

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

The lazy man aims at nothing and generally hits it.

No man can cultivate an optimistic mind on a pessimistic stomach.

The most deadly sin is the one we believe it will be safe to commit.

The more anyone speaks of himself, the less he likes to hear another talked of.

The mitten of a girl has knocked out more men than the prize fighter's glove ever did.

The more one endeavours to sound the depths of his ignorance the deeper the chasm appears.

The world has a million roots for a man, but only one nest.

The short man has this advantage over the tall man: No right minded young lady will draw the long bean when she can possibly avoid it.

Human beings cling to their delicious tyrannies, and to their exquisite nonsense, like a drunkard to his bottle, and go on till death stares them in the face.

Not only study that those with whom you live should habitually respect you, but cultivate such manners as will secure the respect of persons with whom you occasionally converse. Keep up the habit of being respected, and do not attempt to be more amusing and agreeable than is consistent with the preservation of respect.

What is grief? If it be excited by the fear of some contingency, instead of grieving, a man should exert his energies and prevent its occurrence. If, on the contrary, it be caused by an event, that which has been occasioned by anything human, by the co-operation of human circumstances, can be, and invariably is, removed by the same means. Grief is the agony of an instant; the indulgence of grief the blunder of a life.

MURDER IN THIBET.—Thibet is the most prolific country for murderers on the face of the earth. If you dislike a man you just go and cut him to pieces. There is scarcely a man in this sanguinary land who has not sliced somebody up. The fine inflicted for committing a murder is the forfeiture of a certain quantity of tea, which explains to no little extent the free use of the knife.

SUCCESSFUL NOVEL WRITERS.—According to the *Author*, there are at this present moment fifty writers at least who, by their literary labours, and especially by their novels, are commanding great popularity, and an income which, even in the profession of the law, would be called considerable. In six years, however, it is estimated that 700 novel writers, who have once published, have not been encouraged to proceed further. Taking a backward glance over the last eighteen years, there are about 2,600 writers who have failed or have not succeeded much in fiction, to eighty who have succeeded well, and to perhaps 120 who have succeeded tolerably.

Mr Henry Russell, the veteran composer and singer, was interviewed the other day. Mr Russell is now eighty years of age, and still in vigorous health, yet it is fifty years since he was the most successful single-handed entertainer of his day. Everybody even now knows his songs. Most of us have attempted in our time to join in 'Cheer, Boys, Cheer,' and other of his songs which were favourites in the days of the youth of the oldest among us. For the copyright of that song he received £3. That was the song sung by the Guards when they started for the Crimea, and is to day played by the fife and drums on the departure of a regiment. He asked the publisher one day how the song was selling. 'We have now nineteen presses going,' said he, 'we can't keep pace with the orders.' The publishers afterwards sent Mr Russell a £10 note.

THE BIGGEST BARY FARM IN THE WORLD.—The biggest baby farm in the world is said to be the Moscow Foundling Asylum, a Russian Imperial institution, founded by Catherine II., and kept up to-day by a tax on playing cards. It costs £100,000 a year and receives 14,000 babies, and it has a branch at St. Petersburg which makes provision annually for 8000 more. Since its foundation, this institution has sent out into the empire more than 2,000,000 infants. The Moscow asylum lies within a stone's throw of the Kremlin, and is one of the best and most carefully arranged establishments of its kind in existence. According to an article in the *Englishman*, of Calcutta, about 50 infants are received on an average daily and all are taken, no questions being asked. They are sometimes left on the steps of the institution, but more generally brought by the mother or some friend. Each child has a number, and on being registered the mother or her friend receives a corresponding card, a round tag of bone with the number being tied round the neck of the child. If the parent wants to take back her baby, she can do so at any time up to the age of 10 years, on producing the card. The foundlings are only kept a few weeks in the above establishments, nurses taking charge of them afterwards in their own homes, but being continually under Government inspection. In European Russia alone, 4,000,000 infants are born every year, which gives an increase on the death roll of 1,500,000, so that well regulated homes for helpless infants prevent unspeakable misery and crime.

