

INTERESTING ITEMS.

50,000 Skating Rinks—Cardinal Newman—The Wax-Plant—Eccentric Mr. Onaritch, etc., etc.

There are in the United States at present, according to estimates, very nearly if not fully, 50,000 skating rinks.

A bookseller in Liverpool offers a collection of autographs, and among them the autograph of "Adams (C. Francis), late President of the U. S. A., letter of three pages signed and dated London, June 20, 1868, 3s 6d."

The Nizam of Hyderabad will attend the Colonial Exhibition in London next year. This young gentleman, who is fabulously wealthy, at the Calcutta exhibition last year spent at the rate of £1,000 per minute. Fortunately, however, for his purse, he only stayed twenty minutes.

According to the *Indian Pharmacist*, raw oysters not only have a remarkably wholesome influence upon the digestive organs, but are highly recommended for hoarseness. Many leading vocalists are said to use them regularly in preparing for their appearance in concerts or operas.

In the *Gazette de Therapeutique* Dr. Vaillant claims to have cured two cases of hydrophobia, which had reached the convulsive stage, with an alkaloid taken from the seeds of a tree indigenous in South America. After complete tests are made, he full details of the discovery will be given to the public.

Maine papers say that a Bath boarding mistress surprised one of her boarders, who was learning to play on the banjo, by reducing the price of his board on the ground that his singing and playing had frightened away all the rats. The compliment discouraged the young man so that he has given up practice.

The *Medical Times* thinks there is "something anomalous in an age which is at one time charged with cultivating muscle at the expense of mind, and at another with forcing the brains and neglecting the bodies of the rising generation." A judicious care of both brain and muscle would be a common sense solution of the difficulty.

Cardinal Newman has just celebrated his 84th birthday at the Birmingham Oratory. He is enjoying a second youth, and shows an amount of vitality quite surprising to those who some little time ago were anxious about his health. He said mass at 7 o'clock on the morning of his birthday, and later received visits from a number of his friends.

A strange sight was presented in the streets of Tucson, Arizona, one day last month. A woman appeared carrying a child's empty coffin on her shoulder, followed by a lot of little girls. Later the scene was reversed and the coffin was borne by four little girls, followed by several women. It is no uncommon sight there to see a coffin borne to the grave on the shoulders of a man, but a woman rendering the service was a novel spectacle.

The wax-plant is now grown on a large scale in Algeria, and its product is gradually finding its way into the markets of the world. The process of separating the wax is simple. The fruit, enclosed in a bag of coarse cloth, is plunged into boiling water, on whose surface the substance soon floats. The wax is of the same chemical composition as beeswax, and is likely to be largely used in place of it. It is stated that these wax-plants may be seen growing wild in Pennsylvania and the Carolinas.

The oldest bank note probably in existence in Europe is one preserved in the Asiatic Museum at St. Petersburg. It dates from the year 1399 B. C., and was issued by the Chinese Government. It can be proved from Chinese chronicles that, as early as 2697 B. C. bank notes were current in China under the name of "flying money." The bank note preserved at St. Petersburg bears the name of the imperial bank, date and number of issue, signature of a mandarin, and contains even a list of punishments inflicted for forgery of notes. This relic of 4,000 years ago is probably written, for printing from wooden tablets is said to have been introduced in China only in the year 160 A. D.

The *Medicinisches Wochenschrift* makes the bold statement that English scientists are so far behind those of other nations in their study of the causes of infectious diseases that they are no longer in a position to make anything like a pertinent criticism upon such researches. The cause is attributed to English laws practically prohibiting experiments on animals.

The French Minister of the Interior disposes annually of \$400,000 secret service money, and is not required to account for the disbursement of a single franc. In theory he is, indeed, responsible to the President of the republic for the use he makes of the money; and he sends him in a report every year, which, however, is practically limited to a declaration that it was spent in the way in which it was meant to be spent. No details or vouchers accompany the report, which is thus the mere formality. The Emperor exercised a real control over the disposition of this fund; but the existing Constitution gives the President no such power, and the Minister is free to dispose of at all events one-half of it precisely as he pleases.

Spain has, like some other Catholic powers, two Ambassadors in Rome—one accredited to the Quirinal, the other to the Vatican; and as they both live in the same building the Spanish Embassy is, from the official point of view, a house divided against itself. The King was invited the other day to visit the exhibition of pictures opened in the Embassy for the benefit of the Granada sufferers; and it was at first arranged that he should pass through the ante-chamber of the suite of rooms occupied by the Ambassador accredited to the Pope. As soon, however, as the contemplated profanation came to the knowledge of the Vatican, it provoked such a vehement protest that the ar-

rangment was abandoned, and a new door was specially opened in the building for the King and Queen.

