

WAFES AND STRAYS.

HINTS ON SLEEP.—To literary men, preachers, teachers, lawyers, doctors, journalists, and brain workers in general, the following hints are exceedingly worthy of attention: The fact is, that as life becomes concentrated, and its pursuits more eager, short sleep and early rising become impossible. We take more sleep than our ancestors, and we take more because we need more. Six hours' sleep will do very well for a ploughman or bricklayer, or any other man who has no exhaustion but that produced by manual labor, and the sooner he takes it after the labour the better. But for the man whose labor is mental, the stress is on the brain and the nervous system, and for him who is tired in the evening with a day of mental application, neither early to bed nor early to rise is wholesome. He needs letting down to the level of repose. The longer interval between the active use of the brain and the retirement to bed, the better his chance of sleep and retirement. To him an hour after midnight is probably as good as two hours before it, and even then his sleep will not so completely restore him as it will his neighbour who is physically tired. His best sleep is in the early morning hours, when all the nervous excitement has passed away, and he is in absolute rest.

A DETERMINED FAMILY.—Under the head of "Praiseworthy" the "Yazoo (Miss) Banner," of the 19th, tells this story:—"A man with a wife and several children, who some time ago left Indiana for Texas, finding, after reaching New Orleans or some other point in Louisiana, that he could not proceed on account of the overflow, turned back and is retracing his steps to Indiana. He and his family are all walking, carrying a wheelbarrow which contains all his earthly goods. He has stopped a few days in the suburbs of the city, where he is making axe-handles to get means to pursue his journey. He is a man in full vigor of health, intelligent, and buoyant in spirit. He is determined still to go to Texas. He seems to be satisfied with his lot, and hopeful that he will yet make at least an independence. We predict that he will succeed, for his industry and energy are indomitable."

THE RIGHT OR LEFT ARM.—The question whether a gentleman walking with a lady should give his right or left arm is frequently discussed. Customs and written etiquette are rather in favor of the right, although there are excellent reasons in behalf of the left arm. Either one or the other, permanently retained is vastly better than the awkward and absurd habit of changing arms, so as to change the lady on the inside of the promenade. One advantage of giving the left arm is that the person on the right naturally takes the lead, so that, in the country or city, in the street or park, he thus readily directs the way, instead of waiting to consult his companion, or causing a jostling by each of them trying to move to opposite points. Another advantage is, that in a crowded thoroughfare, where the sidewalk is invariably encumbered with merchandise and thronged with people, a gentleman needs his right arm to remove obstructious and keep rude or careless folks out of the way.

MARRIAGE ANNOUNCEMENTS.—Mr Grant tells a very good story of the origin of the custom of charging for the insertion of marriage announcements. At first these were published freely, as they still are by many provincial papers. But in the early days of the "Times" it was the custom in announcing a marriage to state the amount of the bride's dowry—£20,000 or £30,000, whatever it might happen to be; and in looking through the ladies' column one morning Mr Walter threw out the suggestion that if a man married all that money he might certainly pay a trifling percentage upon it to the printer for acquainting the world with the fact. "These marriage fees would form a nice little pocket money for me, my dear," added Mrs Walter, and as a joke her husband agreed to try the experiment. The charge at first was but a trifle, and the annual amount probably not much; but Mrs Walter at her death, passed this prescriptive right of hers to her daughter, and when a few years ago the right was purchased by the present proprietor, it was assessed at £4,000 or £5,000 a year.

BEAUTY.—Without expression, the most perfect features are not beautiful. It may be said that the eyes sway the destiny of the face; for if their expression be not beautiful, the most exquisitely modelled features, the most classical mould of the head, and the purest Grecian oval of general facial outline are but as doves clustering in the fascination of hideous snakes. On the other hand, a beautiful eye raises the plainest face to a higher rank of beauty than mere symmetry can ever attain. The greatest and most loved women of history were often indebted solely to the beautiful expression of their eyes for their power of fascinating all who beheld them. And to make the eyes thus beautiful, it is only necessary to throw into them that light of the soul which emanates from the gentler emotions and purest thoughts. All violent passions abate the eye, all unworthy thoughts mar its clearness.

IMPROVED BRICKS.—The "London Architect" thinks that before long, there will be a wonderful alteration in the method of using bricks, and claims that modern science has long ago pointed out much cheaper and more effectual methods of using lime and clay than those at present employed. Lumps of burnt clay, called bricks, are still made, chiefly because it has been the custom to fashion such lumps in a certain regular form ever since man began to build. A brick wall, says the "Architect," as it is put together, now-a-days, with its multiplicity of small joints, and its liability to consist of porous, undrained bricks, or of fragile, hollow mortar, can hardly escape becoming saturated with moisture every wet day, and retaining, for the longest possible period, the water used in its construction. Instead of making bricks at all, the "Architect" says that the clay can be burned in heaps with small coal, and burned thoroughly, to incipient vitrification, for one third the cost that it can be burned into the form of bricks, and the chalk mixed with clay can be made into a water-resisting element for a little more than the cost of converting into lime.

