

Miscellaneous.

A GOLDEN RECORD.

The following account of lives and deeds which honor human nature is copied from the Paris' correspondent of the Boston *Congregationalist*:

THE MONTYON PRIZES.

The Montyon prizes, distributed by the Academy of France, to persons made known to them as having exhibited remarkable virtues, or having performed unexampled deeds of charity. The society holds its annual meeting in June, and this year the reports were not less interesting than usual. The prizes were founded in 1782; as we have before stated, and were instituted to reward the poor who make sacrifices for those more unfortunate than themselves, or who sustain with Christian fortitude, their own great trials.

The persons themselves do not come to relate their deeds, and claim rewards. They are in almost all cases those who are not conscious of doing anything remarkable, and who perhaps never heard of a society which rewards those who do well. Those who wish to present them make known their history, first to the municipal officer in the neighborhood where they dwell. He substantiates the facts stated by the testimony of many who are acquainted with them, and submits them to the Prefect of the Department, who must also make himself perfectly acquainted with the individuals mentioned, and if he finds that the narratives are true he sends them to the Secretary of the Academy, properly testified.

The conduct which is to be rewarded must have been pursued during a period of at least two years. During the last twenty years the same person has been employed to examine all the cases and decide which is the most worthy of notice, and is often obliged to choose among a hundred. There are four thousand one hundred dollars to bestow, and the society is at liberty to give it all to one, or divide it into few or many. There are usually about twenty who become recipients.

One would suppose that in the course of eighty years the existence of such a fund would become so well known that many people would attempt to earn a reward by conforming to the requisitions. But the villages and cottages of France are almost as isolated now as they were centuries ago, and not half the people can read. In the reports of these eighty years there are the histories of two thousand lives full of noble deeds, and in connection with them we learn the histories of thousands more, full of suffering, dark with sin, or light with heroism, in colors which no imagination could deepen.

WHAT ONE WOMAN HAS DONE.

This year we read of a woman who has spent all her life in a *criche*, which is an institution peculiar to France, and is where poor women, who are obliged to go every day to toil, deposit their children in the morning and return for them in the evening. They are fed and cared for during the day by kind nurses, kept clean and in good air, and supplied with medical attendance for only a few cents. Sister Genevieve has thus taken care of 2,225 infants in the last ten years only, in one of the poorest quarters of Paris.

But she did not confine her labors to children. The parents were equally objects of her solicitude, many who had separated and were thus entailing dishonor upon their offspring, she induced to unite again, and a hundred and seven who had never been married, she led to the altar, and thus legitimized more than two hundred children. In one instance she spent seven years of unwearying effort to bring about such a union; but there were six children, the eldest of whom was twenty years of age. She adopted ten orphans and provided for them in the world, and rescued two little street singers from the wretched life to which they were doomed by their parents, and placed them in good families, and aided many young girls to marry by the little money they needed to begin life, and saved many more from temptation and sin. To record all the details of such a life and those connected with it would fill a volume, and what a volume! Has romance anything to compare with reality?

A STORY FOR YOUNG LADIES AND ANOTHER FOR EMPLOYERS.

Another prize was given to a young girl who earns her living by dancing in a theater. She has lived always in the midst of poverty and seduction without ever having been contaminated, and never sinks under burdens that would seem insupportable with the aid of wealth and luxury. A sick mother and an aged uncle are entirely dependent upon her, and besides taking all the care of them, she does the work of the family and leads a little brother to school. In the middle of the day she walks three miles to the theater for practice, and returns to perform her household labor, and in the evening walks again the same distance to return after midnight, always cheerful, and comporting herself with such dignity that the most gay and thoughtless regard her with respect and admiration. What a pity that some other sphere cannot be found for a soul so noble, a life so heroic! Another instance is that of the proprietor of a large establishment, who was presented by the wishes of the hundred young men and women he employed, because of his upright and generous conduct, which enabled them also to live uprightly. When they are sick he pays the physician, medicine and care they need. When bread rises above the ordinary price, he pays the difference for them. When they become too old for work he gives them a pension, and provides for widows and orphans.

WHAT A RICH WOMAN DID.

Often it is only a medal which is given, merely to express the sentiments of homage inspired by a life of self-denial and good works.

