

PERSONAL POINTERS

Notes of Interest About Some Prominent People.

Robert Casper, of Neu-Ruppin, Germany, who is totally blind, makes a living as a newspaper reporter. His memory is such that he can remember the exact words of any speech. His accuracy is marvellous.

It has long been known that the Czar possessed a very pretty musical gift, and His Majesty has recently essayed his power as a composer of music to his own verses. In these verses the predominant note is one of religion. They extol the glories of the Orthodox Church and its saints and exalt the virtue of Christian self-sacrifice and renunciation of worldly goods and prosperity.

Mr. Briton Riviere, R.A., is deservedly proud of the remarkable feat of having had a picture hung at the British Gallery while still a Cheltenham schoolboy. At seventeen two of his paintings were accepted by the Royal Academy. And yet, in spite of his early success, he was for some years compelled to maintain himself by illustrating magazines and books before he could resume the "luxury" of his beloved brush.

That wonderful woman, the Dowager Empress of China (who, by the bye, is not of the low origin she is popularly credited with), has the great distinction of being able to read and write, which makes her unique among Chinese women of her generation. She looks extraordinarily young for her age, her hair is still dark and luxuriant, her skin firm and unwrinkled, though she reaches to a considerable extent. Her chief recreation is card-playing with the ladies of her Court, and large sums of money are often staked for at heart she is a gambler.

Apropos of the birthday of the Bishop of Lincoln (Dr. King) who was seventy-four the other day, is told the following pretty story: A couple of years ago the Bishop attended a confirmation at Boston, England. There he heard of a poor crippled girl who had been prepared for confirmation, but could not be brought to the service. Without more ado, despite his three-score and twelve years and a driving rain, and blustering wind, he set out and walked the two miles that separated the cottage of the girl from the church. The service in her bedroom lost nothing of its beauty or solemnity because of its mean surroundings.

The Crown Princess of Sweden, who is very pretty and popular, goes by the name of "The Colonel's Wife." The Crown Prince, unlike his poor father, is a military enthusiast, and is honorary colonel of several regiments. When he was first married he took his young bride into the headquarters of the regiment of which he was then acting colonel, and said: "Gentlemen, the colonel in command of the regiment desires to introduce his wife to the regiment." The charming young wife was received with rounds of applause, and the name has stuck to her ever since. The Crown Princess is a notable cook, and this gift, which she has taken great care to perfect, made her a prime favorite with the old Emperor William of Germany.

Many good stories are told of Sir Walter Parratt, the Master of the King's Music. Here is one illustrative of his extraordinary memory. Some eight or ten men were assembled one evening in one of the lodgings attached to St. Michael's College, Tenbury. Sir Walter Parratt and Herr von Holst played in turn upon the piano, such music as was asked for. This went on for some time, until at last the chess-board was brought out. Sir Walter then proposed to play two men at chess in consultation, still remaining at the piano and playing from memory what was demanded, either from Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, or Mendelssohn. Without even a glance at the chess-board he won the game in an hour.

The Marquis Ito, the Prime Minister of Japan, had a narrow escape in the adventurous days of his youth. He and his friend Inouye incurred obloquy by their advocacy of the Europeanizing of Japan, and their political opponents resolved upon their assassination. Ito was traced to the house of a lady to whom he was attached, but the lady hid him so securely that he could not be found, saying that he had left her some hours before, and that she would be glad if the strangers would leave her also. They departed, and Ito managed to get on board a vessel bound for England, concealed in a bale of silk. He remained in that ball for thirty-six hours without either food or drink. Then he introduced himself to the skipper, and was allowed to work his passage to Liverpool as a steward.

The following affecting advertisement appeared some time ago in a London newspaper: "If this should meet the eye of Emma D., who absented herself last Wednesday from her father's house, she is implored to return. She will be received with undiminished affection by her almost heartbroken parents. If nothing can persuade her to listen to their joint appeal, should she be determined to bring their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, should she never mean to revisit a house where she has passed so many happy years—it is at least expected, if she be not lost to all sense of propriety, that she will without a moment's delay send back the key of the tea-caddy."

Some lawyers consider it a crime to confess a crime.

WHERE SLAVERY BEIGNS

SCENE AT A MOROCCAN SLAVE MARKET.

Proceedings Begun With Prayer—Showing Off the Slaves.

A crowd of penniless idlers, to whom admittance is denied, clamor outside the heavy door, while the city rats fight for the privilege of holding the mules of wealthy citizens who are arriving in large numbers in response to the report that the house hold of a great wazir, recently disgraced, will be offered for sale. Portly Moors from the city, country Moors, who boast less costly garments, but ride mules of easy pace and heavy price; one or two high officials—all classes of the wealthy, to be brief, are arriving rapidly, for the market will open in a quarter of an hour, and bidding will be brisk.

We pass the portals unchallenged, and the market stands revealed—an open place of bare, dry ground, hemmed around with tawny walls, dust-colored, crumbling, ruinous. Something like an arcade stretches across the centre of the ground from one side to the other of the market, roofless now, and broken down, just as the outer wall itself, or the sheds, like cattle-pens that are built all around it.

HUMAN CATTLE-PENS.

On the ground by the side of the human cattle-pens the wealthy patrons of the market seat themselves at their ease, arrange themselves in leisurely fashion, and start to chat as though the place were a smoking-room of a club. Water-carriers (lean half-naked men from the Sus) sprinkle the thirsty ground, that the tramp of slaves and auctioneers may not raise too much dust. As they go about their work with the apathy and indifference born of long experience, I have a curious reminder of the Spanish bullring, to which the slave market bears some remote resemblance: the gathering of spectators, the watering of the ground, the sense of excitement, all strengthen the impression.

