

## CLIPPINGS FOR THE CURIOUS.

The butcher bird is said to impale its victims on thorns and devour them at leisure.

In Rome bankrupts were condemned to wear in public black bonnets of a sugar-loaf form.

The shortest verse in the Bible is the thirty-fifth verse of the eleventh chapter of St. John.

The microscope shows the hair to be like a coarse, round rasp, but with the teeth extremely irregular and ragged.

At a recent execution in Japan thirteen strokes of a sword were found necessary to decapitation. The edge of the instrument had been blunted purposely that the agony of the doomed might be as great as possible.

In the eighth century it was a common thing for the peasants and needy persons living in the city to sell their children. In Great Britain the evil of this practice became so great that a special mission to abolish it was sent from Rome.

Among the Chinese no relics are more valuable than the boots that have been worn by a magistrate. If he resigns and leaves the city a crowd accompanies him from his residence to the gates, where his boots are drawn off with great ceremony, to be preserved in the hall of justice.

There is in Turin a tiny boat formed of a single pearl, which form it assumes in swell and concavity. Its sail is of beaten gold, studded with diamonds, and the binnacle light at its prow is a perfect ruby. An emerald serves as its rudder, and its stand is a slab of ivory. It weighs less than half an ounce; its price is \$5,000.

There is a watch in a Swiss museum only three-sixteenths of an inch in diameter inserted in the top of a pencil-case. Its little dial not only indicates hours, minutes and seconds, but also days of the month. It is a relic of the times when watches were inserted in snuff boxes, shirt studs and finger rings. Some were fantastic—oval, octangular, cruciform, or in the shape of pearls, tulips, etc.

## Chinese Temples and Pagodas.

There are more than a hundred temples of heathen worship in Canton. Among them we will mention four: 1. The "Temple of the Five Hundred Gods," founded in A. D. 529, and rebuilt in 1755. In this temple are 500 life-sized images, seated in long rows, and representing that number of noted disciples of Buddha, now deified. Each image is finely carved and richly gilded with gold. Some of these gods are in rich garments and some in rags. Some are wearing shoes, others are shoeless. Some are laughing and some are weeping. 2. "Temple of the Five Genii." According to Chinese tradition, away back 300 years before Christ, one day five genii came riding through the air on five rams. They stopped on the spot where Canton now stands, and said to some people who stood there: "May famine never visit your markets." After delivering this benediction, the five genii departed, but the five rams were turned to stone. This temple contains the images of the five genii, and preserves the five stone rams. The old name for Canton is "City of Rams." 3. "Temple of Horrors," so named from the fact that there are ten rooms in which the torments of the Buddhist hell are represented by life-sized, clumsy, horrid-looking figures. In one room men and women are being transformed into animals, according to the Buddhist doctrine of transmigration. In another room the devils are grinding a man in a mill, while the blood is flowing out between the stones. And so on, from room to room, some are being beheaded, others thrown into caldrons of boiling oil, with devils to stir them round in the burning bath. Here a man is being beaten terribly with bamboos, and there a man is being sawn assunder lengthwise. In one room a man is pounded in a mortar, in another one is sitting under a great red-hot bell. 4. "Temple of Honam," grandest and most famous of all, with its magnificent gateways, its grand shaded avenues, its colossal Buddhas, its vast monastery with fifty monks, its beautiful gardens with dwarf trees and rare flowers, and finally its cremation furnace, where the dead monks are reduced to ashes. It is a doctrine of the Buddhist faith that every one should do what he can to prevent the taking of any life, human or animal. Hence the monks have places on these grounds where they have for years preserved sacred pigs, hens, ducks, fish, and goats, until they die a natural death.

There are several pagodas in Canton, of which two are quite noted. The "Five-story Pagoda" on the city wall gives a fine view of the city and country. As its name indicates it is five stories high. These pagodas are always an odd number of stories in height, rarely less than five and seldom more

than eleven. The "Flowery Pagoda," in the Tartar sections of the city, is nine stories high, giving it a great elevation. It has windows and balconies in each story, and a winding stairway inside leads to the top. The pagoda is a thing of beauty," hence its name. It was erected in the sixth century of the Christian era, and was thoroughly repaired about 500 years ago. The Chinese have a tradition that if ever this pagoda falls, evil will befall the city; hence they expend large sums of money in keeping it in repair. Pagodas are not erected from religious considerations only, but they are built to give good luck. Where a pagoda stands, the Chinese say business will prosper and crops be more abundant.

## PEARLS OF THOUGHT.

An obstinate man does not hold opinions; they hold him.

