

Current Notes.

The Fontaine family, of Norfolk, England, have been collecting art pottery and curiosities for several generations. The collection was lately sold at auction. The sale lasted three days and realized the sum of £91,000, £7,300 was given for a single dish, and a candlestick brought £3,675. A pair of candlesticks brought £1,300, and £4,415 was paid for an ivory horn. Other articles brought equally fabulous prices. The purchasers were art collectors from all parts of Europe.

Sir Joseph Fayer, who has been investigating snake poisoning, says that to him one of the greatest mysteries is that a poisonous snake cannot poison one of its species, scarcely its own congeners, and only slightly any venomous snake; but it kills innocent snakes quickly. A vigorous cobra can kill several dogs, or from a dozen to twenty fowls, before its bite becomes impotent, and then the immunity is of brief duration, for the virus is rapidly resecreted.

At a meeting in Berlin of the Medical Pedagogic Society, it was stated that the percentage of short-sighted children in the country and in towns was attributed in part to the wearing of spectacles from vanity. The unnecessary use of glasses has been found to produce short-sightedness. The opinion prevailed that medical advice should be taken before giving spectacles to a child. An instance showing the need of it was given of a school in Berlin, where forty-seven pupils out of one hundred were using glasses of too high a power.

Passengers arriving from Paris and Marseilles are, by order of the Prefect Police, submitted to a process of fumigation and disinfection before they are permitted to leave Paris terminus. For half an hour or more the travelers are shut up in a room set apart for them, the atmosphere of which is laden with nitrous acid. Some support the process, and breathe the chemical air without too much inconvenience; but others, those especially who are not in strong health, who have a throat or heart affliction, or any similar ailment, are really made ill by inhaling vapors which half suffocate them.

Dr. Webster, American consul at Sheffield, England, speaking of the cutlery industry, says that the United States furnishes Great Britain annually with about \$100,000 worth of bones, horns and hoofs, a portion of which is returned in scales for the American cutlers, and the remainder in the finished cutlery from Sheffield. The shank bones of oxen are almost exclusively used for this purpose, 2,000,000 being required annually by the cutlery trade. The best qualities are so good as to be mistaken for ivory by the inexperienced eye. Of the whole importation of bones into Great Britain in 1880, 78,138 tons were made into fertilizers, and 11,311 tons were used for manufacturing purposes, chiefly by Sheffield cutlers.

A French paper gives pictures to show the contrasts in the treatment of murderers in countries where capital punishment is not inflicted. For instance, in Belgium, where the King has a tender heart, murderers confined under life sentences, may be seen "going about unshackled, or working at some easy occupation, like toy-making, in cells that have been made to look homelike with pictures and other things which the convict has bought out of his earnings." On the other hand, in Italy, Passemante, who tried to murder King Humbert in 1878, is confined to the island of Elba. He is secured to the wall of an almost dark cell by a chain five feet in length, which is riveted to an iron ring round his ankle, and which does not allow him to take more than one step in any direction. His keepers are forbidden to speak to him or answer his questions. He has become imbecile.

Brierwood Pipes.

The short clay pipe formerly used by smokers has of late years been to a great extent supplanted by the wooden pipe, the manufacture of which is now an important industry. Some information respecting these pipes is given in British Consul Inglis's trade report on Leghorn, whence the material for making wooden pipes is now largely exported. Selected roots of the health are collected on the hills of the Maremma, where the plant grows luxuriantly and attains a great size. When brought to the factory the roots are cleared of earth, and any decayed parts are cut away. They are then shaped into blocks of various dimensions with a circular saw set in motion by a small steam engine. Great dexterity is necessary at this stage in cutting the wood to the best advantage, and it is only after a long apprenticeship that a workman is thoroughly efficient. The blocks are then placed in a vat and subjected to a gentle simmering for a space of twelve hours. During this process they acquire the rich yellowish-brown hue for which the best pipes are noted, and are then in a condition to receive the final turning; but this is done elsewhere. The rough blocks are packed in sacks containing from forty to one hundred dozen each, and sent abroad, principally to France (St. Cloud), where they are finished into famous G. B. D., or "pipes de bruyere," known to smokers in England and the United States under the name of "brierwood" pipes.

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