

## Miscellaneous.

**THE ORIGINAL AUSTRALIANS.**—The religion of the aborigines, says a traveler, in all parts of Australia, includes a belief in sorcery, and a dread in numerous demons, spirits of the wood, of the river, of the mountains and the pool. Some of these are the spirits of dead men. I once met a party of thirty or forty men and women who were traversing the country along the Barwan, as strolling play-actors, performing a pantomime in the presence of every camp of their countrymen, with the avowed design of driving away the ghosts of dead men. All night long the choir continued to sing. In the morning having marked their bodies with earths of various colors, yellow and blueish grey, they went through a mimic fight with unseen foes, beating the air with branches and rushing about in a frantic manner. After alternately marching, dancing, and charging to the sound of music, they declared that the ghosts were all gone, and would trouble the inhabitants of the place no more. The general name for ghosts or spirits is "wunds." And this name they give to white men, probably from the impression which has spread among them, that white people are blackfellows risen from the dead. The chief of all the wundas, the arch demon, is said to appear at their *baras* or public meetings, in the form of a serpent. And there are figures of serpents cut on the trees in some places, to which they pay religious homage. Parental affection is generally very strong in the aborigines; and when a child dies the parents testify their grief in the same manner as the ancient heathen Canaanites, by cutting themselves. I have seen a number of women sitting down to mourn with a bereaved mother—their skin plastered with white clay, and blood streaming down from large gashes made with the tomahawk in their heads. In conjugal affection savages are generally deficient. As a traveler in distant parts of the interior, I can bear witness that aborigines have treated me with kindness and with a polite consideration which I did not expect to meet in such a quarter. And I believe they are as a people remarkably susceptible of impressions from kind treatment. They recognized me as one who sought their good, and were evidently pleased and thankful to see that I thought them worth looking after. Their musical power is strong. Of their very simple melodies, some have a wild mirthfulness, and others a most plaintive melancholy. The very soul of the people seems to breathe out in their brief songs. And when under training, their musical taste has been successfully used as an aid in their civilization.

**A PAPER HOUSE.**—A London paper gives the following account of the mode of application of paper for building purposes:

An exhibition of a novel and interesting character will shortly take place, and one designed to illustrate the varied and almost exhaustless uses to which paper may be applied. M. Steremey, whose inventive genius is only rivalled by his perseverance under many difficulties, has been for some time past engaged in the preparation of the materials for this exhibition. He proposes to build a house of paper; to construct the walls of paper tiles, to floor it with paper boards, to supply the water through paper pipes, and to supply a large portion of the furniture and household utensils of paper. The inventor, in the preparation of the materials, makes use of a peculiar description of gum, which he calls *zapissa* which is found in large quantities in the East, and which he contends is the same material as that used by the ancient Greeks and Romans as a coating for their shoes, and by the ancient artists for encaustic paintings, such as adorned the tombs of Egypt and the dwellings of Pompeii. M. Steremey, now a political exile from Hungary, was formerly Colonel in the engineers of the Austrian service, and was appointed by the Imperial government one of the members of the scientific commission to enquire into and report upon various subjects connected with archaeological science, and in the course of his extensive travels in the East he was enabled to throw considerable light upon many questions of interest respecting the encaustic and *zapissa* process of the ancients. The gum, treated in various modes, according to the purposes for which it is required, possesses very remarkable preservative qualities. It will enquire or harden stone, as may be seen by those portions of the exterior of the House of

Commons on the river front which have been treated with this substance. Its effects may also be seen in a portion of the front of the Bank of England. It has been employed by Mr. Penrose as the base upon which to plant the frescoes on the interior of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, and if its merits be as great as are claimed for it, we may soon have reasons to regret that this material was not employed for the frescoes of the Houses of Parliament, and that Mr. Herbert's magnificent picture was not painted upon *zapissa* rather than upon the so called water-glass. The gum has not only been successfully applied to stone, but bricks; and soft plaster casts, when immersed in, or coated with, the compound, become hard as granite, and sparks may be struck from a substance which but a few days before was only a piece of soft chalk. Iron may be equally protected from the decay which was rapidly eating it away, by several coatings of this remarkable substance.

**ANTIDOTE FOR POISON.**—Dr. J. Edmonds, a prominent London physician, writes as follows to the *London Times*: I inclose a simple, safe and accessible prescription for the whole range of acid corrosive poisons, which, if promptly used, will almost invariably save life. Mix two ounces of powdered chalk or magnesia, or one ounce of washing soda, with a pint of milk, and swallow it at one draught; then tickle the back of the throat with a feather or finger so as to produce vomiting. Afterward drink freely of milk and water, and repeat the vomiting so as to thoroughly wash out the stomach. Any quantity of chalk or magnesia may be taken with safety, but soda in large quantities is injurious. I may add, that the narcotics are excepted. Milk is an antidote for almost all the poisons, and especially followed by vomiting.

**MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.**—A traveler says that in Great Britain, well-to-do people never appear to go to business until noon, and then they move with a slow and stately gait. In France all is politeness and bustle. In Egypt, the motto of the people would seem to be "cursed be he that does to-day what he can do to-morrow." In London, he sometimes mounted the seat with the driver of an omnibus, who, usually a grum, heavy man, would answer his inquiries with a good English grunt and then willingly ride on, if allowed, for hours without speaking. In Ireland he took his seat on the lively, flying, jaunting car, and started off with a great flourish, a crack of the whip and overflowing of good nature and fun; he found a man full of anecdotes and odd jokes which would have forced the severest monk in the world to break his vow, had he ever made one against laughter. In all France, after leaving Paris, he saw scarcely a wooden or iron fence, and seldom a stone wall. A fine comment on the respect of the people for law and order. In London, he saw ministers preach with kid gloves on. In Arabia, Syria and Egypt, no Moslem takes wines; but, it appears that they have got a drink which, not called by that name, is similar in its operation. Women in the south of France are vilely used, bearing the burden of agricultural labors, etc. A short way from Jerusalem, he saw a stout Arab holding the plough, to which were harnessed a mule and a woman! And he acted as if it did not concern him much which of the two it was that the long spear-like rod he held in his hand should strike first or hardest as he labored to hurry them on. Throughout the East, woman was looked upon as an inferior being. In some places the birth of a daughter was a matter of condolence of the friends with the father. He noticed many other peculiarities, some of them of patriarchal antiquity. None, however, so deeply affected him as the custom of the Hebrews every Friday to repair to one of the ruined walls of the Temple, and wait over Jerusalem and their disappointment at the delay of the Messiah.

**WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE A GOOD NEWSPAPER.**—"We receive at this office thirteen daily newspapers, and from sixty to eighty weeklies, all of which we make it a point to read. From this mass and labyrinth of matter we carefully select such articles, items, gems and tit-bits as comprise the miscellany of our columns. Each editor acts upon this principle; hence, each individual paper is an epitome of the whole, and in proportion to the extent of the editor's judgment contains the quintessence of the whole. It requires more talent to make good selections, than it does to write a good leader; hence, we imagine that the popu-

larity of a paper depends, to a great extent, on its selections. That editor is a fool who imagines he can write better on all subjects than any of his contemporaries. We all have our specialties—some peculiar gift—in which, perhaps, we may excel many others. It is the art of combining these gifts, and culling their choicest gems, that makes the readable, eagerly sought-for, splendid journal. Such is our idea of what a good paper should be; but, bless us, how few of us 'fill the bill.'"—[*San Jose Mercury*.]

**CORNELIUS O'DOWD ON AMERICANS.**—There is a rough, unvarnished Yankee that I like much. I like his self-reliance, his vigor, his daring earnestness, and I don't dislike his intense acuteness, and I forgive his ill-humor with England. It is your traveled Philadelphian, your literary gentleman from Boston, or your almighty swagger from Boston that I cannot stomach. This be-ringed and gold-chained masticator is positively odious to me. His imitation of the usages of society is at once so close and remote, as to afford a cruel mockery of our actual civilization; and I long to read my Darwin backwards, and fancy the time when he will go back to his native woods and prairies, and be as wildly fantastic and barbarous as nature intended him. These people are not the nation; they are not even like it. They are the offshoots of an over wealthy and purse-proud society, who, not daring to exhibit their impertinences where they are known, come over to Europe to display themselves in all the extravagances of a mistaken culture. "When a good American dies he goes to Paris," it is said; and I am almost tempted to wish that he would wait for his immortality on his own side of the Atlantic. Such people have helped to make the Continent dear, and done very little to make it pleasanter.—[*Blackwood's Magazine*.]

**THE SUEZ CANAL.**—Mr. Ferdinand de Lesseps gives public notice that his projected Ship-canal, uniting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean, was so far completed in 1864 that a daily boat has been run from Port Said to Suez since the 1st of last month—a large bark towed by a steamer, and conveying twenty to thirty passengers having passed from sea to sea within twenty-four hours. As yet, the depth of water would seem to be but four or five feet, with a width of thirty to forty; but it is confidently calculated that the canal will be prepared for effective transportation by April, when six steam-tugs are to be ready for service upon it.

This canal is ninety miles long, and is to have, when completed a minimum depth of twenty feet, with a width of 330 feet at the surface. It was commenced in 1859 by a private company, on a subscribed capital of \$40,000,000. We infer that M. de Lesseps does not expect to complete it immediately, but to deepen it by degrees without interfering with its use. A British railroad, 222 miles long, passing from Alexandria through Cairo to Suez, has for some years afforded expeditious transit between the two seas.—[*N. Y. Tribune*.]

