

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

A HEAVY purse is an excellent counterweight to a light heart.

He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.

It is no point of wisdom for a man to beat his brains about things impossible.

One of the most fascinating of occupations is watching other people work; but only a foreman can make it pay.

A mule would rather hear himself bray than listen to any other music. A good many people are made like him.

Scratch the green rind of a sapling, or wantonly twist it in the soil, and a scarred or crooked oak will tell the act in years to come. How forcibly does this figure show the necessity of giving right tendencies to the minds and hearts of the young.

Happy are those who have lost their relish for tumultuous pleasure, and are content with the soothing quiet of innocence and retirement! Happy are those whose amusement is knowledge, and whose supreme delight the cultivation of the mind! Wherever they shall be driven by the persecution of Fortune, the means of enjoyment are still with them; and that weary littleness which renders life unappreciable to the voluptuous and the lazy is unknown to those who can employ themselves by reading.

CURIOUS HABITS OF ROOKS.—Among the odd habits of rooks is the way that members of the same rookery have of inter-marrying generation after generation. The males always choose their wives from among their near neighbours; and if one should be so bold as to bring home to his rookery a bride from a distance the other rooks will invariably refuse to receive her, and will force the pair to build some way off. In the neighbourhood of big rookeries outlying nests of this kind may always be found.

ROMANCE IN REAL LIFE.—When ill, a man is peculiarly susceptible to kindness, and a pretty nurse is apt to become dangerous to his peace. Not long ago a young man with a broken leg and an attractive appearance languished in a city hospital. The demure, white-capped nurse began to take an annual interest in him; and, after a time, asked him if there was nothing she could do for him—no book she could read, no letter she could write. The patient gracefully accepted the latter offer, and the nurse prepared to write from his dictation. He began with a tender address to his 'dearest love,' and the little nurse felt slightly embarrassed. But she continued through the most ardent declarations of all-absorbing affection to the end, where he wished to be subscribed an adoring lover for all time. Then she folded the letter and slipped it into its envelope. 'To whom shall I direct it?' she asked. The wicked young fellow said amiably and even tenderly, 'What is your name, please?' They have been married a little more than a year now.

SPLIT ENGLISH PENNIES.—How many collectors of coins know anything about the curious half-pence issued centuries ago by English authorities, half pence in the truest sense of the word, since they were nothing more than minted pennies cut directly in half? Specimens of these coins have been discovered frequently among the buried treasures which from time to time have been unearthed in Great Britain. In Lancashire in 1840 were found a rare lot of coins, among which were several pennies of the time of Alfred and Edward divided in this way. Similarly divided pence of the time of Edward the Confessor have been found, and in speaking of the discovery, in 1833, of a number of these curious half-pence of the time of William the Conqueror, an unquestioned authority states that they were probably issued from the mints in that form, since the whole collection had evidently been in circulation. In the British Museum in London are specimens of these divided coins issued under various monarchs from Alfred to Henry III., with the latter of whom the custom ceased. An eminent archaeologist accounts for the divided coins by saying that this doubtless arose from the scarcity of small change, which was in part remedied under the reign of Edward I. by the coinage of half-pence and farthings.

