

ODDS AND ENDS.

(From Chambers's Journal.)

CATTLE RAILWAY.—Word comes from New York from what is said to be very good authority to the effect that the New York Central road has a new improvement under consideration looking to the development of the carrying facilities of that great line. For some time consideration has been given to the subject of how to provide ample means to expedite cattle traffic which has become an important fact for the business of the Company. The increase in passenger and freight traffic has been so vast of late years that it has greatly interfered with the transportation of live stock from the West, causing serious delays and losses. The management of the road, it is said, have at last decided to build a special track adjoining the present four from New York to Buffalo, and give cattle trains the exclusive right of way over the entire route. The new rolling stock is to be provided with facilities for feeding and watering stock on the way, thus avoiding one of the greatest drawbacks of the transportation of live cattle, the deprivation of food and drink which causes the feverish and unhealthy condition of much of the western meat slaughtered at New York. Trains are to be run through on fast passenger time, as high as forty miles an hour, taking cattle through in a night from Buffalo. With the fine yards at East Buffalo and the large sources of supply over the present roads and those now building westward, the fifth track will be a great acquisition to New York, improving the quality of the meat sold there and lowering the price.

BENEFICENT ALCOHOL.—Dr. William Sharpe, a Bostonian, has published a book, defending the remarkable proposition that alcohol has been one of the great factors in human progress, and contending that prohibition is a mistake. "The value of alcohol," he says "as a stimulant lies in the fact that it produces artificially and sustains temporarily that state of mental excitement or exaltation necessary to the conception and projection, though not to the detailed elaboration, of those enduring works that, whether in the domain of art, architecture or engineering, are remarkable for boldness of execution, originality and grandeur of design; and, further, that it is the only manageable stimulant which, when used in moderation, and in the form of wine or spirits, is not only not injurious, but conducive to the general health, while it favors both mental and physical development. Instead, therefore, of blindly and ignorantly trying to move heaven and earth in favor of the manifestly undesirable system of total abstinence, which tends to make the hard man still harder, lets its over-zealous advocates devote their energies to the promotion of "temperance," that the many undoubted advantages which accrue from the rightly regulated use of alcohol may be preserved to society, while the evils and dangers there may be lessened and avoided."

ABORTIVE STRIKES.—Labor strikes this year have, as is generally the case, proved very costly to the strikers. One paper estimates the loss to laborers, growing out of the strikes, at \$4,000,000, while the Cleveland Leader considers this too low, estimating the earnings of the 20,000 iron workers in the Pittsburg district alone for the eleven weeks during which they were idle at \$2,640,000, while the loss of the 5,000 men idle in Cleveland it thinks has been not less than \$500,000. Considering in addition to this the many thousands of men whom the strikes have driven into idleness at Chicago and other points where there are iron mills, and the thousands of coal miners who have participated in the recent strikes, it is easy to see that the total loss of wages will run well into the millions. For all this loss and the resulting suffering, in some cases approaching actual starvation, there has been no compensation whatever, as many of the men have been glad to return to work at old wages and those who are still holding out will doubtless ere long do likewise.—*Railway Age.*

ORANGE PEEL SPECULATION.—The orange peel as an article of commerce has received extended notice in the *Commercial Bulletin*. In Europe it is related that orange rinds are gathered and sold to manufacturers of marmalade. New York, it is said, is doing a steadily increasing import business in orange peel, home scavengers not having succeeded in gathering sufficient refuse rinds from our own gutters and elsewhere to meet the demand here. The request in this city is not for the purpose of making marmalade, but is made the base of medicinal preparations, tonics and orange bitters. The chief sources of supply are Malaga, Spain, Trieste, in Austro-Hungary, Sicily, the West Indies, and of late Florida. Malaga peel is worth 9¢ @ 10c. per pound, while Curacao often runs up to 12c. The values of importations of orange peel have been: In 1877, \$5,927; in 1878, \$7,061; in 1879, \$11,487; in 1880, \$11,375; and in 1881, \$12,088, the total for five years being \$47,940. The first export was made to Havre recently 200 sacks, valued at \$1,000. There is no duty on orange peel. The *Bulletin* would not be surprised, however, if the Florida orange peel shippers should demand protection from the pauper peel of Europe.

