Gleanings From the Exchange Table

BALFOUR ON DECADENCE.

British Statesman Talks to a University Audience.

Mr. Balfour delivered the Henry Sidgwick memorial lecture at Newnham College Cambridge, before a large audience which filled every part of the large hall of the college. The lecture was first fixed for November 30, but, owing to indisposition, Mr. Balfour had to postpone it.

Mr. Balfour took for the subject of his lecture "Decadence," and in the course of it said that by decadence he did not mean the sort of decadence often attributed to certain phases of artistic or literary development, in which an overwrought technique, straining to express sentiments too subtle or too morbid, is deemed to have supplanted the direct inspiration of an earlier and a simpler age. The decadence respecting which he wished to put questions was not literary or artistic; it was political and national. It was the decadence which attacked, or was alleged to attack, great communities and historic civilizations; which was to societies of men what senility was to man, and was often, like senility, the precurser and the cause of final dissolution. To Macaulay it semed natural that ages hence a young country like New Zealand should be flourishing, but not less natural that an old country like England should have decayed. Berkely, in a well-known stanza, told how the drama of civilization had slowly travelled westward to find its loftiest development, but also its final catastrophe, in the New World. Every man who was weary, hopeless, or disillusioned talked as if he had caught these various diseases from the decadent epoch in which he was born. But why should civilization thus wear out and great communities decay? And what evidence was there in fact they did? These questions, though he could not give to them any conclusive answers, were of much more than a merely theoretic interest. For, if current modes of speech took decadence more or less for granted, with still greater confidence did they speak of progress as assured. Yet, if both were real—they could hardly be studied apart—they must evidently limit and qualify each other in actual experience, and they could not be isolated in speculation. Weismann had definitely asked how it came about that the higher organisms grew old and died, seeing that old age and death were not inseparable characteristics of living protoplasm, and that the simplest organisms suffered no natural decay, and perished, when they did perish, by accident, starvation, or specific disease. The answer he gave to his own question was that the death of the individual was so useful to the race that natural selection had, in all but the very lowest species, exterminated the potentially immortal. One was tempted to enquire whether *this* ingenious explanation could be so modified as to apply, not merely to individuals, but to communities.

Was it needful for the cause of civilization as a whole that the organized embodiment of each particular civilization, if and when its free development was arrested, should make room for younger and more vigorous competitors? And, if so, could we find in natural selection the mechanism by which the principal of decay and dissolution should be so implanted in the very nature of human associations that a due succession amongst them should always be maintained? To this second question the answer must, he thought, be in the negative. The struggle for existence between different races and different societies had admittedly played a great part in social development. But to extend Weismann's idea from the organic to the social world would imply a prolonged competition between groups of communities in which decadence was the rule, and groups in which it was not, ending in the survival of the first and the destruction of the second. The groups whose members suffered periodical decadence and dissolution would be the fittest to survive, just as, on Weismann's theory, those species gained in competitive efficiency whom death had unburdened of the old. Decadence, even if it was a reality, never acted in isolation. It was always complicated with, and often acted through, other more obvious causes. It was always, therefore, possible to argue that to these causes, and not to the more subtle and elusive influences collectively described a "decadence," the decline and fall of great communities was really due. Yet there were historic tragedies which did most obstinately refuse to be thus simply explained. It was in vain that historians enumerated the public calamities which preceded, and no doubt contributed to the final catastrophe. Civil dissentions, military disasters, pestilences, famines, tyrants, taxgatherers, growing burdens and wanton wealth—the gloomy catalogue was unrolled before their eyes, yet somehow it did not in all cases wholly satisfy them; they felt that some of those diseases were of a kind which a vigorous body politic should easily be able to survive, that others were secondary symptoms of some obscurer malady, and that in neither case did they supply them with the full explanations of which they were in search. Consider, for instance, the long agony and the final destruction of Roman Imperialism in the West, the most momentous catastrophe of which we had historic record. Rome fell, and great was the fall of it. But why it fell, by what secret mines its defences were breached, and what made its garrison so faint-hearted and ineffectual — that was not so clear. If there was no progress, decadence was slow; and but for what Western Europe did and what it failed to do during the long struggle with militant Mahomedanism there might still be an empire in the East largely Asiatic in population, Christian in religion, Greek in culture, Roman by political descent. Had this been the course of events, large portions of mankind would doubtless have been much better governed than they are. It was not so clear that they would have been more "progressive." Progress was with the West, with communities of European type. And if their energy of development were some day to be exhausted, who believes that there remains an external source from which it could be renewed? Where were the untried races competent to construct out of the ruined fragments of our civilization a new and better habitation for the spirit of man? They did not exist; and if the world were again to be buried under a barbaric flood, it would not be like that which fertilized, though it fast destroyed the western provinces of Rome, but like that which in Asia submerged for ever the last traces of Hellenic culture.

