

Tobacco.

I AM the Spirit Nicotine ;
 'Tis I who glide the lips between ;
 Through the lips I trace the brain ;
 There I am a mighty pain.
 I pursue my fatal track
 Down the arched and marrowy back :
 And the vertebræ grow slack.
 Naught can hinder, naught can swerve,
 I pervade each secret nerve ;
 Pick my meal with knife and dart
 From the palpitating heart ;
 Quaff the leaping crimson flood
 Of the rich and generous blood.
 I the yellow bile diffuse,
 Paint the face in ghastly hues.
 Muscle and sinew
 May not continue
 To hold their wonted haughty pride,
 The while I through the system glide.
 Slowly I my purpose wreak,
 Slowly fades the blooming cheek.
 Gloomy fancies I suggest,
 Fill with fears the hardy breast.
 The limbs then fail,
 The lamp burns dim,
 Life hears Death's hail,
 And answers him.
 Heart and liver, lungs and brain,
 All their powers lose amain,
 And yield to me ;
 And I ! and I !
 Laugh to see
 My victim die.

John Ploughman's Almanack.

THE illustrated broadside issued annually by Mr. Spurgeon and known as "John Ploughman's Almanack," was published a little later than usual this year in consequence of Mr. Spurgeon's illness. But it has lost none of its brightness and gives still a proverb for every day in the year. The following are among the more striking :—

If it rained porridge the shiftless would have no spoon.
 Fools run in packs, the wise oft walk alone.
 He is a stupid who has no patience with a stupid.
 Don't change a one-eyed horse for a blind one.
 Women talk less in February than in any other month.
 If lies were Latin, learning would be common.
 Some excellent advice is given to married people.
 It is not every couple that is a pair.
 Let every husband remain a lover.
 Let every wife remain a sweetheart.
 It is easier to find a wife than to feed a wife.
 He that feeds upon charity, feeds upon cold victuals.
 He that marries a fool is a fool.
 When a goose is fat it is still a goose.
 Although the teetotal saws may not be so numerous as on some former occasions, we are advised,
 Drink none, and you'll not drink too much.
 There are short articles as usual ; and from that on "Darby and Joan" we quote this for husbands and wives :
 There, show your own wisdom by loving for your choice those whom you choose for your love. You can get on well enough if you will only feed those two bears—bear and forbear, and try to be lovers and sweethearts all your days. Quarrels between husband and wife are very silly things ; for neither party is the better for them, and generally both are much the worse. He who vexes his wife makes vexation for himself. It is something like the hand striking the nose, or the feet kicking each other. What's the good of it !
 From what is said in the article "Oil the Wheels," it is shown that

TIMES ARE NOT SO BAD.

Times are not so bad as they might be, even to

the man who is the bottom sawyer. Times are going to be better, though there will never be seven Sundays in a week, nor thirty shillings to a pound. "There's nothing much to fret about," as the lark said when it got on the top of a cloud. Our task in life is not too hard after all. "I'm sure I can do it," as Master Tom said when he made up his mind to settle off the pudding. Let us set a stout heart to a stiff hill. Let us trust in God, and put our shoulder to the wheel ; and, above all, never let our spirits go down ; and, depend upon it, the time will come when night shall be turned into day.

In one place we have a personal reference.

John Ploughman has seen a good deal of rough weather of late. He is sometimes as lame as a tree and as full of pain as an old church window ; but, thank God, mercies mingle with his miseries ! There is life in the old dog yet, and John Ploughman can still carry his sack to the mill and grind his corn. Hard as the frost may be the stream of life is not frozen up, but still ripples over the stones. Let us be jolly, however rough the road may be ! Whites and blacks make up the chequers ; summer and winter make up the year ; and comforts and trials make up our lives. Life is a rare bottle of all sorts. It is a good mixture, however ; for our Heavenly Father measures out the quantities and makes all things work together for good.

Here is a good word about thrift in the home.

