CURRENT TOPICS.

BUYERS of costly furs who go abroad to make their purchases will be interested to hear the substance of a communication just made to the *Vossische Zeitung* by its Paris correspondent: "The fur of the French rabbit is in great demand at this time of the year. It figures, moreover, under all sorts of names. The easiest form in which to present it is that of "Siberian fur;" with the long hairs taken out it takes the name of "castor" closely shorn by machine it sells as "otter." Two-thirds of all the furs sold, in fact, have acquired their beauty neither in the plains of Siberia nor the waters of the Arctic Ocean, but on the back of the rabbit that disports itself in the fair fields of sunny France." Foreigners who wonder why their expensive furs fade so rapidly ought to need no further satisfaction of their curiosity.

THE official inquiry into the causes of the terrible railway accident near White River Junction, on the Central Vermont Road, last Saturday morning, does not, thus far, clear up the mystery. The engineer of the fated train says that just as he came upon the bridge the bell-cord was pulled and at the signal he slacked the train. His speed was not more than eight miles an hour when the signal sounded. Looking back he saw the rear car swing off the bridge. In its fall it seemed to pull three cars with it, one after the other. Then the coupling broke and the forward part of the train was saved. This would indicate that the truck of the rear car broke and that somebody in the car realized this and gave the signal to the engineer. As nearly everybody in this car perished, the probabilities are that we shall never know more about the cause of the disaster than is known now.

EVER since a few London west end ladies adopted the Bloomer costume in 1851 there have been spasmodic spurts in favor of dress reform. Of late years an annual conference has been held at which corsets, skirts, high-heeled shoes and garters have been denounced as the parents of all the evils, physical and moral, which afflict a stiff-necked generation. The annual conference of the Rational Dress Reform Association in London has just been brought to a close. The meetings were not open to the sterner sex. The platform was adorned by ladies dressed in various styles of "rationality." Viscountess Harberton, who appeared in a divided garment, delivered an address, and so did Mrs. Pfeiffer, who wore a Greek costume with modifications, but nothing positively novel seems to have been said or worn and no fresh suggestions offered. There is not in London the least sign of a disposition among women of society to adopt anything but the latest fashions of fashionable dressmakers.

WHILE Mr. Stanley has been making the last preparations at London and Cairo for his journey into Africa, some of his assistants, sent in advance to Zanzibar, have been hiring porters and buying and packing the trade goods needed for the march. Stanley expects to arrive at Zanzibar on February 21st, and if the thousand porters he requires have been secured by that time he will doubtless depart at once on his difficult mission. He greatly prefers the Congo route, believing it to offer the easiest and safest road to Emin Bey's camp at Wadelai. It would, to be sure, take him over a month to round the Cape and reach the Congo, but he estimates that with the aid of the Congo State steamers, which King Leopold has placed at his disposal, he could reach Emin Bey in forty-five or fifty days from the mouth of the river. If, however, there is no steamer at Zanzibar that Stanley can engage at once to take his party to the Congo, he will risk the manifold perils of the overland route. It is a noteworthy fact that although the natives serve the whites as porters along a large part of the African coast, the Zanzibaris are by far the most trustworthy; and Stanley thought it necessary to go to the east coast for them, though he desired to begin his mission on the west.

Fun from the Fatherland.

"Ach, Adele, I love you like—like—like—" "Well, think it over, Herr Fritz; perhaps you can tell me to-morrow!"—*Fleigende Blatter.*

"Do you know Frau Z—, madame?" "Oh, yes! she is my best friend; we have no secrets from each other." "Ah, then, perhaps you can tell me how old she is?" "Oh, sir, we are not quite as intimate as all that!"—*De Amsterdammer.*

A talented pianist, Madame De V——, sitting at dinner by the side of Colonel Ramollot, asked him in an amiable tone: "Colonel, are you fond of music?" "Madame," replied the warrior, rolling his eyes savagely, "I am not afraid of it."—*Fleigende Blatter.*

Probably an Oakville Man.

The body of an unknown seaman, taken from the schooner Lucerne, which foundered off the entrance to Ashland Bay, Lake Superior, in November last, was probably that of Patrick H. Madigan, of Oakville. Mrs. Madigan has been making inquiries regarding the whereabouts of her husband, and from information she possesses there is left little doubt that he was aboard the ill-fated craft.

