TIMELY TOPICS.

The American horse Parole is a queer looking animal, with rough coat and curious looking hocks, but when he comes out on the track his preliminar canter displays wonderful action and great spirit. The London *Telegraph* says that the victory of the plucky Yankee is a compliment also to the magnificent ships which traverse the ocean, and make the trip for men and horses so different from what it was when the first winner of the Derby, Diomed, went to New York in a sailing vessel.

A farmer in the suburbs of Philadelphia presented the *Times* of that city with thirty-two stalks of asparagus, weighing twelve and a half pounds, twenty inches in height and each stalk as thick as a child's wrist. Mr. Starkey, the farmer, says this was the result of a three days' growth, and that it is a common thing for him to cut his asparagus at eight o'clock in the morning, and by five o'clock that day it will have grown out seven inches. Over an inch an hour on a warm day after a shower is a common growth.

A dispatch from Helena, Montana Territory, tells this story of one man's brave and successful fight against an overwhelming array of savage foes: "The vicinity of Fort Belknap swarms with Sioux. A man named Lloyd, while camped twenty miles from the post, was attacked by fifteen warriors. He scooped out a rifle pit with his hands, and after a desperate fight of two hours' duration, in which three Indians were killed, the intrepid white man succeeded in driving off his assailants. Lloyd had but three cartridges left when the savages abandoned their attack."

From a limestone quarry in the township of Lisbon, Wis., there was recently exhumed quite a number of petrified animals. One, a large bullfrog, was found solidly imbedded in a large, flat stone, four inches thick, which was as hard as the rock which surrounded it. The shape of the frog is perfect. Another petrified animal-remnant taken out is a pair of stag's antlers, which are about two feet and a half in length. They were broken in separating them from the stone, but are of very good shape. This stratum of limestone runs entirely through the county, though in some places it is a great distance from the surface, and supplies building material for many.

The shark's voracity is something wonderful. When the British bark Lutterworth was becalmed in the tropics, a large shark was observed swimming around the ship. A large hook with a chain attached was baited with a four-pound piece of pork. The shark made for it, bolted it, but in hauling him up the chain parted, and he coolly swallowed the hook, chain and pork. Another hook was then baited, which he instantly seized, biting a three-inch rope in twain, and also swallowed it with another four-pound piece of pork. Another hook was then baited with a similar piece of pork, and with this the shark was caught and landed on the main deck. When at last he was killed and cut open, the large hooks, chain and rope, together with eight pounds of pork, were found in his stomach.

A recent examination of French black silks in New York city showed that they were heavily adulterated. The weight of dye in American silks is about seventeen per cent., but the French silks showed a weight of from thirty-three to fifty per cent. The principal article used in weighting is iron. The silk is repeatedly inserted in a solution of nitrate of iron. It then receives a blue tint from prussiate of potash, followed by several baths in gambier, and a treatment with acetate of iron. It is then made bright by logwood and soap. To make the silk soft, a little oil and soda are added, while to make it stiff and rustling an acid is used. The "wearing shiny" is caused by the action of the soap and alkali, which develop, under friction, a sort of grease. The cracking of silk is owing to its inability to carry the great load of material used in the dying.

A careful estimate respecting the circulation of the Bible during the past century places the total at the enormous number of nearly 150,000,000 copies. The British and Foreign Society is in advance of any other institution of the kind as regards the number of copies issued. It was founded in 1804, and has circulated upward of 82,000,000 copies. The American Society, founded thirteen years later, has caused a circulation of 35,000,000. These two organizations are far in advance of all others. Next in respect of copies circulated are the German Societies, which together have issued 8,500,000. Then comes the National society of Scotland with nearly 4,768,000, then the Hibernian with 4,189,000, the Swiss with nearly 2,000,000 and the French with 1,600,000. The National Society of Scotland has circulated its 4,768,000 copies since 1861, the year in which it was founded

Speaking of the attempt of a lunatic to assassinate Edwin Booth in a Chicago theater, a New York paper suggests that there are probably many more such dangerous persons unconfined throughout the country, "many of them through the connivance and concealment of their families and friends, who think that it would be inhuman to send them to an asylum, whereas the inhumanity is in permitting them to remain at liberty. This is the mischief of much that has been carelessly said of the management of lunatic hospitals, and which may be referred still further back to the mismanagement of some of them. One ill-regulated establishment may bring a great many well-regulated retreats of the kind into disrepute. Mr. Edwin Booth no doubt has strong opinions upon the subject, and so would every reader of this have after escaping from a similar peril."