Time is immeasurably long to him who knows how to value and use it.

Labor is the divine law of our existence; repose is desertion and suicide.

Under all earth runs water, if we dig deep enough; under all life runs grief.

The causes which start men upon their careers are often seemingly the most slight and casual.

There is fellowship among the virtues by which one great, generous passion stimulates another.

Good breeding consist in having no particular mark of any profession, but a general elegance of manners.

Be courageous and noble-minded; our own heart, and no other men's opinions of us, forms our true honor.

He who can prevent a moment's anger may suppress many day's sorrow.

Speak of men's virtues as if they were your own, and of their vices as if you were liable to their punishment.

Recreation is a second creation, when weariness hath almost annihilated one's spirits. It is the breathing of the soul, which otherwise would be stifled with continual business.

The true gentleman is courteous and affable to his neighbors. As the sword of the best tempered metal is most flexible, so the truly generous are most pliant and courteous in their behavior to their inferiors.

## The Turtle Industry.

Few people have any adequate idea of the quantity of turtles which are consumed in this country. New York furnishes the chief market and they come into that port every year from 150,000 to 180,000 pounds. Philadelphia comes next after New York, and Baltimore stands third on the list, these two cities, taking together probably 500,000 pounds, while Boston has never developed any great fondness for this article of food, and is satisfied with about 2,000 pounds a year. Turtles are most plentiful during the summer, and not seldom are brought to New York in larger quantities than the market demands, in which case they are placed in floating cars in the slip behind Fulton market and fed until they are wanted. While thus confined they are given cabbages, lettuce, celery-tops and watermelon-rinds, this latter article of diet being the turtle's special weakness. They can only be kept in the river, however, during the summer months and September, as a temperature below forty degrees kills them. Turtles vary in size from a few pounds to over a quarter of a ton, the largest ever brought to the New York market having weighed 500 pounds. The sizes most in demand, however, are from fifty to seventy-five pounds, and the customers are almost invariably hotel and restaurant keepers. In Philadelphia there is more demand for small turtles, weighing from six to twelve pounds, for family use. The price varies from twenty cents in winter to as low as ten cents in summer.

The turtles sold in New York come for the most part from Key West. Another source of supply is the Bahama Islands, the turtles from which region are rather small but toothsome, seldom weighing above 100 pounds, and averaging about twenty-five. The largest turtles are found in the Spanish Main, but their flesh is apt to be coarse, and they are, therefore, not usually considered so desirable as those from the Bahamas or Key West.

A party of Philadelphians recently made a practical test of rat flesh as an article of diet. The rodents had been caught and caged while young, and fed carefully upon grain and green food. At the meal in question they had been carefully prepared, and were served with an appetizing sauce in company with other viands. The flesh, after cooking, was found to be quite light in color, much more so than either the rabbit or the squirrel, and possessing a delicacy of flavor entirely unknown to either of the last mentioned animals. The experiment proved entirely successful, and a diet of rats, prepared under proper conditions, was voted to be both practicable and economical.

## Indian Jugglery.

A man is now in Calcutta, hailing from Delhi, of the name of Burah Khan, who has attained a simply wonderful excellence in the magical art. We ourselves had the pleasure of witnessing some astonishing feats achieved by this man a short time ago at the hospitable residence of the Dutt family, of Wellington square. We shall mention only one out of several feats performed by Burah Khan and his company, who consist of three females. One of these, a young woman, was tied most securely. Her hands, feet and body were so fastened that she could only stir, and no more. She was, in fact, deprived entirely of the power to turn her limbs to any use. She was then placed under a conical-shaped cover. People sat close round the skirts of the cloth which had been thrown over the cover. No means of escape was left to the young woman. But yet, after the lapse of five or ten minutes, the cover was removed and the woman was found to have disappeared altogether. When her name, however, was called out by Burah Khan, her voice was heard from the veranda above. This performance took place in the compound of the family residence of our friends, the Dutt, and the veranda is in the lofty second-story, forming a part of the female apartments. She was there found responding to the call of Burah Khan, to the surprise of everybody present. The woman did not and could not show the topography of the house, but how she extricated herself and made her way high above to the veranda from within the cover, surprises us to such a degree that we cannot account for the feat on any natural grounds. Even if she was furnished with wings, it is inexplicable how she got out of the cover, unseen and unperceived, except on the supposition that some supernatural agency had been employed. But she herself asserted that she worked the feat by *mana*. We are sure that if Burah Khan gives a few performances at the town hall in Calcutta, he will draw bumper houses, and astonish the whole Calcutta public, especially the European community. But these people do not, unfortunately, know how to make money, still less how to make themselves acceptable to the European community of the city. Burah Khan holds very valuable certificates from the Prince of Wales, Earl de Grey, the editor of the *Pioneer*, and many European noblemen and gentlemen who have witnessed his feats in different parts of India.—*Indian Mirror*.

