

CLIPPINGS FOR THE CURIOUS.

A curious spring in St. Tammany parish, La., runs clear, cold water all day long, but at sunset goes suddenly dry, discharging no water till the sun rises again.

A Montana paper has discovered a gorge in the Yellowstone where, it asserts, the atmosphere is a non-conductor of sound. No matter how loud one shouts, he can't be heard.

In 1770, or thereabouts, the tomato was almost unknown in Paris. To the southern French, who invaded France at the time of the Revolution, its acclimatization is due. It was a costly luxury at first, but at the end of 1803 it was sold at Les Halles by the half-dozen.

In several provincial districts of Finland a religious sect has appeared, based on the fundamental principle of "female supremacy and male subjection." Husbands and lovers bind themselves by oath to wear whatever yoke their partners choose to place upon them, and furthermore to make unreserved confession once a week of all delinquencies. A woman who has been chosen by her sister rulers to exercise unlimited authority within the community allots the penalty, which are promptly inflicted by robust and resolute matrons.

The first notice of trades unionism in England is found in an act of Edward VI., 1548, which recites that "artificers, handicraftsmen and laborers have made confederacies and promises, and have sworn mutual oaths not only that they should not meddle with one another's work and perform and finish what another had begun, but also to constitute and appoint how much work they shall do in a day, and what hours and times they shall work, contrary to the laws and statutes of this realm, and to the great hurt and impoverishment of his Majesty's subjects."

The blue jay is the boldest and most mischievous of wild birds. Near Knoxville, Tenn., recently, one was seen to fly a number of times to a high picket fence to attract a pair of kittens playing on the lawn. The kittens finally mounted the fence and began a cautious approach from picket to picket. The jay let the first get to within eighteen inches, then hopped over between the two. The second kitten approached; the bird hopped over it. It turned, and the jay hopped back and between. The first kitten approached, and the jay hopped back over it, and so kept it up till one kitten got disgusted and left, and the other followed soon after. Once or twice after the jay tried to inveigle the kittens to another frolic, but failed.

In a Russian Prison.

In the cells of the upper and middle tiers are put the least compromised criminals. All the cells are of the same size—ten feet long, seven feet broad and twelve feet high. The doors have each two openings—one large enough for the daily food and drink to be put in through it and the other of smaller size, to serve as a spy hole for the jailers. The doors are also each fastened with two padlocks—the key of one being in the jailer's custody, while that of the other remains in charge of the commandant of the fortress. The dish from which the prisoner eats is pushed in through grooves cut in a plate of iron which projects from the interior of the door, at the height of four feet from the floor. The cannot, therefore, be removed by the prisoner, who must take his food standing against the door—and this on a spoon which is attached to the door. The drinking water is put into a jug hinged to the door. When the prisoner wishes to drink he must lean upon his knees and turn this jug upon its hinges or pivots. Food is supplied at eleven o'clock in the morning and six in the evening, and ordinarily consists of oatmeal gruel and a quarter of a kilogram of meat; besides this there is a daily allowance of a kilogram of rye bread.

The prisoner's bed consists of a plank, six by three, with a straw mattress, a sheet so strong and coarse that it is impossible to tear it, and a covering of felt—all of which articles are taken away during the day. The dress consists of a gray woolen jacket quite short and tight-fitting; short pantaloons of the same color, and long felt boots. For women the jacket is supplied, and a gray skirt added. The prisoners must get up at six o'clock and go to bed again at eight. It has been ascertained, by means of the secret observations which are constantly taken through the peep-holes that, as a general rule, the prisoners spend their long hours from their rising until their breakfast in pacing to and fro in their cells; after this they are wont to remain quiet for an hour or so, only to give way next to an excess of desolate despair which their pitiable situation may well inspire.

A movement on foot—trimming corn.

Odd Evidence.

A witness was once called on a trial to prove an alibi. He solemnly swore that the prisoner, on the night and at the hour in question (twenty-five minutes past eleven at night), was at home and in bed. Nothing could shake his testimony, for he said he had looked at the clock just as the prisoner went up stairs, and had set the clock right with the church clock himself the same day, and it was certainly twenty-five minutes past eleven at night! etc.

"Pray what do you make the time now?" blandly asked the counsel who cross-examined, pointing to a great white dial over the dock. No answer was given.

"Don't be confused—take your time. I ask you again—what is the time by that clock now?"

The question was repeated several times, and the witness was eventually bound to confess that he could not tell the time at all. Singularly enough the clock was standing at twenty-five minutes past eleven when he made this avowal.

