

## PARISIAN ITEMS.

AN UNLUCKY DAY.—A curious statistical fact has just been published by a M. Minard. Friday is considered such an unlucky day in France that not only is the number of travellers by rail much smaller on Friday than on other days, but the difference is also sensibly felt in the receipts of the omnibuses.

—THE Jardin des Plantes, which is the free botanical and zoological gardens of Paris, was the other day the scene of one of the drollest incidents imaginable. There are three bear-pits in the gardens, around two of which a number of *flaneurs* are always to be seen at every hour of the day, leaning over the railings and plying Monsieur Martin (the family name of bears in France) with *brioches*, rolls, and continual injunctions to climb his pole, as contentedly as if it were the most delightful occupation in life. The third pit has lost its bear long ago, and the Jardin des Plantes being a great place for growing plants for study, a botanist belonging to the society has planted in the empty bear-pit a collection of plants, which he visits long and often. On a windy day last week, Monsieur Flourens, our ardent botanist, wrapped in a rough winter coat, was crouching down in his queerly situated garden, busy examining an orchis, when two friends, both remarkable for their extreme shortness of sight—a defect very common in France—met before the railings of the botanist's pit; and, while they were talking, one of them, buying a roll of an old woman who is on constant and eager attendance there, turned round to feed the bear.

"Here's Martin," said Monsieur B., looking over. "He looks an awkward companion," said his friend.

"Allons, Martin, climb your pole, my boy."

After many entreaties and a great deal of bread, which were being paid no attention to by the absorbed bear, the young man got irritable, and flung a large crust at Martin, his friend politely adding a handful of gravel.

Monsieur Flourens, suddenly fancying that he was being assaulted by two madmen, made an abrupt retreat by the door of the pit to give the alarm.

"Good gracious! Martin has escaped," cried the two men; and, shrieking for policemen and keepers, they called to them the dreadful news. Great confusion ensued; some rushed to the place, others from it, and, armed with sticks, a number of resolute men ran to encounter—Monsieur Flourens!

The whole was explained, and a burst of laughter ended the affair.

—A WONDERFUL number of chestnuts are eaten in France. In Paris their disguises are numerous, from turkey stuffing to the delicate sweetmeat called *marron glacé*. In the Cévennes Mountains they were the staff of life until the middle of the present century; for, from the nature of the soil, the peasants could grow but little corn, and only ate bread on Sundays and *fêtes*, and not always then.

"What do you eat on week days?" was asked of a little peasant of the mountains.

"Chestnuts, monsieur."

"And what do you eat on Sunday?"

"I eat a few more."

Poor little peasant!

Mme. de Sévigné, in one of her immortal letters, calls chestnuts the triumph of Brittany, and describes herself sitting in the midst of endless baskets of them. "I am boiling some, roasting others, filling my pockets with more, and trying to find a Brittany dish in which they do not appear."

—AMONG the pretty things that were to be seen at the Exposition, was a white silk dress, with peacock's feathers embroidered upon it so admirably, that at first sight almost every one was deceived by the resemblance; also an apple-green silk dress, embroidered with silk and pearls so as to produce the effect of velvet and lace; some splendid *guipure de d'any* over silk; and specimens of embroidery in colored silk, straw, and other materials, some of it evidently after Japanese models.

—YESTERDAY the watchword was Rome; to-day it is—broken chairs. Along the Boulevards iron chairs are placed, which, for the sum of two sous, accommodate loungers and weary ones, and allow them to survey from beneath the trees the passing promenaders on the one side, and the carriages on the other. Last Thursday morning all the chairs on the Boulevard des Italiens lay mutilated and broken at the edge of the pavements. The next night more victims were discovered along the whole length of

the Boulevards, and the astonishment of the early sweepers did not stop there; for in the Champs Elysées, where the chairs are grouped by hundreds, the massacre was terrific. The sufferers had all been assailed in a systematic way; their backs had been bent down to the ground by some heavy instrument, and the legs had, in many cases, succumbed to the attack. The authors of this eccentric proceeding had evidently worked on a concerted plan; but where the fearful band is, and how they did it in such a short space of time, and why the *sergens de ville* did not see them, and why they did it at all, remains a wondrous riddle; and while conjectures are being made, those who imprudently return late to their homes experience an uncomfortable sensation that they may perhaps, by some mysterious means, share the unhappy fate of the iron chairs.