An increased demand for cut diamonds, which has been noticed for some time at Amsterdam, is reported also from Antwerp, which is the principal rival of Amsterdam in the repairing of diamonds for the market. The workmen engaged in the trade have decided to ask for a considerable increase of wages, and they threaten a general strike if this increase be not granted.

He (enraged and engaged)—Why, Laura, how is this? I thought you were to save those dances until I came, and here your programme is full? Laura—Oh, that is all right. I filled it out with dummy names. It saves embarrassment, you know, when disagreeable persons ask you to dance with them.

The late Prof. Archibald Alexander Hodge, of Princeton Theological Seminary, was a man of broad sympathies and considerable humor. One day an impecunious young graduate called with a letter of introduction to ask help in obtaining a pastorate. *Harper's Weekly* says the document stated that he had a wife and baby and was in a starving condition. "You have a wife?" asked the Professor. "Yes, sir." "And a baby?" "Yes, sir." "Is it plump and tender?" "Oh, yes, sir." "Well, why not eat the baby?"

A FIGHT WITH PECCARIES.

Animals That Will Keep Up a Siege All Night.

"Three Thousand Miles Through Brazil!" contains this animated description of a fight with peccaries: I had barely closed my eyes when I felt my hammock violently shaken, and perceived an odor of old pigstyes. It became evident that we were surrounded by some animals, for in many directions was heard the sound of bodies moving through the bush, twigs snapping, grass rustling, etc. It was a moment of suspense, but not for long, for suddenly from all around us came a blood-curdling sound of the simultaneous snapping of teeth from vast numbers of the enemy, followed by the appearance of a crowd of charging black animals rushing with wonderful speed toward a common centre — our fort. Each of us lighted a coil of wax tapers that were prepared ready for the occasion. And what a scene ensued. The fire was rapidly scattered and partly extinguished. Under and around us was a seething mass of black peccaries, barely distinguishable in the dim light, but all pushing and struggling to the front. * * The men in the hammocks, after discharging their guns, reached down and slashed with their knives at the swarming animals below them. The attack was more like the wild, reckless bravery of the Arabs of the Soudan, for as pig after pig fell squealing and disabled, scores more struggled for his place. * * They threw themselves against the fort, regardless of being struck down one after the other, and always impelled forward by those in the rear; others rushed for our hammocks, or viciously gashed the trees that gave us support. The extremely disagreeable and nauseous odors of the animals, their snapping of teeth like musketry file firing, the reports of the firearms, the shouts of the men, the howling and barking of the dogs and the dim light created an indescribably strange and exciting scene. Every bullet of my revolver took effect. I shouted to the men to reserve their powder and fire volleys, but it was like talking in a gale of wind at sea. The animals appeared to be in immense numbers, grunting, squealing and gnashing their teeth; but noticeable above everything was the abominable exhalations from their bodies, an odor like a combination of rank butter and garlic. * * Then came a diabolical crash of teeth from a complete circle around us, followed immediately by another wild charge, and the battle was again renewed. * * Six or seven other attacks followed, but each one became weaker, and the intervals of longer duration. The eventful night seemed interminable, and finally it was not until near daybreak that we heard the last grunt. In the morning 27 dead peccaries were found in about the camp, and several wounded, to whom it was necessary to give the *coup de grace*. * * * During the battle I could not help noticing the apparent method of their movements, as though they were led by chiefs. Their mode of attack is to surround in silence by a complete circle the object to be stormed; when, at a given signal, a simultaneous snapping of teeth takes place, followed by a converging rush to the centre, whereby the largest and strongest reach the front first and the smallest bring up the rear. Their retreat is carried out on an equally methodical system.

The Governor Dances on Skates.

The Vice-Regal party attended the fancy dress ball given at the Victoria Skating Rink, Montreal, on Thursday night. The Governor-General wore a short coat of dark brown velvet, trimmed with sable, black hose and breeches and a gold chain. It was in fact a Hamlet dress. The Marchioness was dressed as a Swiss peasant. The Governor-General surprised the Canadians with his dancing, which was graceful, his steps being gracefully taken and with the confidence of an expert skater. It is by no means an easy matter to dance on skates, and the effect is surprisingly graceful and impressive.

Bride and Corpse in a Week.