We remember a country witness being called at the assizes to prove that at a particular hour on a certain night the moon was shining and at the full. There happened to be no almanac in court, but the evidence seemed to be satisfactory, for he had obtained his information from "a regular good almanac." When asked if he had bought this almanac recently, he replied:

"My father pasted it behind my kitchen door nine years ago—the day I was married."

It need hardly be said that information as to the moon's age during a day in the current year was of little value from an almanac nine years old. We remark that all evidence of a "circumstantial" character is received with great caution, and no doubt rightly so, on a trial. Take, as an illustration of this, the evidence offered against a prisoner of footmarks. Nothing is more commonly found than the impression of boots and shoes near to a murdered body, or to premises which have been broken into. A policeman is called as a witness on the trial, who deposes that he took the boots off the prisoner upon his arrest; that he compared them with the footmarks near the place of the alleged crime, and that they corresponded in every particular.

"You compared them, I suppose," usually asks the judge, "by placing the boots in the impressions, and found that they corresponded?"

"Yes, your honor."

The answer is fatal to that branch of the evidence, for the placing the boot in the impression found, very possibly caused the similarity relied upon; the prudent officer places the prisoner's boot beside the footprint, presses it into the earth, and then removing it, compares the impression made with the one discovered.

Bees Driven Out of their Business.

Among the latest victims of foreign competition are the bees of Russia. Under the baleful influence of the free importation of a spurious kind of wax called ceresina, manufactured in Austria, the native industry is dwindling at a rate which threatens its extinction. Of ceresina, which bears the same relation to genuine wax that oleomargarine does to dairy butter, no less than 1,000,000 pounds are annually imported, chiefly for use in the manufacture of tapers, which figure so prominently in all Russian churches. The price of wax has fallen under stress of competition with ceresina from thirty to seventeen roubles per pound. At this price bees are regarded as hardly worth their keep, and in one district the honey crop has fallen from 15,000 to 6,000 pounds per annum. By the new tariff an import duty of a rouble a pound has been imposed on ceresina; but, according to the *Moscow Gazette*, it will have to be raised to ten roubles to give the poor bees a chance.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

Queen Victoria's Gold Plate.

No living monarch, European or Asiatic, not even the Czar of all the Russias, can boast of such a service of plate as that owned by Queen Victoria to whose guests it is often exhibited on huge buffets at either end of the banqueting table in St. George's Hall—vases, plateaux, cups, and conchabla, all wrought in the precious metal, the net value of which is said to exceed two millions sterling. Conspicuous among the trophies are the mimic lyre-bird and tiger's head, taken from Tipoo Saib eighty odd years ago, and presented to her Majesty's grandfather, King George III. The lyre-bird's body and tail are composed of solid gold, richly studded with brilliants, rubies, emeralds, and pearls. The tiger's head once served Hyder Ali's masterful son as a footstool. It is a life-sized model, fashioned in solid silver, richly gilt, its tusks of rock-crystal, and its tongue of pure gold. Like the lyre-bird, it fell into the hands of the British at the storming of Seringapatam, where Tipoo, its valorous owner, met his death.

SCIENTIFIC SCRAPS.

It has been ascertained that the first experiment with air balloons was made at Avignon by Montgolfier the elder in November, 1782. He sent up in his room a parallelepiped of canvas containing forty cubic feet of air heated by burning paper inside. The room is still in existence.

Experiments by Koch and Wolfhugel to determine the disinfecting power of hot air have led to the conclusion that so high a temperature and so long an exposure are necessary to secure disinfection that most articles—such as clothing—are liable to serious damage by the operation.

According to the *Medical Record*, "the blue appearance which milk sometimes presents after standing a few days is due to an organism which is allied to bacteria, and can be transplanted into other samples of milk and various solutions. The blueing occurs only in the presence of oxygen, and is attended with evolution of carbonic acid."

It is held by Mons. P. de Tchihatcheff that the great deserts of Asia and Africa are not recently raised sea beds, but were uplifted at remote geological epochs, their sands being the product of rocks disintegrated by atmospheric causes, instead of showing a marine origin. The Asiatic deserts are much older than the Sahara.

In a recent paper Dr. Drysdale, of London, showed that it could no longer be a matter of doubt that humanized lymph should be entirely abandoned in favor of calf lymph for vaccination, as has been done in the United States. Several physicians of wide experience testified in 1880 that animal vaccination was a perfect preservative against small-pox, but the lymph taken from human subjects very often fails to protect.

