Miscellaneous.

RUSSIA.—An Imperial rescript has been published on the subject of education in Poland, which will tend to improve considerably the condition of that unfortunate country. The rescript begins by stating that up to the present time all schools have been governed according to the feudal system, the lord of the manor having the appointment of the master, and prescribing the sum which each pupil should pay for instruction. Another evil complained of related especially to the education of girls. It was almost entirely in the hands of the Catholic convents where the education was worse and the charges higher than in the free institutions. There were other complaints of various importance, arising from the differences of religion or of language in the different provinces of the kingdom of Poland. For the future the communes or townships are to take a share in the management of the primary schools, and to take upon themselves the payment of half the salary of the teachers; the other half will be supplied by Government for the first ten years of the schools' existence, after which time it will fall entirely upon the commune. Each nationality and each religious persuasion may found a school for itself, and receive Government assistance. The instruction in each school will be given in the language of the majority of the pupils. Polish and Russian may be taught in the schools speaking a different language, if required. New free institutions will be created for the education of girls in the various large towns. A special school is to be formed in Warsaw for the German inhabitants. The University of Warsaw will retain all its privileges, so far as they are consistent with the new regulations. A final decree ordains that, in consideration of the fact that the kingdom is again pacified, many of the severer and more degraded punishments are abolished, such as branding and flogging.

TURKEY.—A horrible tragedy is reported in a Constantinople letter. The following are the particulars as thus reported:

Djemila Sultana, the third daughter of the late Sultan, now in her twenty-second year, was married to Mahmoud Jelladin Pasha. The position of a subject upon whom the Sultan confers the hand of one of his daughters is anything but an enviable one, as the princesses treat the unhappy husband much in the same way as they do their slaves, or rather worse, for the latter have not the misery of appearing in a false position. It is well-known that the husbands of the daughters of the late Sultan—Fatima, Raffia, and Djemila—have led the most wretched of lifes from the arbitrariness and jealousy of their wives. The tragedy which occurred on the 12th instant arose from this cause. The Sultana Djemila, from causes well or ill founded, became jealous of one of her slaves, whom she imagined was regarded with some favor by her husband; in her highness's rage against the unfortunate girl she ordered one of her eunuchs to cut her head off, which was done at a stroke of his cimeter. Then she determined to extend her revenge to her husband, and coolly directed that the girl's head should be placed under a cover on the Pasha's dinner-table. It is the custom in Turkey for the male heads of families to dine apart from their women. On the day in question the Sultana seated herself on the divan—a long sofa extending across the room—previous to her husband's entering the dining-room. On his arrival, as is customary, he went up to his imperial spouse and rendered her the usual homage. She requested him to proceed with his dinner. When seated, he called on the servants present to remove the cover which is thrown over the tray which forms the top of the table; to his surprise they hesitated, and shrank back. The Sultana then called to him to remove it himself, upbraiding the servants for their conduct. The unhappy Pasha, obeying his wife's directions, threw off the cover, and then before him lay the gory head of the murdered girl. He reeled and fell back a corpse. Previous to taking off the cover he had drank some sherbet, and whether this was poisoned, as some imagine, or that the shock produced apoplexy, has not been ascertained, as no *post mortem* examination has been held. It will, of course, be thought that the imperial murderess was at once seized and placed in the hands of justice. On the contrary. Djemila Sultana, a princess of the imperial family, daughter of Sultan Abdul Medjid, and niece of the reigning Sultan, has up to the present moment remained in her house unmolested, and the only notice taken of the matter has been that her imperial uncle is very angry with her.

MEERSCHAUM.—The manufacture of meerschaum into pipes and cigar-holders is now carried on to a considerable extent in this city. The carving will compare well with that of the imported article. In the hands of a good artist this soft and friable material may be cut with the clear and finished outlines of coral or cameo. Roses, lilies, bunches of grapes, hounds, foxes, and all kinds of graceful quadrupeds, doves, swans, storks, eagles, and every variety of shapely bird, the human face and figure, the beauty of Venus, the majesty of Apollo, and, highest of all, elaborate groups of men and women are subjects of his taste anb skill. Meerschaum is expensive enough, of itself. It is imported in boxes of forty pounds each, valued al about $1,000. But the carving is the main point of cost in the high-priced pipes. Two hundred pounds is not an unusual price in England for some masterpiece of meerschaum sculpture—like the Battle of the Amazons, the Judgment of Paris, or other ambitious study of that kind—which costs a first-rate artist six months or a year of hard work. American smokers have not yet risen to that height of sumptuousness in the indulgence of their favorite luxury; and $100 is about as much as our fumigating virtuosi are willing to pay for their meerschaums.

Americans are extravagant enough in some things; but it may be reasonably doubted whether they will ever put the price of an eligible building lot or a span of trotting horses into a pipe.

