

ELECTRICITY IN THE PRESS ROOM.

We looked into the press room of one of the large printing establishments in London. The foreman was furious and the proprietor was sorrowful. Frictional electricity in the printed sheets of paper as they left the presses was the immediate cause of their trouble. It is an interesting and not uncommon phenomenon, and is not easily explained nor easily controlled. It has puzzled Professors Bell and Wadman and the best electricians we have about here. The packing upon the press cylinder seems to act as an inductor, and the paper leaves the press thoroughly electrified. We watched a press running off 1,700 per hour. Suddenly the printed sheets clung about the cylinder as though pasted upon it, and had to be torn off in strips. Again, we lifted a few freshly-printed leaves, and they ripped and cracked like the stitches of an old coat. Then we saw a lot of cardboard being printed. The sheets stuck together as solid as a brick, and could not be separated until the electricity had partly passed off. A piece of printers' brass rule placed in this pile of cardboard with an end projecting threw off sparks when approached within an inch by another piece of rule. Two sheets sucked together when held fourteen inches apart. Wet rags placed around the delivery table and led into a bucket of water charged the water with electricity in forty minutes, so that a positive shock was felt upon a hand being immersed in the pail. Electrical currents were felt in the hands and arms upon handling a pile of paper eight minutes after being printed. These are only a few of many curious experiences. The bother to the printer is a considerable one. It entails inconvenience and a serious loss. Valuable work is frequently spoiled by the electricity packing the leaves so closely as to offset the fresh ink. Then the presses have to be slow-speeded, with frequent stoppages. Nothing so demoralizes the press room as this mystery of frictional electricity when under full headway. The theories for controlling it don't seem to work, when applied, to the slightest extent.—*Melbourne Bulletin.*

We asked a political acquaintance of ours the other day what he thought of the campaign. "My friend," said he, "the campaign is opening up gloriously, the outlook was never better; I've been asked to drink 422 times already since the nominations, and—and—excuse me, my friend, but there's a man halloing to me now to come with him and have something; the outlook is glorious, my friend, gle-orious!"—*Rescue.*

PRINCES IN CUSTODY.

The Conciergerie, where Prince Napoleon confined, has twice served as a prison for members of his family. Prince Louis Napoleon, afterward Emperor, was shut up there in 1840 when he was awaiting his trial before the Chamber of Peers for his Boulogne expedition, and Prince Pierre Bonaparte was detained there in 1870 after his manslaughter of the journalist Victor Noir. Louis Napoleon, who was defended by the eloquent Legitimist orator Berryer, received sentence of "imprisonment for life," a penalty which did not exist on the statute book, but which the Peers decreed "so that they might not attach the degrading punishment of penal servitude (*travaux forces*) to the great name of Napoleon." The Prince was at once conveyed to the Fortress of Ham, in Picardy, whence he escaped in 1846. Prince Pierre Bonaparte was tried in March, 1870, before a high Court, specially constituted, and sitting at Tours. He was acquainted of wilful murder, but was sentenced to pay £1,000 damages to the family of his victim. Touching the arrest of Princes, it may be observed that the police of Paris have under all regimes had experience in this kind of business. Some of the arrests have remained memorable owing to the intense public excitement which they caused. In 1748 the arrest of Prince Charles Edward, the younger Pretender, at the door of the old Opera House, and by an ordinary police official, produced a commotion of which traces may be found in all contemporary memoirs. Voltaire wrote that the Prince had suffered a gross indignity. But perhaps the most amusing affair of this sort was an attempt made to arrest Duke Charles of Brunswick under Louis Philippe's reign. The Duke, having been expelled from his dominions in 1830, took refuge in Paris, and began to give trouble to the French Government by his intrigues. After the Government had borne with him some time, it was resolved that he must leave the country, and Count de Montalivet, the Home Minister, signed a warrant for his arrest and expulsion. But the Duke was warned of what was coming and hired an obscure actor to take his place, he himself retiring to the house of a friend. The actor who had contrived a capital "make up," was arrested and conveyed to the Swiss frontier in a post-chaise escorted by a troop of horse. All through the journey he was treated with royal honors; but this so frightened him that soon after reaching Geneva he quietly decamped without waiting for the remittance of his fee. Meanwhile the real Duke had sent friends to in-

tercede for him with Louis Phillippe, and the King was so much tickled at hearing how his Minister had been outwitted that he got the order of expulsion quashed on the Duke's promise to be of good behaviour.—*London Times.*

MISSISSIPPI FOGS.

