AMERICAN JOTTINGS.

A FEW ITEMS ABOUT COLOUR.

Colour is the plague-spot in the constitution of America. How to get rid of it, nobody knows; what is to be the upshot, no one can foretel. So far as an outsider is able to judge, few are satisfied with the present state of things. The more intelligent and reflective part of the nation seem to be getting more alive to the danger, or at least to the social degradation involved in the permanence of slavery. Not a little of this increasing sensibility is, doubtless, owing to the recent and unexpected acts of Congress establishing Kansas and Nebraska, without guaranteeing, in accordance with an existing statute, that slavery shall not be introduced into these western territories. Offended with this loose legislation, and possibly apprehensive of the spread of the institution over the broad continent, even to the shores of the Pacific, many persons hitherto inclined to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law are now apparently disposed to adopt every means of defeating its operation; or, at all events, remaining neutral in moody discontent, they lend no assistance to slave-owners in reclaiming their vagrant property. In short, it may be inferred, from recent demonstrations, that the question of confining slavery to its older and more congenial region, and of modifying other social restrictions in regard to colour, is gaining ground, and that next Congress will not pass away without something being done on this vexing subject. The following are a few items illustrative of matters as they stand :—

A FORTUNATE 'COW-HIDING.'—A case was tried not long since in the courts of New York, involving an important question in law. The question was, whether slaves who had been involuntarily brought into the state, could be legally carried back into servitude by their master. The result of this litigation has not fallen under my notice; but I observe that in Ohio, the law on the point has been established. About a year ago, a Mr. and Mrs. Williams, from New Orleans, visited Circleville, in Ohio, bringing with them a female slave, twelve years of age. One day Mrs. Williams thought proper to give the girl a 'cow-hiding,' whereupon she decamped, and took refuge among some of the coloured population. By them the girl was informed, that having been *brought by her proprietor* into the free state of Ohio, she could not be legally reclaimed or taken back to slavery. Not aware of this state of the law, Williams tried to recover the girl, but found that the authorities could not assist him, and that if he attempted violence, he would subject himself to a prosecution for kidnapping. He and his wife, accordingly, returned to New Orleans without their slave, who remained with her coloured friends, and was put to school.

A BISHOP SLAVEHOLDER.—A correspondent of the *New York Express*, lately furnished a fascinating account of the manner in which slaves are treated on a plantation in Louisiana belonging to Bishop Polk. We give it as a curiosity in its way. 'The plantation presents a favorable, but by no means a peculiar picture of southern homes and hearts. I allude to the sugar-estate of Bishop Polk, on the Bayou Lafourche, and in possession of one of the happiest and most intelligent families one sees anywhere. There are 340 slaves, 90 of whom are children under ten years of age, and 170 working-hands. Eighteen children had been born upon the plantation in less than a year. The children are trained religiously as soon as their minds can be made to comprehend the idea of God and of religious duty. Many of the grown slaves can both read and write; and those who can do so, are not slow to teach others. Probably, the world over, there could not be found three or four hundred beings together happier or better cared for, than the slaves on this plantation. Though a sugar-plantation, the slaves are not worked on Sunday's and Bishop Polk has demonstrated, that it is both practical and economical, even in the grinding-season, to suspend all sorts of labor on Sunday. A planter, who had tried the experiment, concluded to recommend the stopping of labour on the Sabbath; acknowledged that the change worked well; and that he was making more and better sugar than ever before. The children have their nurseries, where the very old take care of the very young, while the mothers and fathers are at work. Those from ten years to ten months old, live and play together; and it is not until they reach fourteen, that regular day-service is put upon them. On a plantation like this, the majority of those of mature years are regular members of the church; and here are ninety communicants. "If northern divines, however anti-slavery they may be, will come here to save souls," said Bishop Polk, "I will welcome them when they come. I will not ask whence they came, or what their faith. They shall see slavery precisely as it is. They shall visit every plantation in the Louisiana diocese, and I will only exact of them, that they preach the gospel, as it is proclaimed in the Word of God;"'

