

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Tariff revision has been receiving much attention of late in France and has been the subject of a report of a parliamentary commission, which gives an interesting glimpse of tariff tendencies on the continent of Europe. The subject is discussed by a Paris correspondent, who shows that the committee, in advocating what is called "specialization," is acting largely on the defensive. What is suggested for France has already been tried in Germany and other countries, with the result that France has suffered considerably from the scheme. Under specialization an article is withdrawn from the tariff number under which it would stand with products of the same family, is classified under a distinct specification and given a standing of its own. It is "minutely described, not only in its nature and species, but even in its characteristics, mode of manufacture, circumstances of production in every detail which concerns it."

The value of the system lies in the fact that it renders worthless the most favored nation clause in treaties. If it is desired to admit a certain article from one country and to discriminate against another, in spite of the clause, specialization makes this possible. A practical illustration is presented in the way Germany has specialized on horses. In 1904 that country made a commercial treaty with Belgium, in which it lowered the duty on horses of Flemish, Brabant and Ardennes breeds; a year later it made a similar treaty with Austria for horses of pure Noric breed. In effect there was a discrimination against French horses, but specialization prevented French exporters from making a valid protest because they would have been allowed the same rate as the Belgians and Austrians on the breeds specified if they had had horses of those breeds to sell. That they did not have them was not the fault of the Germans. The plan admits of great elaboration and encourages ingenuity in tariff tinkering, as was shown by Chancellor von Buelow when he said, "Between the French article and the analogous Austrian, Italian or Russian article differences will easily be found—very small differences, indeed, but quite enough to warrant us in applying two different rates of tariff."

WHERE TO BUILD.

Rocky Site No Longer Advised—Gravel the Ideal Soil.

Strange as it seems after 2,000 years of talk and song about the advantages of founding one's house upon a rock, one of the very things that modern builders tell us to avoid in selecting a site is rock. This is principally because of the great cost of excavating a cellar in rocky soil.

Another objection to rocky soil is that water will soak through rock and so runs down it. Some of this water would be almost certain to seep through the cellar walls, making the cellar damp, or it might undermine the foundations.

Again rock often contains springs. If a spring were opened during the building it would mean either that the water would have to flow through the cellar or be deflected—a costly operation. A house built upon a rock also vibrates during a thunder storm.

Clay is perhaps more to be avoided than rock, says the Circle. Clay collects water and spreads under pressure. It expands in wet or frosty weather and contracts in summer. Frozen clay clings to brick or stone and often causes dislocation of cellar walls and floors.

Also it is impervious to water. Thus an underground layer of clay will prevent the proper drainage of water and leave the soil soft and sodden. Finally, it is extremely costly to excavate. Unprofitable for building purposes also are made land, sand and silt. Made land is not always stable.

Gravel is the ideal soil for building purposes. It is porous and drains perfectly. At the same time it is sufficiently stable to support foundations. A gravel elevation is the ideal building site.

Depressions of levels between rocks are likely to retain water, though the depression is light and the elevation distant. The ground water thus retains its level. Small gravel elevations forms islands, as it were, in a subterranean lake, and on them houses may be built with perfect safety. The cellar will be above the ground water level and no rain water will seep into the cellar.

All men are born helpless, and never outgrow it.

A Good Morning's Work

It was the evening before the steamer was due at Stamboul that Dr. Israel le Mans excited Crossley Clarke with a fragment of personal history. The two men had found each other congenial, in spite of their different nationalities.

"So you advise me to carry a revolver in the course of my prowls in the Sultan's capital?" Clarke said, in comment upon some insignificant words from his companion.

"Certainly—and ready to fire as well, my friend. Between ourselves, I—"

The Frenchman threw his cigar aboard, and stopped. Clarke could see that he was strangely agitated.

"Yes, Le Mans? You—"

"I shall tell you," said the other. "It is nine months that I was here before. I was with my sister—"

"—pauvre chere petite! We had seen the Sultan go to the mosque, and afterwards we lost ourselves among the high garden walls and little lanes. Presently it seemed to me we were followed. I had noticed the same three rascals behind us in other streets. 'Celeste, I say to my little sister, there is danger! It is your gold bracelets and chains. Keep your senses, cherie, if I have to shoot.' Well, we go a little farther, where there are fig-trees over a wall, and then, from a corner, I get a blow on the head. I hear my sister cry out, but I am useless. I stagger against the wall and begin to faint, and then, in front of my eyes, the three men and another take Celeste in their arms and run with her. They tie up her mouth, no doubt, for she stop her sounds. And then all is fog before me, and I sink down. When I am clear-headed again, I am in bed in the steamer, and I have not since seen my poor Celeste."

