

SCIENTIFIC MISCELLANY.

Fashion in Gems—A Wax Formed in Paper-Making—Why the Air is Positively Electric—An Inalterable Protective for Metal Ships—The Celestial Pole Made Apparent—An Imitation Hand That is Natural—A Berlin Epidemic from Cattle.

Gem-stones are far more numerous than is commonly supposed, observes Mr. H. A. Miers of the British Museum, although they often pass muster under erroneous names. Fourmaline is sold as ruby, cinnamon stone as ja-synth, white jargon and phenacite as diamond, while green garnets are universally known in the trade as olivine or peridot. That the varieties of available gem-stones are not far more numerous is due mainly to the prejudice of purchasers, who ring the changes on diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds, and have heard of nothing else; estimating the stones, as the public estimates popular actors or authors, not by their real excellence, but by their names. In the mineral gallery of the British Museum are many examples of cut stones which have rarely or never been employed in jewelry, but should certainly win favor on their own merits. One very curious example is a little gem cut from a crystal of the ordinary tin-stone, the same ore which is worked for tin in the Cornish mines. This is a stone which, when cut from a sufficiently transparent crystal, possesses a most beautiful luster and color. Another example is a single rough fragment of stone from the ruby mines of Burmah, which has puzzled many but has been proven by scientific tests to be the borosilicate of lime known as Danburite, and whose appearance leads to the belief that it would make a beautiful gem.

An English chemist has found that a peculiar wax—evidently not existing in the raw fibre—is sometimes formed during the disintegration of cotton and linen pulp, and is deposited on the iron walls of the beater. The occurrence, which paper-makers have noticed, seems to be due to some peculiarity of the bleaching process. In one case 50 pounds of deposit was collected, and this yielded 77.54 per cent of the substance resembling bees-wax.

Experiments have been made to determine whether argon exists in nitrogenous vegetables or animal tissues, but no evidence of its presence in peas or in rice could be obtained.

In a recent lecture reviewing his investigation of atmospheric electricity between 1862 and 1868, Lord Kelvin stated that some very peculiar phenomena were discovered. It proved more difficult to discharge the atmosphere than to electrify it. The air becomes electrified when electricity is deposited in it, the electric force being continually varying, and sudden changes in electrification are explained by the motion of masses of differently electrified air. A peculiar phenomenon that wherever a waterfall strikes against a rock the air is negatively electrified. The pattering of the drops does this. By shaking water in a bottle it is possible to generate electricity, a somewhat strong solution of salt causing a positive electrification. As two-thirds of the earth's surface is ocean, the spray of storms must give positive electrification, and it is quite possible that storms at sea may explain the constant average of the positive electricity of the air.

A cellulose paint is recommended by a French writer for the protection of steel ships and all exposed metal surfaces. He would use a ten per cent solution of ordinary wood pulp, colored as desired, with the addition, at the time of using, of some siccative, such as an acid salt of lead or of manganese. This paint is said to be more adhesive than oil paints, and it finally becomes insoluble and absolutely inalterable.

Flammarion, the ingenious French astronomer, has been photographing the celestial pole! The position of this is constantly varying on account of the precession of the equinoxes and other movements of the earth, but with a stationary telescope its place at any particular time may be accurately determined from the circular lines drawn on a photographic plate by the circumpolar stars. Some of the plates used record the tracings of more than 200 stars. On a photograph taken last September with an exposure of 250 minutes, the arcs of the paths of the stars have a length of 60.5 degrees, and the different paths closely join to give a series of broken circles around a centre which represents a point towards which the earth's axis is pointed.

Experiments by M. Auguste Strindberg are said to indicate that sulphur,

instead of being an elementary substance, is really a fossil resin or bitumen, and a compound of carbon, oxygen and hydrogen.