NEGRO DOGS.—Without calling in question the kindly treatment of slaves by such pious worthies as Bishop Polk, it is certain that negroes—ungrateful wrethes!—are continually making their escape from the pleasures of servitude. Unfortunately, good masters do not live for ever; neither are they always exempted from pecuniary misfortunes, or from a wish to change their professional pursuits; and, consequently, their servants, along with other chattels, run a continual risk—there lies the pinch—of being suddenly brought to the hammer. When negroes take flight, the best plan for securing them, we are told, is at once to employ a professional slave-catcher, who goes to work in a methodical way, with dogs trained for the purpose of scenting fugitives. During last year, a runaway slave was thus traced to Washington, and there scented by a dog in a place of hiding, not half a mile from the Capitol, where Congress was at the time in session. The *New York Tribune* contains the following advertisement of a professional slave-catcher, quoted from a newspaper in a western slave-state :—'NEGRO DOGS.—I would inform the citizens of Holmes County, that I still have my Negro Dogs, and that they are in good training, and ready to attend to all calls of hunting and catching RUNAWAY NEGROES, at the following rates; For hunting per day, five dollars; or if I have to travel any distance, every day will be charged for, in going and returning, as for hunting, and at the same rates. Not less than five dollars will be charged in any case, where the Negroes come in, before I reach the place. From fifteen to twenty-five dollars will be charged for catching, according to the trouble; if the Negro has weapons, the charge will be made according to the difficulty had in taking him, or in case he kills some of the dogs, the charge will not be governed by the above rates, I am explicit, to prevent any misunderstanding. The owner of the slave to pay all expenses in all cases. I venture to suggest to any person having a slave-runaway, that the better plan is to send for the dogs forthwith, when the Negro goes off, if they intend sending at all, and let no other person go in the direction, if they know which way the runaway went; as many persons having other Negroes to hunt over the track, and failing of success, send for the dogs, and perhaps fail in consequence to catch their Negro, and thus causelessly fault the dogs. Terms, cash. If the money is not paid at the time the Negro hunted for is caught, he will be held bound for the money. I can be found at home at all times, five and a half miles east of Lexington, except when hunting with the dogs.—*John Long, Feb.* 14th, 1855.

A COOL PROPOSAL.—The troublesome foible that runaway slaves have of getting into Canada has given considerable annoyance to persons who make a profession of catching them. In some instances, they have tried to follow them across the Boundary, but not with good results; as, according to British law, all human beings are free, and the forcible seizure of anybody, no matter what be his colour, is kidnapping, and subject to punishment. In circumstances so disagreable to slave-catchers, a member of this respectable fraternity—to wit, Mr. John H. Pope—hailing from the town of Frederick, in Maryland, and during the 1st of January, sends a letter to the 'chief of police, Montreal, Canada,' in which he makes what the newspapers describe as a 'cool proposal.' In justice to Mr. Pope, we copy his letter entire: 'DEAR SIR.—Though the laws of your province preclude slavery, and you may deem it improper that I should address you relative to that question, which has created so great sectional animosity at home, and elicited such disaproval abroad—still, believing that a sense of justice influences every right-thinking man in the formation of his judgment and the mode of his conduct, I have taken the liberty, which, if it meets not with views alike to mine, will be pardoned. Vast numbers of slaves, escaping from their masters or owners, succeed in reaching your province, and are, therefore, without the pale of the Fugitive Slave Law, and can only be restored by cunning, together with skill. Large rewards are offered, and will be paid for their retnrn; and could I find an efficient person to act with me, a great deal of money could be made, as I would equally divide. Many are willing to come, after writing to that effect. The only apprehension we have in approaching too far into Canada, is the fear of being arrested; and had I a good assistant in your city, who would induce the negroes to the frontier, I would be there to pay the cash. On your answer, I can furnish names and descriptions of negroes, which will fully reward the trouble. Answer either to accept or decline. Yours, JOHN H. POPE, *Police Officer and Constable.*'—On this letter, the *Montreal Gazette* of January 13th offers some pointed remarks, and concludes in a strain to which our readers may possibly respond: 'We have no desire to counsel violence towards any man, but such a proposition as that we have just read in this negro-hunter's letter, rouses a spirit of indignation, which prevents all half reflection. If ever the taking of the law into one's own hands were justifiable, it would be in such a case as this. We will not trust ourselves to write more about it to-day, but can only cry shame on the man who would so degrade himself as to make such a proposition! Triple shame on the people whose laws sanction his conduct! And we may thank God once more, and rejoice, that their country is not ours—that we have no share or participation in their sin.'