He did not himself believe that this age was either less spiritual or more sordid than its predecessors. He believed, indeed, precisely the reverse. But, however this might be, was it not plain that if society was to be moved by the remote speculations of isolated thinkers, it could only be on condition that their isolation was not complete? Philosophy had never touched the mass of men except through religion. And though the parallel was not complete, it was safe to say that science would never touch them unaided by its practical appliances. Its wonders might be catalogued for purposes of education, they might be illustrated by arresting experiments, by numbers and magnitudes which startled and fatigued the imagination; but they would form no familiar portion of the intellectual furniture of ordinary men unless they were connected, however remotely, with the conduct of ordinary life. There was another, and an opposite danger in which it was possible to fall. The material world, howsoever it might have gained in sublimity, had under the touch of science lost in domestic charm. For this mood only religion or religious philosophy could supply a cure. But for the former the appropriate remedy was the perpetual stimulus which the influence of science on the business of mankind offered to their sluggish curiosity. If in the last hundred years the whole material setting of civilized life had altered, they owed it neither to politicians nor to political institutions. They owed it to the combined efforts of those who had advanced science and those who had applied it. If their outlook upon the universe had suffered modifications, in detail so great and so numerous that they amounted to a revolution, it was to men of science we owed it, not to theologians or philosophers. The conclusions at which he provisionally arrived were that they could not regard decadence and arrested development as less normal in human communities than progress, though the point at which the energy of advance was exhausted varied in different races and civilizations; that the internal causes by which progress was encouraged, hindered, or reversed laid to a great extent beyond the field of ordinary political discussion, and were not easily expresed in current political terminology; that the influence which a superior civilization, whether acting by example or imposed by force, may have in advancing an inferior one, though often beneficent, was not likely to be self-supporting—its withdrawal would be followed by decadence unless the character of the civilization was in harmony both with the acquired temperament and the innate capacities of those who had been induced to accept it; that, as regards those nations which had advanced in virtue of their own inherent energies, though time had brought new causes of disquiet, it had brought also new grounds of hope; and that, whatever the perils in front of them, there were, so far, no symptoms either of pause or of regression in the onward movement which for more than a thousand years had been characteristic of Western civilization.

1,000 Sovereigns Stolen

£100 Reward.—Stolen from a London bank, a bag containing one thousand pounds in sovereigns, between the hours of 4 p.m., December 31st, 1907, and 9.30 a.m. on January 1st, 1908.

The above reward will be given to anybody who will give information that may lead to the discovery of the thief.—Address Box 68, care of Leathwait and Simmons, 5 Birchin lane, E.C.

This announcement appeared in the advertisement columns of recent London papers. It referred to a robbery from a bank in the city which has been occupying the attention of the city police for just one month, and although the inquiries have resulted in suspicious being aroused, nothing definite has been discovered of the missing money.

At the bank referred to, on the afternoon of December 31st, a certain sum of money was counted ready for transference to a branch bank in the morning. At closing time the money was all right. It was packed in the usual manner—in canvas bags, some of £100 and one containing a thousand sovereigns. Next morning this bag was missing.

There was no trace of anyone having broken into the bank during the night.

Napoleon's First Library

Reading was the lifelong hobby of Napoleon's leisure. In the bare room of the penniless sub-lieutenant of artillery at Valence, the book box, his brother Joseph asserted, was larger than the trunk which sufficed for Napoleon's scanty wardrobe. In Paris, before Brumaire brought him forward to the first rank, he spent his time principally in the Bibliotheque Nationale. A veritable library accompanied him to Egypt; and once definitely settled in France as First Consul he selects, in the Malmaison, the quietest and most pleasant room for his first library. Separated by a long council chamber from Josephine's brilliant and noisy reception rooms, it looked out on three sides on the quiet, leafy garden. A door opened on a miniature bridge across the moat. On this bridge an awning was fitted up and a small table and chair placed. Thus on summer days the consul worked in the open air within easy reach of his works of reference. These were some five thousand in number, history and philosophy predominating. French authors were naturally most numerous. The classics figured as French translations for the most Roman of modern emperors, like the author of Julius Caesar and Coriolanus, had 'small Latin and less Greek' scholarship. Shakespeare, by the way, figured on the Malmaison shelves with Pope, and, of course, 'Ossian,' Napoleon's life long favorite. Among other English authors the novels of Fielding and Richardson were keenly appreciated by the Emperor, and Milton and Hume he also studied. Restored after long years of neglect, the Malmaison is now a public museum, and the first and most personal of Napoleon's libraries open to the inspection of the Parisian tourist.

