MISCELLANEOUS.

A subscriber to one of the estern papers a few years ago being sadly in arrears for the same, promised the editor that if his life was spared to a certain day, he would without fail discharge his bill. The day passed, and the bill was not paid. The conclusion, therefore, was that the man was dead—absolutely defunct. Proceeding on this conclusion, the editor in his next paper placed the name of his delinquent under his obituary head with the attending circumstances of time and place. Pretty soon after this announcement, the subject of it appeared to the editor, not with the pale, ghastly appearance usually ascribed to apparitions, but with a face as red as scarlet : neither did it, like other apparitions, wait to be first spoken to, but broke silence—

'What the—, sir, do you mean by publishing my death ?'

'Why, sir, the same that I meant by publishing the name of any other person —viz, to let the world know that you were dead.'

'Well, but I'm not dead.'

'Not dead ? then it is your fault, for you told me you would positively pay your bill by such a day if you lived till that time. The day is past, the bill is not paid, and you positively must be dead, for I will not believe you would forfeit your word ; Oh ho !"

'I see you have got round me, Mr. Editor—say no more about it ; here is the money. And harkee, you wag, just contradict my death next week, will you?'

'O certainly, sir—just to please you —though, upon my word, I cant help thinking you died at the time specified, and that you merely came back to pay this bill on account of your friendship towards me.'

From fear proceedeth misfortune ; but he that hopeth, helpeth himself.

Fair faces have sometimes foul conditions.

Last Tuesday night, which will be remembered as one of the warmest of the season a young lady at the " West End" was excessively frightened by a little circumstance which transpired about the hour of midnight. This young lady, whose beauty is only equalled by her modesty, and whose " eye's dark charm" has caused more than one waistcoat to palpitate, had retired to her chamber where, after laying aside the greater portion of her wearing apparel, she committed herself to the tender embraces of Morpheus, whose soothing influences were aided by the gentle breath of Zephyr, who came in at the open window and fanned her cheeks with his feathery wings. In a word she was snoozing finely—or to use the language of a modern bard—

" Sleep on her velvet eyelids lightly press'd
And downy sighs upheaved her snowy breast,
While starbeams thro' the window softly creeping,
Stole to her couch, and trembling there stood peeping."

It was, as we said, about midnight, when the young lady was aroused from her delicious slumber by hearing a noise at her window. Half unclosing her eyes, she was startled by the sight of a corpulent form, struggling to gain admission to her chamber through the open window. It struck her at once that the, intruder had been caught by the rear of his unmentionables, by a nail or some other sharp instrument, as he seemed struggling with a stern determination to enter. Her first thought was to faint—her second, to give the fellow a push—her third, to jump out at the window as soon as he jumped in—her fourth, to scream, which was immediately carried into effect. The whistle of the locomotive on the Iron Mountain road, when it gave it's first snort on the 4th of July, was but a whisper to the screams of the young girl. The whole house and half the neighbourhood were awakened by the outcry.

The old folks, three female servants, and two big brothers rushed to the rescue, and broom-sticks, mop handles and boot-jacks flashed in the gas-light; as the household entered the chamber of the frightened beauty. An examination of the figure in the window dispelled the fears of all, and changed the screams of the young lady into shouts of laughter,

The imaginary " fat man " was only her own darling hooped skirt, which she had hung near the window, and which the wind had inflated and set in motion.

There was no sleeping in the house that night.

The happy termination of the adventure put the family in such good humor, that they laughed and talked until breakfast time. Young ladies should be careful about the disposal of their hoops when they go to bed.—St. Louis Herald.

Reader, do you know that every column of a nemspaper contains from 10 to 20,000 distinct pieces of metal, the misplacing of any one of which would cause a blunder or typographical error ? With this curious fact before you, don't you wonder at the general accuracy of newspapers and the cheap rate at which they are published ?