**POPULATION OF SWEDEN.**—The Swedish census, taken December 31, 1863, is published. The total population of Sweden is 4,022,564, and there are 105,940 more women than men. The increase of population during the last five years has been 1 per cent. About three and a half millions live in the country, and the rest in the towns, Stockholm containing nearly 350,000 inhabitants. The population of Norway is about 1,500,000, which would give the united kingdom about five and a half millions of inhabitants.

**SELLING CHILDREN IN CHINA.**—The *Esperance* of Nancy, publishes the particulars respecting the proceedings of the Society of the Sainte Enfance, in China, extracted by a lady, a native of Nancy, at present residing at Hong Kong: "All that you have heard about Chinese children is but too true. They are not, indeed, given to the pigs here; but that is the case further in the interior. At Hong Kong, mothers come to the asylum of the Sainte Enfance and offer their children for sale, as I myself saw only a day or two ago. I have just visited this asylum, kept by the nuns of St. Paul, whose principal establishment is at Chartres. While I was there the bell rang, a nun went to open it, and returned in an instant after with a female infant only a few days old. The price paid was 200 sapecks; but the mother, a hideous creature, wanted more, or else to have the child's clothes returned, which were accordingly given to her. The nuns told me that there

were women who carried on quite a trade in these poor babes. One had brought no less than forty to the asylum, and she confessed that, before she had the opportunity of selling them, she had thrown above six hundred into the sea. I stood godmother to the poor thing purchased in my presence. The great cause of these horrors is that the Chinese can repudiate their wives and marry again every year. The divorced wives, according to the Chinese law, have the right of life and death over their children, and if unable or unwilling to rear them, they get rid of them in any way they choose."

**A KIND JUDGE.**—A very learned and compassionate judge in a Western State, on passing sentence on one Jones, who was convicted of murder, concluded his remarks as follows:—"The fact is, Jones, the court did not at first intend to order you to be executed before next spring; but the weather is so very cold; our jail is unfortunately in a bad condition; much of the glass in the windows is broken; the chimneys are in such a dilapidated state that no fire can be made to render your apartment comfortable; besides, owing to a great number of prisoners, not more than one blanket can be allowed to each, and to sleep sound and comfortable is therefore out of the question. In consideration of those circumstances, and wishing to lessen your suffering as much as possible, the court, in exercise of humanity and compassion, do hereby order you to be executed to-morrow morning as soon after breakfast as may be convenient to the sheriff and agreeable to you."

**USE OF THE ARMS IN WALKING.**—The first time you are walking with your arms at liberty, stop moving them, and hold them by your sides. You will be surprised to find how soon your companion will leave you behind, although you may hurry, twist, wriggle and try very hard to keep up. One reason for the slow walk among girls is to be found in this practice of carrying the arms motionless. Three miles an hour, with the arms still, is as hard work as four miles with the arms free.

I have seen the queens of the stage walk. I have seen a few girls and women of queenly bearing walk in the street and drawing-room. They moved their arms in a free and graceful manner. Could this habit become universal among girls, their chests would enlarge, and their bearing be greatly improved. See that girl walking with both hands in her muff. How she wriggles and twists her shoulders and hips! This is because her arms are pinioned. Give them free swing, and her gait would soon become more graceful.

You have seen pictures of our muscles. Those of the upper part of the body, you remember, spread out from the shoulder, in all directions, like a fan. Now, if you hold the shoulder still, the muscles of the chest will shrink, the shoulders stoop, and the whole chest becomes thin and ugly.

But some girls will say, "Swinging the arms must be very slight exercise." True, it is very slight if you swing the arms but once or ten times, but if you swing them ten thousand times in a day, you will obtain more exercise of the muscles of the chest than by all other ordinary movements combined. Indeed, if I were asked what exercise I thought most effective for developing the chests of American girls I should reply at once, swinging the arms while walking.—[*Dr. Dio Lewis*.]

**ICE AND SCRIPTURE.**—It may not be known to many of our readers that the use of ice as a comfortable thing, if not a luxury, is spoken of in the Old Testament. The passage referring to it may be found in Proverbs, twenty-fifth chapter and thirteenth verse. It is as follows:

"As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him."

**THE USE OF COFFEE.**—It is somewhat singular to trace the manner in which arose the use of this common beverage—coffee. At the time Columbus discovered America, it had never been known or used here. It only grew in Arabia and Upper Ethiopia. The discovery of its use as a beverage is ascribed to the Superior of a monastery in Arabia, who, desirous of preventing the monks from sleeping at their nocturnal services, made them an infusion of coffee, upon the report of some shepherds, who observed that their flocks were more lively after browsing on the fruit of that plant. Its reputation spread through the adjacent countries, and in about two hundred years it reached Paris. A single plant, brought there in 1714, became the parent stock of all the French coffee plantations in the West Indies.