Experiments in California have demonstrated that the soil and climate of that State are admirably adapted for the growth both of the tea plant and mulberry tree. Neither the culture of tea nor of silk, however, seem likely to become practicable there for the present. The tea plant grows as readily on the Pacific coast as the camellia, and requires even less care. The difficulty, however, is in devising some process by which the leaves can be picked at a cost low enough to make the industry profitable. It is a well-established fact that the tea plant will grow in many of the Southern States. It is not a tropical plant, but a hardy one, and flourishes best in elevated regions, especially on the mountain sides. In India it is extensively grown. There are large tea plantations there, and the tea of that country is an important article of traffic. But neither tea culture nor silk culture can be profitably conducted while the cost of labor is as high as it is in this country, and with no better labor-saving machiney than we now have for use in those industries.

Mr. L. Delmonico, the celebrated New York restaurateur, has been telling the public the best way of cooking fish. Boiling seems to him the "most legitimate," as well as quickest and most convenient. His direction is to "put them in cold spring water—the less the quantity of water that the fish can be boiled in the better—with a handful of salt. Rub a little vinegar on the skin of the fish, to prevent it from cracking, and to make the flesh solid. Ten minutes to the pound should be allowed for a salmon, and three or four minutes for almost any other kind; but a good general rule is that the fish is done when the fins pull out easily." Mr. Delmonico also says that broiled fish should be "carefully split in two from head to tail, dried, seasoned with salt and pepper, greased with a little oil (which is preferable to butter), and broiled to a nice brown color, the gridiron having been previously well greased, too;" and that small fish may be "deliciously fried in oil, after dipping in milk and then flour, or in very hot grease, after being breaded with beaten eggs and crumbs."

Despite some one's dismal prophecy, that on account of certain changes in the heavenly bodies during 1881, the earth will be overwhelmed by pestilence famine and other disasters too numerous to mention, an astronomical writer says: "There will be no catastrophe in 1881. The conjunction of the four great planets at perihelion is not going to take place. It is an idle scare. It is true that the longitude of the perihelion of these three planets will bring them somewhat near each other. Jupiter will be in perihelion, I think, about 1881. Saturn will be in conjunction near that time, and Neptune will not be near enough to help any mischief that may be feared; while the position of the planet Uranus in the heavens in 1881 will be about 148 degrees right ascension. Every one hundred years we have five conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn, and always have had—without the least damage thus far. Being in conjunction so near to Jupiter's perihelion may possibly produce higher tides than usual, as Jupiter's position will be twenty-three million miles nearer the sun and the earth than he is at his mean distance. Let us not delude ourselves, nor be frightened by chimeras.

Begging as a Fine Art.

Mr. J. H. Gregg, of Hong Kong, has recently written to a London paper a very interesting letter on Chinese beggars. Certainly some of the accounts of these mendicants are horrible in the extreme, and would hardly be credited if the authority was not so good. He says that he has actually seen one beggar bearing on his back a leper so much affected by the disease that his ears and hands and feet were apparently sloughing off. With this loathesome burden, Mr. Gregg says, the beggar threatened to enter each shop he passed, unless the shopkeeper at once administered to his wants. Alms were promptly thrown into the street, and quickly picked up. Others, according to this account, go about carrying sharp Chinese razors, with which they cut themselves to show their misery, and to exort alms. Mr. Gregg has seen mendicants with the upper part of their bodies covered with blood. At the town of Pitkong, in the province of Canton, he saw a beggar literally bathed in his own blood, which also sprinkled over the floor of the shop in which he was trying to melt the apparently obdurate heart of the shopkeeper. He also relates horrible stories of beggars who vary the above fashion by knocking their heads against the walls of shops, and of others who beat their bodies with large stones for the edification of passers-by. Not contented with these pleasant and entertaining exibitions, some of the more emaciated have an agreeable habit of apparently appearing in a dying condition on the threshold of a shop or dwelling house, and announcing, in dismal tones, their purpose of remaining there to die. Here is Mr. Gregg's account of one instance: "In May, 1874, I saw one, apparently perishing from hunger, throw himself down at the doorway of a dwelling house, saying that he would die of starvation if he were not immediately relieved. The householder, who was in a great state of trepidation, at once offered the starving man a small sum of money, which was indignantly refused. A friend who was with me expressed his readiness to relieve the wants of the sufferer. He held out a half-dollar, and the penurious householder at once rushed toward him, and eagerly grasped the coin, which he at once gave to the sufferer."