A few days ago, Miss Edna, eldest daughter of Mr. L. Peaslie, 2nd line, Warwick, and niece of James Busbie, of this city, was married to Abraham Warren, of Vigner, near Sarnia. They had been married but a week, when the bride was taken suddenly ill with inflammation, and in four days she died. The body was interred in Lake View Cemetery, Sarnia, yesterday. Deceased was 18 years of age and is regretted by a large circle of friends.—*St. Thomas Times.*

—Supt. Shields, of the Western Division of the Canadian Pacific, has left for St. Paul, Minn., to accept a similar position on the St. Paul & Manitoba Road. Before leaving Medicine Hat he was presented with a purse containing $1,500 by the employees.

EGYPTIAN SERENADE.

Sing again the song you sung
When we were together young—
When there were but you and I
Underneath the summer sky.

Sing the song, and o'er and o'er,
Though I know that nevermore
Will it seem the song you sung
When we were together young.

—Rev. George Muller, of Bristol, England, who it was reported had died in Australia, has arrived at Yokohama, and during the past two weeks has held meetings there, and in other countries which he has visited. He is now 82 years of age, but full of zeal.

—The latest styles of dressing the hair in Paris are much less exaggerated than at one time they threatened to become. High structures of puffs and curls and aigrettes have been replaced by much simpler and less elevated modes of arrangement, though in the same style. The "Diana" coiffure, formed by bringing the back hair forward and turning it over to form a single roll at the top of the head, is new and very graceful.

—The Chicago & Alton Railway seem to have reached the perfection of expensive and artistic advertising. They have issued three beautiful volumes, each a parody of one of Gilbert & Sullivan's popular operas —"Princess Ida," "Iolanthe" and "Patience." These parodies are written by D. Dalziel, and profusely illustrated in colors after the quaint style of Kate Greenaway. They are admirable specimens of color work and western railway enterprise.

BRIGHAM YOUNG'S GUIDE.

How He Led the Mormon Chief Into the Valley of the Great Salt Lake.

John Y. Nelson, the guide who piloted Brigham Young to the present site of Mormondom, told the story of the trip as follows to a reporter for the New York *World*: "It was late in the fall of 1846, I think. I was at Cottonwood Springs, Neb., living with an old Mexican half-breed, who knew every inch of the Rockies like a book. We were doing nothing in particular and ready for a job, when Brigham Young came along and asked my Mexican friend and myself to be his guides across the Rockies, promising us good pay. He had four companions, Mormon elders, I think, but I cannot remember their names. Seven in all, we started with two emigrant waggons, one of them loaded with flour, bacon, coffee and biscuit enough for two years' supply. I don't believe Brigham had an idea when he started just where he was going nor when he would get back. It was a sort of prospecting trip. He and the elders called each other 'brother,' and the old man was a good-natured, jolly sort of fellow. He talked a good deal of religious lingo, but he was not the Sunday School, pious-Jonah kind; would say 'D—— it' just the same as I would, and played a good hand at euchre. I was quite a young fellow in those days, and, as the old Mexican didn't speak much English, Brigham talked a good deal with me and tried to convert me to Mormonism.

"He was about 40, well set up, and with a big, strong head and neck. I didn't take much stock in his arguments defending polygamy, which Jo Smith had recently introduced as a revelation among the Saints. But Brigham gave me the idea of a man who was pretty firm in his opinion and actually believed what he preached.

"We didn't hurry ourselves much, making only about twenty miles a day with the waggons, pitching our tents for three or four days at a time when we got into a likely region where game was plenty, and exploring the country for miles around. I don't think we met a white man all the way across. There were lots of Indians, but they didn't trouble us, just coming into camp to trade off fresh meat or skins for bacon and coffee. Toward Christmas we struck Ham's Fork, in Western Nebraska, after making a journey of nearly a thousand miles. There we were snowed up until the spring.

"That was a particularly hard winter, and the snow was forty feet deep in places where it had drifted over the canyon. But we didn't suffer; provisions were plenty, there were lots of game, and when we couldn't get water we got snow and melted it. Our camp at Ham's Fork was pitched in a sheltered valley, and we got all the elk, antelope and bear we could shoot.