In one case all the officials of a city and a great proportion of the inhabitants send a petition that this may be granted to a lady who has been an angel of mercy in their midst, and whom they designate as the "benefactress of Bailleul," the town in the north, on the borders of Belgium, where she lived. She was rich, and in early youth consecrated nearly all her income to the poor. When she became a mother and saw how much care was necessary for the moral and physical health of a child, she said, "How is it possible for the children of the poor to live?" Eighty little boys became her adopted children, and received from her all a mother's care and instruction. When she became a widow she left her home to reside in a school, where six hundred girls were collected from among the poorest, and taught to work as well as to read under her direction. But not only these which she immediately superintended, but all the institutions of charity of the city and surrounding country considered her their directress and counselor. She not only gave her fortune but herself, and has devoted forty years to this laborious life.

In this case the wealth of the individual did not exclude her from participating in the honors which the Academy could bestow, because she made herself poor for others' sake.

SEVERAL REMARKABLE CASES.

We then read of four women in different quarters of the country, who have nothing, and yet who have endowed many. One is a simple lace weaver, her loom her only fortune. She saved enough, penny by penny, to buy a small house, in which she placed eight boxes, which served for beds, and where she entertained strangers, not asking first if they were angels. Her cot was erected among the dreary peaks of the mountains of Auvergne, where poor wayfarers often lost themselves in the snow, though it is the custom for the bells of the village to be tolled at certain hours of the day and night, to serve as a guide when storms came suddenly to obscure the sun and stars. But she collects also poor orphans and teaches them, visits the sick far and near, not in the day as this would give her no time for work, but in the night, and the people of the country do not seem to regard it as anything very remarkable, merely calling her "the good woman of the mountains." All this she does while earning only eight cents a day. One must live in France to believe that this small sum can nourish a human being, and leave her a mite for others. Another, whose trade is ironing, finds time and money for many sick and poor, and during the seasons of cholera, in 1835 and 1854, devoted her days and nights to the dead, the dying

and the afflicted, and has lived since thirty years a life all to others.

Another, who was born in comfortable circumstances, learns a trade, the profits of which she has devoted during twenty-five years to the unfortunate. Another, who came to pass many months in a hospital in Paris, to learn to take care of the sick, and returned to her native country among the Vosges, to organize a hospital, persuading three nuns and twenty other young girls to become of it the sisters of charity, where they have labored thirty-four years. Three others in Savoy united their fortunes of six thousand dollars to establish a "community" for all the sick and unfortunate of their canton.

These are a few which we have extracted from the Reports of two years only, and as we stated at the commencement, there are eighty filled with similar narratives, many of them long, and all interesting. We cannot help coming to the conclusion that the land is full of misery and ignorance when we see such an army of heroes devoted to destroying it, and it is not new to observe that it consists mostly of women, who exhibit the bravery of soldiers and the compassion of angels, who in almost all cases exhibit characters so noble, so free from the dross of earth, that we can scarcely believe them human.

Those who toil in connection with great societies, whose names and deeds are constantly before the public, may be as pure and noble, but there is always the possibility that they are moved by a little worldly ambition, while most of these are persons who could not possibly dream of being known except to those they aid, and among those motives there is not the smallest place for an unhallowed desire.

It has often seemed to us that in no country were there instances of such aggravated and revolting crime as in France, but it has occurred to us often to think, also, that among no people are the virtues of self-sacrifice and devotion to others so universal.

GREAT FLOOD AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY.—G. W. Colby, of Colby's Landing, arrived in this city last night by the steamer Victor from Red Bluff, and he informs us that the high water on the upper Sacramento and the destruction of cattle, horses, hogs, sheep and other property are unprecedented. The country above is an open sea, according to his statement. At Nourse's warehouse, near Chico, the water stood two feet on the floor. At Tehama the water was so high that the people went with boats in the streets and over the sidewalks into the stores. In Tehama county, Widow Simpson lost some 200 hogs, and A. G. Toomes 150 head of cattle, 60 head in one lot. In Toomes' granary, which contained 300 tons of wheat, the water rose to the eaves, wetting and spoiling the whole lot for flour. Read & McCreary's warehouse at Tehama mills was carried off by the flood, but about 1,000 sacks of flour, which were in it, had been taken out just before the flood came. The pontoon bridge at Red Bluff was carried off. At Colby's Landing, about ten miles above Chico, the water stood at the depth of about two feet. Colby loses about \$10,000 worth of hogs and a large quantity of hay. The Montgomery Brothers, at Colby's Landing, will lose about 5,000 sheep, which were valued at about \$20,000. Other losses occurred, of which the particulars could not be ascertained. The Victor passed the swell of the flood between Chico and Colusa, and it was supposed it would reach this city during this afternoon, but in greatly diminished height, as before reaching here it will spread over a vast expanse of country.—[*Sac. Union*, Dec. 20th.]