"A fog catches you sometimes, and what then?"

"Then we go by guess—plain guess. We move slow and have one hand on the engineer's bell all the time. We nose up into the bushes once in a while, and back out and turn around. Oh, it's amusing what capers a boat will cut in a fog. Why I recall once, I was on the Alice Vivian going up at the foot of the island, when the fog came on so dense you had to brush it aside to see your hand. We chasseyed around there for a long time, now into this bank, now into that, and having \$50 worth of the derndest fun you ever saw, when all at once I found we were in a pocket with a bank on both sides of us and a bank a little way ahead. Yes, sir, we were 200 yards up in Three-Mile Creek, having come down the river to accomplish this feat.

"About two years ago I was following Capt. Peoples of the Johnson, in a fog, listening to her escape pipes and steering well into the point. I thought everything was going all right when the Johnson came steaming back and I learned that Captain Peoples had been up the Tensas River and was going right through to the Atlantic Ocean, when he heard a dog bark. knowing there was no dog put down on his chart he turned back and came down where I was.

"Well, we run by dog barking, by rooster crowing, by pig squeals. These are reliable signs to run by. Sometimes we run by the stopping bell, and then by the rudder. You see, we ring the bell and accordingly as it sounds with a faint or a quick echo we judge how far we are from the shore. We sometimes stop the boat ever so often just to hear the bell echo, and then it is almost the same thing with the whistle and with the wheel. When the wheel is grinding away close in shore she makes an awful roar, but when we are well out in the middle of the stream you can scarcely hear it. The other way of judging the run of the boat and her direction is by the feel of the rudder. When the pilot's wheel turns hard we know which way she is heading, even when we cannot see the jackstaff. Of course it is a science to some degree, but for the most part piloting in a fog is pure guesswork."—[*Mobile Register.*

SOLUBLE GLASS PAINT.

Soluble glass has been largely used in painting on articles and woodwork that it is desired to make incombustible. Messrs. Vilde and Schambeck use the following composition:—Twenty parts finely-pulverised glass, 20 parts finely-pulverised porcelain, 20 parts of any natural stone finely powdered, 10 parts of burnt lime, 30 parts soluble soda glass of about 42 or 36 per cent. The solid matters are pulverised as finely as possible, then mixed with water and passed through a fine sieve. They are next well mixed in a wet state with the soluble glass, which gives a syrupy mass, and it can be used in this condition or mixed with paint. The addition gives a certain amount of unctuousity for whitewashing. The proportion of the ingredients except that of the soluble glass may be changed, but it is always useful to retain the lime, and in fact the general composition is given above. Soluble potash glass may be used instead of the soda, but it is dearer. A second coating may be applied after six hours. This paint is as hard as stone, and gives complete protection against fire. It might be very advantageously used for railway carriages, and for boats, rendering the latter waterproof, and doing away with tar. It sticks well on iron, and does not crack or blister like oil paints.—*Melbourne Leader.*

NEAL DOW'S RAT STORY.

My house is supposed to be rat proof and was so when quite new, but at one time, more than twenty years ago, we had a large colony of the rodents, greatly to our annoyance, and it was with us a matter of daily wonder where they found a weak spot in our defences against them. One evening a young lady from a friend's family, living in a large, fine house nearly a mile away, was with us and the talk turned on rats, as we heard ours galloping in the ceiling and scampering up and down the walls. The young lady said that none had ever been in their house and she did not think there was any point at which they could enter. My eldest daughter, a great wit, said: "I've heard that, if politely invited to do so in writing, rats will leave any house and go to any other to which they may be directed, and I will tell ours that at your house they will find spacious quarters and an excellent commissariat."

