

## Flotsam and Jetsam.

ABERRATIONS OF COLOUR SENSE IN WITNESS.—In a lecture at Boston, March 4, before the Society of Arts, Prof. Edmund Beecher Wilson of the department of biology at Columbia University declared that eight times as many men are colour blind as women, and that a man may inherit colour blindness from one of his parents, but it takes two to transmit it to a daughter. The New International Encyclopædia says colour blindness is found in from three to four per cent. of men and less than one per cent. of women. "The most common forms of colour blindness are red blindness, green blindness, and red-green blindness." A variety of defects of vision, in respect of the colour sense, apparently afflicted many witnesses in *Tillson v. Maine Cent. R. Co.*, 102 Me. 463, 67 Atl. Rep. 407, and it is rather remarkable that none of them seems to have been subjected to the infallible tests now in vogue with the New York Central and some other great railroad companies. In the case cited a semaphore with convex lenses on its four sides, red glass on two opposite sides and green glass on the other two opposite sides, was set near a railroad track and for more than a score of years, as far as known, had faithfully performed its office of sending red rays, and *only red rays*, directly down the track as a signal of danger when it was set for the red. On the night of an accident when the plaintiff, a fireman on defendant's train, was injured by reason of the engineer running past the semaphore, it was conceded, and even alleged in the plaintiff's declaration, that the device was properly set for danger, but it was averred that the device was so negligently located that at some points in front of it the green light was shown, or both red and green. But the singular fact was that ten witnesses for the plaintiff had tested the contrivance since the accident, and six of them swore that the light when set for red shewed such a mixture of red and green that it was not practicable to distinguish the signal intended, while four of them declared that it displayed clear green. Several of these witnesses were experienced engineers. Fifteen witnesses for the defendant, having made similar tests, declared that when the apparatus was set for red, nothing but red was visible down the track. The court did not attempt to reconcile this conflict in testimony, but simply applied the familiar "physical facts" rule as follows:—

"Whatever variations there may appear to be in the testimony of witnesses who saw the same light set at the same