INDIANA SCHOOL STATISTICS.—From the December number of the *Indiana School Journal* we gather the following educational statistics of that state for the present year: The whole number of children, between the age of six and twenty-one, is 559,778; school districts, 8,399; districts in which schools were taught within the year, 8,166; pupils attending primary schools, 390,714; attending high schools, 12,098; number of teachers employed, 9,493; expended for tuition, \$1,020,440; school houses built within the year, 346; total value of school property, \$4,515,734; total number of school houses, 8,231; number of private schools, 2,026.

THE CABLE—AN AGE OF WONDERS.

But if this is an age of humbug it is also an age of wonders. On the day before Thanksgiving business called me to the office of the Western Union Telegraph Company, corner of Liberty street and Broadway, New York. This company as those who read the *Union* must be aware, is a grand monster combination of nearly all the telegraph material and interests of this Western world, and under its roof the mysterious union of the Atlantic Cable with your overland wire takes place. Here in an upper room sets the man Cyrus, the very wire and electricity of the great nineteenth century wonder, and here, like Jove himself, he grasps his thunderbolts, and rules earth and air and ocean. The first and second floors and part of the third floor of the large building are filled with operating desks, and all day and all night long the ceaseless click of the instrument tells to the listening ear that New York never sleeps, and is ever holding colloquy with the outside world. Between one hundred and fifty and two hundred operators are employed in this building and the noise of the instruments when all are at work is like that of a Lowell cotton factory. On the fourth floor is the office of the Associated Press, very convenient to the source whence it derives its principle intelligence from abroad. On the day above mentioned, while in the rooms of the Association, the word was passed that "a cable," meaning a dispatch by cable, was coming up. The manifolders, whose business it is to multiply copies of the dispatches handed to them; "put up"—i. e. prepared—their eighteen or twenty sheets of thin paper, and soon the signal from the telegraph operator announced the dispatch taken and it was put in hand. The cypher in which cable messages are sent to the Association has first to be unraveled. But this was the work of a few seconds. Pens—or rather manifold implements—flew, and in about nine minutes from the time it was taken off the wires the news was on its way in twenty different copies to the city and country press. But the marvel was not at an end. In less than five minutes "San Francisco" was announced, and soon a message burning hot from the other end of the earth was put in shape for the press and sent out to appear with the cable news in the evening editions. Thus, in the space of half an hour I had witnessed the transmission of news from the old world and from the remotest verge of the new to the common American center, and its delivery to the nation on the wings of the press. It was like treading enchanted ground, this standing at the confluence of the two great wires that encircle half the earth, and beholding their swift utterance of news from the ends of the world. The words of the Psalmist flashed upon my thoughts—"There is neither speech nor language but their voices are heard among them. Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world."—[*Cor. of Sac. Union*.]

MORALS IN VISALIA, CAL.—The *Delta* of December 12th says that intemperance and gambling are becoming the two great local evils of Visalia. That paper speaks of it thus:

Just think of it! Our county pays more money for intoxicating drinks every year than for taxes, schools, the support of the churches, and all benevolent objects combined! It is a miserable state of things. Tens and tens of thousands of hard earned money is spent every year for that which makes idiots, lunatics, criminals and fools of such multitudes of men in the land. It is one of the most singular things in human history that men will drink hell-broth when their reasons tell them it will poison, corrupt, degrade and ruin them. It is equally strange that a man with a thimbleful of brains will put himself in the power of men who live by gambling, when he knows that every chance is against him, and that they are just as sure of his money as though they had it in their hands.

A common sight in Paris at the present time is an immense tree which is being borne through the streets preparatory to its transportation somewhere or other. Trees of from twenty-five to forty years old, some of which are higher than the third floor of the houses, are comparatively easily removed, and they nearly all recover the shock.