A NEW FACE FOR AN OLD HOUSE.

(From Chambers's Journal.)

An impression prevails that one consequence of Her Majesty's visit to Paris will be the gradual adoption of a system for promoting the beauty and salubrity of the Great Metropolis. The New Metropolitan Buildings' Act will effect something, and might very properly be made the basis of a general scheme of improvement. London will perhaps never look so bright and cheerful as Paris: but with a purified river and a smokeless atmosphere, its appearance would be surprisingly different from what it is at present. What we want in sunlight might be made up in colour—that is, colour on the walls. There is no reason why they should be dull and dingy; for there is an available means by which they may be covered with a weather-proof glaze of almost any colour, [or] which impurities would hardly lodge, or would be washed off with every shower of rain. We mentioned the subject some months ago in the *Journal*, and think it worth repeating at the present juncture.

A paper on 'Hydraulic Lime, Artificial Stone, and Different Novel Applications of Soluble Silicates, addressed by M. F. Kuhlmann to the Academie des Sciences at Paris, takes up the subject in theory and practice. The author tells us, that when once the marked affinity of lime for silicic acid was discovered, the silicifying of stone became an easy mechanical process; and further, that the action of lime on metallic oxides has led, and will lead, to important results in art. He lays down the law, that 'whenever a salt reputed insoluble in water is brought into contact with the solution of a salt the acid of which forms, with the base of the insoluble salt, a salt still more insoluble, there is an exchange; but in most cases, the exchange is but partial, admitting the formation of double salts.' By direct application of this law, he has succeeded in giving a certain degree of silicification to chromate of lead and of lime, to numerous metallic carbonates, and to some oxides, particularly oxide of lead.

Another step was the application of alkaline silicates to painting; and instead of oils and the ordinary vehicles, M. Kuhlmann has substituted solution of silicate of potash, finding it work well with vermillion, green, ultramarine-blue, the ochres, oxide of chrome, and some others. These colours applied to a wall, become so to speak, part of its substance, and are almost imperishable. Prepare your wall; paint it either plain, or any design according to taste; then sprinkle the whole surface with the solution of potash above mentioned, or of soda, and you cover it with a permanent glaze. Advantage has been taken of this discovery in the decoration of public buildings at Munich, and other places in Germany, and with the happiest effects. And in another way; when the Munich theatre was rebuilt, the inflammable materials were saturated in the solution, to render them fire-proof. It is known that fire takes but little hold on even stuffs and cottons that have been treated with the solution.

Should the cost of the silicated colours be objected to, the wall may be painted with ordinary water colours, and then coated with the solution. This is applied by means of a small hand-pump, or a syringe fitted with a rose, so that the stream shall fall as a light shower. The liquid soon dries, and forms a glaze, wind and weather proof. What scope is thus afforded for ornamental frescoes, or many species of decoration, which might beautify our streets for years, unsullied by dust or smoke!

Wood, affected as it is by moisture, is not so well adapted for the silicated colours as brick or stone. The most suitable kinds, according to M. Kuhlmann, are ash and hornbeam. But glass, porcelain, and metal, if quite dry, take the colours readily. In glass particularly, a semi-transparency is obtained, which renders it applicable, at low cost, to the windows of private houses or of churches; and we all know what admirable effects can be produced by coloured panes artistically introduced. At this point, the author makes the following practical remarks: —'Artificial sulphate of baryta, applied by means of the silicate of potash to glass, gives to the latter a milkwhite colour of great beauty. The sulphate becomes intimately incorporated with the silex; and after a few days, cannot be washed off even with hot water. On subjecting the glass thus painted to the action of an elevated temperature, a beautiful white enamel is produced on the surface, which would economically replace the enamels that have oxide of tin for their base. Ultramarine-blue, oxide of chrome, and coloured or porphyrized enamels, are a great resource in this new method of painting; for if there be no chemical combination in all these applications of colour, there is at least a very powerful adherence determined by the silicious cement, of which the hardening is doubtless facilitated by the excessive division, wherewith it is presented to the action of the air.'

M. Kuhlmann has further succeeded in using his silicated colours for designs on paper hangings, on cotton and woollen cloth, and in letter-press printing. 'The processes,' he says, differ very little from those in use in the various modes of printing. One important condition is to maintain the silicious colours in a uniform state of humidity during their application; whether the application take place with blocks of wood or metal, or by having recourse to type. All the colours that I have applied,' he adds, 'on stone, wood, metal, or glass, serve for printing on paper or woven cloths. Typography, colour-printing, the application of gold or silver in powder or in leaf, can all be executed with the same facility, taking care, with certain colours, to keep out sulphur in the preparation of the silicates. Ultramarine is fixed in cloths with more solidity and economy by the silicate of potash, than by the methods now in use.'

Here we have a wide range of applications arising out of M. Kuhlmann's discovery; and that the range will be extended, is not doubtful.

We may add, that by grinding the charcoal used in the preparation of Indian ink with silicate of potash in solution, a writing-ink is obtained almost indestructible by chemical agents; and the same solution, mixed with a decoction of cochineal, gives a red ink, the colour of which resists for a long time the action of chlorine and the acids.

