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The Horse Chestnut. The practical science of these days is finding ways of utilizing many products which formerly went to waste, and thus it is not only by the discovery and development of new resources, but by the utilization of what were formerly waste products that the sum of the world's wealth is being increased and the means of living made more ample. Among the products which are now being turned to useful account is the horse chestnut. These nuts contain about 27 per cent. of albumen, this remarkable proportion being greater than is found in any cultivated plants, but their bitter taste, due to the presence of about ten per cent of bitter rosin, has condemned them as unfit for food. By extracting the bitter principle, Flügge, of Hanover, claims to have made useful another waste material. After partial roasting to loosen the shells, the kernels are removed and pulverized, and the powder is placed in a tight percolator, with alcohol, for about a week. To extract the bitter completely it may be necessary to replace the fluid with fresh solvent. The alcohol dissolves out the rosin, leaving a pleasant and nutritious meal, which contains all the albumen and starch of the chestnuts, and is a valuable food.

The Public Roads. There are few matters of public expenditure in connection with which reform is more urgently demanded than in that of building and repairing our public roads. The system of repairing the highways by a labor assessment levied upon the adjacent residents, and expended under a road-master chosen annually and with little or no reference to any special knowledge of either the theory or the practice of road-building, is one which could be justified only in connection with a very primitive condition of society and political organization, and its practical results are such as might reasonably be expected. What a New York paper says of a similar system in that State is largely true in our own Provinces. "This labor system is the worst collection of antiquated and useless ideas that could well be brought together for the purpose of accomplishing nothing; and this is exactly what it has accomplished. Nothing has been done for the highways of the State in the hundred years that the system has been in operation." In this country, before the introduction of railways, the Governments of the day were charged with the duty of seeing that the main stage routes were kept in tolerable repair, but all this has been changed and many of the great highways of the country are accordingly in a much worse condition now than they were forty or fifty years ago. A vast deal has been expended upon our roads, if the ordinary value is assigned to the days-works which the road assessments have called for, and this has been supplemented by Government grants of very considerable proportions in the aggregate. No doubt a great deal has been accomplished in opening up new roads and keeping them in passable condition. Much also has been expended in building bridges, and very likely our public roads in rural districts will compare favorably with those of other new countries. And yet it must be admitted that the condition of many of them is lamentably far from satisfactory, nor can any great improvement be looked for until the present careless and ineffective ways of doing, or rather of not doing, things gives place to some plan based upon a true theory and practice of road-building. It is interesting to note that the people of New York State are moving for better things in this connection. At a Highway Convention, recently held in Albany, a resolution was adopted by the representatives of the rural counties. The resolution calls for the two million days' labor to be commuted in a cash tax of at least \$1,000,000, and to

benefit the towns giving up this ancient method of road building, the State will be asked to contribute 25 per cent. of the amount of cash raised in each town for highway improvement up to one-tenth of 1 per cent. of the assessed valuation in the town. This will call on the State for approximately \$250,000 each year, to be divided among the towns, and the result will be that in place of one thousand highway commissioners having charge of fifty thousand overseers of the highways who get no work accomplished on the roads, there will be one thousand highway commissioners having the direction of the expenditure of at least \$1,250,000 in cash, and every taxpayer in the community will be watching the highway commissioner to see that the mile of road in front of his property gets its due share of attention.

The Referendum in Ontario. The referendum on the Prohibitory Liquor Act of Ontario, since the introduction of the Bill by Premier Ross, has been for the people of that Province an exciting subject of discussion. There is of course much difference of opinion expressed, but evidently those who are regarded as the leading prohibitionists of the Province are finding much fault with the terms of the referendum. Objection is made to the time named by the Government for the taking of the referendum, which is the 14th of October next, and it is urged that it would be much more convenient for the electors that the day for voting should be the first of January next, which is the time of holding the municipal elections throughout the Province. The plebiscite on prohibition was taken at the time of the municipal elections, and it is urged that this example should be followed in respect to the referendum. If such a change of date for the taking of the vote is generally desired by the prohibitionists, it would seem probable that the Government and the Legislature would agree to have the vote taken in January instead of October. The most serious criticism of the Government, however, is in reference to the basis of the vote which makes it necessary for the prohibitionists to register in the referendum a vote, in excess of half the total vote to be polled at the general Provincial election in June. It is pointed out that this condition makes it an object for the liquor party to make the vote in June as great as possible, while on the other hand, it is an incentive to prohibitionists to stay away from the polls in June, for the smaller the vote polled then, the less will be the number of votes required to secure prohibition. This objection might be obviated by making the basis of the referendum the vote cast at the last general election or by taking the average vote of several consecutive general elections, instead of making it depend on the uncertainty of an election yet to be held. It is further contended that by the terms of the referendum too much is asked of the prohibitionists, since they must poll a vote exceeding one-half of that usually polled in an election, even if the supporters of the liquor party sit still and no votes are polled in opposition. On the other hand it is contended that in bringing in a law so strenuously opposed by a part of the people and so difficult of enforcement as a prohibitory law is acknowledged to be, it is only just and reasonable that the Government should be definitely assured that it has in this matter the substantial strength of the people of the Province at its back, that therefore it is not too much to ask that 37 or 40 per cent. of the voters of the Province shall definitely declare themselves to be in favor of the proposed law, and that if this could not be secured after the agitation and education of a six or nine months campaign in favor of prohibition in the Province, it must be considered doubtful whether a prohibitory law could be either successfully enforced or long retained upon the statute book.