Mr. Quaritch, the London bookseller, has many peculiarities. Perhaps one of the best known is his attachment to an old felt hat in which at a great sale he invariably appears. He has had it for years, and obstinately refuses to part with it. Its shape is well known to frequenters of "the rooms." One gentleman, a well-known collector, had a great desire to possess the headpiece as a memento of the great bookseller, and tried but in vain to induce him to part with it. Failing in possession, he tried to soften Mr. Quaritch with gold. But still in vain—even when the collector offered £2 for the old tile. Mr. Quaritch, when the bidding had reached this point, declined all parley and refused—still happy in the possession of his hat. The market value to a Jew broker of the hat would be sixpence or in-peace.

A Yarn of the West.

A red-faced, raw-looking youth, whose ready-made clothing did not fit him well and whose flaming red necktie would have driven a bull into a delirium, sat in a hotel in this place the other day nervously tossing what appeared to be a very broad and well-worn silver coin from hand to hand. With a touch of numismatic curiosity your correspondent asked to see it, and found himself unable to make out what device it had originally borne beyond a faintly outlined hand apparently grasping a pair of balances. The youth who owned the coin was as curious as any one to find out what manner of money it was, and on being questioned as to where he got it he said he "found the money with a heap more in the Jim River out in Dakota. You see," he continued, "our folks moved out into that country three years ago next spring, intending to make it our home. One day I went to the river, five miles from home, to fish. I didn't catch anything but what I thought was a snag and giving my line a right smart yank to get it loose, I fetched up a little strip of something that wouldn't let go on the hook very easy. I loosened it with my fingers and was going to throw the piece away when I noticed it was a strip of copper with something like rotten leather or cloth hangin' to it. Then I thought maybe I had better look into the thing a little. I got down the bank, and where it had caved in lately I could see, about four feet above the water, a print the shape of a herring-box, showing that something about that size had been buried there, and had been tumbled into the water when the cave happened. It only took a minute or two of kicking around in the sand to find what I was looking for. Whether it was an old grip-sack, a leather trunk, or an animal's skin folded up, I couldn't make out. It was too rotten. But it had been chuck full of valuables—that was plain enough. Half a dozen comical-looking old watches, lots of rings and bracelets were lying around. Besides there was about a peck of money—gold and silver. I loaded up all my pockets, hid the balance of the stuff, and went all the way home on a dead run, yelling like an Indian as soon as I got in sight of the hole in the ground we lived in—sod house, you know. Dad and I hitched up the team as soon as I could get breath and tell him what had happened, and we drove down and got all the stuff we could find."

"How much did it all amount to?"
"Blamed if I can tell ye, stranger. Dad never would tell me; said it might make me too proud and rich. He said it would buy a good improved farm back in God's country—Missouri—and he intended to get back there as soon as he sold his claim."

"Where is your father now?"
"In Missouri with the rest of the folks. I came here because my gal's folks—they had a claim next to ours—came here to visit relatives till the spring. I want her to marry me right off and go down to where my folks live and I reckon she will."

The youth would not submit to further questioning, evidently suspecting the guileless scribe of a scheme to erect a claim to his treasure-trove.

Horrible Outrage in Spain.

A horrible outrage is reported from the village of Tubenas. A party of brigands entered the village late at night, and easily gained an entrance into the house of the parish priest. They demanded that the priest should tell them where he kept his money. He replied that all that he had belonged to the poor of his parish, and he refused to disclose its hiding place. They proceeded to torture him to compel him to reveal the secret. They threw him upon the floor, and two ruffians gouged out his eyes with their thumbs. They repeated their demand and the priest still refused; they pulled out his tongue to its full length and seared it with a hot iron. The priest was by this time in the most frightful agony and was unable to speak, but he still refused by signs to reveal the hiding place of the poor-box. The brigands again threw him upon the brick floor of his kitchen and proceeded to ransack the house. Failing to find any money they returned to the kitchen in a more fiendish temper than before. The priest was dying, but they stuffed his clothing with straw, set fire to it and left the house. When the body of the priest was found it was burned to a crisp. The authorities have sent troops in pursuit of the brigands. Mgr. Rampallo del Tindaro, the Papal Nuncio at Madrid, is maddened at the outrage and insists that the Spanish Government shall offer a huge reward for the capture of the murderers.