MEDICINE AS A CONVERTER.—An eminent lady missionary in Burmah recently gave an instructive but somewhat startling chapter of her experience. In one of her tours she came upon a village where cholera was raging. Having with her a quantity of a famous painkiller, she went from house to house administering the remedy to the invalids, and left a number of bottles to be used after the had gone. Returning to the village some months after, the missionary was met by the head man of the community, who cheered her and delighted her by this intelligence: 'Teacher, we have come over to your side; the medicine did us so much good that we have accepted your God.' Overjoyed at this news, she was conducted to the house of her informant, who, opening a room, showed her the painkiller bottles solemnly arranged in a row upon the shelf, and before them the whole company immediately prostrated themselves in worship.

BOOKS AND BOOK-MEN.

LIKE Lord Beaconsfield Mr Justin McCarthy has given considerable attention to literature and authorship; but unlike the famous Tory statesman his literary productions will be read and renew his fame long after his political life and actions are clean forgotten. The author of *Coningsby* will in future generations be remembered as the man who obtained for England the control of the Suez Canal, the smartest, most brilliant, and perhaps least scrupulous politician of his time; but Mr McCarthy's leadership of the faction of the Irish party will be all but forgotten when the 'History of Our Own Times' has become the most valuable text book of a past century. 'England under Gladstone' and the short history are both too well-known and have been too widely read to need praise in this column. Like all histories they show the views of the



MR JUSTIN MCCARTHY, M. P.

author's politics to some degree, but they are certainly far less prejudiced than Macaulay or Froude. In light literature Mr McCarthy has also made a name for himself, 'Dear Lady Disdain' being one of the most delightful novels ever written.

MRS FRENCH SHELDON has evolved a big and somewhat pretentious book out of her experiences as 'Bébé Bwana'—lady master—of a caravan in East Africa. The interest, however, lies less in the positive experiences than in the fact that they befel a woman; and in this age of the inversion of the sexes this is an interest of scarcely sufficient strength or novelty to support so large a book. Mrs Sheldon deserves, and will doubtless receive from all who read her book, all admiration for her indomitable pluck, her concentration of purpose, and her remarkable powers of organisation and leadership, but—she has not written a good book.

THE frank revelation of some of the incidents of the journey leaves rather a nasty taste in the mouth. The story on page 306 of the mutilation, carried out by the author's own hands, of the corpse of the Masai woman for the purpose of obtaining the ornaments from her legs and arms is particularly ghoulish. But Mrs Sheldon is not a lady of squeamish tastes. She discusses questions of morality with frequent and complete outspokenness. She penetrated the arena of the harem of the Sultan of Zanzibar, and the ladies of the establishment moved in procession before her, and each presented her with a jewelled ring.

THERE is a certain interest, other than statistical, in the fact that at the close of the procession Mrs Sheldon's jewellery was augmented by one hundred and forty-two rings! Moreover, she visited and revisited the wild moon dances of the utterly nude El Moran or warriors of Taveta, a ceremony from which the women of the tribe were excluded. Her sex, in fact, though frequently a protection, was never a deterrent. The most interesting part of her experiences to the author herself was her sojourn in Taveta and her circumnavigation of Chala, the crater lake on the north-eastern side of Kilimanjaro, over three thousand feet above the sea level. She claims to have been the first human being who ever disturbed the surface of this eerie lake, and the event evidently made a deep impression on her mind, and is, in a degree, transmitted to the reader.

THE book is curiously ill-written. The illustrations are only less profuse than unsatisfactory. Almost all are reproductions of photographs, and whether the fault lies with the original sun pictures or with the process, certain it is that the result is never good, and in many instances is superlatively bad.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

DRESSSES may be rendered incombustible by dipping them in a solution of tungstate of soda, one pound in two gallons of water. The most delicate colour will not be affected by it.

SALT AND LEPROSY.

The excessive consumption of salt, notably in the shape of salt fish as a general article of diet, is stated to be conducive to the production of leprosy, and at the Pau Congress some evidence in support of the statement was given. In the Antilles, for instance, the blacks have salt fish—cod from Newfoundland—as a daily article of diet, and leprosy is more prevalent amongst them than amongst the whites and half-breeds.

