

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Useful Man.

We have scientific writers of several kinds, and their number is continually increasing; there is no harm in that, but their studies are mainly directed to form theorists capable of ordering workmen, but unable to put their own hands to the work. Banish to their country seats the most celebrated engineers, and they will be as embarrassed to perform the smallest thing for themselves, as our statesmen, magistrates, professors, poets, painters, and wealthy merchants. If a lamp leaks, a coffee-pot is broken, a screw lost, a lock damaged, or a chair on three legs—and for a thousand other petty trifles—they must send to the neighboring town. If it is an emergency, a messenger on horseback must be dispatched, with perhaps a kettle round his neck, and a couple of watering-pots in his hand: there is no poor Robinson Crusoe to be found in these oases of luxury and indigence. There is, therefore, wanting a class of men who have a slight knowledge, not enough to manufacture but sufficient to repair every thing,—who can place a little solder on this place, a little glue on that; clean their employer's gun or watch; bore a bolt, take down a stove, bore a hole and fit in a screw, patch up a valuable piece of porcelain, and adjust a hand organ; who can give one blow with a hammer and another on a flute; bend a piece of wire, and tie up a bell rope; saw off the end of a plank, plane a little off the door, make a shovel-full of mortar, mix up a little plaster, lay a coating of color on a wall, and take out a spot of it on your coat,—in short, who can frame a picture, prevent a chimney from smoking, varnish a piece of furniture, and, in case of necessity, put a shoe on a horse, &c. &c.

In our society of imbeciles, each of these things requires a particular workman, who must be sent for several times, and who only troubles himself with what concerns his own trade and nothing else. What a heap of bills and accounts at the end of the year—they are never done coming in. While the workmen whisper to one another, "what an awkward helpless set of fellows these rich men are—obliged to run after us to open a trunk, splice a rope, make a hole in a strap, join a hoop, put a pin in the wheel of a child's coach, and a tail to the kite. All those great men who make laws, and do not know how to work with their ten fingers, can teach us nothing. I have seen some who do not know the difference between tin and lead—between gum arabic and gum lac; they take iron pyrites for silver ore, oats for wheat, and do not know how the bread they eat is made. I have heard of one, who, wishing to instruct his son, attached to an embassy, said to him, 'You see that big tree, that is a poplar, pine boards are made out of it.' And yet they always have a book in their hand, and send their children to school up to twenty years of age. What in heaven's name can they learn there? They must be very thick-headed not to know as much as we who have never learnt anything. It is not for want of time, for they do not know what to do with themselves all day."

These are the very natural expressions of work-people among themselves; but let us return to our "Useful Man." Is it possible that a man of this kind would not be valuable on a gentleman's country-seat—that he would not be sought after and paid the same as a good cook. Well, any young countryman that knows how to read, write, and cypher would require, at the utmost, two years at a special school to learn to do all the repairing that we have mentioned, and much more. Five days passed in the workshop of a turner, cabinet-maker, smith, locksmith, tinman, glazier, plumber, saddler, frame maker, &c., would be sufficient, with a few explanations, and receipts written in a memorandum book to enable him to mend any thing belonging to the above trades. A fortnight passed with a clock-maker, gunsmith, and lamp maker, would give him an insight into the fabrication of arms, watches, lamps, locks, and principal tools of each of these trades. Some lessons of common drawing, given at school between the visits to the workshops, would complete the education of the useful man. A workshop

could be set apart for him in the house; the tools would not be expensive—a small joiner's bench, a vise, a few files, pincers, and chisels, a plane, hammer, saw, and soldering iron, some screw taps, a small anvil, ditto furnace, and a grindstone; add to these a glazier's diamond, a hand drill, some bottles of oil, varnish, and acid, a little mastic and wax, a glue pot, and a few pieces of tin and brass wire, and you have the entire fittings of the useful man's workshop, which his employer will very soon be willing to augment by the addition of a lathe, a small forge, and a galvanic battery, with some crucibles and porcelain vessels.

