Miscellaneous.

The Cocoanut of Jamaica.

Mr. Bigelow writing from Jamaica, to the New York Post, thus describes the manner in which the indolent people of that beautiful Island neglect the blessings of a beneficent Providence:

"To illustrate this supineness a little more in detail, there is the cocoanut, one of the most profitable fruits thatthe earth produces, is turned to no account whatever by the Jamaicans, though it grows luxuiantly here as in any quarter of the globe. I was told, by a gentleman who had a large number of these trees growing, that he would esteem it the best property on his estate, if he could get one dollar a hundred for the nuts, but that there was a very limited market for them at any price.—And yet there is no part of this fruit that is not valuable. It thrives in a sandy soil, and bears in Jamaica within three or four years after it is planted. From its flowers the finest arrack in the world may be distilled, and the best of vinegar. A coarse brown sugar may also be prepared from the flower. The green fruit yields a nutritious and delightful drink, and a more substantial food in the pulp which contains the liquid. When ripe, the fruit is popular as an article of diet in all parts of the world. From that fruit a pure oil may he extracted, which may be manufactured into candles, soap, and used in a variety of other ways, in whieh vegetable oils are available, while the refuse, or oil cake, as it is called, is a most excellent food for cattle.

A medicinal oil is extracted from the bark, which is used, I understand, in Ceylon as an efficacions remedy in cutaneous diseases; the root is also used for medicinal purposes; its elastic fibres are sometimes woven into strainers for liquids, while the timber may be used in building, or converted into beautiful articles of furniture. The husk consists of tough fibre, from which cordage and rigging of the best quality may be manufactured, and which furnishes the finest stuffing for mattresses that is used, not excepting hair. I saw some of this fibre manufactured at the prison in Kingston, for mattress stuffing. I satisfied myself that if its value was known in America it would bring a higher price than any commodity now in use for bedding. The specimens that I saw were manufactured by the convicts, at a cost, I was told, of six cents a pound. Hair costs with us, I believe, about twenty-five cents.—The process of manufacturing it is very simple,—the husk shells are soaked till perfectly soft, and then are pounded out until the fibres are all separated. This was done in the prison by hand, and without the use of machinery, and yet the article could be produced by them for six cents a pound. By the aid of a very simple machine, something, for instance, like that to which rags in a paper mill are first subjected, it is very apparent that the cost of manufacturing it might be reduced at least one-half. When I asked why machinery was not employed in this department of the prison, I was told that they had not work enough to occupy the convicts if machinery was employed. Of course I had nothing to say to a reason so conclusive as that.

The supply of these huskswould be almost inexhaustible. They have no more use or value here than walnut shells have with us, and may be had by the ship load for the mere expense of cartage. A cargo of a thousand tons could be manufactured for a thousand dollars, and be worth in the port of New York not less than $4,000, as soon as the usefulness of the article became generally known."

Death of a Great Inventor.

Mr. Smith, of Deanston, Scotland, a gentleman well known in America for his improvements on machinery for spinning cotton, died suddenly in his bed on the 9th of June last. Mr. Smith was agent in Scotland for the Matteawan Co., N. Y. He was a man of great scientific acquirements and practical skill. He was eminent for his knowledge of machinery and agriculture. He was frank, sociable, kind and unaffected in his manners—one of nature's noblemen.

Causes of Rain.

Heat and water are the fruitful parents of winds and clouds. When aqueous vapor is precipitated in rain or snow, heat that was latent becomes again sensible, and by increasing the capacity of the air to hold water in the form of vapor, prevents a disastrous deluge of this abundant element in nature. The laws which restrain the precipitation of water from the clouds are no less curious than those which cause it to rain at all. The atmosphere must approach saturation before it can rain, and it usually happens that the quantities which will fall on a given area, one hundred feet above the ground, and on the earth, are unequal. Large drops, in falling through many feet of dry air, become smaller by constant evaporation, and may be wholly dissipated before they reach the earth. On the other hand, quite small drops formed in cold regions, high in the air, constantly condense more vapor in falling through a saturated atmosphere, and will be many times latger when they reach the ground than at their starting point.

To illustrate the production of rain, let us suppose that a current of air at 70° temperature, saturated with moisture, meets and mingles with another current, also saturated, but having a heat of 50°. Now, if the atmosphere at the mean temperature of 60° had a capacity to hold water as an invisible vapor, equal to the mean of 70° and 50°, it is obvious that no precipation would take place. But such is not the fact. The quantity of water held in air heated from 60° to 70° cannot be contained in that heated from 50° to 60°. In other words, whatever cools air saturated with moisture, causes a cloud, dew, mist, or rain.