THE LARGEST NEWSPAPER.

The largest newspaper ever printed was published in New York, July 4th, 1859, and bore the extraordinary title of *The Illuminated Quadruple Constellation*. It contained portraits of President Buchanan, Henry Ward Beecher and Elizabeth B. Browning. It was only issued once, and considering that the 23,000 copies printed contained enough paper to turn out 6,000,000 copies of an ordinary-sized newspaper, this may be fairly considered to have been quite enough, for some time.

BUILDINGS OF SAWDUST.

Extensive experiments have been made in Germany with sawdust that had been treated with acid. The action of the acid is to convert the fine particles of wood into a material that can be moulded into blocks or other form, having an extremely hard surface, and being practically non-combustible. The material is said to be stronger than timber and much lighter than either iron or steel, while in point of cheapness it is superior to either wood or metals. Arrangements are being made to manufacture the material on an extensive scale.

A NEW MINERAL.

A new mineral, not unlike asbestos in its properties, has been discovered in immense deposits in the United States of Columbia. It is stated to be 'the colour of amber, perfectly transparent, and incombustible. Experiments made at Bogota indicate that it will be of great value for the manufacture of bank-note paper, for fireproof and waterproof roofing tiles, and for suits for fireman. A white varnish can also be extracted from it, says our informant. The substance has been named 'Cucaramaquina,' and it is expected to prove of greater importance than asbestos.'

EDIBLE CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

It appears that the Japanese do not raise chrysanthemums as ornamental plants, but cultivate them as edible ones. It is the flowers that are employed by amateurs. Those are eaten as a salad after being steeped in water and then boiled. In Japan the flowers of the chrysanthemums constitute a truly popular dish, and during the months of November and December bunches of them, washed and carefully displayed, may be seen in the stores of all the dealers in vegetables. Almost all the varieties are edible, strictly speaking, but those to which preference is usually given are the ones with small deep yellow flower heads, and which are not so pretty as the varieties cultivated for ornament. The Japanese also eat lily bulbs.

HANDY RULE TO FIND SIDEREAL TIME.

The number of Sidereal days in a year is necessarily one in excess of the number of Solar days. Sidereal time at noon on any given date is expressed by the same proportion of a day that the interval between the date and the previous vernal equinox bears to a year. This relation between the fraction of a day and a year is easily ascertained, as their subdivisions bear a very simple relation to each other, there being 12 months in a year, and 24 hours in a day; there are also 60 minutes in an hour, and (about) 30 days in a month. Thus Sidereal time can be ascertained approximately by a short mental calculation according to the following rule:—Subtract 3 months and 22 days from the date (increased by 12 months if needful). Call each month of difference 2 hours and each day 4 minutes. Example: To find Sidereal time when it is noon on August 30th. August 30th is 8 months and 30 days, subtracting 3 months 22 days leaves 5 months 8 days, allow 2 hours for each of the 5 months and 4 minutes for each of the 8 days = 10 hours 32 min. To find sidereal time at noon on February 15th = 2 months 15 days, add 12 months = 14 months 15 days = 3 months 22 days = 10 months 23 days 21 hours 32 minutes Sidereal time.

THE SENSE OF TOUCH IN BATS.

Bats have an extremely keen sense of touch, probably (says a contemporary scientific journal), the most delicate of any creature, and they are guided in their flight chiefly by this sense. They have been blinded for the sake of experiment, and then let loose in a room where an intricate network of string had been arranged. This network, however, was not touched once by the bats during their flight. In other experiments it has been noticed that they wisely gave a wider berth to such things as a man's hand or a cat's paw, than to harmless pieces of furniture. They can also fly along underground and in quite dark passages, avoiding the sides, even when a turn or twist comes. Their wings and other membranous expansions are peculiarly sensitive to touch, but they are comparatively small in the fruit-eating bats, for it is the insect-eating bats which have to be on the alert in order not to starve, and which need this excessive keenness of the sense of touch. Sight is useless in the gloom, and it appears to be by the minute changes of pressure in the atmosphere that they recognise the approach of their prey.