Specimens of M. Kuhlmann's art are to be seen in the French Exposition. Perhaps some practical member of the Society of Arts, during his visit to Paris, will inform himself of the means by which the discovery may be made available in this country. Mr Barlow's lecture on the subject at the Royal Institution has already done something towards making it known.

Important To Duellists.— Would it not be a good plan to substitute for the modern custom of duelling(under the miscalled "code of *honour*") with pistols, rifles, or swords, the plan adopted in Kordsfan? It is as follows:

"When a gentleman of that nation considers himself aggrieved, he sends the offender a formal challenge, which, it is presumed, is always accepted. The duel takes place on some open plain, and all the friends of the combatants assemble as spectators.

"An *agareb*, or couch, is then brought forth, and the two combatants place a foot close to the edge of the couch, the width of which alone divides them. A formidable whip, made of Hippopotamus leather, is then placed in the hands of each, and renewed attempts are made by their friends to reconcile them. If, however, they are bent on carrying out their 'affair of honour,' the signal for battle is at last given.

He who is entitled to the first blow then inflicts as hard a lash as he can on his opponent, who stands perfectly still to receive the compliment, and then prepares to return it.

"They thus continue, 'turn and turn about,' to flog each other's back and shoulder (the head must on no account be struck), while the blood flows copiously at every stroke. Not an acknowledgment of pain escapes the lips of either, and all the spectators remain equally mute. This continues until one of the combatants, generally from sheer exhaustion, drops his instrument of torture, whereupon the victor immediately does the same.

"The rivals now shake hands, declaring that they have received sufficient 'satisfaction;' their friends congratulate them on the reconciliation; their wounds are washed, and sundry jars of '*merissa*,' the national beverage, provided beforehand, are produced, and emptied by the spectators in honour of the gallant opponents."

This seems to be administering "equal and exact justice;" and the "style" is like the play of "*cutting jackets*," by which country boys sometimes test each other's prowess.

The Farmer's Bank.—The following is a good description of this model institution.—*Vault*: Mother earth.—*Exchanges*: The transplanting of the nursery and garden.—*Deposits*: Happiness, sobriety, and manly independence.—*Assets*: Smiling fields, waving with a golden harvest.—*Liabilities*: Indebted to God alone, who sends the sunshine and the rain.—*Dividends*: Health, wealth, and pure hearts.

Everything lent.—An old quaint writer once said that children, relations, friends, honours, houses, lands and endowments, the goods of nature and fortune, nay even of grace itself, are only lent. It is our misfortune to fancy they are given. We start, therefore, and are angry when the loan is called in—think ourselves masters, when we are only servants; and forget that to each of us it will be said, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou must be no longer steward."

A negro Liebig.—"I say, Sambo, does ye know what makes the corn grow so fast, when you put the manure on it?" "No, I don't hardly." "Now I'll just tell ye. When the corn begans to smell the manure, it don't like the fumery, so it hurries out of the ground and sits up as high as possible, so as not to breaff (breathe) the bad air."

A writer beautifully remarks that a man's mother is the representative of his Maker. Misfortune and crimes set no barriers between her and her son. While his mother lives, a man has one friend on earth who will not desert him when he is needy. Her affection flows from a pure foundation, and ceases only at the ocean of eternity.

JUGGLING EXTRAORDINARY.

One of the old men came forward upon the graveled and hard-trodden avenue, leading with him a woman. He made her kneel down, tied her arms behind her, and blindfolded her eyes. Then bringing a great bag-net made with open meshes of rope, he put it over the woman, and laced up the mouth, fastening it with knotted intertwining cords in such a way that it seemed an impossibility for her to extricate herself from it. The man then took a closely woven wicker-basket, that narrowed towards the top, lifted the woman in the net from the ground, and placed her in it, though it was not without the exertion of some force that he could crowd her through the narrow mouth. Having succeeded in getting her into the basket, in which, from its small size, she was necessarily in a most cramped position, he put the cover upon it, and threw over it a wide strip of cloth, hiding it completely. In a moment, placing his hand under the cloth, he drew out the net quite untied and disentangled. He then took a long, straight, sharp sword, muttered some words to himself while he sprinkled the dust upon the cloth, and put some upon his forehead; then pulled off and threw aside the covering, and plunged the sword suddenly into the basket. Prepared as in some degree we were for this, and knowing that it was only a deception, it was yet impossible to see it without a cold creeping of horror. The quiet and energy with which he repeated his strokes, driving the sword through and through the basket, while the other jugglers looked on, apparently as much interested as ourselves, were very dramatic and effective. Stopping after he had riddled the basket, he again scattered dust upon its top, lifted the lid, took up the basket from the ground, shewed it to us empty, and threw it away. At the same moment, we saw the woman approaching us from a clump of trees at a distance of at least fifty or sixty feet. Throughout the whole of this inexplicable feat, the old man and the woman were quite removed from the rest of their party. The basket stood by itself on the hard earth, and so much beneath the veranda on which we were sitting, that we could easily see all around it. By what trick our watchful eyes were closed, or by what means the woman invisibly escaped, was an entire mystery, and remains unsolved. —Crayon (U. S)