There would thus be completed, insensibly, as occasion presented, a country workshop, which would be the delight of the owner, to whom all these nick-knacks of handicraft are a sealed secret, and who, in a short time, would become an inventor like his useful man. This latter would be the favorite of the children, for he would mend their little balloons, little wagons, and little mills; the favorite of the old folks, whose spectacles he would repair; the favorite of the cook, for he could tinker up her pans, and fresh solder the coffee-pot; the favorite of the lady, because he could mend her fan and make the drawers of the cabinet to slide in smoothly; the favorite of the neighbors, who would be ready to have him to dinner, to put a string to the piano, arrange the French clock, and see what is the matter with the pump. In fact, I can assure you that the useful man would be the envy of the township, provided he knows neither Latin nor algebra, and reads no political papers,—if he does this, he will be like every body else, and the best thing that can be done will be to give him a letter of recommendation to your nearest neighbor. There would be a vast exportation of useful men to the Brazils, Peru, and Mexico, every hacienda would like to have one; they would be the preservers, the civilizers of the new world; the Russian boyard would contend for them with the Spanish hidalgo; the Hungarian magnates with the Turkish pachas, and perhaps the Chinese mandarin with the Indian nabob. The useful man would be the necessary link in the chain that ought connect the man of science and the daily workman, for he would lay one hand on the theory and the other on the practice, and would often take the place of the two.—[Translated from "L'Invention."

Justice to Philippe de Girard.

The above inscription was on the flag of one of the deputations of Vaucluse to Louis Napoleon, on the occasion of his late tour in the South of France. Philippe de Girard was the inventor of a flax spinning machine which gained the prize of a million of francs offered by Napoleon Bonaparte for the best invention of this kind. The fall of the Empire did not allow Napoleon to fulfill his promise, and the inhabitants of the Commune represented by the above deputation, now demand its fulfillment by his nephew.

We observe, in the "Genie Industriel," that a patent has been lately taken out, in France, for making a species of cloth from the refuse of cotton, wool, hemp, and flax; these materials are cut up very fine and then carded; they are afterwards passed through rollers and covered with an oily substance, to unite them firmly, after which they are pressed down tight by flat plates.

In the same periodical is a recipe for a newly patented soap for fulling cloth; this soap is composed of 67 parts of a solution of caustic potash, and 33 parts of olive oil. After being kept in motion for a few hours, a combination takes place, when the soap is made.

Human Ingenuity.

In the formation of a single locomotive steam engine, there are no fewer than 5,416 pieces to be put together, and these require to be as accurately adjusted as the works of a watch. Every watch consists of at least 202 pieces, employing probably 215 persons, distributed among 40 trades, to say nothing of the tool makers for all these.

Syrup of Asafetida.

To make a syrup of a most useful medicine, but which has an unpleasant odor and bitter taste, take asafetida one ounce, boiling water one pint, sugar two pounds (the asafetida

must be first triturated with water in a mortar) and dissolve all together with a moderate heat. This is an excellent antispasmodic.

Death by Machinery.

C. W. Beard, employed at the Lowell Bleachery, met his death a short time ago in a very painful manner.

While stooping over to oil a shaft, which revolves about 118 times in a minute, his clothes had become entangled with the end of the shaft, by which means he was carried around with it, and his head and limbs, at every revolution, were brought in forcible contact with an adjacent wall, and also with the hanger of the shaft, which is a perpendicular stationary cast-iron, in a perforation of which the shaft plays. How often he had been whirled around this shaft it was impossible to determine, but his clothing was mostly torn from his body; his boots, after having the soles ripped off, were stripped from his feet, and thrown to a distance of some twenty feet from the shaft; his stockings and hat, and a portion of his watch-chain, were thrown in different directions to a considerable distance, and the remainder of his clothing was still revolving round the shaft. His body and limbs were of course shockingly mangled, and the blood and locks of hair on the hanger bore painful testimony to what he must have suffered during his fearful gyrations.

When he became disengaged from the shaft, it appears that he fell under it on the ground, a distance of some four or five feet, whence he had dragged himself about five or six feet to the place where he was lying when found. The unfortunate man was immediately removed to a room in the building, but expired almost immediately.

Old Ring.

At the last meeting of the New York Historical Society, Mr. De Peyster, the Vice President, submitted to the Society wax impressions of a very ancient gold ring, found by an Arab laborer near the great Pyramid of Cheops. The ring weighed about three English sovereigns. The tomb near which it was found was that of a high priest. Professor Lepsius, Chevalier Bunson, Mr. R. S. Poole, Rev. J. Leader, of Cairo, and other distinguished Egyptian scholars, agreed in considering this ring authentic, and place its date at three thousand years before Christ. The beauty of the hieroglyphic symbols engraved upon its oval face could not now be surpassed. The delicacy and sharpness of the etching could only be properly seen by a microscope. It was doubtless the royal signet, and was in keeping of the high priest; and the particular sovereign to whom it had belonged was supposed to have been the second Pharaoh of the fourth dynasty. The wax impressions were handed around among the members, and the ring itself afterwards shown by Mr. De Peyster. It bears mark of having been much worn.