"Late in the spring, when the snow had melted, we struck camp and started straight up the mountain about forty miles. Right up on top of the mountain we found a large lake, fed by a living spring, chockfull of trout that beat anything in the world. The smallest of them was about two feet long and weighed five or six pounds, and the flavor——" The old trapper smacked his lips as the recollection of the gustatory gratification of forty years before arose in his mind.

"Brigham was all the time spying out the lay of the land, and as he looked from the top of the mountain over the level stretch of desert nearly fifty miles away he said: 'The promised land is in sight.' We made our way down the mountain without any accident worth mentioning, and when we struck the water now known as Salt Lake Brigham swallowed a mouthful and named it the Great Salt Lake. Then we struck out about six miles to the northwest, and Brigham Young stopped suddenly in the middle of the valley and shouted: 'This is the spot; this is the place revealed to me by the Great Spirit in a dream long ago. Here we will build the New Jerusalem!'

"We stayed in the neighborhood about six weeks. Brigham staked out the place so that we could find it again easily and made a sort of map of it. Then we started back to Cottonwood Springs, which we reached late in the summer. Brigham and his friends went over on to Nauvoo, Ill., and I went off on a deer hunt with my Indian friends. Next year Brigham took a large party of Mormons over, and Salt Lake City was built on the very spot to which I guided him."

A Canny Scot.

A Scotch farmer rode up to a toll-bar, and finding the gate open, he wheeled his horse round about just as he passed through, and shouted for the toll-keeper, who was invisible. "Hey, I'm sayin' fat's the damage tae git through yer gate wi' a horse?" "A shillin'," shouted the toll-keeper, making his appearance. "A shillin'," echoed the farmer, sarcastically. "No shillin' d'ye get frae me. I'll awa' hame again;" and wheeling his horse for the second time, he rode off in the direction he wished to go, chuckling at the trick he had performed upon the toll-keeper.

Mr. Kinch Kitchen has attained an enviable notoriety among his neighbors near Talapoosa because fifteen years ago he swore off from getting mad and has kept his resolution from that day till this.

Fifteen cows huddled in a Northern Pacific cut to keep from freezing to death, and a freight train came through and killed all of them.

One of a gang of ice cutters near Mount Carmel, Ill., cut out a block of ice on three sides and then laid a saw on it, remarking: "Some fool will go to pick up that saw and in he ll go.' He proved to be a prophet, for forgetting his trick a few moments later he himself stepped on the ice cake and went down in seven feet of water.

A novel advertising scheme was recently introduced by a merchant in Carthage, Ill. A series of prodigious boot tracks were painted leading from each side of the public square to his establishment. The scheme, it is said, worked to perfection, for everybody seemed curious enough to follow the tracks to their destination.

A Welsh couple from a mining settlement near Pottsville, Pa., recently obtained a marriage license from Register Johnson. Then they went home happy in the thought they were man and wife, and lived together for two or three weeks before they found out that a minister or a 'Squire was necessary before they could be really married.

WHAT SOME MEN NEVER LEARN.

That the Baby is the Key to the Domestic Situation Every Time.

It is amazing how slow some men are to find out that the baby is the key to the domestic situation. No woman ever quarrels with a man who plays regularly with the baby. No woman ever really loved a man who ignored the baby. Doesn't the poet say that "hell hath no fury like a woman with a baby scorned?" That isn't exactly it, but it's near enough. In the majority of suits for divorce you will find there was no baby. The baby is down on divorces every time. The baby is the presiding judge in the court of matrimonial arbitration, and he keeps it in perpetual session. If there is a strike the baby orders it off and both parties back to work on the old terms. If you have the baby on your side, the baby's mother can be counted to send a solid delegation in your favor to any kind of convention you can think of. The babies are all peacemakers, and "blessed are the peacemakers," you know. Moreover, the man who has bribed the baby into his confidence will tell you that the little citizen in pink knows more than you give him credit for. Some doctor's books will tell you that babies don't talk intelligently till they're about eighteen months old. This is a medical delusion. A healthy baby is a brilliant conversationalist at three months old. People who know their language—it is not quite ours—can and do talk with them by the hour. You can tell the baby that you feel blue, and he will push his fist in your eye, which gives you the denial direct. Go on and tell him that you have had a bad week's business and have lost money. The moment you say "Money" the baby will blow big bubbles from his red lips; babies have infinite contempt for men who count their gains and losses in money. Now, tell baby that you think he's the pittiest little dot of a baby, bess it, dat ever was in dis world, and he will immediately fall on one side of your neck and yank your hair, which means that now you are talking common sense. It is Victor Hugo, the biggest-hearted Frenchman of the century, who sings of babies:

In our light, bitter world of wrongs
They come; God gives us them awhile.
His speech is in their stammering tongue
And His forgiveness in their smile.