Le Mans told the tale with considerable emotion.

"Is all that a fact?" asked Clarke, in astonishment.

"A fact? Well, perhaps we shall see things to-morrow," was the dry reply.

"And haven't you heard from her, or of her, or can't your ambassador do anything?"

"Oh, yes, I have heard! She has my letters all right, and I get letters from her—like this:

"Dear Israel,—Do not fidget yourself. I am well. God bless you! Celeste."

"She is compelled to write, you see. I know something, too, though not from her. The letters I send have nothing on them but her name, and Constantinople, and one Mizrim Bey sees to their delivery. I find that Mizrim Bey in the morning. When I find him, I do something."

"Hang it all," exclaimed Clarke sympathetically, "couldn't we go shares in the—fun of the risk?"

The Frenchman got up.

"Good-night!" he said. "I do not forget your friendship, but this is my affair. So long, my friend—so long!"

The next morning Clarke awoke, to find the white palaces of Constantinople gleaming under a very blue sky beyond the blue water seen from his portholt.

It was quick work to dress and prepare to go ashore. Remembering Le Mans, he knocked first of all at his cabin, but found the Frenchman quite indisposed.

"Amuse yourself well," said Le Mans. "I shall rest myself a little longer. There is no hurry for me. I do not return with the steamer—like you."

"All right!" replied Clarke. "I'll be back probably before you're up; then we'll go off together again."

Le Mans nodded, with a little smile, and turned his face away. And Clarke hastened on deck, and hailed a boat. It was only an hour after sunrise. The second mate of the Chartres, who was by the ladder, made an audible remark about British energy as he helped Clarke down the side.

"There is the Gay Lord," he added, pointing to a steamer behind them, flying the Union Jack. "You shall find your compatriots also on shore, monsieur."

"Ah, so much the better!" said Clarke. He had already, at Athens, hobnobbed with sundry of the Gay Lord's passengers, and hoped to meet them again somewhere.

With quick strokes, and much chattering, his two boatmen sped him to a landing, where a dapper little electric launch caught his eye. Hardly had he set foot ashore, and paid his men, when a small Turk, in European black, save for his fez, accosted him.

"Monsieur Thompson?" said this gentleman, with a very polite salutation. "His Excellency send this for you."

He waved his hand towards the launch.

Clarke was not a man given to display his feelings unnecessarily.

He begged the little gentleman's pardon.

"You not remember?" said the Turk, with a smile. "His Excellency send a letter to the ship last night. Ah, perhaps you drink after, and forget!"

"So!" thought Clarke. "This looks like an adventure. Well, have at it!" He bowed to the smiling Moslem, and stepped towards the launch. As he did so he noticed another boat coming from mid-current. The launch began to dart to the southward, hugging the shore; and then he recognized the passenger in this other boat. It was the Gay Lord's medical officer whose name he remembered also.

"Sold, old man!" said Clarke to himself. "We'll see what we shall see!"

He fluttered a distant salutation to Dr. Thompson, and lay back on the red cushions of the launch.

After a few remarks about the weather, the little Turk became silent over his cigarette; but already Clarke had grasped the main fact of the mistake. He gathered that there was someone to whom he was going as a doctor to a patient.

Well, if the case was a simple one, no harm need be done, for he had studied medicine for two years. Otherwise, an apology would pave the way for the Gay Lord's certified surgeon.

For twenty minutes the launch shot through the water. The city had given place now to isolated palaces and pleasure-houses, with gardens terraced to the water's edge. High walls enclosed the gardens, the perfumes of which were wafted over the waters.

The launch made a sharp turn, and entered a tiny creek, with roses bled between the cypresses which seemed to have been set as a palisade between this garden and the shore.

Two or three minutes more, and he was in the presence of a keen-eyed gentleman, also in European black and a fez, to whom his guide made such respectful obeisance that Clarke knew he was at the crisis of his little escapade.

"You are early, monsieur," said this gentleman. "I shall offer you coffee!"

"Thanks, no!" said Clarke. "Anything I can do, I would rather do at once."

"Bien! You have your instruments?"

Clarke felt for his revolver, and nodded.