This letter goes to show that the mendicants of the European countries and the United States have not begun to master the fine art of begging, and that they are as yet but in their infancy when compared with the almond-eyed children of the Flowery Land.

Do the Dying Suffer Pain?

People do not like to think of death. It is an unpleasant subject; but it constantly obtrudes itself, and there has been much speculation as to whether mental or physical pain attends the final act. Observation teaches us that there is little pain of either kind in dying. Experience will come to us all one of these days, but it will come too late to benefit those who remain. It seems to be a kind provision of nature that, as we approach the dread event, our terrors diminish, and the coward and hero die alike—fearless, indifferent or resigned. As to physical pain, Dr. Edward H. Clark, in "Visions," says:

"The rule is that unconsciousness, not pain, attends the final act. To the subject of it death is no more painful than birth. Painless we come; whence we know not. Painlessly go; whither we know not. Nature kindly provides an anæsthetic for the body when the spirit leaves it. Previous to that moment and in preparation for it, respiration becomes feeble, generally slow and short, often accomplished by long inspiration and short, sudden expirations, so that the blood is steadily less and less oxygenated. At the same time the heart acts with corresponding debility, producing a slow, feeble and often irregular pulse. As the process goes on, the blood is not only driven to the head with diminishing force and in less quantity, but what flows there is loaded more and more with carbonic acid gas, a powerful anæsthetic, the same as that derived from charcoal. Subject to its influence the nerve centers lose consciousness and sensibility, apparent sleep creeps over the system; then comes stupor, and then the end."

FACTS ABOUT THE POTATO.

Its Many Uses—Its Cosmopolitan Character.

At a meeting of the Washington Horticultural Society, Prof. Wm. Saunders made the following interesting remarks upon the potato:

The potato is a native of various parts of South America, particularly of Chili, Peru and the Argentine territory. It is stated that it was sent to Spain early in the sixteenth century; from thence it spread to Italy and Germany. It was introduced into England from Virginia about the year 1586. It was slow to gain popularity, for it is stated to have been rare as a field crop in 1760, but after that time its culture seems to have steadily increased; and it is now considered by political economists as being next to wheat in importance as an article of food, although, as compared to wheat, its nutritive properties are very low, yet one acre of potatoes gives more food for man than two acres of oats. Approaching in its composition to rice and the plantain, it is said to be superior to these in nutriment.

The composition of the potato varies very greatly in the different varieties; the ingredients are the same, but the proportions vary considerably. The proportion of water ranges from seventy-two to eighty-two per cent.; of starchy fibrine from six to eight per cent.; of pure starch from nine to fifteen per cent.; and of gum from three to four per cent., while small proportions of vegetable albumen, acids and salts make up the remainder of the bulk.

THE POTATO AS A TABLE VEGETABLE.

As a vegetable, the potato is esteemed in whatever manner it may be prepared. It is recommended that potatoes should be well-cooked, with a considerable degree of heat. If intended to be boiled, they should be placed at once in hot water, but differences of opinion prevail on this point, some claiming that they should be placed in cold water, which is slowly brought to the boiling point. When peeled and soaked in cold water, a portion of the fecula will be extracted, and if placed in a slow oven the skin will be hardened and thickened. The water in which the potatoes have been boiled is nearly destitute of nutritive matter, and is said to contain substances which are deleterious to health.

