

BRITISH IRON TRADE.

An article on this subject which appeared in the London *Times*, and which was reproduced in our own issue of last month, has naturally attracted a good deal of attention, says our South Staffordshire correspondent. In that district, however, it is contended that, while there are grave causes for anxiety on this subject, the decline may, after all, prove to be only one of those periodical depressions which old ironmasters remember so well and describe so graphically. Conversing with an octogenarian ironmaster the other day, our correspondent learnt that in the years 1844, 1857, and even so late as 1866, the year of the memorable "Black Friday," when Overend and Gurney's and other banks came to grief, times in the general iron trade of the Kingdom were much worse than they are at present. In proof of which, the ironmaster in question mentioned the comparatively few and light failures in the iron trade that now occur.

STEEL AND IRON CHANGING PLACES.

As to the vast changes wrought by the increased production of steel in late years, continues our correspondent, there is no sort of question. Looking at the question, moreover, there can be no doubt that unless the leaders of the iron trade in this, or, indeed, in all other centres of manufacture, adapt their works to produce steel, they will have to do as others have already done—break them up as obsolete and useless. Twenty-five years ago, local ironmasters were told by Dr. Percy, the eminent metallurgist, that they ought to be preparing to produce the new metal; but they were satisfied with the moderately good trade then prevailing, and unfortunately ignored his advice. The consequence was that this district, as regards steel manufacture, was left in the lurch, instead of becoming, as it had the opportunity of doing, one of the chief seats of the steel armor plate trade. In the pig iron, as well as in the finished iron trade, there is a marked decline of production as compared with former times, which is evidenced by the fact that only 22 furnaces are now in blast, compared with 120 thirty or forty years ago.—*Hardware Trade Journal*.

ALAS! THE POOR GAMBLERS.

The half-yearly meeting of the shareholders of the Casino Company, which owns the gambling tables at Monte Carlo, has just been held, and proved rather lugubrious. The report presented on the working of the gaming-tables was far from satisfactory. As was the case last summer, there has been a decided falling off in the receipts. At the end of the financial year, concluding on March 31, the receipts were £80,000 less than in the previous year, and this deficiency has been further increased in the past six months by the sum of £20,000. Various reasons are given for this falling off—the continuous scarcity of money in Italy, which provides Monte Carlo with by far the largest number of its patrons during the hot season, being the chief. The opposition now offered by Aix-les-Bains, Spa, Ostend, and Dinant, which are more accessible to the English and American gamblers, and cooler and more amusing resorts than Monte Carlo in summer, is also much keener than formerly. The decline in the receipts, therefore, seems likely to continue, and the anxious directors are trying to devise new attractions and new economies. Last year the subsidy for the press was reduced from £40,000 to £32,000, and there is a chance that the corruption fund will be cut down again, though unfortunately it is not likely to be stopped altogether.

HOTELS AS HOMES.

The tenement house commission appointed by Gov. Flower reports, among other things, that the number of hotel residents is constantly increasing, while the number of private houses or dwellings is steadily on the decrease when compared with the total population of the city. The total number of dwelling houses in New York city is 83,000, and the average number of persons to a house is 18.5. Twenty years ago the average was 14.5. In Brooklyn at present it is 9.8, and in Philadelphia still smaller.

In recent years the tendency has been for people to concentrate in a smaller number of houses through the building of hotels and apartment houses, former dwellings being abandoned to business or factory purposes, says the *New York Sun*. New York's hotel population

has grown each year. The number of hotels in New York city is 229, and putting the average number of guests in each at 100, 23,000 is found to be New York's hotel population. The newer hotels up town have an average much nearer 250 guests than 100; and, as the big new buildings replace the small old houses, New York city's hotel population increases steadily. Many of the new apartment houses, too, are to all intents and purpose hotels, except in name. They do not, it is true, furnish accommodation to transients, but they have separate restaurants, and resemble in other respects big hotels.