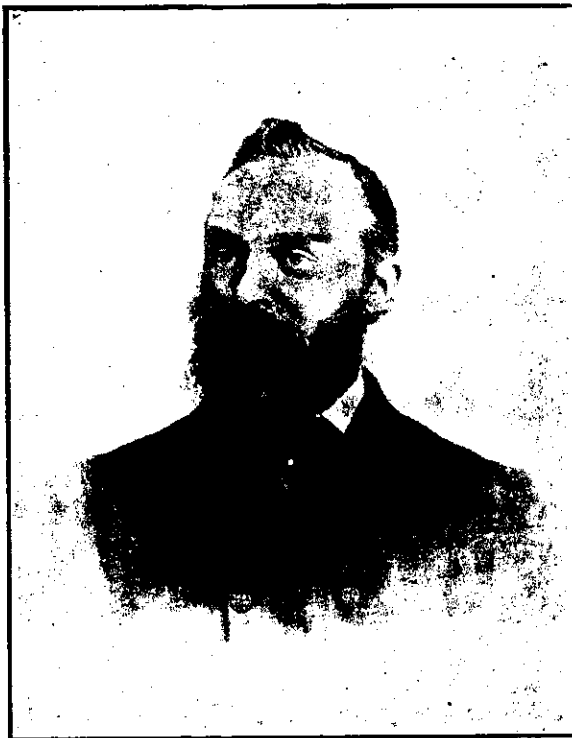
A DOG GOES INTO HYPNOTIC TRANCES.—All St. Petersburg has gone wild over something new, a dog which goes off into hypnotic trances. This remarkable animal belongs to M. Duroy, who was awarded a gold medal by the Paris Academy of Science for his original investigation and discoveries in the science of hypnotism as applied to animals and its effects upon them. Several tests have been made of the animal in the presence of no less a person than Dr. Afanasyev of the War Department. One of the tests consisted in placing several articles, as a pencil, cigar case, handkerchief, cuff button, etc., on the floor. Then the dog, having been thrown into a hypnotic trance by him, M. Duroy requested one of the audience, which consisted also of several other physicians of renown and some newspaper men, to think about something and what the dog was to do with it, then to write it out on a piece of paper and show it to the rest of the audience, excepting, of course, himself. This was done, and, the dog having been brought in, what was the astonishment of the whole assemblage to see the animal go up to the cigar-case, pick it up and bring it to the one who had been indicated in the wish. Another test consisted in laying several cubes with figures on them in a certain order in a closed box. At the same time several pieces of paper were put upon the floor bearing like numbers on each. The dog, as they called in and tried to place the pieces of paper in the same order as the cubes were laid in the closed and sealed box. This he did, to the astonishment of all assembled. The strangeness of the whole procedure is increased when it is remembered that M. Duroy knows no more about what is being done or wished than does the dog, and is, therefore, entirely unable in any way to prompt him.

NOTABLE PEOPLE

LIVER WENDELL HOLMES, the American Poet Laureate, says that there is no hard and fast rule by which a man can become a poet if he is born one. Sooner or later the world will know it; but whoever expects to make money by publishing poetry will be disappointed. The chances are a thousand to one against him. Verse is a drug in the market. The cause for this decline in the poetical market may be various. It is, however, clear that the public taste runs in an opposite direction. The poet finds his most formidable rivals in the modern novel, the cricket field, football, lawn tennis, racing, boxing, comic songs, and the opera comique, besides which the trend and spirit of the times is 'how to get money'; therefore we fear the poet will have to wait for better times.

The subject of our picture is Mr W. R. Wills, well known as a New Zealand poet. He was born at Bath, England, on January 21st, 1837, and was the youngest son of the Rev. John H. Wills, Wesleyan Minister. He came to this colony twenty years ago, and during the whole time has resided in the pretty township of Otahuhu.

In early life he showed considerable ability in the art of versification, and the divine passion grew upon him as years passed on—until he was able to publish his first volume,



Hanna, photo.

MR W. R. WILLS.

Auckland.

now thirty years ago. Since then he has been a prolific writer, continually supplying the public press all over the colony with poems, upon an infinite variety of subjects. His principal medium of publicity has been the *Auckland Star*, for which paper he is now country contributor.

During this last ten years Mr Wills has published several volumes of his works, amongst which are 'A Bunch of Wild Pansies,' 'Tales of Araby,' etc., etc. In bringing out these works, at a great expense, Mr Wills has been very much assisted by his friends and admirers, chief amongst whom has been Sir George Grey, K.C.B. Some of his songs have been set to music, and obtained great popularity, especially 'The Old Land and the New,' and 'Light Beats the Heart.'

That Mr Wills is a true poet there can be no question. Some of his writings have the stamp of a very high order of poetry, and had he been content to report only his supreme moments, it would have been far better for himself and his readers; for if it be true that the greatest philosopher or conqueror is no hero in the eyes of his valet, so likewise a poet who publishes his weakest efforts, needlessly damages himself, and runs the risk of being ruined.