Potatoes are deficient in mineral matter, so that they are unfit to be a sole food, but that defect is supplied by the addition of hard water, milk and other elements of food. New and waxy potatoes are said to be less digestible than those that are old and mealy, and which contain a greater amount of starch. When cooked, the starch cells burst and mealiness is the result.

IN OTHER FORMS OF FOOD.

Besides their use as a table vegetable, potatoes furnish a large quantity of starch, which is employed for various purposes in the arts, and forms the basis of a variety of farinaceous foods, such as artificial tapioca, sago, vermicelli, etc. It is much used for culinary purposes, and many famed gravies, sauces and soups are largely indebted to it for their excellence, as also are bread and pastry. It is sometimes called potato flour, but the tubers contain no proper flour, their starch is destitute of gluten, a substance which is necessary to the production of dough, which, by fermentation in baking, becomes bread. In certain proportions the fecula of the potato may be mixed with wheat flour so as to produce good bread. It is stated that if the proportion of potato starch exceeds one-fifth of the weight of the flour, a peculiar flavor is communicated to the bread, arising from a small quantity of oily matter which is supposed to be identical with fusel oil. This is sometimes called oil of potato spirit, and has been extracted as a colorless, oily liquid, possessing a very powerful odor, at first rather agreeable, but afterward exceedingly nauseous. This matter is believed to be a product of the fermentation of the potato, and not to pre-exist in the tuber.

A substance called dextrine, or starch gum, is prepared either by torrifying potato starch, or by the action of heat aided by a small portion of nitric acid. Dextrine is produced in the forms of a pearly powder, a syrupy solution, or as a gum. Powdered dextrine is used as a substitute for gum in calico printing and by manufacturers to give body to their woven fabrics which are made slim and with wide meshes which are filled up with starch. It is also employed for adhesive labels and for postage stamps, and for many other similar purposes. Dextrine in the form of syrup is employed in the preparation of various alimentary substances. The gum is made by boiling the syrup and then running it into flat vessels where it remains until it assumes a pasty consistence; it is then cut into small pieces which are rolled out flat and then dried. This gum is easily dissolved and makes a clear solution. It is more easily packed than powdered dextrine and over liquid gum it has the advantage of not fermenting.

OTHER PREPARATIONS.

Polenta is prepared from potatoes, which are first boiled or steamed, then bruised, dried, sifted and separated into coarse grains. It keeps for a long time if stored in a dry place; it is used to give consistency to soups and for other culinary purposes. Glucose, or grape sugar, is prepared from potato starch; this substance is employed in the manufacture of beer and for mixing with grape juice in the manufacture of wine. Potato pulp is distilled to produce brandy, and cognac, so called, is thus made and substituted for that distilled from grape juice. In the manufacture of brandy from potatoes a peculiar alcohol is formed which is variously called potato spirit, fusel oil or amylic alcohol. This gives a disagreeable flavor to the brandy and is separated by rectification. When this spirit is distilled with oil of vitriol it yields the voltaic ethereal liquid called potato-spirit ether, or amylic ether, which, when compounded with various acids gives respectively apple oil, grape oil and cognac oil. Many of the artificial sweet-smelling ethers are chemical productions from potato ether, and under chemical treatment produce cheap imitations of various agreeably fragrant perfumes. Potato cheese is made by reducing boiled potatoes to a pulp. To five pounds of this pulp are added one pound of sour milk and a portion of salt. The whole is kneaded together and the mass allowed to lie for a day or two, when it is further worked and made into small cheeses which are hung up in bags or baskets to allow the escape of superfluous moisture; they are then dried in the shade and kept in a dry place till used.

POTATO PICTURE FRAMES, BILLIARD BALLS, ETC.

The pulp remaining after the extraction of the starch becomes hard and horny when dried. It is employed in the manufacture of various ornamental articles, as picture frames, snuff-boxes and toys of the paper-mache character. It is also stated that potatoes steeped for a certain time in water to which has been added eight per cent. of sulphuric acid, and afterward submitted to pressure, will form into a material which can readily be carved into any design, and, when made into pipes has a resemblance to meerschaum; billiard balls have been made of it, so hard does it become.