Within the sheds the slaves are shrinking, huddled together. They will not face the light until the market opens. The crowd at the entrance parts to the right and left to admit grave men wearing white turbans and fellabias. They are the dealers or auctioneers, and the sale is about to begin.

Slowly and impressively the dealers advance in a line to the centre of the slave market almost up to the arcade where the wealthy buyers all sit expectant. Then the head auctioneer lifts up his voice and—oh hideous mockery of it all—he prays. With downcast eyes and outspread hands he prays fervently. He recites the glory of Allah the One, who made the Heaven above and the earth beneath, and the sea and all that is therein; his brethren and the buyers say amen.

Prayers are over, the last amen is said, the deals separate, each one going to the pens he presides over, and calling upon their tenants to come forth. Obedient to the summons the slaves face the light, the sheds are emptied, and there are a few noisy moments bewildering to the novice, in which the auctioneers place their goods in line, rearrange dresses, give children to their charge of adults, sort out men and women according to their age and value, and prepare for the promenade. The slaves will march round and round the circle of buyers, led by the auctioneers, who will proclaim the latest bid, offered, and hand over, on one of his charges, to an intending purchaser, that he may make his examinations before raising the price.

SHOWING THEIR POINTS.

In the procession now gathering for the first parade, five or six of the seven ages are represented. There are old men and women who cannot walk upright, however the deal may urge; others of middle age, with years of active service before them; young men full of vigor, and youth fit for the fields; young women moving for once unveiled, yet unrebeked before the faces of men and children of every age—from babies, who will be sold with their mothers, to girls and boys on the threshold of manhood and womanhood. All are dressed in bright colors, and displayed to the best advantage, that the hearts of bidders may be moved and their purses opened widely.

It will be a fine sale, says my neighbor, a handsome, dignified Moor, from one of the Atlas villages, who had chosen his place before I had reached the market. There must be well-nigh forty slaves.

Now each deal has his people sorted out, and the procession begins. Followed by his bargains, he marches round and round the market. Some of the slaves are absolutely free from emotion of any sort; others feel their position.

I learn that the deal's commission is 2 1/2 per cent. on the purchase price, and there is a government tax of 10 per cent. Slaves are sold under a warranty, and are returned if they have not been properly described by the auctioneer. Bids must not be advanced by less than a Moorish dollar—that is about three shillings—at a time, and when a sale is concluded a deposit is paid at once, and the balance on or after the following day. The attractive women and strong men have been sold, and have realized good prices; the old people are in little or no demand, but the auctioneers will persist. Outside the market-place one country Moor of the middle class is in charge of four young boys, slaves, and is telling a friend what he paid for them. I learned that a pair, price averaged, eleven pounds, apiece in English currency—two hundred and eighty dollars in Moorish money—that they were all bred in Malwa, by a dealer who keeps a large establishment of slaves in England might keep a stud farm, and sell the children as they grow up.

MOUNTAIN MUSIC

Strange Formation of Musical Rocks in Nevada.

From the shores of Pyramid Lake, near the Truckee River, Nevada, rise the rock-covered slopes of a musical mountain. It is little known to man of the present age, for it has no mines, and the country about its base is barren and unfit for cultivation, while the absence of a railway, or coaching convenience, puts it out of the beaten track of the tourists. In 1863, it was first discovered by a party of white settlers, who had come prospecting from Comstock, and who pitched their camp along side a waterhole at the foot of the mountain.

When the sun had gone down, and the myriads of insects had ceased their humming, and the animals had sought their lairs, a low, sweet sound of music seemed to emanate from the mountain side, beginning like the tinkling of millions of fairy bells, gradually swelling into a roll of harmony, and then stopping almost abruptly. In a short time the operation was repeated, and the sweetest sounds that ever fell on human ear rose in the calm evening air. Theories, wild and improbable were propounded by the prospectors; but no satisfactory reason was forthcoming, and the sounds continued at intervals throughout the night, becoming inaudible at sunrise.

After a time it was discovered by those men who developed a greater interest in the musical phenomenon than in prospecting, that the whole of the mountain side was covered with thin flakes of crystalline rock, lying in large beds, which were over moving slowly like an avalanche towards the foot. Basing their theories on this discovery, they arrived at the conclusion that the strains of music arose from the friction of these plates one against the other, and that the sounds of the world drowned the music by day, which accounted for its only being audible at night.

SETTLED THE ARGUMENT.

Visitor (to one-legged ducky).—Did you lose your leg in the war, uncle? Ducky.—No, sah, I done lose dat leg in de Raptis' cause, sah. I war minister in down in Carlin, and tuk a sinner down inter de tiber for 'neshiate. In inter, de chuch an' long come one dese yere mens us big, catfish, an' stracted dat laig from de remalus or my pusson. Indeed! That was a sad misfortune. I was in dat erpinion myself at de time, sah; but dar wuz one good zult, comin' from de same. Hit retted a pint dat my wife an' me had differed bout, for some time. She allers blowed dere war'n nuffin in de round world, dat I war good for, but after dat she war bledge, to owh up dat I wuz mighty good fish eat!

DR. A. W. CHASE'S 25c CATARRH CURE. It is the best remedy for the disease. It is a simple, improved Blower. It cleans the mucous membrane, and drives the mucus out, and permanently cures Catarrh, and Hay Fever, Blower free. All dealers or Dr. A. W. Chase Medicine Co., Toronto and Boston.