An artificial hand that will not give a chill to the person shaking it—one that is warm and pulsating—is an invention claimed by a New York man. When exhibited, the hand was covered with a kid glove, and underneath the glove, according to the *Electrical Review*, there was felt a gentle throbbing motion which seemed to be communicated to the living hand, while an equally gentle and pleasant warmth was plainly perceptible. It seemed hard indeed to realize that the hand was not one of living flesh and blood. The apparatus is said to be very simple, a small dry battery supplying one electrical current which gently heats minute asbestos tubes—or "veins"—in the fingers, while another current sets in motion a number of small diaphragms in the palm, thus giving the throbbing motion to the hand.

A disease known as aphthous fever, identical with the foot-and-mouth disease of cattle, has been constantly present among villagers near Berlin since 1891, and the epidemic has this year reached the city itself. The first symptoms are giddiness, shivering, and inclination to vomit; at a later stage the tongue and gums swell, the teeth become loosened, and little blisters appear on the tongue, the lips, and the legs. In some cases serious ulcers are formed, but few deaths occur. A bacillus found in the liver and kidneys is believed to be the cause. Inoculations with cultures of this organism have produced the typical foot-and-mouth disease in cattle. The disease is transmitted by milk.

The temperature in all kinds of electric incandescent lamps have been found by Prof. Weber to be approximately the same, and are comprised between 1565 degrees and 1568 degrees Cent. Some lamps which have very thick filaments, giving a very brilliant light, have a temperature 40 degrees higher.

From a study of the records of earthquake-registering apparatus, M. de Montessus de Ballore finds that the total number of shocks actually occurring in a group of well-studied earthquake districts must be estimated at 16,957 a year. The average for this area alone being therefore a shock every half hour, the old declaration that no day passes without a shock being felt on earth proves no exaggeration.

Thorough investigation in India has finally proven that strychnine is not an antidote against snake poison.

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"Does my proposal impress you as sudden?" he asked.

"Not at all," said the new, up to date girl calmly. "I have been expecting it for some time."—Chicago Record.

Often Dropped.

"She has been jilted six times. No wonder she has no heart."

"Yes, constant dropping will wear away a stone."—Detroit Tribune.

Persons who sympathize with the afflicted will rejoice with D. E. Carr of 1235 Harrison street, Kansas City. He is an old sufferer from inflammatory rheumatism, but has not heretofore been troubled in this climate. Last winter he went up into Wisconsin, and in consequence has had another attack. "I came upon me again very acute and severe," he said. "My joints swelled and became inflamed; sore to touch or almost to look at. Upon the urgent request of my mother-in-law I tried Chamberlain's Pain Balm to reduce the swelling and ease the pain, and to my agreeable surprise, it did both. I have used three fifty cent bottles and believe it to be the finest thing for rheumatism, pains and swellings extant. For sale by O. M. Royster Druggist. 18-4t

Remarkable.

A housekeeper up town says that her grocer is so slow with his delivery that when she orders eggs the boy brings chickens.—Philadelphia Record.

When so many people are taking and deriving benefit from Hood's Sarsaparilla, why don't you try it yourself? It is highly recommended.

INSANITY AND NERVE POISON.

A Theory That Insanity is a Form of Blood Poisoning.

It is already beginning to be asked whether the delirium of insanity is not due, as that of typhoid fever, to blood poisoning, to a cerebral intoxication by infectious products or by the waste of insufficient or vitiated assimilation. It is certain that poisons act, in a very powerful manner on the nervous system. Lead, mercury and alcohol often produce paralysis among painters, gliders and those engaged in the manufacture of alcohol. Poison produced by the microbe of diphtheria often causes paralysis, as do the poisons secreted by other bacilli. So the more eminent specialists study nervous and mental maladies the more they approach the conclusions of Pasteur—that these diseases have some connection with infectious microbes—and the more also they apply to their specialty the ingenious ideas of M. Bouchard on the troubles caused by a bad digestion of alimentary products.