THE COMET.—M Rabinet ,a member of L'Academie des Sciences, says that the comet expected the present year is one of the largest comets described by European or Chinese observers, and that its periodical course is three hundred years. It has been seen in the years 104, 682, 1204 and the last time in 1538, always shining with extraordinary brilliancy. M. Bonne, an eminent astronomer, assisted by Mr. Hind, has gone over all the calculations pertaining to the comet's reappearance—making a new estimate of the separate and combineb, of 300 years, the result of which is that in 1858—or of somewhere between 1856 and 1860—it will again be visible.

BEAUTIFUL THOUGHT.—Here is one of the many beautiful thoughts to which Fanny Fern has given expression ;

" O leet me die in the country, where I shall not fall like the single leaf unheeded ; where those that love me need not mask the heart to meet the careless multitude, and strive as a duty to forget me ! Bury me in the country amid the prayers of the good and the tears of the loving ; not in the damp dark vault, away from the sweetened air, and the cheerful sunshine, but in the open fields, among the flowers that I loved and cherished while living."

A little friend of ours a few days ago, while coming down stairs, was cautioned by his mother not to lose his balance. His question which followed, was a puzzler. Mother, if I should lose my balance, where would it go to ?"

A dying Irishman was asked by his confessor if he was ready to renounce the devil and all his works. " O, your honor," said Pat, " don't ask me that ; I'm going into a strange country, and I don't want to make myself enemies !"

THE LAND OF THE LIVING.—Said one to an aged friend, " I had a letter from a distant correspondent, who inquired if you were in the land of the living." " No," replied the venerable man, " but I am going there. This world is alone the world of shadow, and the eternal is the only one of living realities."

WHERE AND HOW GUANO IS OBTAINED.—The New York *Evening Post* furnishes the following interesting account:—

An intelligent gentleman, who has been employed in loading a ship with guano at the Chincha islands, on the coast of Peru, has communicated to us some interesting information with respect to the trade. He has been at the islands at three different times, and nearly six months in all. The last time he was there was in the fall and summer of 1855. He says he found at times five hundred sail of vessels together, loading with guano, generally large ships. One ship was 1,500 tons burden. Not less than three hundred sail of vessels are now at the islands, loading for the United States, Spain, Portugal, France and English and German ports. Some cargoes are sent to Constantinople, and some to Russian ports in the Black Sea. This was before the war in the Crimea. The Russian trade will now open again, both from the Black Sea and the Baltic. Freights are high; £6 10s are often paid per ton for Liverpool and Hampton Roads. Generally ten shillings more a ton freight is paid to Europe. At the rate at which Guano is now shipped from the Chincha islands, it will be exhausted in in six or eight years—not a ton will be left. Twenty thousand tons are some times removed in a single day.

These islands are about one hundred miles north from Callao. The longest of the group is two miles in length and a quarter of a mile wide, but contains only a small quantity of guano. The most northerly island is the smallest, being about a mile in length, by half a mile in breadth. Guano on this island is two hundred and fifty feet deep. The island contains a Chinese settlement of coolies, about a thousand in number, who are employed in digging guano and loading the vessels. A task is given them each day, and if the gang fail to get out the given number of wagon loads, of two tons each, a day, their bondage is continued a longer period to make it up; so many months or days being added as wagon-loads are wanting.

The coolies are cheated into the belief that they are to be shipped from China to California and the gold-diggings, and are further deceived by the offer of a free passage. The knowing Chinese, or the mandarines ship them. The ship master carries them to the Peruvian coast, and sells the cargo of living Chinese to the Peruvian Government for his freight money. All this time the Chinamen are kept in irons and confined below in the ship. The Peruvian Government purchase the cargo of living coolies, paying the Yankee or English captain a round sum for his care, diligence, and labour in stealing Chinamen from their homes, to be sent into the *guano* mines, of Peru for life, or for five to seven years, and to be held in bondage or peonage to pay their passage to the glorious land of the *Meas*.

The guano is hard, and can only be broken up with the pick-axe. It is then brought and shovelled into the wagons, and rolled from the shutes into the vessel.

No person can go upon or come away from the islands without a pass, as they are guarded by more than one hundred armed soldiers belonging to Peru.