Singular geological fact.— St Modena, in Italy, within a circle of four miles around the city, whenever the earth is dug, and the workmen arrive at a distance of sixty-three feet, they come to a bed of chalk, which they bore with an auger five feet deep. hey then withdraw from the pit before the auger is removed, and upon its being drawn out, the water bursts up with violence and quickly fills the well thus made—the supply of water being neither affected by rains nor droughts. At the depth of fourteen feet are found the ruins of an ancient city, houses, paved streets, and mason-work; below this, again, is a layer of earth; and at twenty-six feet, walnut-trees are found entire, with leaves and walnuts upon them. At twenty-eight feet, soft chalk is found, and below this are vegetables and trees.—Year-book of Facts.

Aerial voyage.—The New Orleans papers have an account of the most successful aerial voyage ever performed by a balloon, with five persons in it, including some members of the press. The balloon started on the evening of the 30th. April, and went 310 miles in six hours, landed its passengers at Port-Gibson, and then took a fresh start on another voyage.

Too Literal.—A lady at a neighbouring village (says the Cambridge Independent) the other day, patted on the head a little boy, of about nine years of age, the child of a labourer, saying, "I should like to have your curly locks, my little fellow." The boy had a splendid head of hair. About an hour afterwards the boy appeared before the lady, with a plateful of curly locks, saying, "Please, Mum, here's that ere hair as how you wanted; I've cut it off for yer."

Last week, Judge Williams, at one time Associate Judge of Union County Ohio, while in a state of intoxication, seated himself upon a railroad track, and was run over by a train of cars and killed.

Speckled Butter.—"Don't you want a ra'al prime lot of butter?" asked a peddler, who had picked it up at fifty different places.

"What sort of butter is that? asked the merchant.

"The clear quill—made by my wife from a dairy of forty cows—only two churnings."

"What makes it so many colors?"

"I guess," replied the Yankee. "you never would have asked that question, if had seen my cows, for they are a darn sight speckleder than the butter is."

A Fine old Couple.—A woman, aged 115 years has just died at Oraviza. She had preserved her vision almost unimpaired, and all her teeth. Her husband, who died three years ago, had reached the same age as herself, and both sank at last under the burden of old age alone, for neither of them had ever been ill.

Where to Find a Wife.—In one of the factories in Maine, recently, the proprietors reduced the wages, whereupon there was a general determination to strike; and as they were obliged to give a month's notice before quitting work, they have meanwhile issued a circular to the world at large, in which is the following interesting paragraph: "We are now working out notice, and will soon be without employment; can turn our hands to most anything; don't like to be idle—but determined not to work for nothing, where folks can afford to pay. Who wants help? We can make bonnets, dresses, puddings, pies and cakes, patch, darn, knit, wash, stew and fry; make butter and cheese, milk cows, feed chickens and hoe corn, sweep out the kitchen, put the parlor to rights, make beds, split wood, kindle fires, wash and iron, besides, being fond of nursing, and in short can do anything the most accomplished house-wife is capable of; not forgetting the scolding on Mondays and Saturdays. For specimens of spirit, we refer you to our overseer."

A Royal Tiger.—A vessel called the Robert Peel, which has just arrived in the Loire from Sumatra, has brought a magnificent royal tiger for one of the French menageries. Forty armed men were, it is stated, sent to capture him, but he killed ten and injured thirteen of them, before he could be secured.

Don't Waste a Pin.—In the year 1789, a boy called Lafite first appeared in Paris. He was poor, and greatly desired to obtain an inferior place in a banking-house. Furnished with a letter of introduction, he went to the house of a rich Swiss banker to ask for employment. He was friendless, timid, and careworn, and the banker, thinking him unfit for a clerk, told him he had no room for him in his office. The lad left the richly-gilded room with a sad heart. While crossing the court-yard with drooping head, he saw a pin on the ground; he stopped down, took it up, and placed it carefully in the in corner of his coat. He did not think at the time that this act, so trifling in itself, would be the turning-point in his life, and the means of his future splendid success. The banker saw from his window what had taken place, and attaching great importance totrifles, he was impressed by the circumstance. This simple action gave him a key to the character of Lafite. It was a proof of order and prudence; and he thought that a young man who could thus take care of a pin, would surely make a good clerk, and merit the trust and good wishes of his employer. The same evening, Lafitte received a note from the banker, offering him a situation in the counting-house, and asking him to come and fill the place at once. The discerning banker was not deceived in his hopes; for he soon found that the young pin-saver possessed all the good qualities he expected. From a clerk, Lafite soon advanced to be cashier, and was at length received into partnership, and afterwards became the owner of the largest bank in Paris, and one of the richest men in the world. He was not only rich, generous, great, and powerful, but was chosen a deputy of the people, and made President of the Council of Ministers, and was in every respect the most influential citizen in France.