

## Miscellaneous.

## ENGLISH LITERATURE.

A TRUE AND HARD HIT UPON SENSATIONAL WRITERS AND PENNY-A-LINERS.

English literature at the present day is like a plot of ground which once was a lovely garden, but which is now all overrun with weeds, and in this rank jungle lies in wait the penny-a-liner, whose calling it is to fall upon every fresh fact, and to tell it in the most diffuse and rambling way. Like a Thug, he chokes the life out of a sentence by a long coil of words. In general this assassin of the mother tongue has very vague notions of spelling. He could not write "irrelevant," or "veterinary," or even "separate" correctly from dictation. When a frost comes, though he revels at the prospect of accidents on the ice, his notions of zero are most perplexing. Sometimes he will tell you that "zero rose to freezing-point during the past night, but that as the sun rose zero fell suddenly, and a thaw set in." Sometimes he seems to think the centigrade thermometer is a malignant monster, a water-god that lurks among the weeds of the Serpentine in defiance of Mr. Cowper and the park-keepers, for he has been known to warn his readers on no account to venture on the ice so long as the centigrade is below zero, but to wait till they see their old friend Fahrenheit below the freezing-point, so that to him these two scales are the Ormuzd and Ahriman of skaters and sliders, the good and evil principles of frost, instead of two different scales expressing exactly the very same thing. With him all accidents are "awful," but he much prefers "catastrophe" to "accident." So too a fire is invariably a conflagration, and not only a conflagration but an "alarming" one, as if it were likely to be anything else. If he describes a shop it is an "extensive establishment," though the owner may be merely a cobbler. At a launch he is in great glory, for is he satisfied till he has described how "the noble triumph of marine architectural construction"—a periphrasis for ship which would delight the heart of an Anglo-Saxon "maker"—has "glided like lightning into its native element"—a most puzzling assertion, seeing that the native element of no part of a ship is water, either salt or fresh. He makes his way everywhere, and we find him even in the very last queen's speech, in which he makes her most gracious Majesty talk of a "friendly reconciliation" between contending Powers; as if a reconciliation could ever be anything else than friendly. Sometimes he goes up in a balloon, at least he says he does, though we hardly believe him. Were we there on the spot, endowed like Nero with absolute power, and sure that he was the only one of this wretched class alive, we would, without a moment's remorse, take such steps that the balloon, and he in it, should never come down. To the moon he might rise, and write a long description of earth to the "man" in that planet, but earth should be rid of him and his twaddle. But, alas! he goes up and comes down, and talks of the "veteran aeronaut" and of zero rising and falling up there in his distracting way. But we leave him where we found him, "the last man in possession" of the English language abiding in that stately palace which our forefathers have reared, and rendering it hideous by his utter ignorance of regimen or syntax, of mood or of tense, of person or of gender. Standing there, in the very forefront of our language and literature, read by millions every morning in the newspapers, his power for harm is incalculable. "To this complexion," after an existence of eighteen centuries, "have we come at last."—[North British Review.]

**SUGGESTION TO TREE PLANTERS.**—Those about to set out young trees, or fruit bearing or ornamental shrubs, should remember that the great leading object is to obtain a thrifty growth on the start. Reject, therefore, all large trees, for it is nearly impossible to take them up without leaving at least nine-tenths of the roots in the ground, including nearly all the small fibres. Such mutilated trees grow but little for several years, and then slowly recover from the effects of the removal; when a small, thrifty tree, taken up with plenty of roots, starts off at once, grows rapidly, and not only overtakes the larger one, but makes a handsomer and healthier tree, and bears larger and better-flavored fruit.

Another point, equally important, but very often neglected, is cutting back young trees, vines, &c, when they

are set out. Take a grape vine, or a prairie rose, for instance, and place it in the hands of a novice, and it will be nearly impossible to persuade him to cut off the "long, handsome, thrifty vine," five or six feet in length, leaving only a few inches next the root. Yet, if this operation is not performed, the plant will remain nearly stationary the first season, while otherwise, it would grow freely, and perhaps double or triple its former size. For the same reason, raspberries, gooseberries, &c, should be cut back freely when transplanted. The heads of young apple and pear trees, if shortened back in the same way, may be made to preserve their original form, or any new shape may be given them, without any loss, but a great gain in their growth. Peach trees, possessing a strong reproductive power, may be cut back most freely of any fruit tree—next apples and pears—then plums, and lastly cherries. The latter may have half of each yearling shoots removed.

But it is of the utmost importance that this cutting back be done before there is any swelling or expanding of the buds, otherwise the growth will be checked by the operation, instead of accelerated. This is especially the case with cherries and plums, which start more feebly than peaches and grapes. A main reason why cutting-back has failed with some, is doing the work after the buds have swollen or leaves expanded.—[Country Gentleman.]