At the moment, before us all, she wrote a most grandiloquent letter to the large family of rats that had so long favored us with their presence, pointing out to them that at No. 6 Pearl street was a large, fine house, which had never been favored with the residence of any of their family,

where they would find ample quarters and a fat larder. When finished, she read the missive to the company, and we had a great laugh over it. As an old superstition, she then put lard upon it, and carried it to the attic, where it would probably be found by those to whom it was directed. A few days after the young lady was at our house again, and burst into a laugh, exclaiming: "Our house is overrun with rats!" That recalled to us the fact that we had heard none in our walls. My daughter went to the attic and the letter was gone. While we were talking and laughing over the curious affair a friend came in, and hearing the talk said that two evenings before, in the bright moonlight, he saw several rats running down Congress street, which was the straight road to Pearl street. We have never been troubled with them since, but I have not heard how it has been with the house to which our beneficiaries were directed.—*Boston Congregationalist.*

A CHILD'S HEART.

The other day a curious old woman, having a bundle in her hand, and walking with painful effort, sat down on a kerbstone to rest. A group of three little ones, the oldest about nine, stopped in front of the old woman, saying never a word, but watching her face. She smiled. Suddenly the smile faded, and a corner of the old calico apron went up to wipe away a tear. Then the child asked, "Are you sorry because you haven't any children?" "I—I had children once, but they are all dead," whispered the old woman, a sob in her throat. "I'm sorry," said the little girl, as her chin quivered. "I'd give you one of my little brothers, but I haven't got but two, and I don't believe I'd like to spare one." "God bless you, child—bless you for ever," sobbed the old woman, and for a minute her face was buried in her apron. "But I'll tell you what I'll do," seriously continued the child. "You may kiss us all once, and if little Ben isn't afraid, you may kiss him four times, for he's just as sweet as candy." Pedestrians who saw three well dressed children put their arms around that strange old woman's neck and kiss her were greatly puzzled. They didn't know the hearts of children, and they didn't hear the woman's words as she rose to go:—"O children, I'm only a poor woman, believing I'd nothing to live for; but you've gave me a lighter heart than I've had for ten long years."

The word "teetotal" was originally applied to workmen who had been dismissed from their employ, and signifies an "entire discharge," a "complete dismissal." The name "teetotaler" is now used to designate one who has given all intoxicating liquors an entire and final discharge.

AN ASPHALT MORTAR.

The *Centralblatt der Bauverwaltung* describes a patented composition made at a factory in Stargard, Pomeranie, which has for some years past been used with perfect success on the Berlin-Stettin Railway for wall copings, water tables, and similar purposes requiring a waterproof coating. The material is composed of coal tar, to which are added clay, asphalt, resin, litharge, and sand. It is, in short, a kind of artificial asphalt, with the distinction that it is applied cold, like ordinary cement rendering. The tenacity of the material when properly laid, and its freedom from liability to damage by the weather, are proved by reference to an example in the coping of a retaining wall, which has been exposed for four years to the drainage, of a slope 33 feet high. This coping is still perfectly sound, and has not required any repair since it was laid down. Other works have proved equally satisfactory. In applying this mortar, as it is termed, the space to be covered is first thoroughly dried, and after being well cleaned is primed with hot roofing varnish, the basis of which is also tar. The mortar is then laid on cold to the thickness of about three-eighths of an inch, with either wood or steel trowels, and is properly smoothed over. If the area covered is large, another coating of varnish is applied, and rough sand strewn over the whole. The waterproof surface thus made is perfectly impregnable to rain or frost, and practically indestructible. The cost of the material laid is estimated at not more than 5d. per square foot; and it is stated that this price can be reduced by at least 1d. for large quantities put down by experienced workmen.—*Melbourne Leader.*

WHICH WAS THE BEST FRIEND?

And it came to pass as a certain man journeyed from the cradle to the grave he fell among saloon-keepers, who robbed him of his money, ruined his good name, destroyed his reason, and then kicked him out worse than dead.

A moderate drinker came that way, and when he saw him he said: "He is but a dog, they served him right; let him die; he is a curse to his family."

And also a license voter came that way, and when he saw him he said: "The brute! Put a ball and chain on his leg, and work him on the street."

An American paper says:—Looking over an old ledger we see a long array of names of former subscribers who are indebted to us. Some of them have moved away, and are lost to sight, although to memory dear. Others are carrying the contribution boxes in our most respectable churches, and others again have died, and are now angels in heaven; but they owe us just the same.

