

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE SPREAD OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.—I notice one striking change in Egypt. This is the astonishing spread of the English language within the last twenty years, resulting both from the numbers of English and American travellers who visit the East, and the use of the language by travellers of other nationalities. French, which until within the last few years was indispensable, has been slowly fading into the back ground, and is already less available than English for Italy and all the Orient. I was a little surprised in Rome at being accosted by a native boot-black with "Shine up your boots?" In Naples, every peddler of canes, coral, photographs, and shell-fish knows at least enough to make a good bargain; but this is nothing to what one meets in Egypt. The bright-witted boys learn the language with amazing rapidity, and are so apt at guessing what they do not literally understand, that the traveller no longer requires an interpreter. At the base of Pompey's pillar, to-day, a ragged and dirty little girl came out of a fellah hut and followed us, crying, "Give me ha'penny!" All the coachmen and most of the shop-keepers are familiar with the words necessary for their business, and prefer to use them, even after they see that you are acquainted with Italian or Arabic. The simple, natural structure of the English language undoubtedly contributes also to its extension. It is already the leading language in the world, spoken by ninety millions of people (double the number of the French-speaking races), and so extending its conquests year by year that its practical value is in advance of that of any other tongue.—Bayard Taylor's Letters.

"ENLIGHTENED ENGLISHMEN"—DESCRIBED BY THEMSELVES.—Those who read English papers are continually told about the wretchedness and depravity of the "low Irish." Let us see how the low English compare with them. In an article entitled "The Vildest Specimens of Humanity," a correspondent of the 'Manchester Guardian,' describing the roughs of Lancashire, says:—"To my mind the Lancashire rough of the Bolton and Blackburn districts is the vilest specimen of humanity on the face of the earth; indeed, he would disgrace the lowest order of animals, and I think a cannibal or an Ashantee is a perfect gentleman compared to one of them. The villains never seem to think that kicking with the sort of clogs on they wear, is not one whit better than fighting with iron gloves, or armed with spikes; and I dare say even they would admit that this was rather too much of a good thing. There is nothing in the shape of bodily suffering so repulsive to my mind as the blows given by these vile brutes by their clogs, and I should infinitely prefer a bullet through my head to undergoing the treatment to which they often subject each other, and even their poor wives."

CURIOSITIES OF LANGUAGE.—The Hindoos are said to have no word for "friend." The Italians have no equivalent for our "humility." The Russian dictionary gives a word, the definition of which is, "not to have enough buttons on your footman's waistcoat;" the second is, "to kill over again;" a third, "to earn by dancing." The Germans call a thimble a "finger-hat," which it certainly is, and a grasshopper a "hay horse." A glove with them is a "hand shoe," showing that they wore shoes before gloves. The French, strange to say, have no verb "to stand," nor can a Frenchman speak of "kicking" any one. The nearest approach he, in his politeness, makes to it is to threaten to "give a blow with his foot," the same thing, probably, to the recipient in either case, but it seems to want the energy, the directness of our "kick." The terms, "upstairs," and "downstairs," are unknown in French.

THE DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF POSEN.—The 'Kurier Pazaranski' publishes an article upon the imprisonment and deposition from office of Mgr. Count Ledochowski, Archbishop of Gnesen and Posen, from which the following extracts are taken: "What will now become of all our ecclesiastical affairs? Perhaps the Government, confident of its superior power and the forbearance of the Legislature, will take some precautionary measures without waiting for the result of the decision of the Landtag on the bills to supplement the ecclesiastical laws of last May now before it, and introduce certain restrictions, which it will subsequently try to justify by pointing out their urgent necessity. But, no matter what happens, our course is clear and straight, and there is no doubt about what is duty. We will continue to give to Cæsar what is Cæsar's, but we will also faithfully and firmly give to God what is God's. At this moment our first thought turns again to our imprisoned Archbishop, who, in spite of his confinement behind the bars of the goal, is greater than his adversaries, who are surrounded by the glitter of worldly power. They wish to tear from him the character of the Divine mission which Holy Writ has impressed upon him. Vain efforts! They may crush him, but to his last breath he will remain what he is; and the faithful will never cease to recognise and venerate in him the successor of the Apostles—the pastor to whom the Vicar of Christ has entrusted his flock."

MR GLADSTONE, it is said, rarely writes anything with his own hand, the gift of spontaneous composition, like Mr Lowe's, amounting to improvisation. His treatise upon the Greek drama is dictated from a few notes to a staff of shorthand writers, who visit the right hon. gentleman every morning, taking "turns," as they do in the "Gallery," and passing them on to the printer in the course of the day.

THE CONSCRIPTION IN FRANCE.—Last year from about 300,000 young men passing the examination for recruiting the army, 16,000 were discharged on account of having lost their brothers, or having been wounded in the war; 11,400 as being sons or grandsons of widows, or of people above seventy years of age; 1600 as elder brothers or orphans; 16,000 as not being strong enough; 10,000 through lameness; 8,000 from not being tall enough; 3,000 for defects in the eyes; 2,000 from having bad teeth; 1,000 for being mutes, 1200 as epileptics, 600 as deaf, 80 on account of blindness, 1,000 through phthisis; in all 89,000 were rejected.

THERE are three kinds of cheques. A cheque to bearer, the banker is bound to pay over the counter by whomsoever presented. A cheque to order he is bound to pay in like manner, if endorsed by the person to whose order it is payable. A crossed cheque he must pay, not over the counter, but only to a banker. To cross a cheque

however, it is not enough to draw two lines, the words "and Co." must be written between the lines—a fact of which many people are not aware.