—THE great dress novelty is still the waistband rings, through which sashes are hung in elegant folds behind.

LADIES, look out for your trains. The *Presse* of Vienna mentions that a society has been established in that town, whose object is to be the suppression of the long trains worn by the Viennese ladies, which "are not only an obstruction to street traffic, but also, by raising enormous clouds of dust, cause considerable danger to the lungs and eyes." The mode of operation of the members of this society is to be that, "the instant they perceive a lady with a long train in the street, they are immediately to tread on the same with such force as to produce a considerable rent in the dress." When the lady arrested in this manner turns for an explanation, she is to receive apologies for the awkwardness of the perpetrator. Should these, however, be insufficient to appease her anger, and should she claim compensation in a court of justice, the society engages to pay all expenses.

The following epitaph will suit the above:—

"Encumbrance sore long time I bore,  
Derision was in vain;  
But when short skirts became the mode,  
They eased me of my train."

EXTRACT from the letter of an old correspondent:—

"Under my window, a few days ago, I heard Charley (three years old) and two little negro children, holding an animated discussion about Charley's swing. Charley had put up a swing for himself in the quince tree, and was enjoying it very much, but the little darkeys wanted to enjoy it too. They coaxed for a long time; finally the biggest one, John, said:—

"Well, you jest better git outer dat ar swing, Marse Charley. Dar's a great big snake in dat tree, an' he'll bite any boy dat's in de swing."

"Well," said Charley, coolly, swinging away, "I guess I'll taste just as good as you will if he *does* bite!"

We seldom have occasion for an errata, but it is due to the author of the lines "To My Watch-Case," in the December number. In the last verse for "Dear Moments" read Dear Memento.

Dear memento! in my chamber  
Thou shalt hang—a pleasing gift;  
And, while through all time I wander,  
Holier thoughts to heaven uplift.

The correction was received too late for the January number.

THE American Conservatory of Music at Horticultural Hall, and Mark Hassler at Concert Hall, weekly delight our musical population with selections from ancient and modern music. The Philadelphians are a music-loving people.

A LONDON correspondent asks, regarding the Prince of Wales, "What would you think of the manners of a man who made a point of entering ladies' drawing-rooms with a cigar in his mouth?"

We do not know how they answer these things in London; but the reply here would be that he is not a gentleman.



THE LONDON GENERAL POST-OFFICE.—There are some curious statistics stated in the last annual report of this great institution. It would scarcely be credited that in one year 12,000 letters were dropped in this office without any address. These letters contained money amounting to \$18,600. In the year 1866 there passed through the post-office, for town and country delivery, 897,900 Valentines, and in 1867, 1,199,142, producing a revenue of \$56,210. The Valentine fever is not decreasing in England. There are queer articles sent through the sample post.

"The majority of these consist of produce, such as tea, sugar, coffee, hops, seeds, corn, beans, &c.; but every conceivable article under the allowed weight, from mousetraps and clockworks to leeches and Pharaoh's serpents, now passes through the post-office. These samples are sorted on the same counters with the letters, and their bulk, of course, is far greater. Attempts are made to burden this department with very odd articles—a limb for dissection, not long since was discovered by its smell, and rejected.

The Blind Man's Department is the most humorous one. The 'blind men' are the decipherers of illegible and imperfect addresses. On one occasion they were fairly beaten by the Arcadian simplicity of the following superscription on a genuine letter containing a pair of spectacles:—

My dear Father in Yorkshire at the white cottage with green palings.

Where it is possible, the 'blind men,' versed in the ways of ignorance, correct the address, and where the letters are to all outsiders totally 'blind,' these experts will make a shrewd guess, which often turns out to be a hit. Some years since a letter came thus addressed:—

Mr. Owl O'Neil,  
At the Postoffice.

The 'blind man' into whose hands it fell surmised at once that this was a bit of phonetic spelling, and delivered it without hesitation to Sir Rowland Hill, its rightful owner.

Here is another lucid address for the postman:—

Mr. —, Travelling Band, one of the Four playing in the street,

Persha (Pershore),  
Worcestershire.