If Tennyson wrote: "The Charge of the Light Brigade," just after receiving his gas bill, he was perfectly justifiable.

RINGING THE CHURCH BELLS.

A Minister Defends Them and Sets Many Advantages in Their Use.

"It is the spirit of vandalism still extant which wishes to do away with the time-honored custom of ringing church bells," said a prominent divine to a reporter. "Civilization demands that many obnoxious customs and foolish laws should be done away with, but the progress of science the morals of the people, and general every day business are, in my opinion, not affected in the least by church-bell ringing. The bell was adopted before clocks were invented to call people to worship. It was a time-piece itself, informing all in hearing of the hour. In England at one time the curfew tolled the knell of parting day, just the same as the cannon at our military forts are discharged at sunset.

"The atheistical iconoclasts, who would be delighted to have not only the bell-ringing stopped, but the very foundation of the churches razed, are the chief instigators of the hue and cry that the church-bell must go. The old, loud, and continuous ringing has been stopped, and merry, silvery chimes peal forth that gladden the hearts of those who hear it, and sound like music in the heavens. Civilization does not necessarily require a dead silence. I admit that any noise persisted in for several consecutive hours becomes monotonous and disagreeable. The church-bells only ring at certain hours, and then for a brief period. The old agnostic next door to the church howls against it and writes an article to a scientific magazine setting forth what a great nuisance the church bell is and how civilization should blush to tolerate such a relic of superstitious days. A newspaper copies the article, and the general public is led to believe that unless the church-bells stop ringing, not only will civilization be throttled in its march, but that the world will soon turn into a howling pandemonium, maddened by bell ringing. They also allege that every house has a clock and nearly every person a watch, so at the appointed hour they meet without being called together by a bell. This is to a great extent true. A great many churches denoting their bells to signify the time for services. They frequently have stated hours for the chime to peal, and on Sunday these hours are just before services or after the close. As long as churches are built with tall spires the bell with its chimes will be in them, to sound at certain hours of the day. Then, too, there is poetry in the ringing of the bells. A man who objects to them is rather matter of fact and disposed to be hypochondriacal. A large city has a great deal of noise made from many different sources, but of them all I do believe that church bell-ringing is less detrimental to head, repose, and health than any. The church bell may go but it will be many generations hence, when a different order prevails and when sound is less popular than at present."

Tricks in all Trades.

The imitative quality of the Chinese extends even to counterfeiting European and American labels and trade-marks, says a letter writer in Hong Kong. The knowledge of certain small articles of foreign make has caused a desire for them in China, and an effort to imitate them. So we find at the small shops Chinese-made clocks and watches, and at the stands of the street vendor, combs, tooth-brushes, shoe-horns, pocket cutlery, and razors, which are vastly inferior to the foreign goods, but as the price is as low as the quality is poor, no one can reasonably complain. The knives and razors often bear very distinctly the brands of Sheffield firms, whose names are household words wherever the English language is spoken. Three knives are sold for 5 or 6 cents each, while the razors, Sheffield brand and all, can be bought for 15 cents. The last implements are roughly made, and to the thick-skinned man a torture to look at, but with the other articles enumerated they show to what an extent Chinese manufactures can be carried, and at what rates, defying competition, they can be furnished to the consumers. The reasons why the Chinese can make and sell so cheaply as to put competition entirely out of the question are the contracted quarters in which they can do business, and the cheapness of their food and clothing. Their economical, or more justly their sordid, habits have been so often described in the general discussion of the Chinese question in America as to render all detail unnecessary.

A CRANK'S WILL.

Making his Guests Sleep on Coffins.

John S. Sammons, an eccentric citizen of the Town of Montgomery, N. Y., died in December, and left real and personal property valued at \$11,000. He bequeathed the entire estate to the Montgomery M. E. Church. A condition is that the church officials shall keep his burial vault in good condition and have it visited at least once a month by a trustee, who is to receive \$1 for each visitation. The probate of the will is opposed by Sammons's relatives.

Sammons took his meals in the cellar, eating from a board laid upon the top of a barrel. He kept a supply of coffins on hand, and when any of his relatives or friends called upon him and stayed all night he insisted upon each having a coffin under his or her bed. His servants, when he could keep them, were retained on the same stipulation. His dogs and cats were put in coffins when they died, and on one occasion he kept the confined remains of a dog in the house till the authorities interfered and compelled him to bury them. He exhumed the bones of his mother, put them in a box and kept them in his wagon-house until he was compelled to reinter them. At times he

was very devout, but it was no uncommon thing for him to suddenly stop praying and curse vigorously.