MISS GIBSON.—In the *New York Tribune* of January 30, there appears an account of a runaway affair. It begins with a quotation from the *Detroit Tribune* of the 15th of the same month, to the effect, that a Miss Gibson, from Maysville, in Kentucky, has just crossed the river St. Clair to the Canadian shore, having arrived in safety by the underground railway from Toledo. 'What makes this case of unusual interest,' proceeds the Detroit paper, 'is the fact that Miss Gibson is as white as any of our lady-readers who will con this paragraph. Unless informed of the fact, no one would have the remotest suspicion, that she had a drop of negro blood running in her veins. Her eyes are blue, her hair brown, her complexion fair and clear. She is very intelligent, and her appearance really prepossessing.' Now for Greeley's characteristic commentary: 'The suberb chivalry which would keep such a fair chattel should be known, but in default of such knowledge, let us imagine a public dinner, and the company, with that chivalrous man present, and the proceedings at Toast No. 13: *Woman!* [Nine cheers.]

> O women! in our hours of ease,
> Uncertain, coy, and hard to please, &c.

[Immense applause, the whole company rising and using their glasses, some breaking them.] The gallant Colonel Fitz Specimen, of Kentucky, being called upon to respond to this toast, rises and speaks as follows:—"Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen.—It is time-honoured custom to toast women at public dinners; and, what is more, to reserve the toast till the close of the feast, when our hearts are warmest, and, under the inspiration of jolly Bacchus, our feelings mellowest. [Cheers rnd laughter.] Woman! what shall not be said in her favor? When too young to know love or gratitude, we are nurtured at her breast, and her tenderness glows in the ratio of our helplessness and infant sorrows. When a little older, the first beam of divine feeling comes from the rainbow of undefined passion which overarches our existence, even in the dawn of youth. [Applause and disorder.] Then in our days of ripened passion, what makes the stars shine, the flowret perfume, the grove vocal—what makes life worth the toil of existence, but the love of woman? Oh, how poor, how mean is our boasted ambition, our public honour, our private labours, without her smile! [Applause considerable.] But how doubly, triply, quadrubly blest, are we in this land of liberty, where alone women is respected by the law? Look at Europe, and you find her ever and everywhere doomed to the coarsest toils. War's greatest martyrs, and the shame of peace! She ploughs, digs, delves, carries loads, plays scavenger, descends into coal-pits, is habitually prostituted—the centre of civilization, Paris even, shewing one lost daughter to every three that are born [Shame! shame! and groans.] But in our own country, the land of the free and the home of the brave, women first finds a place due her honour, nobility, and tenderenss. Here she is respected. Free as virtue can render her—respected, beloved, venerated—this is her paradise. [Extravagant cheering.] Go where you will in the thirty-one states, and a halo of idolatry encircles her fair brow! [A gentleman mutters: "All except niggers.'] The gentleman need not correct me—I said *fair* brow. [Great cheering and laughter.] Woman, Mr. Cqairman and Gentlemen, now and for ever—God bless her!" Need we add that, beyond a doubt, the gallant colonel sat down amid loud applause, long continued, and that—in spite of his speech, Miss Gibson found it necessary to run away from his proprietorship.

THE WORLD'S PROGRESS.

It is curious and deeply interesting to observe how much of the advance which mankind has made in some of the most essential branches of internal improvement has been effected within the last quarter of a century; and on the other hand, in how many departments human intelligence reached its culminating point ages ago. In the fine arts and in speculative thought, our remotest ancestors are still masters. In silence and its applications, the order of precedence is reversed, and our own age has been more prolific and amazing than the aggregate of the ages which have gone before us.