**THE ANCIENT SAXONS.**—An English paper says that Mr. John Brent has finished his excavations in the Saxon cemetery at Sarr, in Thanet, for the present year. His researches have been most successful. Not only has he laid open nearly three hundred graves, but he has been so fortunate as to find some of especial interest, which supply novel materials to the student of Anglo-Saxon antiquities. As an example of the rich contents of some of these graves, it may be mentioned that one contained four fibulae (two circular and two cruciform); five gold pendants, which, with the fibulae, are elaborately ornamented; a very large crystal ball, set in a silver gilt frame or suspension, a silver gilt perforated spoon, set with garnets; an elegant footless glass cup, a silver ring, beads, and other objects, such as buckles, shears, and keys. This is the grave of a woman, no doubt a lady of rank, although it was at first supposed to have belonged to a man, from the fact that, with the objects enumerated above, was a sword or knife. One of the antiquaries, however, considers that although it be sword-shaped, it is no weapon of war. Not one instance has occurred of cremation; all the graves denoted burial of the body entire; neither has Mr. Brent discovered any urns with burnt bones, as are often found in the cemeteries in juxtaposition with skeletons.

**CAPTURED FLAGS.**—The War Department has in its possession 205 flags captured from the rebels in battle. This, of course, does not include all that have fallen into the hands of the Union troops a short time ago. The rebels claimed that they had 239 of our flags.

**TELEGRAPH.**—The one and a half-inch submarine telegraph cable from Fort Point to Lime Point, the longest in America, was laid, Feb 17, by the California State Telegraph Company.

**THE LATEST WRINKLE.**—A lucifer match is now in market that differs from anything hitherto in existence. Upon the side of each box is a chemically prepared piece of friction paper. When struck upon anything else whatever it obstinately refuses to flame. You may lay it upon a red hot stove, and the wood of the match will calcine before the end of it ignites. Friction upon anything else than this prepared pasteboard, has no effect upon it. The invention is an English one, and by special act of Parliament the use of other matches than this, is not permitted in any public buildings. The discovery is a curious one. There is not a particle of sulphur in the composition of the lucifers in question.—[Philadelphia North American.]

**TO PROTECT PLANTS FROM FROST.**—E. Alesworth, of Peterboro, New York, has accidentally discovered how to protect plants in frosty nights. He was in the habit of using boxes, casks, pails, pans and cloths. One very cold night he covered one plant with a basket.

In the morning on examination, everything was killed, or nearly so, except the plant under the basket. Now it is a well known fact that on the approach of a frosty night if the breeze keeps on blowing there is no frost to do much injury; but if the breeze goes

down with the sun, and is succeeded by a calm, then woe to the young flowers and garden plants. But any covering open on the sides or ends will create a draft in the stillest night, and this was the case with the basket. Ever since that time Alesworth has simply placed boxes, etc., at intervals, and laid boards on the top of them, leaving both sides wide open. It seems like no covering at all; but it is all that is needed, and he never loses a plant. The people are greatly troubled by frosts in that high region. In early June, and even in July, it is not an uncommon thing for them to put their flowers, etc., to bed and tuck them up. Blankets, sheets and cloth, with boxes, pails, pans etc., are all brought into requisition, and even with those the plants are often destroyed. But the gentleman above named always saves his plants by covering them in the method described.

**A LARGE MAGNET.**—Among the philosophical apparatus belonging to the Free Academy in this city, is an electro magnet weighing 650 pounds, which has held seven men suspended at one time, and how much more weight it would support nobody knows. This magnet was made by Charles T. & J. N. Chester, of 104 Center street, in this city. It is formed of two round bars of the softest iron, each 4 inches in diameter and 23 inches in length, which are secured at one end by massive screws to a cross piece to form a U magnet. The bars are wound with 200 pounds of No. 12 copper wire, insulated with cotton and shellac, and laid on in eight equal lengths, making the finished bar about eight inches in diameter. The armature is a bar of soft iron of 80 pounds. A neat wagon is employed for moving this magnet about the room, or it may be suspended from the ceiling by means of a block and tackle.—[Scientific American.]

**DENATIONALIZATION OF POLAND.**—St. Petersburg journals publish official documents which show that the Russian Government has been for some time back engaged in the preparation of measures intended for the complete denationalization of Poland. All offices of any importance are to be filled henceforth by Russians; Russian peasant colonies are to be established; the Polish Catholic clergy are to be placed under the strictest surveillance, and an active propaganda is to be set going on behalf of the orthodox Church. A letter from General Mouravieff, addressed to the government, recommends the gradual removal of the minor nobility from Poland, and suggests their deportation to Siberia as colonists.—[Journal of Commerce.]

