

Notes and Items.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

ONLY MILK AND WATER ARE SAFE.—A Philadelphia medical director says that the effect of coffee upon the heart is worse than that of alcohol. Incidentally he gives a description of the nature of the harm done by each of the stimulants. A heartbeat consists of two sounds, one long and one short. In the first, blood is filling the relaxed heart; in the second, the heart contracts, with a corkscrew motion, and violently expels the blood through the arteries. It is essential to a healthy circulation that the first movement should be completed and the heart filled before the second is begun. Strong stimulants disturb this regular action, shortening the length of the long beat, and a long continuance in their use may make the derangement permanent. Whiskey, coffee and tobacco affect the rhythm of the heart and diminish the power to resist hardship and exposure. The corkscrew motion of the heart is the only thing gives the taper any encouragement.—*Insurance Times*.

VERY TRUE.—The following comments of the editor of "Talks with Fire Insurers," in that excellent monthly magazine, *Black and White*, deal with a most reprehensible practice prevalent in other cities than Chicago:—

"The common practice of berating fire companies should be stopped for the reason that they are not deserving of it. One man talks, half in jest and half in earnest, but without knowledge, of the practice of companies not settling in full, and more by insinuation than any direct charge, leaves the impression on the hearer that the fire companies are always tricky and dishonest in adjusting and paying losses; and this is passed along, growing as does a snowball by being rolled over new falling snow, until it assumes enormous proportions. The real fact is that the companies are more sinned against than sinning, and rogues take advantage of the bias of the public against corporations in order to gain their ends if possible. Be assured that the companies wish nothing but justice and right, and if you will deal with them with this thought in your mind you will have no difficulty."

DELAGOA BAY.—Portuguese Bonds continue under the cloud of the Delagoa Bay arbitration, the result of which, delayed as it may be by the dilatory method of the three gentlemen of Berne who constitute the Court, cannot, according to the well-informed *Times* correspondent, "be many months distant." It seems to be generally agreed that the decision must be in favour of the claimants for a pretty considerable sum, anything in fact from £1,700,000 to £2,700,000, and the Ordinary £10 shares of the Delagoa Bay Company have lately risen on the prospect from nothing to £7, being now £6 1-2. The doubtful point is how Portugal in the present state of its finances is to make good the enhanced value of these securities out of its own unaided pockets. As a matter of fact it cannot hope to do it, and the point of interest is how the difficulty will be overcome. Offers of assistance there will be in plenty, indeed some thirty groups have already signified their willingness to help—but upon the condition that Delagoa Bay is hypothecated in their favour. This is where Portugal's dilemma grows em-

barrassing. The King's tenure of his throne is precarious, and any alienation of territory merely for the purpose of paying a debt, would provoke a republican rising, whilst, on the other hand, America and Great Britain are both bound to protect the shareholders by enforcing the award. The suggestion is made that the only way of cutting this Gordian knot is by forming a Chartered Company under Portuguese auspices, with its headquarters in Lisbon, and if possible, one of the Royal Family as its President. The solution of the difficulty is really of immense consequence to everyone interested in South African matters, as the Transvaal Republic only has access to the sea through the Cape, Natal, or Delagoa Bay. Hitherto it has used the last-named route, and has been thereby enabled to continue frankly antagonistic to any South African Custom Union. The Berne award will, it is hoped, alter the position and make this impossible.—*London Shareholder*.

PERSONALS.

MR. FRED. BRYERS, Inspector Alliance Assurance Co., has been in Montreal for some days. We understand he contemplates making this city his headquarters.

MR. C. D. HANSON has recovered sufficiently from his very serious accident to give some attention to business. He expects to leave for New York in the course of a fortnight to consult a specialist.

MR. PLUNKETT, who has served the Bank of Montreal for several years as accountant at Moncton, has been promoted to Lindsay. The affection of Monctonians for this handsome and obliging official of the big bank was expressed by an address, some tears and a valuable present.

MR. S. E. MORRIS, of the firm of L. Powell & Co., who do a large business on the London Stock Exchange, is in Montreal for a few days. He proposes to visit British Columbia for the purpose of investigating the position of the mining industries of that Province in the interests of his firm.

MR. WILLIAM McCABE, Managing Director of the North American Life Assurance Company, has been visiting Winnipeg, and the newspapers of that city publish interviews recording his impressions of the wonderful growth and improvement of that city since 1889, when Mr. McCabe was last in the West.

MR. ALEX. ROBERTSON, Manager of the Chicago Branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia, has been visiting Montreal. Mr. Robertson, formerly Inspector of the Nova Scotia, was welcomed by many friends who were glad to see him enjoying excellent health. He left for a brief vacation at Old Orchard Beach, on Tuesday last.

MR. W. H. BURNS has been appointed Manager of the branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia, at Fredericton, N. B. Mr. Burns during his stay in Montreal as accountant, has gained the esteem of the Bank's clients, and the respect and liking of the staff. A complimentary dinner, on Wednesday last, testified to mingled regret and rejoicing—sorrow at the departure of a good accountant and gladness at his promotion to a higher office.