A report of the British Association Committee on underground temperatures states that the result of fourteen years' observation shows that the increase of heat under the surface of the earth varies in its rate. A great many records were taken, and as near as possible the mean increase of temperature is set down as 1 degree Fahrenheit for every sixty-four feet.

Coral Fishing.

The best coral fisheries are along the coasts of Tunis, Algeria, and Morocco, from two to ten miles from shore, in from thirty to 150 fathoms. Good coral is also common at Naples, near Leghorn and Genoa, and on various parts of the sea, as Sardinia, Corsica, Catalonia, Provence, etc. It ranges in color from pure white through all the shades of pink, red, and crimson; the rose pink is most valued. For a long time Marseilles was the market, but now Italy is the great centre of the trade; the greater number of boats hailing from Torre del Greco, while outside persons are forced to pay a heavy tax. The vessels are schooners, lateen-rigged, from three to fourteen tons. Large nets are used, which, during the months between March and October, are dragged, dredge-like, over the rocks. A large crew will haul in a season from 600 to 900 pounds. To prevent the destruction of the industry, the reef is divided into ten parts, only one being worked a year, and by the time the tenth is reached the first is overgrown again with a new growth. In 1873 the Algerian fisheries alone, employing 3,150 men, realized half a million of dollars. The choice grades are always valuable, the finest tints bringing over \$5 per ounce, while the small pieces, used for necklaces, and called collette, are worth only \$1.50 per ounce. The large oval pieces are sent to China, where they are used as buttons of office by the mandarins.

The fashion of framing the front breadth of a skirt gives great scope to the employment of an inconsiderable quantity of handsome material, and many "short lengths" of rich brocade, velvet or satin may be most advantageously used in this manner. The bodice is often of the same material as the panel; but where this cannot be accomplished, a portion can be introduced as trimmings, such as revers, plastrons, or pelerine and cuffs.

Quite cute in Araminta: "You are such a strange girl!" said Charley; "really, I don't know what to make of you." "Well, then, I'll tell you, Charley," replied Araminta; "make a wife of me." Charley did so at the earliest opportunity.

The rag business in New York has assumed enormous proportions. It amounts to \$30,000,000 per annum. There are 2,000 ragpickers in the city. Last year there was over \$10,000,000 worth of rags imported.

An exchange wants to know: "What are our young men coming to?" Coming to see our girls, of course.

PEARLS OF THOUGHT.

Duty never frowns but upon those who shun her. On those who follow her she smiles.

Death is the antagonist of life, and the thought of the tomb is the skeleton of all feasts.

Life is a battle. From its earliest dawn to its latest breath we are struggling with something.

The proper way to check slander is to despise it; attempt to overtake and refute it, and it will outrun you.

Every day a little helpfulness. We live for the good of others, if our living be in any sense true living.

There will always be something that we shall wish to have finished, and be nevertheless unwilling to begin.

Flattery is often a traffic of mutual meanness where, although both parties intend deception, neither are deceived.

We cannot be too much on our guard against reactions, lest we rush from one fault into another contrary fault.

We must distinguish between felicity and prosperity, for prosperity leads us to ambition, and ambition to disappointment.

He who swims securely down the stream of self-confidence, is in danger of being drowned in the whirlpool of presumption.

Poppery is never cured; it is the bad stamina of the mind, which, like those of the body, are never rectified; once a coxcomb, and always a coxcomb.

What real good does an addition to a fortune already sufficient procure? Not any. Could the great man, by having his fortune increased, increase also his appetites, then precedence might be attended with real amusement.

Beautiful is old age, beautiful as the slow-dropping mellow autumn of a rich, glorious summer. In the old man, nature has fulfilled her work; she loads him with her blessings; she fills him with the fruits of a well-spent life; and surrounded by his children and his children's children, she rocks him softly away to a grave to which he is followed with blessings.

THE FAMILY DOCTOR.

Don't try to get cool too quickly after exercising, is advice given by Dr. Foote's *Health Monthly*.

To remove coldsores, rub the finger behind the ear close to the part which is joined to the head, and then rub the sore. The secretion removes the sore in a short time if applied every twenty minutes.

To make good sticking plaster, put two spoonfuls of balsam of Peru to six of isinglass, melted with very little water, and strained. Mix these well together in a small stone jar over the fire. Pin out some black Persian or sarsenet on a board, and dipping a brush into the mixture, pass it over the silk five or six times; then hold it to the fire, but not very near, and it will soon become black and shining.