The plain elbow chair still bears the gashes made by Napoleon's penknife; the writing table is simple and ample. Close by is a curious piece of furniture, on the child's money box system, into which private papers could be introduced rapidly, but could only be extracted by the use of lock and key. On the table are a few odd volumes in the Malmaison binding.—Chambers Journal.

TWO PRESIDENTS.

Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Roosevelt.

In writing about Mr. Cleveland it is difficult to avoid comparing his character with that of President Roosevelt, says a noteworthy article in "Appleton's Magazine" for March. In each the element of sturdy honesty stands out sharply. In each there is a devotion to high ideals and a conscientious desire for the country's good, regardless of self-interest. In Mr. Cleveland's mental operation one is always conscious of a plodding intellectually, profound but not brilliant; in Roosevelt one is conscius of dynamic energy, brilliance of thought, and a nervous eagerness to act, to act at once. Mr. Cleveland thinks out a matter with deliberate thoroughness and when he reaches a conclusion it is there to stay. Mr. Roosevelt thinks quickly and act impulsively, nearly always right, but sometimes with a haste that suggests a lack of sufficient premature thought.

They both love the open. Mr. Cleveland fishes and shoots ducks; Mr. Roosevelt rides a hunter, jumps fences, wades streams, shoots bears and wolves and exults in the hardships of the trail. Mr. Cleveland is not generally credited with being a man of wide interests, whereas Mr. Roosevelt's interests are well nigh universal. There are few things in the field of human endeavor that he has not found time to study and there are few classes of people that he has not mingled with on terms of democratic good fellowship. In the latter lies the magnetism of a dominant personality; in the former lies the magnetism of something behind the exterior.

Each is a very strong aggressive character and has vigorously fought for his own way with determination and power naturally stirring up many strong antagonists.

Mr. Cleveland has a family of several children and Mr. Roosevelt is also blessed in even a greater measure. In informal conversation the nation calls one Grover the other Teddy, and the newspaper mention the initials G. C. and T. R. sifficiently identifies the man. Both have had careers of fascinating vicissitude and both have risen swiftly—each via Albany. The former has passed through the flames, been severely scorched, but now is safely rehabilitated; the latter, is now going through the flames incident to the slacking of the industrial pace and is equally certain to emerge in honor.

At the present time, with a panic just over and with a presidential election just ahead, the career of Mr. Cleveland cannot fail to be particularly interesting because of the parallels it suggests in the conditions now existing. For example: Mr. Cleveland went to the White House by way of the Governor's chair at Albany. Mr. Roosevelt followed in his footsteps. Mr. Hughes is now trying to do the same thing. One cannot take an informed guess at the latter's chance of succeeding without comparing his qualities with those of Mr. Cleveland, who did succeed. Mr. Hughes has honesty and is about as little known to the country at large as Mr. lCeveland was when he went to the Governor's mansion at Albany, and yet, at present, the country is only mildly excited about Mr. Hughes, while in 1884 the personality of Grover Cleveland had seized upon the imagination of the people as if a sort of telepathic epidemic had swept the country. Whether the parallel will have any further significance will in due time be realized.

Mr. Cleveland offended the labor element of the country in the great Pullman strike of 1894. He sent federal troops to Chicago to rescue the city and the country from a reign of terror and the strike was crushed. The name of Cleveland was muttered in hatred by thousands of angry men in those days and his personal popularity with the masses of laboring men was shattered. Mr. Taft offended the laboring interests by his injunction decisions from the Cincinnati bench. Mr. Cleveland was right in the course he took and candid men will acknowledge the justice of Judge Taft's rulings. Will the latter suffer as much in the campaign to come as Mr. Cleveland did in years following 1894?

Mr. Cleveland in 1887 demanded a severe reduction of the tariff. It was on the eve of a presidential election and the politicians of his party were frantic. They put party success foremost in all things and considered Mr. Cleveland's act in forcing the issue at that time to be political suicide. At the present time, on the eve of the campaign of 1908, there are many Republicans who believe that the moment for tariff revision is here, but the politicians are striving to keep the issue chloroformed until after the election.

Mr. Cleveland vitalized the Monroe doctrine in a ringing message on the Venezuelan boundary dispute and by the bold stand he took compelled England to recede from her insolent attitude and to accept the doctrine in its real sense. This was the most daring act of his career. At the present time our relations with Japan are such that Mr. Roosevelt may yet be confronted with the problem of settling the emigration question by the same vigorous and significant means.