People Perish by Earthquake.

Seismic disturbances of a very serious character, resulting in great loss of life as well as of property, occurred last week in the trans-Caucasian country, some seventy miles from Baku. The accounts say that at Shamaka four thousand houses were destroyed and some two thousand persons killed. A later despatch puts the number of lives lost as high as five thousand. Many villages surrounding Shamaka are said to have suffered severely. A volcano near one of these villages had broken out into active operation, a great crevasse having opened whence immense flames and streams of lava were being thrown out. The course of a river had been altered, its bed having been dammed with earth dislodged by the earthquake. The Red Cross Society is reported to be active in relieving the distress of the suffering people.

Ethnological.

A discovery of great interest to ethnologists is reported to have been made by a Jesuit missionary, Rev. Father Jetté, who is a son of Sir L. A. Jetté, Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec. Father Jetté is working among the Nulato Indians, near the Polar Circle, and has acquired a thorough knowledge of their language. The discovery alluded to is the identity of these northern Indians, as to race and language, with the Apaches of the South. Writing to some of his colleagues in New Mexico, the missionary quoted some words used by the Nulato Indians, and those who received the letters were surprised to find that the words quoted were identical with words contained in the vocabulary of the Apaches. Further investigation led to the discovery that the language of the Apaches and that of the Nulatos are practically the same. From this some ethnologists are said to have reached the conclusion that the natives of New Mexico originally came from the North, a theory which would strengthen the supposition of an Asiatic origin for the red men of America and would be in harmony with biblical data.

Nova Scotia Government Asked to Pass a Prohibitory Law.

On Wednesday last the Government of Nova Scotia was waited upon by the delegation appointed at the recent Convention of Prohibitionists at Truro, to urge the enactment of a prohibitory liquor law for the Province. The delegates present were: Messrs. A. M. Bell, Halifax; Amos Outhouse, Digby; W. G. Guild, Hants; Adam Cason, Pictou; R. G. Irwin, Shelburne; M. D. McAskill, Victoria; E. H. Armstrong, Yarmouth; George Harvey, Hants; J. C. Mackintosh, Andrew Hubble, W. S. Saunders, Halifax; Mr. King, Colchester; and Revs. Robert Murray and G. W. F. Glendenning, Halifax. On behalf of the Government the delegation was cordially received by Attorney General Longley, Acting Premier, who said that the Government would listen with pleasure to what the delegation might have to say. Mr. Bell accordingly said that the delegates were present to ask the Government to pass a prohibitory act. He eulogized the Government as progressive in other matters, and felt that every consideration would be given to the prohibition question. The delegation was convinced that in this matter it represented the public sentiment of the Province. In formulating a prohibitory act, the speaker said, the Government would have the support of the opposition, and this he felt would materially strengthen its hands. What the delegation asked, Mr. Bell said, was that the Government should pass any prohibitory act within its power, though he would like to see a law passed on the basis of the Manitoba prohibitory act as far as that was applicable to Nova Scotia. Mr. Bell's presentation of the case was supported by remarks from Rev. Robert Murray and other members of the delegation. In reply to the delegation, Hon. Mr. Longley declared that the Government had listened with pleasure to the remarks which had been made, and which had presented the subject in a terse and comprehensive manner. The question, he said, would be carefully considered by the Government and a decision would be announced in due time. He felt that the delegates were actuated by high, pure and worthy motives, and whether the Government would or would not grant the request, its members would likewise be influenced only by pure and worthy motives. They would take a bold and open course in the matter, and in whatever they did, they would not for an instant shirk the responsibility.