—*Boston Globe.*

Late Fashion Notes.

Knots of platinum and gold heavily chased are liked for linked sleeve buttons.

Among fashionable women the favorite ring is a large shield-shaped turquoise surrounded with diamonds.

Black braiding on white cloth vests and panels is not new, but is still worn, generally upon house dresses for those in mourning.

Ladies beginning to lay aside mourning wear gray cashmere combined with white corded silk and trimmed with steel passementerie.

There is a tendency to return to some old-fashioned colors under new names. A bright blue shade is called "Jubilee blue," in honor of the Queen.

A light pink that is being brought out in velvets to combine with black lace is much like the old Magenta shades and is called Charles X. pink. Anemone is a new reddish purple, much prettier than the heliotrope now worn.

India silks are more popular than French foulards, owing to their superior durability. White India silks, with all-over patterns of graceful lines in black, blue, brown or scarlet, will make pretty summer dresses, and there are many Watteau and Pompadour designs of roses and pinks in pale and charming colors. Lace is no longer used in profusion to trim these light silks, velvet having superceded it.

Surahs with large, wide diagonal twills are shown in all solid colors and in many plaids, some of the prettiest being dark blue crossed with pink or lighter blue; Suede, with bars of rose and green, and green grounds barred with pink. These are to be made up in entire dresses, not combinations, with velvet collar, vest and cuffs; the skirts bordered with velvet, or with velvet laid in between the plaits.

The sleazy diagonal wools of light quality are shown in all dark colors, with white lines and bars, like that which had such immense popularity last summer. However, the method of making them up will be quite different, the kilt plaits and smooth short lavandeuse drapery being replaced by plain skirts and voluminous Grecian drapery. The sailor hats almost invariably worn with these suits last year will be replaced by the brimless turban.

Drab and tan shades, brown and gray are largely represented in what is called covert cloth for short covert coats to be worn with suits of wool of lighter colors, or as an occasional wrap to go with almost any dress. There are also loosely woven English cloths in small blocks of two or three colors—such as olive with blue or red with brown—to make travelling suits or the suits worn in the morning for shopping, or any use, except for visits and afternoon entertainments.

There is already a large display in all the shops of sateens, batistes and other cotton goods, because such dresses are made up during the leisure of Lent. Panels of embroidery, borders for the lower skirt and entire skirts of embroidery are special features of these pretty gowns. The various shades of heliotrope, so popular this winter, reappear in the sateens, as well as several of the new greens and grays. The fancy is to make them with plain skirts of solid colors, the drapery being figured in white or ecru.

Miss Elizabeth Atkinson, who recently died in Burlington, N. J., aged 98 years, had not been out of her room for eighteen years.

It is reported from Maine that the English sparrows are growing white, as a result of their becoming acclimated. White feathers have been often noticed this winter on the sparrows.

A bill has been introduced into the Tennessee Legislature offering to the United States the Hermitage farm, famous as the home of Andrew Jackson, as an asylum for disabled and invalid soldiers. The bill provides that Mrs. Sarah Jackson, the adopted daughter of Old Hickory, shall be allowed a home and maintenance upon the farm for life.

NEW THINGS JUST OUT.

Wood Wool—Sewing Machine Improvements—Cork Bricks for Partitions.