Mr. Cleveland's last term was made memorable by the panic of 1893. He alienated the support of his party by sounding the death knell of free silver, and his resolute stand in that crisis saved the credit of the nation, prevented financial ruin, and cost him the favor of the masses and the leadership of his party. When he left the presidency in 1897 he was practically a man without a party and in the minds of the free silver element of the nation was utterly discredited and in exile. At the present time the country is just recovering from the panic of 1907. It has resulted because credits have grown out of all proportion to the cash supply. The country has been betting away beyond its resources. The show-down which was inevitable was due to come and it came in Mr. Roosevelt's administration. For this he will have to bear the blame. In the long run he will be justified for clearing the financial atmosphere, but for some months to come he will be certain to suffer in popular favor as Cleveland did after the panic in 1893. Cleveland lost the support of the cheap money element; Roosevelt has lost the support of the much-money element.

Perhaps there are many other parallels that are pertinent to present conditions, but there is one condition that has no parallel. It is the pleasing spectacle of a man who has always endeavored to do his duty regardless of politics, who has suffered for his bravery, and who now is our only ex-President. If the old song were to be sung now, it would not be "four more years of Grover," but "forty more years of Grover." Long may he live to enjoy the affectionate appreciation of all Americans and enjoy the unique distinction of being the Supreme Court of conservative public sentiment.—Appleton's Magazine for March.

FALLING FROM HEIGHTS

The Sensation as Described by One Who Has Tried It.

A German scientist, Prof. Albert Heim, who fell over a precipice in the Alps but lived to tell the tale, makes that story a very encouraging account to those with an inclination to high jumps and the like. His fall was only seventy feet, yet that would be more than enough to satisfy a temperate person. He has narrated his sensations in minute detail.

At first he seemed to himself to be flying through the air. His fall could really have occupied only a few seconds, but his train of thought was long and full of interesting detail.

"I clearly saw," he says, "the possibility of my fate. I said to myself, 'The rocky wall from which I am now being hurled prevents my seeing what is at its base. The snow may be melted there, or there may be none; if there is any my life may be saved. Otherwise death is inevitable.

"If I am conscious on reaching the earth I have by me a bottle of aromatics and my alpenstock. I will still grasp it, for it may serve me in good stead." I thought, too, of removing my eyeglasses lest their spintering might cause injury.

"Other and gentler thought for those I was to leave behind came upon me. For myself I felt indifferent, caring really little whether I should be much injured or not; but from motives of consideration for others I felt impelled, as it were, to make light of the matter. I seemed to call aloud, 'I am not much hurt.'

"I recollected that in five days more I was to have delivered an inaugural discourse, and thought of the grief my death would cause to those near and dear to me. Anon, living as it were, on the limit of a far distant horizon, appeared distinct and divers images and episodes of my past life. The whole mental picture stood out clear cut and illumined by divine and mysterious light. All things seemed lovely and of good report. There were no misgivings, no anxieties, no sorrow, pain, or terror. There were not sensations of contest or strife. All was merged in feelings of genial good will and kindly feeling. Such feelings predominated over all and formed what was truly a unique and lovely picture.

"Gradually a heaven of glorious blue, flecked with crimson clouds of gossamer lightness, surrounded me. In them I was wafted to and fro, borne up from below, but painlessly and pleasantly, while a vast and moving snowfield seemed to accompany me. Anon the perception of objects, subjective thoughts, a medley of various feelings, seemed to circle in concentric mazes around me as a common centre.

"Then came a dull sound, which I heard very distinctly, but did not feel—and my fall was ended. At that instant a dark veil passed before me. I called aloud three or four times 'I am not much hurt,' grasped my glasses, which lay near me, and touched my limbs to make sure they were not broken. Then I saw my companions slowly approaching. They told me a good half hour had elapsed after my fall before I spoke.

"I had lost consciousness, and that explains the dark veil. Later the power of thinking returned. 'I was conscious only so long as I was falling of the perception of beautiful images. At the moment of contact with earth they disappeared."

On another occasion Dr. Heim was injured in a railway accident. He said that he distinctly heard and counted the bone fractures—seven in all—which he received. He quotes the evidence of an Italian who had a similar experience. —The Gateway.

A Chapter of History

History records the declaration of a state of war with Great Britain in 1812 as a precipitate action. The lack of sufficient preparation for war on land and sea was notorious. There was a strong sentiment, especially in New England, against war. The hotheads triumphed.

Yet we may read in an editorial paragraph of the London Times, Jan. 12, 1908, that the imminence of the war was talked of four years and five months before war was declared. Here is the paragraph:

"The American Minister, it is said, does not hesitate to give it as his opinion that war will be declared on the part of America against this country, as soon as the Orders-in-Council, of Nov. 11, arrive out. The meaning of the above statement, if it be correct, is this, that France may make whatever Orders she pleases with respect to neutrals; but Great Britain must not presume to impose any restrictions whatever, for fear of incurring the hostility of the United States."