[The above is a short extract from the Agricultural Report of the Patent Office, presented to Commissioner Ewbank by Dr. Lee, who was appointed for this purpose. The Report is not yet officially published, but we hope it soon will for it is one of the most able and valuable reports we have ever read and will be of immense benefit to our farmers.

Turkish Manners.

We naturally regard the Turks as a species of outside barbarians, and it is a little difficult to survey them with a perfectly unprejudiced eye; yet, an honest view affords much that can be contemplated with satisfaction. Their gravity of mein, their soberness of gait, and rich flowing robes, give them an air of gentlemanly dignity, in pleasing contrast with their hurried expression, the impertinent carriage, and the stiff, angular garments of Franks; and their is a natural ease and delicacy in their social forms and etiquette that is far superior to anything ordinary observed at home. Personal cleanliness is not among them as among us, a half-neglected "semi-virtue," but a scrupulously-fulfilled religious obligation. Propriety and courtesy distinguish their mutual intercourse, and hospitality, rendered to all without distinction of country or condition, is an inviolable duty. Quarrelling is extremely rare among them, and their treatment of the brute creation is far kinder than ours. The Koran prescribes the giving of one-tenth of their incomes to charitable purposes, and benevolence with them is no transient impulse, but an abiding sacred principle.

Telegraph and Newspaper Dinner.

A complimentary dinner was given on Tuesday evening of last week, at the Astor House, to M. Lefferts, Esq., by the members of the New York Associated Press, and a splendid present was made to Mr. Lefferts, consisting of a salver, two pitchers, coffee urn, and a rich silver sett, valued at $800. The Associated Press consists of the Courier and Enquirer, Journal of Commerce, Express, Herald, Sun and Tribune. A number of speeches were made by the gentlemen of the press. Mr. H. O'Reilly was there, and so was Bain, the inventor of the Telegraph used on that line.—They were complimented highly, the former for his energy in establishing Telegraphic lines and the latter for his invention.

G. S. Davenport of Pen Yann, N. Y., is authorized to receive subscriptions to the Scientific American.

City Improvements.

The business community of this city seem possessed with a remarkable spirit of "go-aheadativeness," unsurpassed perhaps by any other in the world. Combined with this they are evidently "as proud as Lucifer," and what would seem a luxury in days of yore, is now only to be swept away among the things that were. The present seems to be an interesting era in the history of New York, so far as concerns its external appearance. The enterprise of our citizens is illustrated in a remarkable degree by the splendid character of the buildings now in progress,—no doubt but this season has been more prolific in this respect, than any other since the first stone was laid towards the completion of this gigantic superstructure, on all sides new or substantial stone or brick building are made to supplant those which might seem, in every respect, ample for the business interests. Such, however, seems not to be the view taken by our merchants—instead of a store sixty or seventy-five feet deep, they must have one from a hundred to two hundred, fitted up in the most elaborate and beautiful style, outvieing in design the halls of the ancients devoted to the display of artistic skill. This fact alone may be taken as a criterion of the successful state of business generally. We like to look upon these substantial monuments of enterprise. They display the improving taste of our mechanics, while they afford them a field for employment as well as improvement. Commencing at Reade street, we notice that Mr. Stewart, the princely merchant, is nearly doubling the size of his marble palace, which at present is the largest establishment of the kind in the world. On the block between Ann and Fulton, the renowned Barnum and the celebrated hatter Genin, have presented to the curious a scene which attracts unusual attention. We notice in this block that the Graefenberg Company have fitted up a magnificent office, devoted to the sale of their celebrated medicines. The interior is beautifully painted in fresco by one of our first artists, while the front presents a most unique and chaste appearance, richly ornamented with the business signs of the Company. The principal entablature is supported by two Carytides, one representing Esculapius, the God of Medicine; the other representing Mercury, the God of Commerce. The main entrance is richly ornamented by the finest carved work, symbolical of strength and wisdom, combining some of the finest specimens of artistic skill that we have ever seen. This is but a hint of what is going on in the way of improvement, and there can be no doubt but that New York will be a great place when it is done.

The Route to California Through Nicaragua.