Summing up some of the uses of the potato, they embrace, in addition to the tuber as an esculent, starch, or potato arrow-root, sago, semola, polenta, vermicelli and maccaroni. It also furnishes sugar, alcohol, flavoring essences, gum, bread, coffee, cheese, pasteboard and paper-mache; and, in addition, a peculiar principle called solanine is found in the germinating shoots, and the leaves of the plant may serve as a substitute for tobacco, which they are sometimes used to adulterate.

MEDICAL PROPERTIES OF THE POTATO

Medicinally, the stems and leaves have slightly narcotic properties, and a narcotic extract is obtained from them which has been employed to allay pain in coughs and rheumatism. Raw potatoes, scraped, are used as a cooling poultice applied to burns and scalds. Although the potato comes from a tropical latitude, it does not come from a tropical climate. It is grown to perfection at Quito, in Ecuador, a place said to be upward of 10,000 feet above sea level. It is one of the most cosmopolitan of plants, and is cultivated with more or less success from Patagonia to Labrador, and from the Cape of Good Hope to Iceland.

THE POTATO A COSMOPOLITE.

It also grows in a variety of soils, from those composed principally of clay to those mostly of sand. In regard to the mechanical condition of the soil, its swelling tubers meet less resistance in light, loamy, friable soils, or those in which there is a predominating proportion of sand. In all cases the soil should be rich and properly drained: wet soils are especially pernicious, and poor soils will not sustain a respectable crop. In chemical parlance, the potato is a potash plant. There are some subjects which seem to compose the stock in trade of rural writers. According to my observation the foremost of these is "How to cure gapes in chickens," and second only in importance to this is the question as to which end of a potato produces the most prolific plant. That celebrated naturalist, Josh Billings, has determined in a perfectly satisfactory manner as to which is the business end of a hornet. I have not seen his decision in regard to the potato, but when it does come it will be equally luminous and decided. So we will leave it, with the remark that the value of a potato crop, as far as present knowledge extends, is not much influenced by the size or nature of the tuber. Fine crops have been produced from plants which have been produced from cuttings made of portions of the potato-stem inserted in sand and rooted in a manner similar to cuttings of verbenas or geraniums.

A Lawyer on His Profession.

At the annual dinner of the New York Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Joseph H. Choate responded to the toast "Bench and Bar—blessed are the peacemakers," and said among other things: "I do not believe that a body of merchants with their stomachs full have any distrust of the institution that I represent. Gentlemen, you have the bar always with you, and so the lawyers will always be your sure and steadfast companions. Lord Bacon, who was one of the greatest lawyers of his day, said that every man owes a debt to his profession, but I think that can be amended on behalf of the lawyers. Every man owes a duty to our profession, and some time between the cradle and the grave he must acknowledge the liability and pay the debt. Why, gentlemen, you cannot live without lawyers, and certainly you cannot die without them. It was one of the ablest members of our profession who had bespoken his passage for Europe, but failed to go, and for an explanation said, 'Yes, he had intended to go, but one of his rich clients had died and he was afraid if he had gone across the Atlantic the heirs would have got all the property.' [Laughter]. When I look around at this solid body of merchants, all this heaped up and idle capital, I believe that the fortunes of the bar are yet at the beginning. Gentlemen, the future is all before us. We have no sympathy with Communism, but like the Communists we have everything to gain and nothing to lose. With reference to the remarkable phrasecology of the toast, 'Blessed are the peacemakers,' I believe that is true. I believe that if you devote yourselves assiduously and long enough to our profession that it will result in perfect peace. For you never knew of a suit, if it was prosecuted vigorously enough, at the end where there was anything left for the parties to quarrel over. I will take my seat, exhorting you to do justice to the profession of the bar."

"What is It?"