THE SIX LARGEST STEAMERS.—The six largest steamers in the world are: the Great Eastern, owned by the International Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company, 674 feet long, 77 feet broad; the City of Peking, lately launched in the Delaware river, Pacific Steam Navigation Company, 6000 tons, 423 feet long, 48 feet broad; the Liguria, the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, 4,820 tons, 460 feet long, 45 feet broad; the Britannia, White Star Company, 4,700 tons, 455 feet long, 45 feet broad; the City of Richmond, Inman, 4,600 tons, 453½ feet long, 45 feet broad; and the Bothnia, Cunard, 4,500 tons, 425 feet long, 42½ feet broad.

RAILWAYS AND POPULATION.—In the population of the world, China stands first with 425,213,152; the British Empire, second, with 199,817,000; and Russia, third, with 82,172,000. The United States are fifth. In density of population, Belgium comes first, with 451 persons to the square mile; England is next with 389. Belgium, 1 mile of railway to six square miles of territory; Great Britain has 1 to 8 square miles; and the United States are eleventh, with 1 to 56. Of electric telegraphs, Great Britain has 1 mile to every 4 miles of territory; Belgium 1 to 5, and the United States, 1 to 36.

GENERAL NEWS.

ACCORDING to a return just issued, there are at the present time 185 peers of Ireland: viz., 2 dukes, 11 marquises, 66 earls, 38 viscounts and 68 barons, and that at the passing of the Act of Union there were 211 peers of Ireland—viz., 1 duke, 5 marquises, 77 earls, 58 viscounts, and 70 barons. Since the Union 75 Irish peerages have become extinct and 61 peers of Ireland have been created peers of the United Kingdom. Of the existing 185 Irish peers, 80 are also peers of England, Great Britain or the United Kingdom, and 28 are representative lords, thus leaving 77 as the number of Irish peers without seats.

The 'Tuam News' has the following:—"A little fellow in Derry the other day having caught a mouse in a trap, laughingly held up the trap and shook it in his companion's face. The mouse, making a sudden spring, freed itself, and seeing the open mouth of the companion boy leaped into it, and passed on down his throat. The lad seems to suffer in no way from the accident, though he avers he felt the mouse biting him as it passed down his throat."

Brooklyn has a Catholic Newsboys' Home, where over one hundred little fellows are protected and cared for. It is under the protection of the St. Vincent de Paul's Society. The board is excellent, the dormitories are specimens of neatness, the gymnasium a perfect boys' paradise, the school (from 8 to 9 p.m.) cannot be beat, and the boys never swear nor use vulgar language. Each boy has a little pigeon-hole wardrobe for himself, with the key in his own custody.

Mr Fish, the Secretary of State, has made a suggestion that a law should be passed to return immigrant paupers, vagabonds, and convicts landing in the United States by the same vessels which bring them, and heavily fining the companies to which these vessels belong.

It is telegraphed from New York that the Government of Guatemala has granted the British Vice-Consul, Mr Magee, £10,000 as compensation for the outrage inflicted upon him by Colonel Gonzalez at St. José.

The vexed question of precedence among the Princesses at Court, which has given rise to so much gossip and contradictory reports, has now been satisfactorily settled. Inasmuch as the Duke of Edinburgh, heir apparent to the Principality of Coburg Gotha, the Duchess will take precedence immediately after the Princess of Wales. The London correspondent of the 'Western Morning News' gives a new explanation of the cause of the absence of the Duchess of Edinburgh from several drawing-rooms lately. There is not room on the dais for all the members of the Royal Family who have been present; and twice the Duke of Teck had to stand in the rear out of sight, behind the rest of the royal personages. The Duchess of Edinburgh not being fond of State ceremonials, and having noticed this state of things, begged Her Majesty's permission to be excused from such frequent attendance at drawing-rooms as is generally considered necessary, and her request was granted.

An instrument for obtaining the altitude of the sun has recently been discovered under a stone near the harbor of Valencia, County Kerry. When discovered it was enclosed in a case, which, on being touched, fell to pieces. The graduations were very carefully and accurately made, but there was no makers name or date. The instrument was of a most primitive kind, being intended to be suspended from the observer's thumb while he made the observation; and no such instrument has been used for the last two hundred and fifty years or more. Two ships of the Spanish Armada are known to have been wrecked near Valencia, and it may have belonged to one of them.

The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, in one of his recent sermons in Plymouth Church, said, according to the report in the 'Tribune':—"Average the churches of New York and Brooklyn, and I think it can be shown that the aristocratic or prosperous element takes possession of the churches, and that the great needy classes, or the poor, if they go to them at all, do not go to them as a home, because the churches do not satisfy their wants and cravings. The churches are not as democratic as they are in Europe. They are, largely, institutions for the mutual insurance of prosperous families (laughter)." Mr Beecher does say smart things now and then; and it is refreshing to see that no severe rule of respect for the place or the worship keeps the congregation of Plymouth from "laughter." Of course, Mr Beecher, in speaking of "the churches of New York," did not include the Catholic Churches.

A revolving cannon was fired at Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar when he was stepping into his carriage to attend the levee. No injury was inflicted. The assassin escaped at the time, but was afterwards captured. He proved to be a crazed Pole, who adopted this course to compel the attention of the War Office to his invention.