MOLES.—A French naturalist has experimented with moles to ascertain their true habits. It has been found that they will starve to death in presence of abundant vegetable food, refusing to touch it, but they will greedily devour earthworms, mice, and even small birds, when early starving in an enclosed jar. Of the birds they devour only the inside; they devour indiscriminately their own weight each

day of snails, insects, larvae, chrysalides, caterpillars, adders, worms and lizards. An instance is known where a French landed proprietor destroyed every mole on his property. The next season his fields were ravished with cutworms, and his crops destroyed. He then purchased moles from his neighbors, and stocked his fields, and afterwards carefully preserved them as his best friend.

MUSLINS.—An Indian native woman, with her fingers and spindle alone, and a native man, with his toes and bamboo loom alone, can spin a thread and finish a piece of muslin which cannot by the application of the most delicate machinery, be produced outside of India. There is one quality of Dacca muslin, for example, which is termed "woven air," it is made only for king's daughters. So short is the staple of the raw material, and so brittle are its fibres that it must be spun by a woman under twenty-five years, and before all the dew has left the grass in the morning. As a substitute for natural moisture the evaporation of water from a shallow pan is sometimes used, but the quality of the work in that case is inferior. A piece of muslin four yards in length and one yard in width often weighs less than one ounce avoirdupois. The muslin is very durable, and will wash.

THE LENGTH OF DAYS.—At Hamburg, in Germany, the longest day has seventeen hours, and the shortest seven; at Stockholm, the longest eighteen and a half, and the shortest five and a half; at St. Petersburg, the longest nineteen, and the shortest five. At Wonderbus, in Norway, the day lasts from the 21st May to the 2nd of July, the sun not getting below the horizon the whole time, but skirting along very close to it in the north; while in Spitzbergen the longest day lasts three months and a half.

THE PASSION FLOWER.—When the Spaniards discovered South America they saw, amongst other plants new to them, a climbing shrub, having from two to three fruit-bearing flowers, unlike any they had ever seen. One day a priest was preaching to the Peruvians, or aboriginal inhabitants, amidst the wild scenery of their native forests. His subject was the Passion of Our Lord. His eye suddenly glanced at this curious flower, which hung in festoons from the trees overhead; and like St. Patrick with the Shamrock, he saw with the eye of a Saint a vivid picture of the sad story of Calvary. The rings of threads which surround the cup of the flower, and which are mottled with blue, crimson, and white, suggested the crown of thorns, stained with blood, to his mind, tutored by meditation; the five anthers, on the stamens, represented the five wounds; the three styles, the nails which fixed Our Blessed Lord to the Cross; and the singular column which rises in the centre of the flower, were made to bring before the minds of these wild savages the harrowing scene of the Second sorrowful Mystery of the Most Holy Rosary. So, without Bibles or books, did this holy man instruct his converts on the Passion; and to this day our beautiful creeping garden flower is called "The Passion Flower." In all languages it bears the same name.

EDUCATION.—The education of the girl, as a housekeeper, should be begun by the mother early, continued until the marriage of the daughter, and no other duty of the mother, and no other study of the daughter should interfere with it. This and the school education should go on simultaneously. If anything is to be postponed, let it be music and drawing and philosophy, which, as experience shows, are usually untended to after "the happy event." The more and higher the education the better. But let us have a real and practical education instead of a sham education.

LEECHES V. OLD PROPS.—That there is a sensitiveness to atmospheric changes in the leech is generally admitted; and the idea of utilising this little creature as a sort of weather-glass arose long ago, we have evidence in one of the early volumes of the "Gentleman's Magazine." A correspondent of that venerable journal stated that if a leech be kept in a phial or bottle partly filled with water, it will indicate approaching changes in the weather. He placed on the window-ledge an eight-ounce phial, containing a leech and about six ounces of water, and watched it daily. According to his description, when the weather became serene and beautiful, the leech became motionless at the bottom of the phial, rolled in a spiral form. When it began to rain at noon, or a little before or after, the leech was found at the top of its lodging, where it remained until the weather became settled. When wind was approaching, the leech galloped about its limpid habitation with great liveliness, seldom resting until the wind became violent. When a thunderstorm was about to appear, the animal sought a lodgment above the level of the water, displayed great uneasiness, and moved about in convulsive-like threads. In clear frost, or in fine summer weather, it lay constantly at the bottom; whereas, in snowy weather, like as in rain, it dwelt at the very mouth of the phial. The observer covered the mouth of the phial with a piece of linen cloth, and changed the water every week or two.

WORTHY OF ATTENTION.—An Englishman with rheumatic gout found this singular remedy a cure for his ailment: "He insulated his bed from the floor by placing under each post a broken off bottom of a glass bottle." He says the effect was magical; that he had not been free from rheumatic gout for fifteen years, and that he began to improve immediately after the application of the insulators. "We are informed by this statement," says the "Scientific American," "of a patent obtained through this office for a physician, some twelve or more years ago, which created considerable interest at the time. The patent consisted in placing glass cups under the bed-posts in a similar manner to the above, and the patentee claimed to have effected some remarkable cures by the use of his remarkable insulators." A gentleman in this city who has been afflicted with rheumatic gout, gouty rheumatism, or one or the other both combined, accidentally stumbled upon the above statement of facts, and tried the experiment. The result is, that although nearly fifty years old, he is ready to run a foot-race with any man of his age in the State for one hundred yards. —San Francisco paper.

The last new thing in linen-draper's shops in Paris is a billiard-room for husbands and brothers to beguile away the time while their fair companions are making their purchases. A good lunch and a glass of wine are also provided gratis.