CANADIAN BANKS DISOBTEDIENT.—The violation of the internal revenue laws by one of the Canadian Banks doing business in Chicago had the effect to considerably increase the receipts of the Internal Revenue Bureau by the payment of back taxes. It is said that the amount already recovered from the delinquents is \$1,800,000. This represents practically the total collection, as there is still but one case open, that of one of the German savings banks of New York. The offense in this case is merely technical, and it probably will soon be closed without any considerable payment of money. Many of the demands of the Revenue Bureau appear technical, and it is a striking illustration of the obedience of the banks to law that so large an amount has been paid into the national treasury without any determined resistance, under circumstances which would have at least excused a protracted legal contest. The large receipts of government revenue will certainly justify a repeal next winter of the laws upon which these tax levies were based.—*Bradstreet's.*

RIDING OFF.—Betty, said a mistress one morning to her servant, 'why did you stay out so late last night? You were to be in at nine, and were not at home till ten o'clock.' Betty denies the imputation. She does not say a word about not being in at nine, but asserts in a tone of virtuous indignation that she was home at three minutes to ten, and enters into an explanation of having heard the clock strike when she was going up-stairs to bed. She could point out the precise step in the stair where she was when the hall-clock began to strike. Worn out with the specious defence, the mistress gives the thing up. On the alleged error of three minutes in the accusation, Betty has made out her case of being an ill-used woman. In high quarters, this ingenious but not very honest practice of raising a false argument is called 'riding off.' In the department of society to which Betty belongs, it is better known as the art of 'bamboozling.' One day, at a court for the recovery of small debts in Edinburgh, there occurred a droll instance of a servant-girl, trying to bamboozle Judge Macfarlane. She had been out all night without leave, and when she appeared next morning she was instantly discharged. Forthwith she raises an action for recovery of wages and board-wages till the end of her appointed term of service. Her master appears in defence, and briefly explains the circumstances. 'What do you say to this statement?' asks Macfarlane. 'Knowing that denial was vain, the girl went off on a new argument. 'Sir,' said she, addressing the bench, 'that man there, my master, is owing my mother for a pound of butter; and,—— We do not want to hear anything about your mother and her butter, shouted the judge; 'is it true that you were out all night without leave; that is the question?' 'Well, I'm coming to that, sir; but I first wanted to speak to you about how ill my mother has been used about the butter!' 'Go away,' was the response; 'the case is dismissed.' Laughter, as reporters would say, in which Macfarlane joins.

DESTRUCTION OF BOOKS.—Amongst the influences at work for the destruction of books, one is not generally thought of—that intense love of books, called bibliomania. A regular collector, obtaining a superior copy of a scarce book, will destroy the first and inferior copy in his library, that this new possession may have as little rivalry as possible. Collectors of works of art likewise destroy scarce objects of *virtu*, for the same reason. A poet would say, love tends to destroy its objects; but is the passion of such men really love? Are these collectors not mere egotists, eager for the notoriety or glory of possessing unique or very rare articles.

NAMING A CHILD.—One evening at the house of Dr. Arnott (1853), Mr. Rowland Hill gave some curious traits of the wretched ignorance of a population of nailers in some central districts of England, with which he is acquainted. A clergyman exerted himself to effect an improvement, and took particular care to get their children baptised. One day, having come to baptise a newly born infant, whom he understood to be a boy, he asked what name he should give the child. The father was quite at a loss, had no predilections on the subject. 'Shall it be a Scripture name?' Assent. 'Well, what scripture name?' The man agreed to the minister's suggestion, that Benjamin would do. As he was retiring afterwards, he heard a great shouting, and turning back, met the father, who exclaimed: 'Sir, it wanna do—it maun be done again—the bairn's a wench!'

JOCULARITY OVERDOSE.—(May 21, 1853.) I have been much pleased with the following remarks in Ruskin's *Modern Painters*: 'The chief bar, I suppose, to the action of imagination, and stop to all greatness in this present age of ours, is its mean and shallow love of jest; so that if there be any good and lofty work a flaw, failing, or undipped vulnerable part, where sarcasm may stick or stay, it is caught at, and pointed at, and buzzed about, and fixed upon, and stung into, as a recent wound is by flies, and nothing is ever taken seriously or as it was meant, but always, if it may be, turned the wrong way, and misunderstood; and while this is so, there is not, nor cannot be, any hope of achievement of high things; men dare not open their hearts to us, if we are to broil them on a thorn-fire.'

The above is most true. Banter reigns everywhere, even amongst the scientific men. I often deplore it, even while I to some extent join in it. It seems to me that the physical prosperity of our age, and nation is the principal cause. Another lies in the peculiar religious state of the world; no longer a sincere vital faith in the old, and yet nothing satisfactory in the new. There are earnest people too—earnest in piety, earnest in philanthropic schemes, earnest in politics; but the tendency is to behold them as set aside from the main current—respectable eccentricities at the best. There is a sad want of real satisfaction in all this crackling of thorns under the pot, and I deem it far from unlikely that there was more happiness among the wretched multitude following their leaders in the Holy Land in the twelfth century, or in the poor host of Scottish enthusiasts who met in Dunso's Law—nay, even in many men perishing in Dunnottar Castle, or standing under the gallows in the Grassmarket—then there is among our prosperous people of the present day, who have everything but a faith, and are fain to make matter of mirth out of every honest emotion that goes beyond the tone of polite society. (Since the above was noted twenty years ago, the practise of treating subjects jocularly has become considerably more common, till at length it amounts to a kind of pollution of literature, particularly the literature of fiction. It cannot be doubted that for this, the fashion set by certain popular writers is partly accountable.)