The Peruvians send all their prisoners of state into the guano mines—say about two to three hundred—where they are let out to work by day, and at night are shut up in their cells, with only two meals per day. These prisoners are generally provided with wives, or female companions, who have been permitted to go to the islands and hire themselves out for work and prostitution. They are mostly Indians—natives of the country. There is no fresh water on the islands, and each vessel is compelled by law to carry a ton of fresh water there for every hundred tons burden of the ship. The oldest captain in the fleet from each nation is appointed commodore, and hoists his flag as such on his ship, where all disputes are settled. Indeed, the municipal of the islands and the fleet are decidedly of Yankee origin.

The islands are about ten miles from the main land, and are composed of new red sandstone. The guano is not, at all birddung, but is largely composed of the mud of the ocean; that brought from Peru is so, at least. When anchors are hoisted into the ship from the holding-grounds of vessels along the Peruvian coasts, large quantities of mud, of a greenish-white color, are brought up, and this mud when dried, makes guano equally good with the guano taken from the islands.

The birds and seals come upon the island when the people are not at work; but it does not appear that their dung or decayed bodies is more than a foot deep on any of the islands. Fish are taken in great abundance about these islands, as are also seals which come there in large sholes. Sea-lions also abound. The composition taken from the islands, called guano, is stratified, and lies in the same form it did before it was lifted up from the bottom of the ocean.

Our informant says that a geographical examination of the islands will satisfy any man that the guano ships are bringing away from these islands a very different thing than the dung of birds or decomposed animals.

Gibbs & Bright, of Liverpool, have a lease of the guano islands from the Peruvian government for five years, which expires in 1857, but hope to get their lease renewed. This house pays the Peruvian government about $4 50 a ton for the privilege of taking all the guano from the islands, the government furnishing the men to dig the guano.

The ships that load at the island are mostly vessels chartered to carry a cargo, or sent there by the owners to take away a cargo of guano bought by Gibbs & Bright, who have the entire monopoly of the trade.

THE PERILS OF LISPING.—The following is said to be a veritable incident in the experience of a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

A couple brought their little child to me one day to be baptized, and upon my inquiring the name chosen, to my astonishment I heard sounds which resembled very much one of the titles bestowed upon the arch-enemy of mankind. Supposing that my ears deceived me, I enquired again, when the same word, to my horror, was more distinctly repeated. "Lucifer!" said I to myself, "impossible ! I cannot baptize a child by such a name." I bent over once more, and a third time asked the question. The answer was still the same, and repeated louder and with emphasis, as if the parents were determined to have that name or none. By this time my situation had become more embarrassing, for there was I, in the presence of the whole waiting congregation, standing up with the baby in my arms, which, to add to my consternation, set up a squall as if to convince me that he was entitled to the name. I could stand the scene no longer; so, hastily dipping my finger in the font, and resolving it should be a good name, as opposite as possible to the diabolical one so strangely selected, I baptized the child George Washington. I thought the parents looked queer at the time, but the rite was performed; the baby had got an excellent name, and I was relieved. But conceive, if you can, my confusion, when, after service, the father and mother came into the vestry, and the latter bursting into tears, exclaimed, "O, thir, what have you done? Ith a girl, ith a girl, and you've called her George Washington! My poor little Luthy, my dear little Luthy !" Alas! the mother *lisped*, and when I asked for the name, she meaning to be very polite, and to say " Lucy, sir," in reply to my question, had said, " Luthy, thir," which I mistook for Lucifer. What was to be done? I consoled the afflicted parents as well as I was able, and promised to enter the name in the parish registry and town records as Lucy, which I did; but for all that, the girl's genuine, or orthodox name is George Washington."

When a man dies, people generally enquire what property has he left behind him? The angels will ask, what good has he sent before him?

Poetry is said to be the flower of literature ; prose the corn, potatoes, and meat ; satire is the aquafortis ; wit is the spice and pepper ; letters containing remittances are the apple-dumplings.