When an artery is cut, the red blood spurts out at each pulsation. Press the thumb firmly over the artery near the wound, and on the side toward the heart. Press hard enough to stop the bleeding, and wait till a physician comes. The wounded person is often able to do this himself, if he has the requisite knowledge.

Hoarseness and tickling in the throat are best relieved by the gargle of the white of an egg, beaten to a froth in half a glass of warmed, sweetened water.

Wanted, a Husband.

In the papers recently appeared an account of a young woman in Dakota who advertised for a husband in the characteristic slang of the Far West. Another story of a similar character comes from this wild, untrammelled land. An officer of the Seventh Cavalry Regiment at Fort Lincoln, Dakota, received a letter from a woman who owned a ranch near Mandan, which in substance read as follows: "Dear Sir: My man, perhaps, you know, is dead. I buried him Thursday. It is coming on spring now, and I am a lone woman with a big ranche and the Indians about. I don't mind the Indians, the red devils, but I have too much work for any woman to do. If you have any sergeant about to be mustered out, or a private, if he is a good man, I would like to have you inform me about him. If he is a steady man, likes work and wants a good home, I will marry him, if we think we can get along together. It's a good chance for any man. Please answer."

About 1,500 miles of new railroad were put into operation in the Southern States last year. The gross earnings of the Southern roads reached \$63,000,000, and the net earnings increased from \$18,000,000 in 1880 to more than \$24,000,000.

Utilizing Sun Rays.

M. William Calver, a mining expert living in Washington, has just patented a new discovery which promises large results. It is very simple, consisting of an arrangement by which the rays of the sun are reflected from any number of mirrors upon a common focus. By accident Mr. Calver directed the light from two ordinary looking-glasses upon the same surface, and he immediately observed that the resultant heat was about doubled. Continuing his experiments in this direction, he succeeded in reducing wood to ashes; and metal to a liquid state, merely by concentrating upon them the reflected rays of the sun from twenty small mirrors with flat surfaces. Mr. Calver does not pretend to explain the principle, he has simply pursued his experiments until he has brought the process to a point where it can be patented.

A reporter of the *Washington Post* has seen the model in the Patent Office, and has witnessed some of the experiments. The model patented by Mr. Calver consists of a number of small looking-glasses arranged in rows upon a frame so fixed that they can be converged upon any one point. A working model, of which he has a number, was exhibited to a reporter in the yard in the rear of his residence. Forty innocent, guileless-looking, fifteen-cent, gilt-framed mirrors, each three and three-quarters by five and three-quarters inches, were arranged upon a frame propped up like an artist's easel, and bearing a striking resemblance thereto. Facing the east was the fragment of what was once a barn-door, also propped up, and partly covered with a worn and faded sheet of zinc that bore unmistakable evidence of having been burned through in several places. It was but the work of a minute to converge the forty mirrors upon a space three and three-quarter inches by five and three-quarter inches upon the barn door, and then the revelations began. As each mirror cast its quota of sunshine upon the common store, the parallelogram of light grew white and more dazzling, until at last it looked like a patch of electric light. But little patience was required to await results. In less than thirty seconds a thin curling puff of smoke gave evidence of the progress of the experiment. In a minute the board was bursting out in flames. The focus was then shifted upon the zinc. In a few minutes it began to turn color; then shrink, as if anxious to get away where it was cooler; and then, in less than three minutes, the entire surface, covered by the focus, was literally melting, drop by drop. To melt zinc requires a temperature of 700 degrees Fahrenheit.

The light projected upon the focus is wonderfully white and brilliant. Each mirror adds its quota, not only of heat, but light, until the effect produced is more dazzling than that of the electric light. Mr. Calver has produced more than four hundred degrees of heat with his mirrors, and it is shown by calculations that 1,000 mirrors, each a foot square, will melt iron and steel almost immediately. Even this heat can be condensed and made to produce remarkable results. The mirrors will project more heat in winter than in summer, and they may be utilized for producing power cheaply by doing away with coal and wood. Indeed, the mirrors, if they will do all that Mr. Calver expects, may be regarded as the employment of a new force to minister to the necessities of man.

How She Became Rich.

