day's dinner placed on the sideboard at luncheon time. And then he would discuss every item in his fanciful humorous way with his guests, much to this effect: "Cock-a-leekie! Good, decidedly good. Fried sole with shrimp sauce! Good again. Croquettes of chicken? Weak, very weak; decided want of imagination here," and so on; and he would apparently be so taken up with the merits or demerits of a menu that one might imagine he lived for nothing but the evening dinner. He had a small but healthy appetite, but was remarkably abstemious both in eating and drinking. He was delightful as a host, caring individually for each guest, and bringing the special qualities of each into full notice and prominence, putting the very shyest at his or her ease, making the best of the most humdrum, and never thrusting himself forward.'

## SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

**HERCULITE**, a new French explosive, is a yellowish grey powder, composed of sawdust, camphor, nitrate of potash, and several substances that are kept secret. It cannot be fired by sparks, flame, or detonation. At a trial, a half-pound charge of the compound was inserted in a blast hole about four feet in depth, tamped with sand and earth, and fired by a special igniter. A block of stone about 30 tons was displaced.

### DIETETIC VALUE OF CHERRIES.

The fruit of the ripe cherry is rich in juice. Of 100 parts between 70 and 80 consists of pure distilled water of nature, with over 18 parts of sugar, and 2 of malic acid. The effect of its juice is invaluable either in health or disease, and when partaken of freely through the season, cannot fail to purify the blood in a very marked manner indeed. Dry wholemeal bread and cherries during the summer heats especially, will keep the blood cool, and tone up the system most effectually and naturally that can be done by other means. A complete change to a natural diet says one writer, can only be made in the warm season. Perhaps, when cherries ripen is a more suitable season than any other. No repeat can be more simple, natural, and agreeable. A few cherries and a little bread suffice to replace the used-up tissue. How pure and artistic, how in the highest degree humanising, is such a meal. Such a diet as this is an effectual remedy for obesity, besides being productive of health and strength. For the sedentary man the use of fresh fruits becomes a necessity. Their acids are foes to liver and kindred complaints, they dissolve the obstructions which induce disease, and, in one word, tend to prolong life. The cherry is remarkable for the fact that it generally contains more sugar than most other English fruits, some authorities stating the sugar to be equal to 10 per cent. in fully-matured dessert cherries. In Germany the children of the fruitgrowers and peasants absolutely live on bread and cherries in the season, and it is a fact that at this time they are said to enjoy better health and spirits than at any time of the year.

### SOMNAMBULISM.

Memory is responsible for many of the phenomena of somnambulism. A distinguished physician once dreamed that he was listening to a remarkable piece of music performed by some singer. He remembered the melody on awakening, and was so delighted with it that he wrote it down. Several years afterward, as he was turning over some old sheets of music that he had never seen before—as he thought—he came upon the very melody he had dreamed. He could not remember that he had ever seen or heard this melody except in his dream, and yet it is beyond doubt that he had heard it, that he had forgotten it, and that it had been reproduced in his dream in the manner recorded. A servant girl, while in a somnambulist state, wrote down the pages of an astronomical treatise with calculations and delineations. It was found that this was taken from the *Encyclopædia Britannica* which she said she had read in the library. But when awake she could not recall a word of it. De Boismont mentions the case of a widow who was sued for a debt of her deceased husband, which she knew was paid. But she could not find the receipt. Greatly disturbed, she went to bed and dreamed that her husband came to her and said that the receipt was in a velvet bag in a hidden drawer in his desk. This was found on waking to be the case. Of course, she had known of the hiding, but had forgotten. The physiologist Burdach was told one morning that his wife had been seen the night before walking on the roof of the church. He took the opportunity at her next sleep to question her, when she gave a full account of her proceedings, and mentioned having hurt her left foot by a nail on the roof. When awake she was asked about the wound in her foot, but could give no explanation. Instances of this sort seem to show that we possess a latent memory, the contents of which partially return in dreams, sometimes with and often without recollection.

### WHAT ALL SHOULD KNOW.

When the brilliancy of your diamonds is dimmed or your gold ornaments become tarnished it is not necessary to hurry off to the jeweller. With a little care and attention you may restore their beauty and save delay and annoyance. With a good nail brush and a box of bran you may do wonders. Carefully brush the diamonds with soapuds and rinse in cologne water. Then place them in the box of bran and shake them thoroughly. You will be surprised at the brilliancy they will acquire. By drawing a slip of tissue paper through the interstices of rings or brooches, you can remove any particles of bran which may adhere to the ornaments. (As stones should never be wiped after being washed. Rinse and place in sawdust until they are quite dry. If your spats have been scratched, you can renew their polish by rubbing with oxide of tin or putty spread on a chamois skin and moistened. Afterwards polish with powdered chalk and then wash the spats with a soft brush. Amber, when tarnished, should be rubbed with pulverised chalk and water; then with olive oil and dried with a woollen cloth. Pearls may be kept from tarnishing by shutting them up in a box of ashwood. Gold ornaments should be washed in soapuds and rinsed in pure water. Cover with sawdust and leave until quite dry, then rub them with a chamois-skin. Silver hilgees ornaments when tarnished should be washed in a weak solution of potash, then rinsed in a water composed of one part salt, one of alum, two of saltpetre four of water. Rinse again in cold water and dry with a chamois skin. Oxidised silver should be cleaned with a solution of sulphuric acid, one part to forty parts of water. Nickel and silver may be kept bright by being rubbed with a woollen cloth saturated in ammonia water. Ivory may be cleaned by rubbing with a brush dipped in hot water and then sprinkled and rubbed with bi-carbonate of soda.

THE Book of the Season: 'FRANK MELTON'S LUCK.' Price One Shilling. All Booksellers.