The American Minister at the Court of St. James in 1808 was William Pinkney, of Maryland. Appointed by Jefferson, he held over while Madison was president, until in 1811 he resigned. He was afterward Attorney-General in Madison's Cabinet, and was the author of the brief war resolution adopted by the House of Representatives in June of the next year.

As a matter of fact, war as an outcome of the perplexity of American commerce and shipping, caused by frequent interference with our merchant service by British warships, was talked of as early as 1807. When Madison took office the threatened freedom of American commerce was one of the problems he faced. For years, too, the popular conviction that the British in Canada were responsible for Indian uprisings in the Northwest had caused ill-feeling. The British authorities denied responsibility for the Indian outrages, with some show of proof, but the restrictions against American shipping continued, and the Orders-in-Council of 1808, inspired by Napoleon's Berlin and Milan decrees, gave great offence to the Americans.

Madison was at first opposed to war and the hostile spirit did not develop steadily. In 1810 there was a tranquil period. The change in the personnel of Congress at the time of the extra session of November, 1811, however, greatly strengthened the war party. Henry Clay was made Speaker, and in the next summer war was declared.

The London Times' century-old quotations from its own columns, day by day, are rarely more interesting to historical students than this, which shows once more how slow the processes are by which great international conflicts are brought about. But the signs may not always be clearly read. In 1880 a war between the United States and France seemed inevitable. Nothing seemed less likely in 1810 than a war with England. Indeed, if an ocean telegraph and an enterprising newspaper press had been in existence in 1812 there would never have been a war.—New York Times.

London postmen among them cover about 60,000 miles daily.

AN OLD AGE SECRET.

Porridge for Breakfast as an Aid to Longevity is Golden Recipe.

When you are an octogenarian, and when you have just retired from active business life, you see a new kind of life—that of leisure—before you, and you must settle what you are to do. Among other things, you must settle about breakfast. What shall I eat? What shall I drink? And what shall I avoid?

I know of no particular reason as yet why my breakfast of liberty should materially differ from my breakfast of the days of slavery, unless it be that I can take it more leisurely. My ancient regime for breakfast was a liberal one; it has always been for me the most substantial meal of the day—simple but wholesome. It comprised oatmeal porridge as a foundation, and it is on that subject that I should like to engage you a little.

Porridge per se is not an attractive article of consumption. I prepare my dish from a recipe of my own, and I willingly present the recipe to you. During the plum season I take two or three or four, according to size, of those large red Victoria plums—stewed of course—these I put into my dish of porridge with, say, two or three tablespoonfuls of the rich juice—to moisten the mass. Add to this a teaspoonful of golden syrup; then a square piece of dry toast, the size just as it is usually found in the toast rack. Cut this up into small cubes and mix ad lib; a little milk may be added to moisten the whole. Out of the fresh plum season I use a large baked apple in the same way. It will be found to be a pretty substantial and, to my way of thinking, a most palatable dish. Bacon, eggs, buttered toast, marmalade, tea or coffee, etc., are mere subsidiaries; porridge is the perennial dish.

Porridge, as everybody knows is made of oatmeal, and oatmeal is made of oats, and oats, according to the rather unkind definition of Dr. Johnson, is "a grain which in England is generally given to the horses, but in Scotland supports the people." English horses undoubtedly thrive on oats, and English people fed on oatmeal long before the great dictionary maker launched his sarcasm. Markham, in his "English Housewife," 1653, speaks of oatmeal as a'viand in regular use in England, and after giving directions how it should be prepared, he says: "The use and virtues of it are beyond all reckoning."

Those were the days of Old Parr and Henry Jenkins, and who shall say that the lives of these two venerable old parties were not projected from mythical and ante-birth-registration times into times when their death was unquestionably registered, by a constant use of oatmeal porridge? I am assuming, of course, that both of them were born where they said they were, for it cannot be proven that they were not, and that oatmeal porridge formed a substantial portion of their sustenance. This is more probable than that Old Parr invented a pill which prolonged his life so long that he must have been a vast incumbrance to his relations and friends, who, of course, were probably not sorry to be rid of him. As to poor old Jenkins, he is said to have ended his days in the workhouse.

It is all very well to go on getting older and older, so long as your can enjoy your porridge and other good things of a mundane character, and be able to trot about making yourself a pleasant thing to those about you, and finding some enjoyment in life, and so long as you are not a burden to others, and do not stand in shoes which others would be pleased to put their feet into. When that point of life has been reached, the sooner your exit is made the better for all concerned.

'Revenons a notre potage.' There can be no doubt that porridge for breakfast was coeval with the human race. I do not think the word is found in the Bible, but we all know that Jacob sold pottage, and Esau came from the field and he was faint and at the point of death, and he sold his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage. That pottage was made of red lentils, doubtless thickened with oatmeal.