**CAST A LINE FOR YOURSELF.**—A young man stood listlessly watching some anglers on a bridge. He was poor and dejected. At length, approaching a basket well filled with wholesome looking fish, he sighed "If, now, I had these I would be happy. I could sell them at a fair price and buy me food and lodging." "I will give you just as good fish," said the owner, who chanced to overhear his words, "if you will do me a trifling favor." "And what is that?" asked the boy eagerly. "Only to tend this line till I come back, I wish to go on a short errand." The proposal was gladly accepted. The old fisherman was gone so long that the young man began to be impatient. Meanwhile, however, the hungry fish snapped greedily at the baited hook, and the young man lost his depression in the excitement of pulling them in, and when the owner of the line returned, he had caught a large number. Counting out from them as many as were in the basket, and presenting them to the young man, the old fisherman said: "I fulfill my promise from the fish you have caught, to teach you that whenever you see others earning what you need; to waste no time in fruitless wishing, but to cast a line for yourself."

**OIL ON THE BRAIN.**—If you want to be bored, come to this oil region. Here's the place where you bore and get bored. It's nothing but oil from morning till night—oil on paper—boiled oil—people talk, write, sleep and snore oil. Ask a man how far it is to Charlestown:

"Twenty-six miles from Slabsides' oil spring."

"What time does the steamer leave for Wheeling?"

"Just as soon as Slocum's oil is loaded."

"What was that fight about yesterday?"

"Oil."

Jenkins married an oil well yesterday—or just as good—married Miss Snifkins, whose father struck "ile" a few days ago.

Snifkins hadn't time to go to his wife's funeral last Tuesday—his "ile" would run over."

Preachers preach about oil being poured upon the troubled waters, and say that this is the very spot where the oil for that occasion comes from. I slept on four barrels of oil last night—every hotel full. The entire country looks greasy, people have oily tongues and your oil-factory nerves are strongly impressed with the terrible stench. Everybody has territory for sale, and there are plenty of "fools and their money" who anticipate the realization of the Baron Munchausen stories that are afloat. Every sharper has a map of the region, and can tell a stranger exactly where the nicest spot is—he has been there, knows the place, but is short of funds—has no personal interest in the matter, not he indeed. But in mere matter of friendship advises you to buy there and then do what he is doing—bore, and oil must come. Men seem crazy, victims are plenty. Seeking to become suddenly rich, many a tolerably well-to-do, but over-sanguine individual goes his pile and loses all he has and sneaks off; a few strike ile and become millionaires, but not one in a hundred but get their fingers terribly burned.—[Cin. Commercial.]

**AIR LINE TO NEW YORK.**—A party of engineers have been surveying and running out a route through the lower townships of York County (Pa.) for the railroad between New York and Washington, as nearly on an air line as the surface of the country will admit. The route enters York County at Wrightsville, and proceeds in a southerly direction, passing through Windsor, York and Hopewell townships, immediately through Wintertown, in Hopewell, thence through Shrewsbury township to the villages of New Market and New Freedom.

**THE VALUE OF LIFE LOCALLY CONSIDERED.**—The report of the Police Commissioners presents some very startling facts to our citizens. The following extracts in reference to the increase of what is termed crimes of a "serious character," is valuable just now, coming as it does coeval with some of the most unprovoked crimes in the history of the metropolis. The report says: "A state of war is a school of violence and crime. The fruits of its instruction exhibit themselves mainly in cities, and most of all in the metropolis. It has been observed that during the war there has been a marked tendency to crimes of violence toward persons, and other crimes of a graver character, while petty offenses have not increased in proportion. Probably in no city in the civilized world not in the theatre of actual war, is human life so lightly prized and subjected to as great hazards from violence as in New York and Brooklyn. In no other such cities does the machinery of criminal justice so signally fail to restrain or punish serious and capital offenses. This is a startling proposition, but it is seen and felt by all classes of prudent and sober-minded people. There were arrested by the Metropolitan Police, for crimes of violence of a serious character, in 1863 and 1864 respectively, as follows:

	1863.	1864.
For felonious assault.....	343	401
For assaults on policemen.....	19	35
For attempt at rape.....	23	29
For insulting females in street.....	33	88
For murder.....	79	48
For maiming.....	6	6
For manslaughter.....	1	10
For rape.....	21	34
For threatening life.....	12	30
Total.....	527	742

A small portion of this mass of high crime has received the punishment provided by the laws." The last sentence quoted tells the trouble existing. Crime is not punished as it should be. Guilty are allowed to go free and innocent ones too often left to drag out years of confinement awaiting the time honored "law's delay." For a number of years it has been fashionable for our Legislature to attempt to tinkering with the punishment for capital crimes. At one time we actually had no enacting clause in the law for the punishment for murder, and since then the penalty of hanging has come practically into disuse. A reform of the most sweeping character is demanded.—[N. Y. Dispatch, Jan. 8.]

**ENORMOUS CASTING.**—It may be in the recollection of our readers that in July last the Sheffield Independent reported a successful attempt made by Stanley & Co., of the Midland works, to cast an anvil block weighing 160 tons. The enormous mass of iron took six weeks to cool, and it was then, by means of hydraulic power lifted from the mold. On Friday, the firm were engaged in casting a second anvil of precisely the same size and weight. The mold, which was 15 feet square at the base and 11 feet 6 inches deep, was dug out in the centre of the workshop, and from five