

THE CRYSTAL PALACE POULTRY, PIGEON, AND RABBIT SHOW.

THIS (the show for 1859) was, without doubt, by far the most successful of the summer shows, both as regards the number of visitors and the quality of the birds and animals exhibited. The poultry classes generally were good, the Spanish fowls particularly so. The pigeons were as numerous and as attractive as ever. Some extremely largerunts, exhibited by Messrs,

Baker of Chelsea, excited much attention, on account of their size being larger than some bantams. The most extraordinary feature of the show was the rabbits, two of which we have engraved on account of their extreme length of ear, being the longest ever known, that of the black and white in the foreground, the property of Mr. Angus, measuring 22½ inches in length, and 4½ in breadth; and that of Mr. Durham's second prize fawn being 21½ inches in length and 4½ in breadth. The next poultry show will be held in February (1860) instead of January as heretofore.



PRIZE RABBITS EXHIBITED AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE POULTRY SHOW, 1859.—FROM "THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS."

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM (containing works of decorative art, modern pictures, sculpture, and engravings, architectural illustrations, building materials, educational apparatus and books, illustrations of food and animal products) is open on Mondays, Monday evenings, Tuesdays, Tuesday evenings, and Saturdays, free; and on Wednesdays, Wednesday evenings, Thursdays, and Fridays (Students' days) on payment of 6d. each person. From 10 to 4, 5, or 6 in the daytime, according to the season, and from 7 to 10 in the evening.

PARCHMENT PAPER.—This substance is prepared by exposing paper to the action of a mixture of two parts of concentrated sulphuric acid and one part of water for no longer time than is sufficient to draw it through the liquid. Thus, in little more than a second of time, a piece of porous, feeble, unsized, paper is converted into a substance so strong that a ring of it ¾ths of an inch in width, and weighing no more than twenty-three grains, has sustained 92lb.; a similar strip of parchment sustaining about 66lb.

NEWLY-DISCOVERED ACTION OF LIGHT.—According to M. Niecep de Saint Victor's experiments, if a solution of starch or dextrine (one of its constituents, with gum and sugar) be exposed for a short time (say a quarter of an hour for a small quantity) to the action of solar light, the liquid will be converted into glucose (grape sugar). This will tend to explain many a natural phenomena, such as the ripening of fruits, &c. M. Niecep believes that if bunches of grapes at the beginning of autumn were inclosed in paper bags steeped in a solution of tartaric acid, not only would the ripening be accelerated, but the quantity of sugar in the fruit would be greatly increased, tartaric acid, like nitrate of uranium, having the property of absorbing and retaining the light in its condition of chemical efficacy.—*Cosmos*.

MOULTING OF THE LOBSTER.—Mr. Salter describes circumstantially (in the *Linnean Society's Journal*) this interesting operation witnessed in his aquarium. The animal, having previously collected a

quantity of seaweed as a screen and protection for its soft body, remained for two days in a peculiarly rigid attitude; on the third day a crack was observed along the membrane connected with the first abdominal ring. By a series of strong vibratory actions, and followed by intervals of complete repose, the animal succeeded in completely extricating itself from its covering in about twenty minutes. The membrane of the new shell was perfectly soft, and of a bright blue colour. At first the lobster was shy and inactive, remaining concealed among the seaweed, but in a few hours it moved freely about the aquarium. On the seventh day the shell appeared to be perfectly calcified.

REARING OF SILKWORMS.—M. Thannaron, President of the *Société d'Agriculture de la Drôme*, France, has experimented with great success on the rearing of silkworms in the open air, and in rooms not warmed. The worms in the house made their cocoons five days earlier than those in the gardens, but of about 650 cocoons formed in the house 42 contained a dead black worm, which was not the case in any of the cocoons formed in the garden, though they were exposed to wind and rain. Madame Pirodon, at Versona, near Grenoble, has also informed the Academy that she has caused silkworms to be reared from the egg in rooms with windows open, but supplied with curtains to prevent currents of air from coming on the worms, and also in warm rooms with closed windows. The worms reared in the former produced the best silk of the year; the silk of the worms in the latter was nearly unusable.—*Comptes Rendus*.

THE HYDROPHONE.—Dr. Scott Allison gives this name to an indiarubber bag about the size of a watch, so made that it may be fitted readily to the chest or any other part of the body. By this apparatus the sonorous pulses, so to speak, are readily taken up from the solid body or the chest, and are conveyed through the water and membrane on either side, and reach the edge of the aperture of the hearing-tube and the contained air, whether the instrument be the human ear, the flexible stethoscope, or any other hearing-tube. The hydrophone may be employed either in aid of the stethoscope or by itself, as a distinct acoustic instrument.