"Well, then, I shall tell you, first," said the gentleman, with a furtive wrinkling of the eyes, "that the lady is a little difficult. You are English, monsieur? I am glad of it. This young lady came to me perhaps a year ago. She now comes to lose her health, and I fear a phthisis. You understand? I prefer the advice of a stranger, and I send for you. Allons! We shall see her."

A heavy brocade curtain was lifted at one side of the reception-room, and Clarke's host led the way.

It was on Clarke's lips now to confess the mistake. He quite perceived that he had got himself into a mess. But he liked not the look of the master of this gorgeous little villa of white marble, and preferred to wait and see if he could yet come out of the scrape without humiliation, let alone danger.

"Mademoiselle, the doctor!"

The introduction was abrupt—half ironical, too; it seemed to Clarke.

He was on the threshold of a charming little room, furnished quite in European fashion, with books, musical instruments, and flowers adding to its graciousness. A tall, saucy-eyed girl, in a magnificent morning-robe of yellow silk, turned her gaze upon him.

"You understand, monsieur?" said the Turk, in a whisper. "One of my wives—the most cherished of them all. Au revoir! In ten minutes I shall return."

Clarke found himself facing his patient, and alone with her. Now he noticed her beauty, heightened by the flush upon her cheeks.

He immediately threw himself on her mercy.

"I am not a qualified doctor," he said, having learnt that she understood English, "and I shame to say I am here as an—adventurer. The real doctor will no doubt come later."

The girl stared at him in surprise, with one hand to her heart.

"Another insult!" she murmured. "Heaven forgive me, anything rather than that! Mademoiselle," said Clarke quickly "when I left the Chartres—"

"Ah!" The girl gasped. "You come from the Chartres? Tell me, monsieur, has she a passenger named Le Mans?"

She spoke rapidly, in a whisper, with her hand toward him, and in that moment Clarke saw the resemblance between her and Le Mans.

"Is it," he gasped—"is it possible that you are his sister?"

"I am Celeste Le Mans, monsieur, a poor woman, who still prays daily to Heaven for her rescue," was the touching reply. "He called me wife—I heard him, but I am nothing yet to him. He hopes, but—"

Clarke had gazed to the window of the boudoir, peered down the

tangled garden which led to the water, and formed a daring plan. "Mademoiselle," he now said, "there is no time to lose; your brother is desperate, and will do desperate deeds to recover you. I am fortunate indeed if I can save him and yourself. Will you rush it with me? I am armed. I'll shoot the engineer of the boat if he refuses to work it. Come! Will you?"

The window was open. The blue water could be seen sparkling beyond the garden. Clarke held out his hand to the girl.

And, after a moment's hesitation and piercing scrutiny of him, Celeste Le Mans gave him her right hand, and with the other gathered up her gown for the flight.

They flashed through the dewy foliage, screened superbly by the tangle.

Already they were near the water's edge, when a cry and a whistle sounded from the house.

"Faster!" said Clarke. The launch at last! The engineer was smoking a common briar pipe. Clarke noticed his face now. It was not the face of a Moslem.

He signalled to the man to make ready, and helped the girl into the boat. And, to his astonishment, the engineer burst out laughing, and said, in perfect English:

"Elopement or not, I'm on your side, sir!"

As the servants of Mizrim Bey and the Bey himself broke through the rose-decked palisade of the cypresses, the launch shot at full speed round the corner into the main stream of the Dardinelles.

In less than half an hour Clarke tapped again at the cabin of Israel le Mans, and entered with a smile, and the words:

"Your sister's upstairs, old chap!"—London Answers.

GERMANY'S WAK CHEST.

Hoarded in the Julius Tower, and is Annually Counted.

A curious task, typical of the petty thoroughness incidental to German army methods, has just been completed at Spandau, near Berlin. This is the annual counting over, coin by coin, of the "Kriegschatz," or emergency war chest.

It consists of \$30,000,000, which ever since the war of 1870-71 has been hoarded in a room in the Julius Tower of that supposedly impregnable fortress.

The sum forms part of the \$1,000,000,000 indemnity extracted from France as the price of peace. It is carefully counted every year by a selected staff of non-commissioned officers. Their task occupies them a full week, starting on the Monday morning and finishing on the following Saturday night. During this period they are practically close prisoners, for they have to eat, sleep, and take what exercise they can within the steel-cased walls of the treasure-vault.

At each counting the money is found to lose through wear and tear some four ounces in weight, equivalent to about \$70. This is carefully made up before the vault is closed for another year, in order that the sum total may always remain precisely the same.