## London Swindlers.

An ingenious fraud has lately been practiced in London. A tall, well-dressed man, apparently a city merchant on his way home from business, is seen talking on the street to a man in workingman's dress, who carries a basket and some tools. The "merchant" accosts some well-dressed passenger, and tells him the "mechanic's" tale of want and employment and family distress. He adds that he has satisfied himself of the truth of the story, and is about to give a trifle; the gentlemen join in giving a small sum to relieve deserving necessity? The apparent respectability of the voucher often succeeds where a common begging petition would fail, and the person accosted generally gives something. A gentleman who had given a small sum saw both swindlers issue from a public-house some time after. Of course on seeing him they decamped.

A clever dodge has lately come to light, which shows how thoroughly the swindler understood those on whom he was to operate, and forms a curious commentary on the relations between servants and tradesmen. A man having the appearance of a gentleman's servant called on several tradesmen in a fashionable part of London, asking them to come to a certain house for orders for different classes of goods, at the same time throwing out a suggestion that a small gratuity for himself would be acceptable, and might not be lost by the tradesman in a distribution of further orders. In a number of instances small sums were given; but when the shop-men attended at the place named they found their services were not required, and that the fees had flowed into the pocket of some other rascal.

In Humboldt county, Cal., the whole area of the redwood forest has been mapped and plotted. There are something over 500,000 acres of that timber in that county alone. Disinterested experts estimate 100,000 feet of lumber per acre as an average, if not a small yield. At \$18 per 1,000 feet, the redwood of Humboldt county alone would just about pay the present national debt.

One vessel was lost at sea every four hours during 1881, according to the *English Nautical Gazette*. In 1879-80 there were 400 steamboat collisions in the North Atlantic Ocean.

## COSTLY CANES.

Expensive Handles for Canes and Umbrellas—Some Queer Canes.

A paragraph has been going the rounds of the press to the effect that a Georgia lawyer has a cane, the head of which is carved to represent the head of a duck, holding a \$650 sapphire in its bill, and with two diamonds worth \$7,100 each for its eyes. "It may be true," the affable young man having charge of the cane department in a large jewelry house said; "but the figures are pretty steep. It is not an infrequent thing for men to come in here and order canes that cost \$500 or \$600, gold heads with jewel settings, you understand; but a \$14,750 cane is rather beyond our experience. For ordinary sale the canes we keep in stock do not run over \$120. We always have on hand a cord or so of canes that run from \$60 to \$120. "Gold-headed presentation canes?" Yes, we sell a good many of them, but hardly ever to the out-of-town buyers.

Our more expensive canes are those in which artistic fancy enhances the value of the gold. Here is one, a modified shepherd's crook of hammered and chased Roman gold, the greatest peculiarity of which is its price—\$115. This hammered crutch head of blended red and yellow gold is worth \$120. Here are a lot of new designs, Indian and Persian fancies, unique, and some of them pretty, that run from \$60 to \$115. They are made of gold, the beauty of which is that it was put through certain chemical treatments that brought it out looking like almost anything but gold. This one, for instance, that looks like steel, is gold, and so is that one resembling a red enamel. Some of these, light ones, were made up as cheap as \$50, but we have none so low-priced on hand now. These very dainty little square crook gold-headed canes, or switches rather, we sell as cheap as \$38 to \$30.

From these let us pass to the silver heads. Of them we have a great variety, from \$9 for a plain hammered silver ball up to \$25 for a large one of the newest fashion, which is a close imitation of an old fashioned buck horn handle, or \$75 for one like this, which is, as you can see, a combination of silver, gold and copper that looks like a sort of marble metal. There is a wide diversity of styles in silver heads, some of them, as you will notice, the plainest possible—a "door knob" or simple ball—and others full of fancy and exquisite workmanship. There is a novel and pretty thing, a perfectly round ball of rock crystal held in place by silver clasps, that we sell for \$25. A man came in here the other day offering for sale a couple of canes that he had made, I believe. They were composed of small, thin pieces of agate, cornelian, and other stones, in alternate layers, set on a steel rod and highly polished. I should think there were 200 pieces in each cane, and he only wanted \$25 each for the completed ones. I don't see how they could be gotten up for the money, but we did not invest in them.