Of course when I begin to consider the question of porridge I have to remind myself that there are at least two kinds of porridge—perhaps more. One might almost say there is porridge and porridge.

You all remember the kind of porridge which Mrs. Squeers administered, as Nicholas Nickleby records, to the boys of Dotheboys Hall, after having dosed them with a big wooden spoonful of brimstone and treacle. You remember the large kettle and the little wooden bowls into which Mrs. Squeers poured a brown composition, which looked like diluted pincushions without the covers and was called porridge! A minute piece of brown bread was inserted in each bowl, and you remember that when the boys had eaten their porridge by means of the bread, Mr. Squeers said solemnly: "For what we have received may the Lord make us truly thankful," and marched off to his own breakfast.

This is one kind of porridge. Then there is the messy, half-boiled, lumpy porridge, which has sometimes to do duty in boarding houses and aboard steamboats. No. No. The porridge I have in my mind's eye is the kind that Mrs. Poyser or Adam Bede's mother used to make—and which made Adam so strong and stalwart. "Ye might ha' made the parridge worse," said Mrs. Bede to Dinah; "I can ate it wi'out its turning my stomach. It might ha' been a trifle thicker an' no harm; an' I allus putten a sprig o' mint in mysen; but however ye t' ken that?" The lads arena like to get folks as'll make their parridge as I'n made it fur 'em; its well if they get anybody as'll make parridge at all."

I think I have justified the position I have taken up, that porridge for breakfast is a thing not to be despised. Now, let me say a word about fruit. Personally I have very great faith in ripe, fresh fruit of all kinds as being conducive to health and longevity, but it does no suit every constitution. Richard Baxter, the great Nonconformist divine of the seventeenth century, speaking of the faults of his youth said: "I was much addicted to the excessive, gluttonous eating of apples and pears, which I think, laid the foundation for the imbecility and flatulence of my stomach which caused the bodily calamities of my life. To this end, and to concur with naughty boys who gloried in evil, I have gone into other men's orchards and stolen their fruit, when I had enough at home."

This was very naughty of Richard Baxter. I quote him because in my boyhood, I too, may have robbed the same orchards as he robbed, for I am of his family and lived in the same neighborhood. I too, was a gluttonous devourer of apples and pears, much of it "stolen fruit," though I had enough of it at home. Now, my belief, contrary to the experience of Baxter, is that this large consumption of fruit in my young days laid the foundation of good health which has helped me all through my life.—'An Octogenarian,' in the London Chronicle.

Periodicity of Panics

Nothing in all the realm of political economy is more extraordinary, and in its way more perplexing to the theorists, than what we call the periodicity of commercial panics. The fact of that periodicity is quite incontestable; occurrence of the larger disasters of this sort, in 1837, 1857, 1873, 1893 and 1907 in the United States, and in 1825, 1844, 1866 and 1890 in Great Britain, has fixed a maxim both of practical and of theoretical finance in what we call the "twenty-year cycle of prosperity." Intervals of exactly twenty years such a period does not observe—of this the above cited dates are themselves evidence—but that approximately two decades elapse between these successive wrecks of financial and industrial credit; that the intervening period is made up of slow and toilsome recovery, followed by renewed prosperity, then by returning speculation and extravagance, and finally, after several more or less plain warnings, by another breakdown of the credit system—to this the whole history of Anglo-Saxon finance and trade bears witness.—Alexander D. Noyes in The Century.

Reindeer Save Esquimaux

Great interest is being excited in scientific and commercial circles in America by the splendid results of the skilled and assiduous efforts of Dr. Sheldon Jackson, a Presbyterian clergyman, to preserve from extinction the Esquimau tribes of Alaska, says the Pall Mall Gazette. Few persons in England may be aware that in the middle of the last century a scheme for utilizing camels in Arizona was tried. This was a disappointing failure; but many people are now saying that if the attempt had been backed by Dr. Jackson it might have been crowned with success.

A most difficult problem has been triumphantly solved in Alaska, where there were fifteen years ago only sixteen reindeer. Today, in consequence of Dr. Sheldon Jackson's persevering efforts, there are in the territory 15,000 of these animals. This able pioneer some years since realized that starvation must be the fate of the Esquimaux unless some means of sustenence other than the chase could be devised for them. He noticed that with the advent of white settlers the whales, seals, caribous and walruses were disappearing. He knew that the Siberians, living in climatic conditions closely resembling those of the vast peninsula, were self-supporting, simply because they possessed immense herds of reindeer. Not only is the animal wonderfully prolific, but its flesh is excellent for food, its hide furnishes good clothing, and its strength, docility, and endurance render it available either for carrying or drawing loads.