ENGLAND AND HER COLONIES.

From the mail summary of the *Melbourne Argus* of English news to 26th January we take the following account of an interesting episode in the history of England and her colonies in our time:—

"The Earl of Derby on the 16th received, at the Colonial Office, the High Commissioner of Canada and the Agents-General for the Australian colonies, New Zealand, and the Cape of Good Hope. Sir Alexander Galt, in addressing Lord Derby, congratulated him upon his acceptance of the Secretaryship of the Colonies, and welcomed the present interview as an evidence of his appreciation of the growing importance of the constitutional colonies. He trusted that the personal usefulness of himself and his colleagues in serving their respective Governments would be promoted by a more formal recognition than had hitherto been found advisable of the deeper interest felt by the colonies in all that concerned the welfare of the nation of which they regard themselves as part.

"Lord Derby, in reply, expressed his thanks for the address, and said that the growing importance of the great self-governed colonies is recognized by every Englishman, of whatever party or class. We rejoice, he said, in their strength and prosperity, and have right to expect results such as the world has not often seen where the energies and experiences of ancient civilization are applied to boundless territory and an unexhausted soil. The position which our country will hold in the history of the future will, in my judgement at least, depend far more on our achievements in the way of colonization, and on the diffusion of our race over so many of the choicest regions of the earth than on the part we have played, or may still play, in Europe. It is difficult to avoid the language of exaggeration in speaking of the possible future of such countries as Canada and Australia. We fully recognize and duly value the attachment of our colonial kinsmen to the constitution under which we live, to the mother-country whence they have sprung, and to the empire of which, though divided by distance, they continue to form a part. It will be my duty and my wish, and it will be equally that of any Minister who may hereafter stand in my place, to take care that the deep interest felt by the people of these islands in the welfare of the colonies shall find adequate expression in the language and in the actions of the official representative of the Crown.

"The *Times*, discussing the interview, says that the claims made by the agents-general mark a stage in the inevitable development of the relations of the mother-country and the colonies. It is now felt to be time that the agents-general should enjoy the status of accredited repre-

sentatives of their Governments. They have come to be the only channels through which the Imperial Government can obtain authentic knowledge of the wishes of the colonial Governments. A Governor nominated by the Crown is no longer capable of conveying what a colony has to say to us."—*Queenlander.*

Teacher: "Can you tell me which is the olfactory organ?" Pupil frankly answers: "No, sir." Teacher: "Correct." Pupil goes off in a brown study.—[Boston Transcript.

An exchange publishes the name of hell in forty-eight different languages. It's very convenient for a man to have to learn by heart and run over when he's getting up off a coal-hole top.

"What plan," said an actor to another, "shall I adopt to fill the house at my benefit?" "Invite your creditors," was the tart reply.

At dinner she had a doctor on either hand, one of whom remarked that they were well served, since they had a duck between them. "Yes," she broke in—her wit is of the sort that comes in flashes—"and I am between two quacks." Then silence fell.

In Boston there is a curious little musical instrument. The case, in shape like a small music box, is of gold, enameled; on the lid is set an oval strip of porcelain; having wound the works and pressed a spring, this oval fles up, a tiny nest is disclosed, and from it leaps a beautiful bird, which, perching upon a rest begins to sing like a canary, opening its bill and fluttering its wings and body in the most life-like manner; when its song is done it hops back to its nest, and the oval closes. This beautiful toy costs \$12.

Vaucanson, a mechanical genius, made a automatic flute player and piper in 1738, which were the wonders of their time. The flutist was a figure five feet high, standing on a pedestal within which were nine pair of bellows, worked by clock work. The motion of the fingers, lip and tongue were all imitated by this figure which by various arrangements of valves, tubes, levers, and wheels, is said to have produce music little inferior to the performance of a skilled flute-player. The piper was constructed much on the same principle. The bellows of his instrument required a fifty-six pound weight to produce the highest note. As the fatigue of playing the pipes usually caused the performer, when playing rapidly, to slur over some of the notes, the mimic piper, impervious alike to weariness and shortness of breath, is accredited with having excelled a living one the clearness of his notes.