Of course, the wastefulness involved in keeping this huge sum lying idle is obvious. If it had been allowed to grow at compound interest, for instance, from the commencement, it would by now have more than trebled itself. But up to the present none of the many proposals made by different parties in the Reichstag to invest it or to convert it to immediate use have succeeded.

Once, however, it came within an ace of being carried off by thieves. The prime mover in the audacious coup, which was of a semi-political character, was a man named Reinsdorf, and more than fifty others were implicated. The plot was discovered in the nick of time, but Reinsdorf escaped, only, however, to be hanged later on for attempting to blow up with dynamite the national memorial at Rudesheim on the occasion of its unveiling by the Emperor.

BLACKSMITH WAS OCULIST.

Performed Operation for Cataract on Several Villagers.

General Booth's operation for cataract recalls the wonderful native skill of a blacksmith near York, who some forty years ago successfully performed this delicate operation on several of his fellow villagers, says the London Chronicle. The fact became known to a doctor in the neighborhood, who so admired the blacksmith's skill that he provided the means for his education as an oculist. To the blacksmith the removal of the cataract was no more than a mechanical feat, but when he became acquainted with the structure of the human eye and its amazing delicacy he was so overpowered by the rashness of what he had done in ignorance that he lost his nerve, and with the fear of knowledge he insisted on returning to his anvil.

Cavalry cover four miles an hour when walking, nine miles an hour when trotting, fifteen miles an hour when galloping.

FROM BONNIE SCOTLAND

NOTES OF INTEREST FROM HIGHLANDS AND BRAES.

What is Going on in the Highlands and Lowlands of Auld Scotia.

The Rosyth naval base staff is gradually on the increase. A stamp-vending machine has now been installed in the Glasgow General Postoffice, George Square.

In naval ship-building circles there is evidently hope of a steadier activity than has been common for some years.

Four horses died suddenly on the small farm of Auchinbaird, near Sauchie, it was thought from poisoning.

Three Kinross miners were each fined \$10 or 20 days' imprisonment for having matches in their possession in a colliery.

James Matthew Barrie, M.A., LL.D. (St. Andrews), the author and dramatist, has received the degree of LL.D. from Edinburgh University.

Prof. Hugh Gall, St. Mungo's College, has been appointed pathologist to Stephen Kalli Memorial Laboratory at the Sussex County Hospital, Brighton.

The Caledonian Railway Company have declared a dividend of three per cent., and the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company one of 3 1/2 per cent.

The new chairman of the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company is Mr. Alexander Gracie, M.V.O., who for some years has acted as managing director.

At Kilmarnock, John Gardner, dairyman, Reform street, Beith, was fined \$15, with the alternative of 30 days' imprisonment for having sold from a cart milk deficient in natural fat.

A large congregation was attracted to Hatheran Parish Church recently by the novelty of a treble wedding, the three daughters of Mr. John Tollington, churchwarden, being the brides.

A Glasgow man who broke his leg owing to his foot catching in a defective part of the footpath, has obtained a verdict of \$1,050 damages, and expenses against the owners of the property.

An Edinburgh headmaster recently received the following executory communication:—"Please advise you be so kind as to let Agnes away at 10.30 to go to the infirmary with her brother's arm?"

The Glasgow Territorial authorities have hit upon a novel method of securing recruits. Officers attended the principal football matches and appealed to the spectators to join the ranks of the "Terriers."

The Fife Coal Company have decided to make an experiment in the provision of bathing accommodation for their workmen. The Aitken Pit, Kelly, where 1,100 men find employment, has been selected.

The grass parks at Dumfries House belonging to the Marquis of Bute were let by public auction recently. There was a large attendance, and the bidding was brisk, and rents were up nearly 20 per cent. upon former rates.

The removal of the torpedo factory from Woolwich to Greenock is evidently not to take place as early as was expected, for the notice inviting employes to volunteer for transfer by a certain date has been withdrawn.

NOT EVEN THE FIRST STEP. Mr. Morse having bought a new bicycle of the most improved pattern, presented his old one to Dennis Halloran, who did errands, and odd jobs for the neighborhood. "You'll find the wheel useful when you're in a hurry, Dennis," he said.

The young Irishman was loud in his thanks, but regarded the wheel doubtfully.

"I mistrust 'twill be a long while before I can ride it," he said.

"Why, have you ever tried?" asked Mr. Morse.