Dr. Jackson is a philosophical ethnologist. He carefully studied the Alaskan temperament, and he became convinced that the Esquimau of the territory, nomadic by hereditary custom, were unfitted for any of the white man's occupations except that of herding. He believed that reindeer herding would be a pursuit of fascinating interest to these natives.

The initial success of the experiment induced the United States to take up the scheme in earnest, and reindeer stations are now scattered widely over Alaska, while new ones are constantly being established. The industry in a general way is under the supervision of the Bureau of Education, which is attached to the department of the interior. Dr. Jackson is the bureau agent of education in the northern section of the territory.

Experience is proving the immense value of the deer as draft animals. In the winter of 1896-97 the superintendent of one of the stations traveled four months with reindeer teams, traversing two thousand miles of barren country, the deer living entirely on moss which they dug from the snow. On another occasion a relief expedition sent to ice-bound whalers at Point Barrow took along three hundred reindeer, which were driven 800 miles, with the temperature from 20 to 50 degrees below zero. The animals reached their destination in perfect health, and several fine fawns were born on the way. For several winters the reindeer have been used to carry mails to the little villages along the coast of Bering Sea. Most useful results have followed the introduction of these animals. The native hotel has now changed its character, and is now a house, often furnished quite comfortably, with pictures and even musical instruments.

Garden Miracle

Professor Bottomley recently revealed a mystery which he has been nursing for many months. It has been generally held for many years that the growth of plants depends largely on the presence of bacteria, some in the soil and some in the roots.

They are of many sorts. The most mysterious group has the power of extracting free nitrogen from the air and transferring this essential substance to clovers, beans, and other leguminous plants. A special colony of these have been under the microscope at King's College, London, for six months, and the first photograph was shown by Professor Bottomley.

Every man of science in the hall cheered the spectacle of these dots on the roots, for they revealed a new marvel. The bacteria, after years of enquiry, have been actually and visibly harnessed to a new work. Professor Bottomley is the first man to have attached these "nitrogen-fixers" to plants that are not leguminous. By watering the roots or seeds of strawberries, tomatoes, wheat, barley and oats with a bacterial solution he has increased their growth by something like a third.

It is yet more important that the maturity is immediately accelerated. A gardener, as a result of using bacterial solution, has sold beans in Covent garden six weeks after the seed was sown—an incident that sounds miraculous. By innoculating seeds and soil one may convert the roughest moorland into good agricultural land worth, perhaps, several pounds an acre.

United States Mineral Products

The value of the mineral products of the United States for the year 1906, as shown by the Geological Survey report, exceeded by $279,000,000 the total of the preceding year, and by $795,000,000 that of the year 1906. As compared with the total for 1880, the increase is enormous, amounting to $1,556,000,000. The total sum for 1906 is $1,902,517,565. The production first surpassed a thousand millions in 1899. The value of the metallic products in 1906 was $866,110,856, which is 184,000,000 in excess of that of 1905. Iron takes the lead, with a value of $505,700,000; then comes copper, $177,595,888; then gold, $94,373,800; next lead, $39,917,422; next silver, $38,256,400; and then zinc, $24,362,668. The value of the aluminum produced was $4,262,286. Among non-metallic products bituminous coal stands at the head with $381,162,115. Pennsylvania anthracite following with $131,917,694. The clay products are valued at $161,032,722.

Electrical Anesthesia

Miss Louise G. Roobinovitch, a young New York physician who has won eminence in France and Germany by the successful use of electric anesthesia, soon will receive a permit to apply her system on a large scale in the insane asylums of Paris. Louis Parisot, General Councillor for the seine district, says he believes Miss Roobinovitch's discovery was destined to influence greatly both surgery and medicine. He said that under electric anesthesia a patient might be kept asleep many hours, the blood pressure remaining absolutely normal, with no evil after effects. The system has proved successful in the treatment of delirium tremens and other forms of acute mania.

THE JAPANESE NEW YEAR.

Special Food for the Celebration—Offerings to the Gods and to Friends.

The Japanese celebrate the New Year Day as the Americans do the Christmas Day, writes Frank Tokio in the Japan Current. A few days previous to the 1st of January are busiest, not only on account of the multitude of shoppers but also on account of the large amount of bills the shopkeepers have to collect from their customers for the year ending.

In Japan the shops sell their goods extensively on trust. A considerable number of customers of these shops do not remit promptly. The bills remain in the hands of the customers sometimes for a whole year.

So the shopkeepers are obliged to hire a number of collectors. These carry the bills in their bags and call upon the delinquent customers for payment at the end of the year.

According to the custom in Japan the bills and money lent personally may be collected until the midnight of Dec. 31. With the dawn of the New Year Day the are liable to be left unpaid until the end of the year comes around again. So the collectors strenuously hunt up the payers of the bills throughout the night with a chochin, a Japanese lantern.