Champagne.

The average quantity of genuine champagne annually produced is said to exceed fifty millions of bottles, a quantity, however, quite insufficient to meet the public demand, as the great number of establishments for the productions of spurious champagne attest. It has been stated on good authority, that in one establishment alone upward of 500,000 bottles of so called champagne, made principally from the stalks of rhubarb, are annually sold.—Some idea may be formed of the relative consumption of real champagne by different countries from the following return of the sales in 1843 of the Department of the Marne. The total quantity amounted to 2,689,000 bottles, which were thus distributed:—England and British India, 467,000; Russia and Poland, 502,000; Germany including Prussia and the Austrian dominions, 439,000; United States of America and the West Indies, 400,000; Italy, 60,000; Belgium, 56,000; Holland 30,000; Sweden and Denmark, 30,000; Switzerland, 30,000; South America, 30,000; Spain and Portugal, 20,000; Turkey, 5,000, France, 620,000.

Sardines.

The editor of the Manchester Mirror says from personal knowledge, that the bay of

Monterey, California, is literally filled with this delicious fish. They are said to be found there in greater abundance than in any other part of the world. They are found not only at Monterey, but in all the still waters on the coast from Panama to Oregon.

Alleged Burying Alive.

In the midst of exaggeration and invention, there is one undoubted circumstance which formerly excited the worst apprehensions; the fact that bodies were often found turned in their coffins, and the grave clothes disarranged. But what was ascribed, with seeming reason, to the throes of vitality, is now known to be due to the agency of corruption. A gas is developed in the decayed body which mimics by its mechanical force many of the movements of life. So powerful is this gas in corpses that have lain long in water, that M. Devergie, the physician to the Morgue, at Paris, and the author of a text book on legal medicine, says that unless secured to the table they are often heaved up and thrown to the ground. Frequently strangers, seeing the motion of the limbs, run to the keeper of the Morgue, and announce with horror that the person is alive. All bodies, sooner or later, generate gas in the grave; and it constantly twists about the corpse, blows out the skin till it rends with distention, and sometimes bursts the coffin itself. When the gas explodes with a noise, imagination has converted it into an outcry or groan; the grave has been re-opened; the position of the body has confirmed the suspicion, and the laceration has been taken for evidence that the wretch had gnawed his flesh in the frenzy of despair. So many are the circumstances which will constantly occur to support a conclusion that is more unsubstantial than the fabric of a dream.

Whitney and his Cotton Gin.

The Southern Cultivator, published at Augusta, Ga., contains an interesting letter from Judge Andrews about Whitney's gin. An old gentleman over 80 years of age, named Thomas Talbot, of Washington, Ga., settled there 62 years ago, on the plantation next to that which Whitney settled. Whitney was in partnership with one Durkee, and set up his first cotton gin there. The gin-house was grated so that visitors might see the cotton ginned from the outside. None but females were allowed to enter. A man named Lyor, dressed himself in woman's clothes, went in, and discovered the whole *modus operandi* and went home and made a machine. The partner of Whitney became dissipated and Whitney sold out; the old gin and the gin-house were bought by Mr. Talbot, and the old cotton house is now a fine barn. Whitney got his first idea of a cotton gin from a machine used to tear up rags for paper.

Heating and Ventilation Railroad Cars.

The Railroad Journal speaks very favorably of heating and ventilating railroad cars, invented by Henry Ruttan, Esq., of Coburg, Canada, and for which he has a patent for the United States. It is a good system; the principle of its application to buildings, was illustrated in pages 289, and 317, Vol. 6, Scientific American. The Railroad Journal says: "As artificial warmth is required in this climate about eight months out of the twelve, we look upon any system of ventilation which does not comprise provision for winter ventilation, as the next thing to being altogether worthless, and Mr. Ruttan has hit the nail upon the head in making this part of his plan his chief object. So simple and complete is the arrangement, that in two or three seconds of time the conductor may change from winter to summer ventilation, and from summer to winter."

The introduction of Alpacas into Australia has been in agitation in England for some years. Lately an effort was made to get some of those animals from Peru, but without success. An inquiry into the adaptation of Australia to the purpose, has also proved discouraging, the climate not being sufficiently cold. It is, however, thought that the mountainous regions in the southeastern part of Australia may be suitable, and it has been urged that the government of Great Britain make the experiment.