Yesterday forenoon a farmer's horse and wagon were hitched on Congress street, near Larned, and after the man had gone into the store an individual, who must know something about human curiosity, walked slowly down to the wagon and carefully examined a hind wheel. In ten seconds he was joined by two boys. In a minute there was a crowd of six. The man looked at the wheel from one side and the other, and the increasing crowd did the same. In three minutes there were twenty people around the wagon. Some looked over into the box and some at the wheels, but no one said anything. The man first mentioned seized the wheel and shook it and then measured one of the spokes with a pocket rule. When he had finished, the crowd numbered forty. No one could say what had happened or was about to happen, and the mystery was fast becoming intense, when a corpulent citizen bore down on the crowd and cried out:

"What's the matter here—any one been hurt?"

"No, sir," was the quiet reply of the man with the pocket rule.

"What is it, then?"

"I was looking at this hind wheel."

"What's the matter with the wheel?" asked the fat man, as he seized and shook it,

"Nothing."

The fat man scowled, clenched his hand, looked up and down and then slid, and in thirty seconds no one was left around the wagon but a small boy who was trying to hook an old umbrella.—*Detroit Free Press.*

Time—Twelve o'clock. She—"George, are you to exhibit in the dog show?" He—"No; why?" She—"Oh, nothing, only you are such a remarkable fine 'setter'." Exit young man.

PINS AND NEEDLES.

An Interesting Chapter about these Useful Domestic Articles.

Pins are of very ancient invention, as they were manufactured by the Egyptians in the time of the Pharoahs. Many of these useful articles were found in the tombs of her kings in the Pyramids. Some of them were of quite elaborate manufacture, and must have been costly, as they had gold heads and were six to eight inches in length. Needles are also supposed to be of great antiquity, and their introduction in Europe is said to have taken place at the time of the Saracen invasion and conquest of Spain. The first needles made in England were manufactured at London by a negro who came there from Spain during the reign of Queen Mary. He died without imparting the secret of his art; but it was subsequently recovered in 1565 by one Elias Growse. A century later one Christopher Greening was instrumental in establishing a factory at Long Creadon, in Buckinghamshire.

The first pins manufactured in England were made at Gloucester in 1626; but subsequently this industry was established in Birmingham, and that city is now the headquarters of the pin trade of Great Britain. The best English pins are of superior excellence, and are put up in green paper; but inferior pins are also put up in the same way, and are frequently palmed off upon the unsuspecting purchaser as the genuine production. When pins were first made in England the raw material passed through fourteen different processes before completion, and each of these processes employed a separate operative. The operations consisted of straightening the wire, pointing, cutting into pin lengths, twisting wire for heads, annealing heads, stamping heads, cleaning, whitening, washing, polishing, winnowing, paper-pricking and putting in papers.

The business of pin making was established in this country in 1812, when, in consequence of the war with Great Britain, the price rose from six cents to one dollar per paper. Invention was consequently stimulated, and pins were manufactured at Greenwich, New York, or what now constitutes that part of the metropolis in the vicinity of Christopher street, west side. At the close of hostilities the effort was abandoned, as we could no longer compete with English cheap labor and low rates of interest. In 1820 the business was resumed at Bellevue Almshouse, but soon was again abandoned. In 1824 Lemuel Wright, of Massachusetts, invented and patented in England the first machine that made solid-headed pins, but the enterprise lacked encouragement, and it was nearly ten years subsequent before pins of his make were sold in London. Perfect pins by this process were manufactured during the revolution of a single wheel, and this machine, since considerably improved, is the one used at present in the largest manufactories in Birmingham.

Since 1824 several Americans have patented machines for making pins, but the most successful invention was the work of a Mr. Fowler. But the entire process is a mystery to the uninitiated, and the secret is carefully kept hidden from curious eyes. Most of the best American pins are made in Connecticut, after Fowler's process. In one establishment are eighty-five machines, which consume annually many tons of brass or iron wire, and turn out millions of pins. Brass pins are whitened by long boiling in copper vessels containing block tin. The process of making white iron pins is still a secret. There are eight pin factories in the United States, with an annual production of about 7,000,000,000 pins.

