THE USE OF IVY AGAINST THE WALLS OF DWELLINGS.

We have frequently heard it maintained that it is injurious and unwise to permit ivy to cover the walls of dwelling houses, as it must necessarily occasion an internal damp, prejudicial to human health and comfort, by arresting the rain, and conducting it into the crevices of the walls, detaining it there until it oozes through, and occasions such injurious dampness as it must be most desirable to prevent even at the expense of sacrificing such an ornamental covering as a luxuriant evergreen or variegated ivy. Now experience and reason testify to the very opposite of this, and they are found boldly asserting that no covering whatever is better calculated or more powerfully and uniformly tends to effect the desirable object of keeping the walls of a house dry, both internally and externally, than a general coat of ivy on the outside. Let any one examine any ivy covered wall, and he will discover the leaves hanging down, one over another from the highest point to which the plant attains to the ground, forming an ornamental shield that casts off the rain and prevents its beating against the walls, conveying it from leaf to leaf downward, preventing its ever coming in contact with or moistening the walls; while the clinging nature of the plant, intended for the purpose of adhesion, thrusts its shoots into the crevices as roots and claspers, according as it ascends, which act as so many sucking engines, extracting and drawing away for the nourishment of its own luxuriance whatever moisture the walls may be supposed to attract or imbibe from the atmosphere. No walls are drier, or so dry, as those to which ivy forms a permanent external covering. Inside the shoots and next the wall will be found, in addition, a coating of dry dust and cobwebs, keeping the walls perfectly dry in the wettest of weather, and that, too, on aspects mostly exposed to the rain and least to the cheering smiles of the sun. Depend upon it, ivy clinging against a wall is a protector from damp, not a cause of it. Let our readers plant ivy against their dwellings without any fear of inconvenient results. It is a warmth-giving agent also, as many can testify. The old prejudice against the employment of ivy as an external covering to buildings is rapidly dying out, and will at no distant date cease to be put forward as worthy of attention.—*Land and Water.*

ROBERT BURNS.

How true a poet he was, and the poet of the poor man, of gray codden, and the Guernsey coat, and the blouse. He has endeared the farm house and cottage, patches and poverty, beans and barley, ale, the poor man's wine, the fear of debt, the dear society of wife and weans, brothers and sisters proud of each other. Not great like Goethe among the stars, or Byron on the ocean, but in the lovely landscape which the poor see around them, brooks, birds, hares, field mice, thistles and heather, which he daily knew. How many Bonnie Doons, and John Anderson my Joes, and Auld Lang Synes around the earth have his verses been applied to, and his exquisite love songs will woo and melt the youths and maids. He has made that Lowland Scotch a Doric dialect of fame. It is the only example in history of a language made classic by the genius of a single man. The memory of Burns! The west winds are murmuring it. Open the windows behind you, and hearken what the waves say of it. The doves perching on the chapel opposite may know something of it. Every name in Scotland and every Scotchman throughout the world, keeps his fame bright; every man, boy and girl's head carries snatches of his songs. The corn and barley rustle them. The music boxes of Geneva are framed to play them. The hand organs of the Savoyards in all cities repeat them. The chimes of bells ring them in the spire. They are the property and solace of mankind.—*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

Question Drawer.

Through what pass in the Rocky Mountains does the Canadian Pacific Railway pass? G. H.

ANSWER.

The Rocky Mountains are really a sea of mountains, and the railway has to pass through a succession of parallel ridges. The first and most formidable is crossed through the Kicking Horse Pass, then comes the Rogers Pass and after that the Eagle Pass.

Answer to question page 156, April 2nd.

All goods are given back. Nothing due on them.

Agent is Dr. to cash from company	$ 32 17		
" for goods	102 91	—$138 08	
" Cr. by cash for goods	59 91		
" " for salary	25 00	— 84 91	
" owes the company			50 17

J. M. E. DRAKE,
41 Temple Place, April 10, 1885. Boston, Mass.

THE "TRUTH PROBLEM."

Mr. Editor:—A correspondent writing for himself and others desires an explanation of the "Truth Problem." His difficulty is that, by the usual law of probability, if A tells the truth 3 times in 4, and B 4 times in 5, then by this law the probability that A tells the truth is $\frac{3}{4}$, and that B tells the truth is $\frac{4}{5}$, while the probability that both tell the truth is $\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{4}{5} = \frac{12}{20}$, or $\frac{3}{5}$. "By this method," he says, "the greater the number of persons that assert a particular statement the less probable is its truth." The mistake made by this correspondent is this,—he does not distinguish between these two questions:

(1) What is the probability that two persons (who sometimes lie) *will both tell the truth* in reply to a particular question?

(2) What is the probability that, *having spoken* and agreed in their statement, they *have both* told the truth?

The $\frac{3}{5}$ answers the first of these questions respecting A and B, and it *is true* that the more witnesses you have (who sometimes lie) the less probable is it that they will all tell the truth in a particular case; but when they have testified and agreed, their statements strengthen each other. In the problem referred to, the probability,—

That A, B, and C will all tell the truth is, $\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{4}{5} \times \frac{6}{7} = \frac{72}{140}$ (1)
That A, B, and C will all lie is, $\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{5} \times \frac{1}{7} = \frac{1}{140}$ (2)
That A and B will tell the truth and C lie, is $\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{4}{5} \times \frac{1}{7} = \frac{12}{140}$ (3)
That A and B will lie and C tell the truth is, $\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{5} \times \frac{6}{7} = \frac{6}{140}$ (4)

And so we might go on with all the supposable cases, and the sum of all the probabilities would be $\frac{140}{140} = 1$, or certainty. But *they have spoken*, and all these supposable cases are thrown out except (3) and (4), and the probability is 12 to 6, or 2 to 1 in favor of (3).—*E. T. Quimby, in N. E. Journal of Education.*

Literary Review.

The Journal of Speculative Philosophy. Edited by William T. Harris and published by D Appleton & Co, New York, is, as its name implies devoted to articles on metaphysical topics, and criticisms and commentaries on philosophical works. The table of contents of a single number will afford a good idea of the character of the topics discussed.

I. A view of the Philosophy of Descartes, E. H. Rhoder.
II. A Popular Statement of Idealism, Wm. M. Salter.
III. Kant's Critique of Judgment, T. B. Veblen.
IV Hegel's Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, (Tr.) F. L. Soldan.
V Bradley's Principles of Logic, S. W. Dyde.
VI. A Study of the Iliad, Denton J. Snider.
VII. Rosmini's Innate Idea, A Priori Ideas, and Subject—Object Ideas, Condi B. Pallen.
VIII. Notes and Discussions.

Our Little Men and Women, D. Lothrop & Co., Boston, Publishers, has a pretty frontispiece, entitled "May-day in the Sunny South," in the May number, and is filled with the usual variety of entertaining stories and pictures for the little ones.