A delinquent debtor who does not care to pay the bills which he expects to be sent to him will close his door early in the evening and go to bed. So very often their collectors are to be seen hovering about on the street until the dawn sit carrying their chochin in their hand. When they enter the debtor's house they will say good evening instead of good morning.

The Japanese, in order to celebrate the New Year Day, prepare a day or two ahead a peculiar food called mochi, which is a sort of unleavened bread made of a kind of rice which has a greater measure of tenacious quality than other kinds. Bushels of rice are steamed in a large barrel-shaped utensil, which is placed on top of a flat boiler.

After the rice is sufficiently steamed to make it soft enough to be kneaded into dough it is taken out, a portion at a time, into a stone mortar, in which it is kneaded. Half a dozen men and maidservants stand around the mortar. The men hold in their hands pickaxelike wooden tools with blunt points, while the maids hold wooden poles, point blunt, for poking purposes.

Keeping time with the songs they sing the men swing their pickaxes, while the women turning the rice with their poles. In about fifteen minutes the dough is, well kneaded and is then placed on a large flour spread board. The lady of the family sprinkles flour on the hands of half a dozen other ladies who are waiting to help, kimona sleeves tucked up.

The lady of the family cuts the dough into pieces of different sizes, and the other ladies take them and make them into mochi. These are usually round, an inch or two in diameter, and from half an inch to an inch thick, with their tops in the shape of a bald head. The work begins just after midnight and ends at 10 or 11 o'clock. An average family make about a hundred mochi.

The larger ones are used as offerings to the family gods. Half a dozen different sized mochi are piled on a table, the smaller on top of the larger, and on top of them all is placed an orange with the leaves of a tree which corresponds to the holly in Christmas. This offering is made to the tabernacle for gods very early in the morning of the 1st of January.

On the New Year no laborious work should be performed; not even a broom should be carried by a maid. Food is cooked the day before and can be eaten in the morning without troubling the maids beyond arranging it on the table.

The offertory food is cooked separately with the first bucketful of water drawn from the sacred well in the rear of the communal Shinto shrine just after the bell strikes midnight.

The first thing one should do after midnight is to greet the fellow members of the family with "Omedeto!" meaning "I wish you happiness" or "A Happy New Year!" Then as a matter of ceremony he should eat zoni, a delicious sort of soup. After the zoni is eaten the family goes to bed. They rise late in the forenoon.

The maids prepare for a ceremonial feast which is to be performed about one o'clock in the afternoon. The menu consists of sake, the rice wine, which is called for the occasion otoso, and vegetables cooked on the previous evening. A very little or no meat is eaten.

A Shinto priest, who is known for the occasion as Banzai, performs an itinerant service in the houses of the parish, beginning with the daimio's mansion and visiting every house and hovel, one after another. He mutters the Shinto rituals in front of the tokonomma and drinks otoso in a saucerlike lacquer cup into which a maid pours out of otuzu, a silver bottle.

One cup of otoso in each house makes the Banzai so saturated with it after he has gone round a number of the houses in the parish, that in the rest he becomes rather disparaged, an object of laughter to all the children of the community who follow after him wherever he goes.

After the Banzai goes away each family partakes of the feast and drinks otoso. When the feast is over one dresses up in haori and kakama, an overcoat and skirt, generally made of silk.

He issues forth from his house and goes first to the daimio's mansion—the feudal custom is survive and the time honored daimio invites every resident of his former daimiate to have a cup of wine, or otoso, in his mansion. One goes to pay respect to the daimio, not often personally, but for the drinking of otoso. Then he goes around to greet his personal friends with "Omedeto!" If his friend is a mere casual acquaintance, he leaves his card in a card receiver, which is placed in front of every house. The rest of the day is spent in various New Year sports. Young men and women congregate in groups on the streets and institute an outdoor game of hane tsuki, or in other words makuro uchi. Hane tsuki is a game in which any number of persons that the place can hold may take part. Usually six to twenty participate.

At night the young people gather in a house and play cards, the Japanese cards, called hyaku nin isshu. The hyaku nin isshu consists of a hundred cards, on each of which the second two lines of a noted classical four-line poem generally love-poem or sonnet, is written. These hundred cards are spread on the matted floor and around the spread the card party makes a ring.

A person is chosen from among the party to read the first two lines of each of the poems one after another. The moment the first word of one of the poems is pronounced, every one in the ring recalls in his mind the last two lines, and makes a rush for the card that contains the lines. The one who gathers most of the cards wins the game. The stores of the streets remain closed from the first of January for three days. The spirit of celebration stays in the air for a week.

She—They say a man becomes like that with which he constantly associates.

He—Ridiculous idea! I've been a fishmonger all my life and can't swim a yard yet!—London Opinion.