The best quality of that growingly useful article, wood wool, is obtained from the Riga fir tree, by means of a machine specially adapted to the purpose. This ingenious machine consists of a cast-iron frame resting upon three iron supports, and carrying a driving shaft, which is actuated by two pulleys, fast and loose; to this shaft is fitted a fly-wheel, one spoke being provided with a pin that receives one of the extremities of a connecting rod, the other extremity being connected with the knife-carrier—this latter, which also rests upon the iron frame, sliding in iron guides, and carrying a set of peculiar knives, so arranged that the wood is cut in both the backward and the forward motions of the knife-carrier. The wood is held upright by the machine by suitable arrangements, permitting the introduction of blocks of a few fractions of an inch long; the wood is shoved forward under the knives by means of a click, that causes it to advance the requisite distance at every revolution of the fly-wheel, every movement thus aiding in perfecting the result.—*La Nature, Paris.*

The new sewing machine contrived by an Edinburgh inventor claims to be the simplest yet made for effecting the lock-stitch. It is on the rotary shuttle principle, the novelty of it lying in a circular saucer-shaped shuttle, which is set up on edge and laid with its flat side against the left-hand end of the lower shaft, which is held in position by a revolving cup. The axis of the shaft, the shuttle and the cup, being in line and revolving together, the result is an easy motion far excelling the old reciprocating shuttle.—*New York Sun.*

For some time past experiments have been made in Germany with a composition of cork, sand and lime molded into bricks for the construction of light partition walls. This, it is said, excludes sound better than brickwork, and is also light and a good non-conductor of heat.—*New York Sun.*

A Novelty in Women's Dress.

A novelty in ladies' dress has been brought out at the Pro-Cathedral, Melbourne, Australia, and the originator is Rev. J. E. Bromby, the clergyman who officiates there. It is nothing more nor less than a surplice for the ladies in the choir who supplement the singing of the men and boys. The *Church of England Messenger* on the spot having criticised the innovation adversely, Mr. Bromby preached on the subject. The following is an extract from his sermon: "It cannot be denied that, considering the extraordinary caprices of fashion in the matter of female attire, it would offend the taste to see the simple uniformity of surpliced men and boys disturbed by the intrusion of the grotesque and daily changing inventions of the Paris milliner. What better solution, then, of the difficulty could there be than to clothe the female members of the choir in an ecclesiastical vestment of such a suitable type as should harmonize well with the surroundings of their position?"

People in the Northwest

Know from experience that Putnam's Painless Corn Extractor is the only remedy to be relied upon for the extraction of corns. This is the case everywhere throughout the Dominion. Be sure to get Putnam's sure-pop corn cure. At dealers everywhere.

Ice cutting on the Lake of the Woods, in Illinois, has been abandoned because it was found that the heavy cakes contained many fish that were caught during the cold snap and frozen in the ice.

I was attacked with rheumatism and tried usual remedies without success. I then took McCollom's Rheumatic Repellant, and it drove rheumatism out of my system. With confidence I recommend it to those similarly afflicted.—REV. JAMES BROCK, Kingston, Ont.

Illinois whiskey is dangerous stuff, even in the bottle. An Odin physician bought a flask for medicinal purposes and set it on the table for a moment. It exploded with a bang, the bottle was shattered, and the liquor where it fell on the table cloth burned it like acid.

Gold Mines

are very uncertain property; for every paying mine a hundred exist that do not pay. But if you write to Hallett & Co., Portland, Maine, you will receive, free, full particulars about their new business, and learn how some have made over $50 in a single day at it. You can live at home and earn from $5 to $25 and upwards per day wherever you are located. Both sexes; all ages. Capital not required; you are started free. Send your address and all will be proved to you.

Almost without a dissenting voice, the House Committee on Shipping yesterday resolved to make a favorable report on Mr. Dingley's Bill to protect the fisheries of the United States. The Bill makes liable to seizure and forfeiture any foreign vessels found taking fish of any kind within three marine miles off the shores of the United States.

When a drop of oil is placed upon the surface of water it rapidly spreads in all directions, forming a film of exceeding tenuity, and affecting the waves as if a sheet or carpet of thin, flexible, elastic, and yet tenacious substance, like rubber was spread over the waves.

I CURE FITS!

When I say I cure I do not mean merely to stop them for a time and then have them return again, I mean a radical cure. I have made the disease of FITS, EPILEPSY or FALLING SICKNESS a life-long study. I warrant my remedy to cure the worst cases. Because others have failed is no reason for not now receiving a cure. Send at once for a treatise and a Free Bottle of my infallible remedy. Give Express and Post Office. It costs you nothing for a trial, and I will cure you. Address DR. H. G. ROOT,

Branch Office, 37 Yonge St., Toronto.

D C N L. 8. 87.

DUNN'S BAKING POWDER
THE COOK'S BEST FRIEND.