The materials we generally employ for the sticks are malacca; bamboo and ebony. There are some very handsome and costly canes made in Mexico from some animal substances, clarified as the Mexican saddle seats sometimes are, and inlaid with silver. General Jack Casement used to have one that he refused \$150 for. Then fine canes are occasionally turned out of what is represented to us as hippopotamus hide. In fact, gentlemen bring all sorts of sticks to have fancy heads put on them. Whatever the stick may be, its value is nothing compared with the head we put on it in most cases of that sort. Diamonds, sapphires and other precious stones are very often set in them to order. Of course we keep no such jeweled heads in stock.

We don't have so much call for fancy carved ivory and solid imitation silver heads, monkeys' and dogs' heads, and birds and such things as we used to do. People seem to go in now for rare and fine sticks, lasting and reliable ones, and the cane dealer who wants to keep up with the times must have an almost infinite variety of sticks from all parts of the globe. I've seen one, a plain rough stick, without a ferrule, and only a bent crook at the top, that was said to have been worth \$17,000 when it came into the country. It was hollow, and had diamonds packed in it. That was several years ago. I guess the custom-house chaps have dropped on that dodge. Anyway, I never hear of its being played now. I have seen a German cane with a flute in it, and another that would hold a good drink of schnapps, and one that was a pipe when you took off the ferrule and a cap on the head; but all those things were mere eccentricities. We are never called on to make such things.

There have been 24,000 divorces decreed in Maine during five years, making a ratio of one separation in ten marriages.

## The Feast of Lanterns.

The annual festival called the feast of lanterns is one of the most peculiar of the Buddhist ceremonials among the Japanese, belonging more particularly among the working than among the official classes. Buddhism in Japan is remarkable for the extraordinary veneration of the memory of the dead which it inculcates. Graves are habitually kept clean and decked with flowers, and nearly every grave in that faith has a cup of rice and a jar of tea water standing by for the use of the departed spirit on its supposed frequent visits to this world. These graves, among groves of ornamental trees and flowering plants, beautify the hillsides about Nagasaki. Besides this ordinary care, Buddhism also inculcates the celebration by the relatives of deceased persons of distinct commemorative services upon the first, third and seventh anniversaries. In the case of distinct personages or of the heads of families these are kept up to the fiftieth or even one hundred and fiftieth anniversaries, but as so the vast majority of ordinary deaths all obligations of proprietary ceremonies are discharged after the seventh anniversary by one common and general feast of lanterns. This is held as a three days' holiday by all classes about the first day of September annually, and the people of the outlying country flock into the city to attend it and enjoy its accompanying visiting, dressed in their best attire.

On the first of the three days the ghosts particularly honored are believed to leave the spirit-land on a return visit. Accordingly all the house doors are set wide open, and the head of each family in his best clothes sits in his reception-room, bowing at intervals and uttering words of welcome to his invisible guests as they come in, conscientious persons who have a large ghostly acquaintance continuing this ceremony well into the night. By the next day all the spirits are supposed to have arrived, and a small cabinet apartment found in every Buddhist dwelling (called the household temple and set apart for the use of the dead) is decorated with flowers and set out with rice, fruits, wines, and soon. Sitting in the adjoining room, the living members hold their own accompanying feast, which is kept up through the second day and most of the third. In the night of the third day the ghosts have to go back, and at nightfall all the population that can move betake themselves to the graves, which they deck with bright paper banners and many-colored lanterns, lighting up the latter as the day fades, so that the departing visitors may have their last hours as pleasant as possible. As midnight approaches the males form into processions, every member carrying aloft a lighted lantern on a bamboo pole about ten feet long, and thus they carry down the hillsides to the sea the boats in which the spirits are to depart. These boats, varying from two to ten and even thirty feet in length, are decorated with flags and streamers, provided with a stock of provisions and with money to pay ferriage over the Styx, not omitting a lantern or two to show the way, are then launched and thrust forth together, carrying the spirits to the far West, where good Buddhists are believed to pass their time in happy oblivion. This act, blended with outcries, beating of gongs, chanting by priests, and nearly naked figures rushing to and fro in their excitement, concludes the weird but touching ceremonials.