THE WAYS OF ELEPHANTS.

Particulars in Which They Resemble Human Beings—Whiskey Preferred to Medicine.

"An elephant is nobody's fool," said George Arthingstall, the animal trainer, as he leaned over the ropes and looked at two score of huge pets. "They're very like human creatures. Some of them are good-natured and some are ugly. As they grow older their tempers grow worse. The cow is generally amiable enough to support the reputation of her sex, but occasionally we strike a wicked specimen. Juno there," pointing to an elephant whose immense ears and abnormally developed bump of philoprogenitiveness gave her a look of preternatural benevolence, "has killed her man, and would do it again if she got the chance. The elephant will live a long time in captivity after he has become accustomed to dry food, but like the cobbler's horse that was kept on shoe-pegs, he is very apt to die before adapting himself to the diet. Elephants have been known to live seventy-five years in Europe. In India, where they live on green food, canes and the like, they often attain the age of one hundred and fifty. There is no proof of a longer lease of life than this though big stories are told of elephants turned loose after the name of some king had been inscribed upon their tusks being found again 300 or 400 years later.

"They're just like children. When I have them out in the morning for a dress rehearsal, they're as quick as cats, minding almost before the word is out of my mouth. But in the afternoon they are gaping this way and that, doing everything but attending to business, because they know that I won't strike them before a crowd of spectators. They hate to take medicine too, unless it has a little of the craythur in it. Are elephants ever sick? O, yes! They often have the colic. When they begin to double up I give 'em a dose of five or six gallons of rum and ginger. That straightens 'em out. An equal quantity of boiled linseed oil mixed with aconite and molasses does for physic, while about five gallons of rum and whiskey are prescribed for chills. Solid drugs are given in pills. A pill eight inches in diameter and containing \$6 worth of quinine does the business for a cold, while a peppin pill is given when one gets off his feed. I gave Juno over \$50 worth of quinine in one fit of sickness. They don't like the pills as well as the whiskey, and it's good deal of a job to get them down. The best way is to put a pill on the end of a stick, make them open their mouths, and shove it down before they realize the situation. Sometimes we cut out the middle of a turnip and put the drugs inside the vegetable, but like the bad child in the Sunday School book, they're very apt to 'spit out the core.' Yes, elephants are very queer creatures."

GOLD FOR A CORONET.

Handsome Miss Lawrence to Wed an English Lord.

The announcement made a few days ago of the engagement of Miss Lawrence, a beautiful American heiress, to Lord George William Venables-Vernon, an English nobleman, has created quite a sensation in fashionable circles in New York. The engagement was known some two weeks ago in Pau, France, where the young fiancée was staying with her parents, and the news has travelled quickly to this side of the Atlantic.

The expectant bride is about twenty-one years old, is the daughter of Francis Lawrence, and the sister of young Frank Lawrence, who married the beautiful Miss Fanny Lanier not long ago.

Miss Lawrence is very graceful and beautiful, with great dark eyes, arched brows and a profusion of dark hair. Her hands are the admiration of all artists, being long, slender, supple and white, with exquisite almond nails, and if she were the "daughter of a hundred ears" she could be no more aristocratic in bearing. Her equestrian ability is well-known here, and she has ridden to hounds many times in England during the past few months.

Miss Lawrence inherits great wealth, having a yearly income of many thousands, and owning much real estate in this country. She met Lord Vernon a few years ago, and he fell desperately in love with her, but it took him some time to win the beauty's consent to their union.

Lord Vernon, seventh baron of the name, is thirty-one years old, tall, handsome and blond. He was captain in the Twelfth Lancers for some time, and there attained his military bearing. He owns two fine estates, Sudbury Hall in Derbyshire, situated in the midst of a beautiful park of hundreds of acres, and Poynton Hall in Cheshire. These houses are furnished with rare old tapestries, mirrors, pictures and portraits of all the Vernons, from the first baron, George Vernon, who was created baron in 1728, down to the present Lord Vernon. Over these two houses the young American beauty will rule, and horses, carriages, and servants will be at her command.

Miss Lawrence was presented at Court at one of the last drawing-rooms held by the Queen, and in her flowing dress of tulle, and a few pearl ornaments, she created quite a sensation.

It is said that the wedding will take place in London some time in July, and that the young couple will come to this country on their wedding-tour, spending August at Newport. This is a great disappointment to many of the expectant bride's friends, and several of them are going to London especially to attend the wedding, which will be a brilliant affair. It will, probably, be solemnized in St. George's Church.