The subjoined must be evidently a genuine epistle from Mrs. Gamp:—

E. R.—, a cook as lived tempery with Mrs. L.— or some such a name, a shoemaker in Castle-street about No. — Hobern in 1851. Try to make this out. She is a Welch person about 5 feet 1 stoutish. Lives in service some ware in London or naboured. London.

In some cases a little badinage goes on outside the envelope; to wit, a letter was thus addressed:—

The biggest fool in the world,  
Tunbridge.

And indorsed as follows:—

The Postmaster of Tunbridge cannot decide whom to deliver this to, as he does not know the writer. Cannot find.

Many letters, failing the name of the persons addressed, give descriptions of their occupations or personal appearance. Here are a couple of instances in point:—

This is for her that 'maks' dresses for ladies, that 'lives' at tother side of rode to

James Brocklip,  
Edenover,  
Chesterfield.

This is for the young girl that wears spectacles, who minds 'two babies.'

30, Sheriff-street,  
Off Prince Edwin-street,  
Liverpool.

On one occasion a letter was received addressed, 'To my Son in London.' It remained in the office until one day a verdant youth inquired if there was a letter from 'my father in the country?' It was rightly presumed that the letter addressed to my son in London was for him, and it proved so.

On another occasion a letter was received from France addressed to Sumfre Devi. The 'blind man'

handed it to Sir Humphry Davy, for whom it was intended.

Poor persons, we are informed, have a very extraordinary idea of this department of the Post Office, popularly known as the 'dead letter office.' Letters are continually being received begging the secretary not to return any more dead letters, as they bring death into the house. One person, after complaining that twenty-four persons have died in her immediate neighborhood since a dead letter had been returned to her from the Post Office, begs the secretary that, if any more of those dead letters for her should come back, he should 'burn them and never send them back to heare to me after that.' One letter we were permitted to inspect is directed to the corner and jury who should sit upon the writer's body, giving them full directions what to do with it. Swindlers find the address 'posterestante' very convenient for their purpose. The following advertisement appeared in several country newspapers—a singularly clever bait held out and duly gorged, as we shall show:—

An elderly bachelor of fortune, wishing to amuse himself by testing the credulity of the public and to benefit and assist others, will send a suitable present of genuine worth, according to the circumstances of the applicant, to all who will send him seventeen stamps, demanded merely as a token of confidence. Stamps will be returned with the present, carriage paid. Address (varied, according to circumstances).

What were the number of stamps that flowed into the exchequer in answer to this cunningly-worded advertisement we do not know, but we are informed that between 300 and 400 letters, all containing the seventeen stamps, were returned to this department, failing to find him at addresses which were, no doubt, too hot to hold him."

In several instances we have received letters through the dead letter office containing money that had been addressed to other cities. This does not often happen, as our name is so well known that when a letter is received at an office addressed to Louis A. Godey, the postmaster knows where it belongs, and forwards it to us.

"MISS PENNIMAN, an American belle in Paris, is to be married to M. Romera, Secretary of the Spanish Ambassador."

Miss P. must of course be very rich, but "Penny wise and pound foolish."

Have our fair countrywomen, whose parents are so fond of bartering dollars for titles, read the account of the bigamy case of Sir Cullen Eardley, Baronet? We do not give all his names, as space is precious. Sir Cullen married a young New York lady; after a while they separated, and Sir C. returned to England and married another young person; supposing that, if that precious scamp, Major Yelverton, could marry a lady twice—once in Scotland and again in Ireland—could have the English courts pronounce that he had never been married, he who had only been married once would have equal luck. He was mistaken, and was sentenced to imprisonment and hard labor for a long time. It is almost a pity that he was found guilty. The lesson is not half so good to those weak and title-loving parents, who sacrifice their daughters to titles. We can only imagine Sir Cullen's surprise that a baronet could be found guilty of any bad action.

LEAP YEAR PRIVILEGE.—The privilege of ladies choosing husbands is thus explained in a work entitled "Courtship, Love, and Matrimony," printed in the year 1606:—

"Albeit it is now become a part of the common lawe, in regarde to social relations of life, that as often as every bissextile year doth return, the ladies have the sole privilege, during the time it continueth, of making love unto the men, which they doe either by wordes or looks as to them it seemeth proper; and, moreover, no man will be entitled to the benefit of clergy who dothe in any wise treat her proposal withe slight or contumely."