Again: it is probable, that Abraham sent messages to Lot as rapidly as Frederick the Great or George III. transmitted orders to their Generals and Admirals. In 1774, the wooden telegraph was invented, and made a certain, though a partial and a slight advance. But, with this exception, the rate at which intelligence could be conveyed, had remained stationary at that of ordinary locomotion on horseback up to 1840. In 1840 we communicated over vast distances in appreciably infinitesimal subdivisions of time. The experiment was made, and a message was transmitted from Belgrade to Liverpool *instantaneously*. A spark given at Dundee could fire the cannon of the Invalides at Paris. Here too at a single leap we seem to have reached the *neuplus ultra* of earthly possibility. In ten years—nay, in five—we have cleared the vast space between the speed of lightning.—*North British Review*.

BURIAL OF THE DEAD AT SCUTARI.

On the edge of the bank of the Sea of Marmora, a few hundred yards to the left of the mouth of the Bosphorus, is a level space of greensward, used by the English, from the time of their arrival in Turkey, as a burying ground. The placid sea, the distant isles, the Cape of Broussa on the left, and the Seraglio Point on the right, make up a lovely view of the melancholy spot. At the southern extremity, are single graves neatly defined and turfed, where those, who died while the army halted here in the spring, are laid. But the press of mortality no longer admitted of such decent burial. To those accustomed to see the departed treated with reverence, and attended solemnly to their last habitation, there was something horribly repulsive in a wholesale interment. Where the dead far outnumbered those who stood round the grave. A pit about ten feet deep and fourteen square, received every afternoon those who died during the last twenty-four hours. A rickety araba, or country cart, drawn by two oxen, was the hearse which conveyed them from the neighboring hospital to the place of sepulchre. In the yard of the hospital is a small dismal house, without windows; for its tenants no longer need the light. Thither those who have died in this and the neighbouring hospitals, are brought on stretchers, and packed like sacks in a granary till the araba comes for them. Sewed, each in a blanket, with sufficient tightness to leave a caricature, mummy like resemblance of humanity, a score of bodies are laid on the vehicle, travel slowly, dangling and jostling as they go to the mouth of the yawning pit, where the party who dug it await the coming of the cart. There is no time for ceremony; each poor corpse is hastily lifted off, and and, doubled up limply in cases of recent death, or stiff and stake-like where it has been longer cold, is handed down, nameless, unknown, and void of all the dignity of death, to its appointed station in the crowd. One row being laid, the next covers it, and the feet of those who deposit them necessarily trample on the forms below, leaving muddy foot-prints on the blanket shrouds. Sixty-one (about the daily average number at the time) were buried together on the day I visited the spot. Noticing one corpse on which the lower part of the outline was unusually thin, I remarked to the corporal in charge, that the diseased must have been long ill, to be so wasted; but he pointed out to me that one limb had been amputated. A clergyman waited till all were deposited, to read the funeral service; close by, another pit was being dug for the requirements of next day, and we had seen in the hospital many of those unmistakably destined to fill it. The scene reminded one of Defoe's accounts of the burial about London at the time of the Great Plague. I have mentioned elsewhere the trenches dug on the battle-field to contain rows of dead. But there they lie like soldiers, with an awe and glory on their blood-stained uniforms and upturned faces no pall, nor coffin could bestow. In the pits of Scutari, Death is deprived of its sanctity, majesty, and mystery, and retains only those elements which constitute the grotesque. Officers are buried singly in graves close to the edge of the bank where cross headed slips of wood, like those which mark plants in a green-house, and not much larger, are labelled, sometimes with the name of the occupant below, sometimes less specifically—as a "woman." "a Russian officer."

NOON DAY TRUISMS.—Love, the toothache, smoke, a cough, and a tight boot, are things which cannot possibly be kept secret very long. Every woman is in the wrong until she cries—and then she is in the right instantly. A tragedy is often the safety-valve of insanity. The man who lends an umbrella is a real philanthropist sacrificing himself for the benefit of his species. There is a craving in almost every man's breast for a latch-key. Every woman's mother has been beautiful.—*Punch*.

The incense burning in Chinese idol temples is said to cost £90,000,000 annually, or more than a dollar for every man, woman and child, in the whole Empire.