The Dowager Duchess of Calleira not long since bestowed two splendid estates on the Pope. The way this old lady became so rich is curious. The late Duke possessed a fortune of 300,000,000 francs, which would by the ordinary course of revolution go to his only son. The heir, however, in his father's lifetime, declared that he intended to renounce the world. Instead of retiring to a cloister, as he would have done in the middle ages, he went in his twentieth year into the territory of Nice and applied for a situation as a village schoolmaster. His father regarded the thing as a mere freak, and sent his son every year 300,000 francs. The young man, however, sent this sum every year to Paris, requesting that it should be expended on the poor. After three years the Minister of Instruction, finding out who the schoolmaster at Nice was, appointed him to a high official post, and his father dying about the same time he became Duke of Galleira and the owner of immense wealth. He declined the post, and allowed his mother to use the fortune without interference, content with his position and income as a teacher at Nice.

Ohio produces upward of 25,000,000 pounds of wool, or nearly one-sixth of the whole product of the United States. California follows next with 16,798,036 pounds, and Michigan third with 11,858,497 pounds.

Where He Kept His Revolver.

A traveling man writing to the *Commercial Traveler's Journal* gives an account of how two men sought to rob a drummer out West. They didn't rob him quite as much as they thought they would. His name was Fisher, and he was making a trip through the Western country, where if reckless men ever caught a drummer in a safe place and could get the drop on him, they were pretty certain of a good haul, as the victim always had money. Fisher had left the hotel and had wandered down a little creek to enjoy the fresh air, and had neared a little clump of trees.

Two men were sitting under the trees watching his heedless approach. As he got within a few paces of them they suddenly jumped up and one of them leveled a long navy revolver and told the unfortunate commercial traveler to hold up his hands. Fisher was probably the most astonished man in the State at that moment. His knees smote together like he seemed to grow shorter—sink into himself, as it were—the perfect picture of fright. His hands, however, went about that shiny plug hat instantly. He was not too badly scared to listen to persuasion, but there they trembled and waved up and down like a sycamore leaf in a gale of wind. It was a comical sight to see them, limp and whiten, "flapping" around through a space of a half a foot or more. The brigand thought so too, and could not help raising his eye from his pistol to look at them. Fisher, through his half-closed eyelids, saw the movement of the robber's eyes and then that trembling hand seemed to flash down behind the tall black hat back again, with a glistering something in it. There were two reports as the hand came down before, instead of behind the plug. The highwayman threw up his hands and sank back with a bullet hole between his eyes, while the tall shining plug rolled off the back of Fisher's head with a clean cut across the crown, where the bullet from the long navy had ploughed its way.

The other robber obeyed a gruff order to hold up his hands with an alacrity born of excellent judgment, for Fisher had lost that wild look, and had drawn a bead on that chap that meant business. The fear and trembling was but a clever ruse, and when the highwayman took his eye from Fisher's to watch that trembling, white hand, his surviving partner learned why the commercial traveler wore coats made of stiff goods, cut so as to make the collar stand out free from the back of the neck.

A Tough Witness.

During a recent trial, it was thought important by counsel to determine the length of time that a certain quarter of beef remained in an express-wagon in front of plaintiff's store before it was taken by the defendant. The witness under examination was a German, whose knowledge of English was limited; but he testified in a very plain, straightforward way to having weighed the meat, and to having afterward carried it out and put it into the wagon. Then the following ensued:

Q—"State to the jury how long it was after you took the meat from the store and put it in the wagon before it was taken away?"

A—"Now I shoost cand dell dat. I thinks 'bout dwelve feet. I say no nearer as dat."

Q—"You don't understand me. How long was it from the time the meat left the store and was put into the wagon before it was taken away by the defendant?"

A—"Now I know not what you ax dat for. Der wagon he was back up mit dat sidewalk, and dat's shoost as long as it was. You dell me how long der sidewalk was. Den feet? Dwelve feet? Den I dell you how long it was."

Q—"I don't want to find out how wide the sidewalk was, but I want to know," speaking very slowly, "how long—this—meat—was—in—the—wagon—before—it—was—taken—away?"

A—"O, dat! Vell, now, I not sold my meat so. I all time wegh him; never measure meat, not yet. But I dinks about dree feet. I know not, shentlemens, how is dis. I dell you all I can, shoost so good as I know."

Q—"Look here, I want to know how long it was before the meat was taken away after it was put in the wagon?"

A—"Now you dry and get me in some scrapes. Dat meat was shoost so long in der wagon as he was in der shop. Dat's vot I told you. Dat meat vas dead meat. He don't got no lonver in den dousen year, not moock."

Q—"That will do."

Raleigh has 138 factories, employing 4,456 hands, and is about to have a new cotton factory with 20,000 spindles. Its business for the year ending August 31 amounted to \$75,000,000, against \$71,000,000 the preceding year.

Time is a good deal like a mule. It is better to be ahead of time than behind time.