Pin-papers are marked by the use of a molded piece of wood, which corresponds to those portions representing the small folds, through which the holes are made for the pins to be secured. The pin-sticker, usually a girl, gathers two of the folds together, and places these between the jaws of a vice having grooves to serve as a guide for the entry of the pins. When filled the paper is released and held up so that the eye of the expert at once detects every defective pin, and causes its removal.

Needles differ from pins in being made of steel, and having an eye for the reception of thread, a sharper point, and a highly-polished body. English needles of the best makes are very elastic, the metal being suitably tempered, and the eyes all finely finished and burnished, so as not to cut the thread. A great many needles are spoiled while in process of tempering, as the steel of which they are made is apt to be so variable in quality, and in a heated state, while undergoing chemical action, they are easily injured. Scouring is also a delicate operation, and needles when not properly hardened and polished are always of inferior strength and quickly accumulate rust.—*New York Mercantile Journal.*

How Much Can a Person Read?

The longest single poem, I believe, extant, is an Italian poem, "The Adone" of Marini, who lived in the time of James I. of England. It contains 45,000 lines. As for Spain, one single author of the seventeenth century, Lopez de Vega, wrote 1,800 plays. His works altogether fill forty-seven quarto volumes. Alonzo Tostado, a Spanish bishop of the fifteenth century, wrote nearly forty folios, covering with print three times as many leaves as he had lived days. To come to England. William Prynne wrote two hundred different works. Chalmers' collected edition of the English poets only comes down to Cowper, who died in 1800, and fills twenty-one volumes royal octavo, double columns, small type. The volumes average 700 pages. This gives a total of 14,700 pages, or 29,400 columns. Now, it takes (I have made the experiment) four minutes to read a column, with fair attention. Here is a good year's work in reading over only once a selection from the English poets. The amount of reading which a student can get through in a given time hardly admits of being measured by the ell. The rate of reading varies with the subject—the rapid glance with which we skim the columns of a newspaper being at one end of the scale, and the slow rate which is required for a page of, say, Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" being at the other. Still, just to get something to go upon, make a calculation in this way: Suppose a man to be able to read eight hours a day. No one can really sustain receptive or critical attention to written matter for eight hours. But take eight hours as the outside possibility. Thirty pages octavo is an average hour's reading, taking one book with another. This would make 240 pages per day, 1,680 per week, and 87,360 pages in a year. Taking the average thickness of an octavo volume as 400 pages only, the quantity of reading which a diligent student can get over in a year is no more than an amount equal to about 220 volumes octavo.

A Masterly Stroke of Genius.

The other day a muscular young fellow, having an odor of the stable about him, entered a Detroit photographer's establishment and explained that he would like to have about one photograph taken, but on learning the price he concluded to invest in a tin-type. After taking his seat in the chair he shut up one eye, drew his mouth around one side, stuck up his nose and patiently waited for the operator, whose astonishment caused him to exclaim:

"Good gracious! but you don't want to look that way to get a picture. Nobody will know you from Sitting Bull."

"You go ahead," was the reply.

"Do you want me take such a phiz as that."

"I do."

The artist took it. It beat Sol Smith Russell all to pieces and was highly satisfactory to the sitter, who paid for it and said:

"You see, I had a sort of object in this. Come here from Allegan county six months ago—engaged to a gal out there—found a gal here I like better—got to sever old ties—see?"

"But what has that picture got to do with old ties?" asked the artist.

"Lots—heaps! I've writ to her that I was blode up here on a boat and disfiggered for life. She's awful proud. When she gits this and sees how that explosion wrecked me, she'll hunt another lover quicker'n wink—see? How do you like the plot? Just gaze on this picture once nd then tell me that Mary Ann won't send back my love-letters by first train!"

He posted the picture. The letter was brief, but explained all. It said: "My Evver Dear Gurl—I incloze my pickture that you may see how offul bad I was hurt, tho' I know you will luv me just the same."

"Ever see that game worked afore?" he asked of the artist as he licked the stamp on the letter.

"No—never did."