The nervous system is inclosed in a bony case composed of the bones of the head and the vertebrae. The encephalon is contained in the cranial cavity; the spinal marrow in the spinal canal. The marrow and the brain do not completely fill these cavities, and the interstices are filled with a liquid which prevents shocks and compressions. From the marrow and the brain the sensitive and motor nerves start, which carry sensations to the two central organs and take back the movements.

A sensation brought to the brain by a sensitive nerve generally provokes a motion, a contraction. In such cases the brain is a center, in which the impression is transformed into action, but very often the impression is not followed by any action. The nervous system then becomes a central storehouse for impressions. M. Brissaud very aptly compares the brain to a photographic plate which retains the image and only yields it under the influence of a developing body. The brain, particularly in infancy, stores up numerous sensations, which later cause actions. The cerebral center retains these images—that is, these lasting remembrances of outward excitations. The gray substance which forms the outside covering of the brain is a sensitive plate, on which images of the outer world are impressed.

The nerves conduct the electric, heat, light and sound waves to this cerebral covering, where they are impressed as on the cylinder of a phonograph. The impression is more or less exact according to the nature of the cerebral instrument. It is more or less profound according to the breadth of the number or vibrations of the waves. The impression thus formed becomes a recollection. It tends to become effaced with age. It submits to alterations according to modifications of the impressed surface. These images may remain unused in the brain for a long time, as the photographic plates in their box. The idea of an object is thus always the recollection of an object.

The association of ideas often causes an association of movements, called automatic. A little girl, for instance, learns to knit. At first she is very awkward, but gradually she progresses, and the work at last does itself, until finally she walks talks and learns her lessons while knitting. The different automatic centers occupy localized regions in the brain. The most celebrated is the center of language, localized about 1825 by Bouillaud in the front lobe of the brain. When any injury whatever, rupture of a blood vessel, softening of the brain tissue, etc., attacks this lobe, the faculty of language disappears, and the patient is stricken with aphasia. There are several aspects of this disease. Sometimes the patient cannot speak, but is able to express his thought in writing. This is aphasia of articulation. Others are able to speak, but cannot even write their own names. This is graphic aphasia. Others, though not at all deaf, have no idea that the name they hear pronounced is their own name, although they may be able to speak it, read it or write it. This is auditive aphasia. Others, finally, without being blind, have lost the faculty of reading, although they can still write. This is visual aphasia. Right handed aphasics, unable to speak, have suffered some injury of the third left frontal convolution, and left handed ones of the corresponding right one. Those who cannot write have some injury to the second frontal convolution. Those who have lost the faculty of hearing have a wound in the first left frontal convolution, and those who cannot see writing one of the second parietal left convolution.

Charcot has said, and M. Brissaud repeats: "In studying cerebral affections the nature of the injury is almost a matter of indifference. The localization is everything." One may become aphasic in consequence of an attack of apoplexy, a blow or shock, which causes an abscess of the brain, or a cancer, which presses on that organ. It can even be produced by tuberculosis. Alas, that the brain should be so delicate an organ!—Dr. G. Darenberg in Paris Journal des Debats.

New York's Taste In Silks.

A prominent silk manufacturer, in conversation with a Journal representative, remarked that one of the largest items of expense is the getting out of samples, which often result in nothing, for no living human being can tell what will take. "Why," he continued, "not long ago I prepared a batch of samples, a few of which were so very bad that I thought they at least would never do at all, but when they were shown in our New York house they were adopted at once. 'Now here is something odd—just the thing we want!' was the exclamation. And these goods, to which I thought no one with any taste would give a second glance, were the only ones ordered."—American Silk Journal.

How He Passed.

When Napoleon was a student at Brienne, he happened to be asked by one of the examiners the following question: "Supposing you were in an invested town threatened with starvation, how would you supply yourself with provisions?" "From the enemy," replied the sublieutenant of artillery. And this answer so pleased the examiners that they passed him without further questioning.—Argonaut.

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