Laughs for Landladies.

"Never eat between meals," cautions a writer. We never do. We board. Then you don't eat even at meals.

A man content to live in an oleomargine boarding-house does not know on which side his bread is buttered.

An item is going the rounds to the effect that "some of the poet Willis's best lines were written in a boarding-house." We have often heard that hunger was a spur to literary work.

A young man became violently insane in a New York boarding-house a few days ago. Those who have sojourned for a season in a New York boarding-house will now wonder how they ever escaped a similar fate.

Landlady—Won't you have another cup of coffee, Mr. Dumley? Dumbley (folding his napkin and preparing to leave the table)—Thanks, no. I haven't finished the first cup yet.

"Will you carve the roast beef, Mr. Jorlop?" asked the landlady, slinging a sweet smile at the head of the boarder. "Certainly; with pleasure, madam," responded Jorlop, "where's the saw?"

"Miracles in Turkey" is the caption under which a foreign correspondent writes. Crimsonbeak says the greatest miracle in Turkey that ever came under his observation was when his boarding-house mistress made a nine-pound bird last twelve boarders seven days.

Mrs. Slimdier—Dear me! what a peculiar odor! Thin Boarder—Yes; seems to come from the kitchen. Mrs. Slimdier—I do believe that girl has dropped some rubber in the stove. Thin Boarder—maybe it's the chicken.

A Brave Cabman.

A man as brave as Col. Burnaby, or as the gallant private who left the broken square at Abu Klea to assist him, might think twice before collar'ing a mad dog. The danger is so awful and so appalling to the imagination that most people, of the two, would prefer the policy of scuttling. But an unnamed cabman, whose name, if his tale be true, should be known, has tackled a mad dog, with loss to himself and benefit to the public. The man applied to the Westminster police magistrate for assistance in the following circumstance: He was unable to ply his trade because, on Tuesday, he had been bitten by a mad dog. The animal had already bitten several persons, and might have bitten more. It was a large Newfoundland, a kind of dog liable to sudden passion. The cabman seized it by the throat while a policeman despatched it with a truncheon. The cabman was bitten in the leg, and the place had to be cauterized, and seared with a red hot iron. The cabman's action was one of very great pluck and devotion, and can scarcely be looked on as adequately rewarded by the gift of £1 from the poor box. Courage, happily, is not extinct in our race when it comes to action, though sometimes it may be lacking in council. But such a performance as this cabman's can never be very common, and as a public benefit, merits notice and reward.

Chinese Justice.

A Chinese imperial decree has recently been issued, ordering that the late viceroy of Yunnan, through whose negligence, it is alleged, Sontay and Bac Ninh were captured by the French, and viceroy of Kwangai, who did not advance beyond Langson to the relief of these two towns, are to be beheaded after the "autumnal assizes." The viceroys Li and Tao, who strenuously interceded for the culprits, are degraded two degrees in official rank. The Viceroy of Canton, who was guilty of recommending one of them for employment, is also to be punished. He is, however, to be leniently dealt with, on account of his recent services in providing for the defence of his province. Chang Peilun, who commanded at Foochow during the bombardment, is summarily degraded and dismissed, and is ordered to Peking for trial, while several other military commanders and high officials who recommended them for employment are also either degraded or handed over to the Board of Punishment for trial.

Mishaps at a Funeral.

At the funeral of the 16-year-old daughter of John Wells, at Wesleyville, Pa., on Friday, the pall-bearers were six young women. As they were carrying the coffin into the church two of the pall-bearers slipped and fell. The coffin fell to the ground, and the shock burst it open, exposing the remains. One of the young women fainted away. The coffin was reclosed, and men took the place of the women pall-bearers. While the coffin was being lowered into the grave the rope broke, and one of the men and the coffin fell to the bottom of the grave. The coffin was again broken, and so badly damaged that a new one had to be obtained before the services could be completed. Abel Cole, the man who fell into the grave, was seriously injured.

Making it Easy for his Employer

A merchant in Cleveland went to his head clerk and said "John I owe about \$10,000, and all I possess is \$4,000, which is locked up in the safe. I have been thinking that this is the right time to make an assignment, but what plausible pretext I can give my creditors I know not. You have plenty of brains; think the matter over, and let me know your decision in the morning." The clerk promised to do so. On entering the office the next morning the merchant found the safe open, the \$4,000 gone, and in their place a letter which read as follows: "I have taken the \$4,000 and have gone to Canada. It is the best excuse you can give your creditors."