## Hand-Shaking.

Hand-shaking is British. The longer in society, in his glass of fashion, enumerates its various styles as indicative of character. These are aggressive, supercilious, lymphatic, imperative, suspicious, sympathetic, emotional, but none of these are required by etiquette. Still, to shake, or, rather, to take or give a hand in mere conventional greeting is a cultivated art of society. A gentleman can not take a lady's hand unless she offers it, and an American authority on etiquette reminds him that he must not "pinch or retain it." A young lady must not offer hers first, or shake that given her, unless she is the gentleman's friend. A lady should always rise to give her hand, and in her own house she should always offer it in greeting strangers and friends alike. In the ball-room, however, hand-shaking is not the thing. It is also the privilege of the superior to be the first to proffer the hand. An American is chary of his hand; in these progressive times a nod is sufficient, except in conservative Virginia and the South generally, where family traditions of old courtly and kind observances still obtain.—*All the Year Round*.

Among the articles which were taken from the mails during the past year were cans of dynamite and loaded pistols, as well as bowie knives and other sharp instruments.

## A PATERNAL GOVERNMENT.

Life in Saxony—Yellow Tickets for Everything.

You cannot live in Saxony without handling an assortment of yellow tickets every day. You get a ticket for everything. When you pay your fare on the street car the conductor gives you a yellow ticket. Before reaching the end of your trip, another official enters the car and tears a corner off the ticket. If you send a package by express you receive a yellow ticket. If you send money by mail you get two yellow tickets, one for the consignee and one for yourself, and when the consignee receives the money he also receives a yellow coupon, and signs a yellow ticket. When you buy a bill of goods in a store you are handed a yellow ticket, and when they are delivered at your house the bundle boy gives you another yellow ticket and takes the one you first received. I don't know whether the minister who officiates at a wedding gives the bride and groom yellow tickets or not, but I believe they must have one when their first baby is born. If you live at 3756 B street, and you move to 3755 A street, you must go to the city hall and get a yellow ticket. If a servant girl leaves Mrs. X, and goes to work for Mrs. XX, she must also go to the city hall and get a yellow ticket. It is probable that the Saxon goes into the next world with a yellow ticket in his hand, but that is another point upon which I have no definite information.

All this seems very strange and very funny to an American until he has inquired into it thoroughly, and then it strikes him that the plan is an excellent part of an excellent system. In the street car, for instance, there can be no such thing as "knocking down." The brace bell-punch will not work, every passenger must have a receipt for his fare, and he must show it to the official who tears the corner off. Everybody knows the value of receipts for packages sent and received, whether it be express, by post, or by bundle-boy.

The books of the city hall will tell you where every man in Chemnitz resides, the number of the street as well as the number of the flat; they will tell you whether he is married or single; whether he lives with his parents or rooms alone; how many children he has; how old he is; how old his wife is, and how old his children are; what his trade is; whether he keeps a servant girl; what he pays her; how much his income is; where he was born, etc., etc. They will tell you in a word, anything that is possible to find out concerning himself and his business. He cannot sail under false colors. If he pretends to have an income of 10,000 marks per annum he must pay an income tax on that amount or prove that he has been talking too big. If a merchant is thinking of hiring a man, he can, within forty-eight hours, discover whether his prospective employe has ever been mixed up in a dishonorable scrape, and determine whether or not the account given by the man regarding his own history is true.

There is another feature of this system which is remarkable. If you know the number of the house where a certain man lives, whose history you are anxious to ascertain, but you cannot possibly find out his name in any other way, you can go to the city hall and have not only his name, but his entire record, placed before you in a short time. The number of the house tells the story. But you cannot get information about Tom Dick or Harry simply to satisfy an idle curiosity or for purposes of blackmail. You must show cause for seeking the history of Tom, Dick or Harry; your own name is entered as having called at the city hall at such a time for such and such a purpose; and if you use the information which you have received unlawfully you will be punished severely.

## Ancient Greek Manuscripts.

Many ancient manuscripts of untold value are believed to be stored away in the monasteries of Greece. A loss that will never be understood to its full extent has just been sustained in the destruction of the monastery of Vato-pedi, which took fire through carelessness of one of the monks, and, in the absence of any appliance for extinguishing the flames, was speedily burned to the ground. Several thousand Byzantine manuscripts were consumed in this fire. To prevent such irreparable losses in the future, the Greek government has sent two Athenian professors, Findiklis and Kalogeras, who are experts in deciphering old manuscripts, to examine the libraries and archives of the monasteries, and to send such manuscripts as they find of value to the national library in Athens. These gentlemen report that they have already discovered a great store of parchment treasures in the monastery of Dusiko, among them some of ancient Greek authorship. It is said that they have found an unquestionable tragedy by Aeschylus and one by Sophocles.