This road, it is said, will be in operation some two months hence. The steamships Crescent City and Empire City are to run between New York and San Juan and the lake of Nicaragua will be navigated by steamboats of light draught to the town of Nicaragua, distant fourteen miles from the Pacific, which distance will be traversed on land be means of carriages. By the time that these arrangements are completed, the steamships New Orleans and Sarah Sands will connect with the Cresent City and Empire City on the Pacific, and regularly on that ocean to San Francisco—thus making the line of communication complete between New York and California by that route. Four additional steamboats are intended to be placed on the Pacific side. This route, from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific and California will be about one thousand miles shorter than that by the Isthmus of Panama.

Great Speed on the Utica and Schenectady Railroad.

The locomotive "Erastus Corning," built at the Company's shop in Schenectady, made the passage from Utica to Schenectady, with a full passenger train, on Wednesay afternoon, last week, in one hour and forty-three minutes running time! The distance is seventy-eight miles. The train left Utica at 4 o'clock, 35 minutes, P. M., and arrived at Schenectady at 6 o'clock, 50 minutes, P. M., making eight stoppages, which occupied 32 minutes.—[Albany Argus.

A Dangerous Rock.

Commander V. M. Randolph, of the United States ship "Albany.," reports, on the authority of Sir Robert Schomberg, H. B. M. Consul-General of the republic of Dominica, the posi- of a dangerous rock, not correctly known to the charts, on the south side of the island of San Domingo.

This rock is in latitude 17 deg. 37 min. 40 sec., west of Greenwich.

The English merchant-vessel, "the Leighton," struck upon it last year; the Spanish frigate, "Isabella Segunda," is said to have lost her rudder upon it a few months ago.

The bearing of this "Leighton's rock" is given as north 35 deg. 30 min. west from Alta Vela, distance 93 miles, and from Isle de Vache south 28 deg. 6 min. east, distance 29 miles.

Accidents by Lightning.

There is not a year passes without a great number of accidents by lightning, such as houses being struck or individuals killed. In the great majority of those persons who have been struck with lightning they were standing near the chimney, an open window, at the door, or under a tree. This should teach people to be more careful of the places they occupy during a thunder storm. In country places every house should have a lightning rod, and to spread abroad some useful information upon this subject, we commence a series of articles on our last page, this week, which wil l be completed in two or three weeks.

Oxygen Gas a Cure for Cholera.

Dr. Macrea, in the hospital at Howrah, has, according to the Indian news, discovered a new and most successful mode of treating cholera patients. He causes them to inhale a certain quantity of oxygen gas, which contributes a strong stimulating effect, and finally throws the patient into a refreshing sleep. On awakening, he finds himself restored to health, with the exception of a general weakness which always succeeds any physical prostration. Dr. Macrae had tested his mode of practice upon 15 European seamen, who have been carried to the Howrah Hospital in the last stage of the disease, and the patient has in every instance recovered.

The following named gentlemen were chosen officers of the Mechanics Institute, at the annual election held on Monday evening, June 25th:—

President—ZADOCK PRATT, Tanner.

First Vice President.—THOS. SMULL, Tanner.

Second Vice President.—HORACE GREELEY, Printer.

Corresponding Secretary.—JOHN B. WHITMAN, Clerk.

Recording Secretary.—CHARLES N. BLACK, Lawyer.

Treasurer.—WM. T. LEITCH, Tailor.

DAGUERREOTYPE, ELECTROTYPE, CALOTYPE, GALVANIZING, &c.—We have just laid upon our table a copy of the second edition of this work, by S. D. Humphrey, Daguerreotype Artist, whose establishment is at No. 177 Broadway. It is a neat little work, but there is an old and a trite saying "good gear can always be rolled in small bulk." It contains a history of the daguerreotype art, describes the whole process, instruments and improvements, and gives particular directions to amateurs and artists. It gives receipts for the preparation of the talbotype paper, calotype and Becquerel's process for producing daguerreotypes with the colors of nature. This book contains all the directions necessary for the photographist, and he who would fully understand how the human face divine can be painted with a sun beam, should read and study this book.

Death of an Eminent Sculptor.

Richard J. Wyatt, the eminent English sculptor, died at Rome on the 29th of May. His hearse was followed to the Protestant burying ground by the British Consul, and Mr. Cass, our Charge d'Affaires. Wyatt approached near to Canova in his female figures.

Sixty engine drivers, lately in the employment of the North British Railway, are about to emigrate to the United States. It will be a long time before they will all find situations in the United States.