Imitation meerschaum is made in the same way as imitation ivory. That is, the parings and scrapings of the real article are worked over, pressed and dried. There seems to be no sure way of detecting meerschaum prepared by this method. It is generally heavier, but not always, than the true meerschaum, whose spescific gravity varies from 1.2 to 1.6. Some specimens of the latter are heavier than the former, on account of the presence of solid earth or chalky matter in the interior. Some varieties, on the other hand, are so light and porous that they readily float in water. The workers prefer meerschaum whose specific gravity is midway between these extremes. The color of the real meerschaum, like that of the composition, (technically called "massa") varies from a snow white to a deep brown through the intermediate shades of yellow and red. These tints are imparted by silicate of iron. There is only one test by which the composition can be told, with anytning like positiveness. After a meerschaum has been smoked for some time, little blemishes appear in the pure article, which no amount of smoking brings out in the imitation. As this test cannot be applied until after the pipe has been bought and colored, by that hard pulling and sublime perseverence, which the smoker brings to his task, there is no surety against the purchase of bogus pipes, except in selecting your chunk of crude meerschaum, and having it made up to order by an honest artist. Magnificent specimens of "massa" were exhibited at the Crystal Palace, London, deceiving professional judges and the very elect of smokers. The difference between the two kinds is a matter of fancy. "Massa" smokes and colors quite as nicely as meerschaum.

Meerschaum is not—as is now generally known—the coagulated foam of the sea (*ecume de mer*,) but a hydrate of magnesia and silica, with a trace of iron. It is supposed to be a decomposed carbonate of magnesia. It is found in veins of serpentine in Greece, in Spain, near Madrid, in Sweden and Monrovia; but the commercial supply comes chiefly from the peninsula of Natolia, Asia Minor. At the last named place, near the town of Coniah, the meerschaum ls taken from a fissure nearly six feet in width. When first exposed to the air it is comparatively soft, and, if rubbed up with water, gives off a lather like soap. It was from this fact, and the neighborhood of the vein to the sea, that meerschaum probably derived its poetical name. Before use it is boiled in a mixture of oil, fat and wax, without which preparation the heat and smoke of the burning tobacco would not give to the meerschaum that color for which it is so highly prized; and the prodigious toil of the smoker would go unrewarded.—New York Journal of Commerce.

WHISKEY AND NEWSPAPERS.—A glass of whiskey, says an exchange, is manufactured from perhaps a dozen grains of mashed corn, the value of which is too small to be estimated. A pint of this mixture sells at retail for one shilling, and if of a good brand, is considered by its consumers well worth the money. It is drunk off in a minute or two; it fires the brain, rouses the passions, sharpens the appetite, and deranges and weakens the physical system. It is gone, and swollen eyes, parched lips, and aching head are its followers. On the same sideboard upon which this is served lies a newspaper, the new, white paper of which costs about two cents. This is covered with a hundred thousand types; it brings intelligence from the four quarters of the globe; it has in its clearly printed columns all that is strange or new at home; it tells you the state of the markets; gives accounts of the war, the excution of the last murderer, the last steamboat explosion or disaster, articles on philosophy, government, religion, &c., and yet for all this, the newspaper costs less than the glass of grog, the juice of a few grains of corn.

It is no less strange than true, that there are a large portion of the community who think the corn juice cheap and the newspaper dear, and the printer has hard work to collect his dimes, when the liquor dealers are paid cheerfully. How is this? Is the body a better paymaster than the head; are things of the moment more prized than things of the future? Is the transient trickling of the stomach of more consequence than the improvement of the mind, and the information that is essential to a rational being? If this had its real value, would not a newspaper be worth many pints of whiskey?—British Standard.

COAL OIL INEXHAUSTIBLE.—We may set it down as an axiom that nature is not only capable of producing now all articles that she has ever produced, but that she is and will continue to produce them until she substitutes something better. Perhaps our meaning will be better understood by applying it to a single article. Suppose, for instance, we take the one in which we all have so deep an interest, petroleum. This is known to be a hydro-carbon, composed of two gases. These gases are primary elements, indestructible and exhaustless in quantity. One of them, hydrogen, is a constituent of water, and, of course, is as inexhaustible as the ocean. The other is a constituent in all vegetable forms and in many of our rocks. One hundred pounds of limestone, when burned, will weigh but sixty pounds. The part driven off by burning is carbonic acid. Underlying the "Oil Rock" is a stratum of limestone, of unknown thickness, but known to be upwards of one thousand feet in depth. The water falling on the surface and percolating through the porous sandstone that underlies the oil rock becomes charged with salt, potash, saltpetre, and other chemical ingredients, and finally reaches the limestone rock and decomposes it, the carbon in the rock and the hydrogen of the water uniting to form oil, while the oxygen is set free, to ascend to the atmosphere or unite with minerals and form oxydes. The reverse of this process is seen in burning the oil in a lamp, the oxygen in the atmosphere uniting with the carbon in the oil, forming carbonic acid, and, with the hydrogen, forming water, thus completing the circle. The question is frequently asked, when will the oil become exhausted? We shall answer—when the ocean is, and not before.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.—The *romancier*, author of "Monte Christo," "Les Trois Mousquetaires," and something less than a thousand other works of fiction, many of which are well known and have been extensively read in the United States, intends leaving Paris in the latter part of December or the early part of January, for New York. It is the intention of Dumas to travel about four months in the United States, and he goes with the avowed purpose of writing a book, but whether a book of fact or fiction he does not state. He will take with him a private secretary and two translators, and intends having his work published simultaneously in New York, Paris and London. Dumas is a dark mulatto, of most unmistakeable hue, with hair considerably crisped. He is now about sixty years of age, and is one of the finest looking men in Europe. He is a reckless, extravagant man, financially speaking, receiving an immense income from his works, spending from two to three hundred thousand francs a year, always in debt and always borrowing. He is a man of great *bonhommie* and kindness of heart, and gives away large sums of money every year, to artists, literary Bohemians, and poor devils of every description. He is a very high liver, and drinks excellent wines, of which he is an excellent judge.