"I have," said Dennis gloomily. "A frind lint me the loan o' his whiles he was having the moomps. 'Twas t'ree weeks I had it, an' what wid practising night an' morning, I niver got so I could balance meself standing still, let alone riding on it."

SCRAPS.

White horses, because they make good targets are not used in warfare.

In Siam the flies are a plague, and every private soldier in the army must daily catch 1,000 of them.

Russians do not eat pigeons because the Scriptural dove is a holy bird.

Spain's population is 18,000,000, yet in America 25,000,000 speak Spanish.

A life insurance policy always falls due in Germany of the insured persons loses both hands.

Of course, the preacher's aim wasn't accurate when the sermon hit you.

FROM ERIN'S GREEN ISLE

NEWS BY MAIL FROM IRELAND'S SHORES.

Happenings in the Emerald Isle of Interest to Irishmen.

Best to nest had ad dadad addidi There are three horses in Ireland to one in Scotland.

John Limerick, of Ballykelly, recently sold his farm of 29 acres for \$30,72.

James Kells, of Ballyconnell, died aged 103 years at his residence, Cavan.

Eight evicted tenants on the Lowe estate, near Bansha, have been reinstated.

John Hart, of Holywood, died from drinking the water in which shell fish had been boiled.

A sensation has been caused in Irish banking circles by the arrest of a manager and a teller. The Belfast relief fund for the Italian earthquake sufferers reached a total of \$2,642.70.

The infirmary of the old gaol at Enniskillen is to be converted into a technical institute.

A new co-operative creamery has been established at Lixnaw, and promises to be a decided success.

The Ballyneagh estate is about being purchased by the Estates Commissioners for the benefit of the evicted tenants.

At the age of 82 years the Earl of Howth, the last representative of one of the oldest families in Ireland, has passed away.

A bag containing 432 silver pieces, some of which belong to the 13th century, was dug up on a farm at Dundarg, near Coteraine.

During fourteen days 46,574 women with 27,999 children visited public-houses in Dublin, says a Government return issued recently.

The Marquis of Sligo has just attained the age of 78 years. He is the third of his generation to hold the title, and was of a family of 13.

A woman at Belfast gave children haricot beans to play with, and they shared them with others. All ate them, immediately showing signs of poisoning.

It was alleged at an Irish inquest that a woman's dead body had been kept in a house for fourteen or twenty days while her brother drew her old age pension.

Mrs. Wm. Crawford, of Mullins, county Donegal, has died at the age of 102. She retained her faculties to the end, and remembered vividly the Irish Famine of 1846-7.

At a meeting of the Dublin Trades Council it was stated that there were 20,000 people at the present moment either actually starving or on the verge of starvation in the city.

The committee appointed to take steps to establish new live stock markets in Mountrath have decided to hold three markets in each year, viz.—June 2, July 2, and December 2.

"There could be no real rise in the prosperity of Ireland unless the expenditure on alcoholic drink was immensely diminished," said the R. C. Bishop of Down and Connor recently.

In a Parliamentary return issued on the 11th inst., it is stated that the gun offences perpetrated in Ireland in 1906 were 60 in number, in 1907 they rose to 117, and last year they were no fewer than 207.

CLUE OF DOG'S RED HAIR.

Deductions a la Sherlock Holmes Lead to Murderer's Arrest.

A remarkable example of deductions after the fashion of Sherlock Holmes that led to the arrest of a brutal murderer are given in "Natur und Kultur," of Berlin, Germany.

Some time ago a landed proprietor in the Provinces was murdered, and beside his body was found a long cape covered with a fine powder, and to the collar of which adhered two tufts of hair, one grey and the other reddish brown. The hair and the cape were submitted to a criminal psychologist, who, after minute inspection of them, came to the following conclusions:

"The murderer," he said, "is a middle-aged man, slightly bald. He has a dog with long, reddish brown hair, which is in the habit of playing with him. By trade he is a carpenter or sawyer."

This detail as to the murderer's occupation was deduced from the powder on the cape, which, examined under the microscope, proved to be sawdust.

Armed with this information the police instituted a search, and a few days ago arrested a middle-aged carpenter, slightly bald, whose hair was turning grey. He admitted that he owned a dog with reddish brown coat.

After reading the police description of him, in which he was charged with the murder of the landowner, he turned deathly pale and at once admitted that he was the author of the crime.

Those who keep late hours haven't much use for early hours.