DISCOVERY.—The reward of the discoverer in natural science is, in all contingencies, great. To stand, as it were, between God and man—in the laboratory, the mine, the study—anywhere, and feel that within the few by-past minutes there has stolen into his mind what has hitherto been known to God alone—to reflect further on the many born and unborn who are to take this truth into their bosoms as part of their sense of that primal mystery—is a privilege so high, and a pleasure, so overwhelming, as to sink into insignificance not merely the toils of research, but all the emanations of jealousy and prejudice which so often attend the first coming of truths before the world.

A BUILDER'S SPECULATION.—A few nights ago (1853), at a friend's house in London, a gentleman amused the company by giving an account of the anxiety of a builder engaged in large building speculations at Birkenhead, to obtain the services of a noted preacher in Liverpool as pastor in a church there. His object, of course, was to popularise the place, and get customers for his houses. He accordingly went to this famed preacher, and offered him two thousand pounds a year to come over to Birkenhead. The offer being rejected, he told his informant that if he could have secured such an attractive pulpit orator, 'it would have been worth three shillings a foot to all the new streets.'

CHINAISM.—We laugh at the reluctance of the Chinese to alter old arrangements, and wonder at their obstinacy in not adopting customs which are known to be valuable in our own country. But there is a good deal of this Chinaism in England. It is remarkable how debates will take place regarding the propriety of adopting certain plans, or establishing certain institutions, as if they were new and difficult matters; when they are all the time flourishing as part of the venerable institutions of other countries, perhaps countries close at hand, or indeed part of the same imperial state. The system of registering rights to heritable property, has, for instance, been keenly objected to as something very dreadful; so has the proposal of establishing a public prosecutor for crime, been viewed as a dangerous innovation; though both these practices have been in use, and highly esteemed for hundreds of years in Scotland. One would think that the intercourse between the north and south part of Great Britain was very small, whereas the reverse is the case. If they were completely shut up from the knowledge of each other, there could not be less benefit from the example of each other's institutions. The remark is illustrated very effectively at what took place a few nights ago at the house of a friend in London (1853). The subject of discussion was Tenant Right on grounds, which shewed that they were hardly aware of the lease system of Scotland. On my explaining how it worked, several of the company spoke of it as a thing still hypothetical, and which remained to be tested by experiment, whereas it is a system which has worked well for generations. A proper knowledge of the Scottish land tenure system, by which the rights of landlords and tenants are mutually and satisfactorily respected, might have obviated legislation on Tenant Right in Ireland.

THE OLD OAKS OF ENGLAND.

Among the ancient oaks of England few are more interesting than the gigantic ruin now standing in an amiable field on the banks of the Severn, near Shrewsbury. It is the sole remaining tree of those vast forests which gave Shrewsbury its Saxon name of Schobbesburgh. The Saxons seized this part of the country A. D. 671, when they burnt the Roman city of Uricontium, where Worcester now stands, four miles from the village of Cressage; and underneath this now decrepit dotard it is said that the earliest Christian missionaries of those times, and possibly St. Chad himself, preached to the heathen before churches had been built. The Cressage Oak—called by the Saxons Creste-ache (Christ's Oak) is probably not less than fourteen centuries old. The circumference of the trunk was about 30 feet, measured fairly at a height of five feet from the ground; but only about one-half of the shell of the hollow trunk now remains. It still bears fifteen living branches, each 15 feet or 16 feet in length. A young oak grows from the centre of the hollow. The noted oaks of England, thanks to those who have preserved them, thanks to the universal veneration for timber, and to a stirring and lengthened history, are innumerable. Windsor Forest is particularly rich in historic oaks, and Sherwood Forest, though disafforested, still contains some memorial timber, like Needwood, once a crown forest, now a fine estate of well-farmed land. Dryden's

"Three centuries he grows and three he stays,
Supreme in state, and in three more decays," is a poetical statement, and some of the dates on trees cut down in Sherwood Forest, and marked 600 years before, in the time of King John, prove that it is an understatement. The great Winfarthing Oak, in Norfolk, was called the "Old Oak" in the time of the Conqueror, and has been supposed to have attained the age of 1,500 years. The King Oak in Windsor Forest is upward of 1,000 years old.

INSURANCE AND SUICIDE.—Australia has an interesting life insurance case. A man named Neville, was "under a cloud" so he changed his name to Twiney, and seeing in a prospectus that the National Mutual Life Company of Australia, promised to pay policies, even in felo-de-se, insured his life for £400 and blew out his brains. The company resisted the claim on the ground of fraud. The judge held that the contract was immoral and therefore void, and that the premiums only should be returned. But the jury thought differently and found a verdict for the policy-holder, adding a rider, condemning the company for issuing such a prospectus. An appeal has been taken and the company has withdrawn from circulation the injudicious prospectus.