To have a shilling is a small matter ; to know how to spend it is the great business. Poor people have so little to do with, that it is a great pity they should do so badly with that little ; and many of them could hardly do worse. Any poor dog will lie down and curl himself up and so make both ends meet ; but often enough their masters and their mistresses can't make both ends meet, and don't seem as if they cared to do so. Many men don't pay their way when they are in full work, and what will they do when bad times come ? Do ! Why, they will go off cadging and beg of anybody they meet. A Christian workman believes in God as the God of Providence, and therefore he imitates God by being provident himself.

The Panama Canal.

THE great scheme to construct a canal across the Isthmus of Darien, from the Bay of Limon on the Atlantic, to Panama on the Pacific, seems to have collapsed ; at least, in the hands of its French projectors under the lead of the aged M. de Lesseps.

This scheme was first put in operation by M. de Lesseps, in 1881. At that time, its estimated cost was one hundred and seventy million dollars. The route of the canal, as laid out, was to go by the way of the River Chagres, to traverse the valleys of the Obispo and the Rio Grande, and to enter the Pacific by the Bay of Panama.

But in the course of over seven years, less than a fourth of the canal has been constructed. The natural obstacles in its way have been formidable. The climate is unfavourable to white labour ; and the estimated cost has been proved to be far below the necessary expenditure. In the middle of 1887 no less than two hundred and thirty million dollars had been spent, and, as has been said, only a small part of the work was done.

Although the whole length of the proposed canal would only be about fifty miles, these obstacles have proved insuperable.

After vainly attempting to raise money by loans and lotteries, M. de Lesseps and his colleagues have been forced to seek the aid of the French Government. They wished the period of the payment of their liabilities to be delayed ; and that the govern-

ment should share the financial responsibility of the company.

The French Chamber of Deputies has refused to accede to these proposals ; and the affairs of the canal have been taken out of the hands of the Lesseps company, and placed in those of temporary administrators.

That is, the company, in the business sense of the word, has "failed" ; its condition is one of practical bankruptcy ; and the interests of its eight hundred and seventy thousand shareholders, many of them people of very moderate means, are gravely imperilled.

So long as the project of the Panama Canal has been pursued by a private company, the United States has not deemed it wise to interfere with its operations. The government and public opinion in this country, however, have not looked with favour upon a scheme for making and controlling, in the interest of a European Government, a waterway on this continent, connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific.

In spite of the failure of the Lesseps company and scheme, it is highly probable that in the near future a ship canal will connect the two oceans in some part of Central America. A scheme to do so is already under way, under American auspices, in Nicaragua, north of the Panama route, the project being to start from Port St. Juan on the Atlantic, and to debouch into the Pacific at Port Brito. This route is more than three times as long as that of the Panama Canal, but the difficulties of engineering are said to be less.

Projects for a canal across the Isthmus of Darien have been proposed many times, for more than three hundred and fifty years, the first having been mooted in 1520. In our day, this long-contemplated idea seems likely to be carried, by some route, to a successful end.

Prove that it Moves.

TAKE a good-sized bowl, fill it nearly full of water, and place it upon the floor of a room which is not exposed to shaking or jarring from the streets.

Sprinkle over the surface of the water a coating of lycopodium powder—a white substance, which is sometimes used for the purposes of the toilet, and which can be obtained at almost any apothecary's. Then, upon the surface of the coating of powder make, with powdered charcoal, a straight black line, say an inch or two inches in length.

Having made this little black mark with the charcoal powder on the surface of the contents of the bowl, lay down upon the floor, close to the bowl, a stick or some other straight object, so that it shall be exactly parallel with the mark. If the line happens to be parallel with a crack in the floor, or with any stationary object in the room, this will serve as well.

Leave the bowl undisturbed for a few hours, and then observe the position of the black mark with reference to the object that it was parallel with.

It will be found to have moved about, and to have moved from east to west ; that is to say, in that direction opposite to that of the movement of the earth upon its axis.

The earth, in simply revolving, has carried the water and everything else in the bowl around with it ; but the powder on the surface has been left behind a little. The line will always be found to have moved from east to west, which is perfectly good proof that everything else has moved the other way.—*Frankfort Educational Journal.*

SUCH as are careless of themselves are seldom mindful of others.