STRENGTH OF ANCHORS.—The English Admiralty have lately tested a new anchor constructed on an improved plan. This anchor weighed two thousand four hundred and sixty-eight pounds, on being placed on the testing machine. The distance from the centre of the pin, which fastens the shackle to the shank, to a point near the extremity of one of the flukes, was five feet and five inches. Although subject to strains varying from nine to a weight of twenty-four and five-sixteenths tons, its deflection was but one-half inch, and the shackle only one-sixteenth of an inch; at fifteen tons it was decreased by three-sixteenths, at nine tons the permanent set was one-eighth less; and when all pressure was removed, the original dimension was regained. The Admiralty test was twenty-four and five-sixteenths tons; and the result was highly satisfactory.

CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS.—The Superintendent inveighs warmly and vigoronsly against the false economy of employing cheap teachers. The average wages paid to male teachers, during the last school year was $73.88 per month, and to females, $54 91. As they are only paid for the time employed, male teachers get an average salary of $469 per annum and females $379. Out of this meager pittance they must pay their boarding and other expenses, thus receiving really less wages than domestic servants or Chinese laborers, while their position in society compels them to make the best show of respectability they can. In San Francisco the lowest wages paid to female teachers are $800 per aunum, and the salaries range from that sum to $2,500, which is paid to the principal of the High School. The result of this liberality is that the San Francisco schools are furnished with the best teachers in the State. We may add, that whenever the vocation of teacher is degraded by sordid remuneration, it will generally be found that it is filled with ignorance and incapacity, if no worse—[Ex.

ANSWERS.—A pupil of the Abbe Sicord gave the following answers:

"What is gratitude?"

"Gratitude is the memory of the heart."

"What is hope?"

"Hope is the blossom of happiness."

"What is the difference between hope and desire?"

"Desire is a tree in leaf, hope is a tree in flower, and enjoyment is a tree in fruit."

"What is eternity?"

"A day without yesterday or to-morrow—a line that has no end."

"What is time?"

"A line that has two ends—a path that begins in the cradle and ends in the tomb."

GREAT VOLCANIC ERUPTION.—A correspondent of the Honolulu Advertiser, having visited the volcano of Kilauea, says:

I was at Kilauea on the 9th and 10th of Jan. There was much action in the great cauldron of Halemaumau. Mother Pele was boiling up her rock-soup with vehemence, as if preparing for a rain of young volcanoes. Besides this raging lake, I saw seven other fires at different points in the crater. One lake was boiling most intensely, about a mile from the fountain-lake in a north-westerly direction. The natives told me that, a day or two previous to my arrival at Kilauea, a jagged cone, of the size of a church, and forming an elevated island near the centre of the igneous lake, became so undermined by the intense boiling of the fusion along its apparent base, that it fell over, and was submerged in the fiery abyss; but that, after a little time, it rose again, like a whale from the deep, and shook cataracts of molten minerals from its burning brow. In visiting a pulu station on the highlands, some fifteen miles from Kilauea, I passed many large pits and cone craters, most of them ancient and densely wooded, from three hundred to eight hundred feet in hight and depth. I spent a night near a beautiful pit-crater called Napau, nearly circular, about three hundred feet deep, a mile, perhaps, in diameter, and with a bottom of sand, so smooth and hard that a regiment of cavalry might be reviewed there. One-eighth of a mile from this crater, fissures are opened in the earth, out of which scalding steam and smoke have issued from time immemorial, and affording heat enough to cook for an army.

COTTON-GROWING AT TAHITI.—Under the administration of the French Protectorate, which has offered a series of liberal premiums to encourage agriculture, the Tahitians are engaging nobly in the cultivation of cotton. Over three hundred acres aro already planted