"Course you never did. It's mine. It struck me the other day while I was greasin' a wagon, and I think it's boss. Blode up—see? Disfiggered for life—see? Picture right here to prove it, and she'll write back that she has at last concluded to yield to her parents' wishes and marry a young man out there who owns eleven steers, a hundred sheep and an eight-acre lot."—*Detroit Free Press.*

Bicycle Travel.

In an article entitled "Personal Rapid Transit," a New York paper devotes its attention to the bicycle, formerly called the velocipede. The writer says: If we look to long-distance prize contests, like the one in the American Institute, we find in England, only a short time since, a wonderful race, under the Wolverhampton rules, for six days, from six A. M. to twelve P. M. daily, one attendant being allowed to assist the competitors in mounting and dismounting. Taking only the two highest riders on the wonderful score, we find it reading thus, leaving out the odd laps, of which seven and one-half went to the mile: Monday, No. 1, 236 miles, and No. 2, 214; Tuesday, No. 1, 422; and No. 2, 394; Wednesday, No. 1, 613; and No. 2, 586; Thursday, No. 1, 796, and No. 2, 767; Friday, No. 1, 947, and No. 2, 916; Saturday, at eleven P. M., when the match closed, No. 1, 1,060 miles; No. 2, 1,025. Such scores show the not usually appreciated possibilities of the bicycle. Indeed, since the seat has been shifted to a point over the center of the front wheel, this wheel enormously increased in size, the rear wheel as greatly diminished, and other improvements made, the bicycle has become a very swift machine. Unfortunately, its speed and its knock-down powers compel city authorities to prohibit its use on ordinary thoroughfares. But the bicycle has nevertheless a sphere of its own, and for use as well as amusement, on suburban roads. In England, bicyclism is as much a mania as pedestrianism has lately been here. The clubs are numbered by hundreds, and the horsemen by tens of thousands; while, as to the steeds, it is alleged that 60,000 bicycles were made and sold in England last year. In America there has been no such bicyclical furor as yet; but at some points, and queerly enough at the geographical extremes of Boston and San Francisco, bicyclism has strongholds. New York has been, to a remarkable degree, free from the fever, but it would not be difficult to predict that the late contest at the American Institute will give it a start.

Life's Masquerade.

In this masquerade of life who is there that appears undisguised? Not one! Go where we will, we find tragedy weeping behind the grinning face of comedy, and comedy smiling behind that of tragedy. We all wear our masks from the cradle to the grave. The doctor beside the sick bed, the lawyer at the bar, the minister in the pulpit are all masqueraders, and nearly every one chooses a mask the very opposite of his condition. The merchant, whose embarrassments are staring him in the face, must put on his most cheerful guise as he closes his bankrupt ledger and goes home, for the wife must not suspect the ruin that is so imminent. It is time enough when it comes, he thinks, and one is enough to suffer, so the mask of gayety must have the crowsfeet of anxiety and despair. And she, as the sound of his well-known footsteps reaches her ear, quickly wipes away the lingering tear, the annoyance of household duties, and wreathes herself with smiles to meet her lord, for he must never know her little troubles. Mayhaps, when too late, she finds she has made an ill-assorted match. It cannot be remedied, and she greets him happily, and determines not to ruin his peace by the knowledge of what is inevitable. The mother, as she leans over the crib of her dying infant, wears the mask of hope until death rudely snatches it from her features; the father wears the mask of deceit as he tearfully strives to defend his erring child. So it goes on through every grade, until we reach the tomb, that marble mask which shall cling to us until the last trumpet rends it asunder.—*Baltimore Every Saturday.*

A New York paper gives this anecdote of the late Judge George Barnard: Mr. Ed. Blankman, a well-known lawyer, was arguing a case before him, but did not seem to be making his points to the satisfaction of the court. Mr. Blankman thought the court was very obtuse.

"Your honor," said he, "I am evidently arguing at cross purposes. Let me give a supposititious case. Supposing your honor had stolen a horse—"

"That is not a supposable case," said Judge Barnard.

"I only want to make the point, your honor," went on Mr. Blankman. "I will put it in another way. Supposing I had stolen a horse—"

"That is quite a supposable case," said Judge Barnard. "Go on, Mr. Blankman."