Mr Wills has ever been foremost in the encouragement

and defence of the toilers. His patriotic songs have a stately and manly ring about them, but tenderness is the prevailing sentiment of his muse. Listen to him in that exquisite gem, 'My Sweetest One and Best':

'I know she kissed the rosebuds,
And loved their gentle breath;
I know she pressed the pansies
To her heart, now still in death.

I know the loving daisies,
So meek and pure and sweet,
And like my heart, now withered
And lying at her feet.

Ah! yes, she wears them upon her gentle breast,
Ah! yes, she wears them, my sweetest one and best!

Here Mr Wills is at his best, and clearly shows that he is made of finer clay than the majority of money-grubbing mankind. Like Burns, his heart flows out in sympathy over universal Nature.

JAMES ADAMS.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL

NEW MATERIAL FOR BELTING.

In the way of belting, leather is not going to have everything its way as formerly. The substitution of camel's hair, cotton, paint, and other chemicals for leather in machinery belting is said to be meeting with some success in America. It was first invented in England, and it is claimed for the new material that it is stronger than other belting, more durable, more efficient, and as low priced.

NEVER NEGLECT A COLD.

The discussion of the treatment of bronchitis begins with a warning—never neglect a cold. Lay this maxim to heart, for a cold is the common ground whence many much more serious diseases start off. If a day in the house will cure it, take that day off; if a week is needed, better by far lose wages than injure your health, which is the prime condition for wage-making. Clothe warmly and clothe in wool next the skin. I bear with astonishment (says Dr A. Wilson) of many foolish people in a climate like ours neglecting to wear woollen underclothing. They should know there is no safety possible for them in the matter of rheumatism and lung troubles, save by clothing warmly and efficiently. Women are often most neglectful in this essential proceeding, and therefore, I say especially to them (as the nominal and in the best sense real 'heads' of houses) 'see that you and yours are warmly clad in wool.' This precaution will save many a miserable day and many a doctor's bill.

SUGAR FROM COTTON SEED.

The cotton plant, which has for so many centuries furnished a large part of the population of the globe with clothing, seems to be almost without limit in its usefulness, remarks an American scientific authority. From the seed a valuable oil is expressed, while the husks form an article of food for cattle in the shape of cakes. From the lint which clings to the seed after it is passed through the gin felt is made, while the oil extracted from the seed is applied to quite a large number of purposes. But, according to the British consul, Mr Portal, of Zanzibar, cotton seed is also capable of yielding sugar. A process has been discovered for extracting sugar from cotton seed meal, and though the details of the process have not been disclosed it is said that the product obtained is of a very superior kind, being 15 times sweeter than cane sugar, and 20 times more so than sugar made from the beet. This indicates that sweetness is not due to cane sugar, but to some other chemical.

MUSIC AND PHYSIOLOGY.

The physiological effects of music have been studied by Dugliel, a Russian, and, as the result of numerous experiments, he concludes that (1) Music exhibits an influence on the circulation of the blood; (2) the blood pressure sometimes rises, sometimes falls; (3) the action of musical tones and pipes on animals and men expresses itself for the most part by increased frequency of the beats of the heart; (4) the variations in the circulation consequent upon musical sounds coincide with changes in the breathing, though they may also be observed quite independently of it; (5, 6 and 7) the variations in the blood pressure are dependent on the pitch and loudness of the sound and on the tone colour; (8) in the variations of the blood pressure, the peculiarities of the individuals, whether men or lower animals, are plainly apparent; and even nationality in the case of man has some effect.

USES OF GLYCERINE.

Glycerine is one of those substances that always seem to be lending themselves to new and unsuspected applications. It is found that the freezing of water in the pipes of hydraulic machinery—a very serious source of trouble in the winter months—is entirely prevented by the simple expedient of mixing a small percentage of glycerine with the water in the pumps. This precaution is now taken in the operation of the hydraulic jacks on all the ships of the English navy. Glycerine appears to be just as useful in maintaining the efficiency of the human machinery, for it is recommended as a sure cure for indigestion. A small teaspoonful should be mixed in half a wine-glassful of water and taken with or immediately after each meal until the trouble is past, which in an ordinary case, will be in two or three days' time, and in an obstinate one probably from ten to fifteen days. The treatment will have to be renewed if the indigestion manifests itself again.