Among American cities Chicago stands first in respect to the proportion which its transient hotel population bears to the entire population of the city; New York comes second and Boston is third. At the present rate at which hotels are going up in this city, it will not be very long before New York surpasses Chicago in this respect, as in every other. Chicago claims to have 800 hotels now, and during the World's Fair period claimed to have 1,400. The great majority of these were not hotels, but ordinary houses turned over to hotel uses temporarily. The actual number of bona fide hotels in Chicago is 400, and the reason why the number is so large is that at nearly all seasons Chicago is overrun by runners, who make it their favorite stopping place. The very considerable transient population in Boston hotels is due to the fact that a good share of the business of New England is done in the city of Boston, which is the accepted meeting place of New England men generally. Among other American cities, St. Louis, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Buffalo, and New Orleans have a large hotel population. Philadelphia has a small hotel population, and Brooklyn, for obvious reasons, has the smallest of any American city.—*N. Y. Sun*.

HARDLY LIKELY.

Of course there was no truth in the story sent out from Duluth, a few days ago, about a secret committee having been appointed at the recent international waterways convention in Toronto to induce the Canadian Government to throw open its system of canals to American vessels, excepting vessels of war, on condition that the United States Government furnish the money necessary annually for maintenance. The canals are now practically as free to American vessels as they are to vessels of the Dominion, but the special correspondents of the daily newspapers would have it that all tolls were to be removed. The story has been denied by everybody whose name has been connected with it. But this was hardly necessary. The proposition was absurd. Only a few days ago a canal loan of £2,500,000 was negotiated in England by the Canadian authorities, and the country is not burdening itself with additional canal debt for the purpose of eventually turning over its whole system of waterways to the United States.—*Marine Review*.

THE LIFE OF A BLAST FURNACE MANAGER.

The direction of a blast furnace plant is not a bed of roses; it is a position of grave responsibility, and often of considerable personal risk, demanding constant and continuous oversight. While the manager's office hours may ostensibly correspond with the ordinary working day, he is, in reality, never off duty, and is as likely to have a night call as many physicians. In the office the manager has to attend to the necessary correspondence, which will insure obtaining supplies of ore, fuel and flux; ordering them in advance, watching their shipment, so that they may arrive in proper time to avoid unnecessary handling, and to maintain sufficient reserve stock for emergencies, at the same time preventing such accumulation as would be disadvantageous. Bills for lubricants, tools, supplies, raw materials, freights and pay rolls must be examined and audited, and the reports prepared daily, or, in many cases, twice a day, by those having special charge of details, must be analyzed and prepared for a general report. Consultation with assistants concerning various special features, and with the chemist as to the work in his laboratory, are parts of the daily routine, and it is seldom that a day passes but what a furnace manager must give some time to visitors or the ubiquitous drummer. To keep abreast of the times he must read the trade and technical publications, proceedings of engineering societies, etc. In

some plants where the manager looks after the sale of the pig iron made, his duties are augmented by the attention which a study of the market and correspondence or interviews or visits to his customers demand.

This refers to a blast furnace moving along regularly, but the multiplicity of parts about the plant, the close watchfulness of every detail demanded, to maintain continuous operation, and the widespread influence which some minor irregularity or defect may exert, are constant menaces against blast furnace management being considered a peaceful pursuit. A noted iron metallurgist who lost his life while endeavoring to correct an irregularity in the working of one of the blast furnaces under his control, said to the writer while discussing the blast furnace: "My greatest anxiety and my constant effort is to maintain regularity of operation in all parts of the plant, for a slight defect may result in great expense, loss of product and physical exhaustion."—*John Birkinbine in Cassier's Magazine for December*.

DANGERS OF FOOTBALL.

The array of facts presented in Mr. Camp's book is almost startling, because it is so different from the popular delusion. No doubt many fathers and mothers will be disposed to discount the statements of ex-players, even though some of them have had ten years for reflection; but they can hardly gainsay the records produced by men like Dr. Loveland, who finds that 20 per cent. of the players of ten years received permanent injuries, and that 11 per cent. of these were of the importance of an enlarged finger or a broken nose. The testimony of members of faculties and head masters is decidedly in favor of football as a beneficial influence. They declare that it has no serious effect on the scholarship of the young men, while, on the other hand, it works much moral good by affording an escape for superfluous vivacity, and by setting up physical temperance and self-mastery as models. It should be borne in mind that the example of sacrifice for the college honor is not set only by the football team of the crew, but by all the men who hope to become members of some athletic team. Prof. Sloane, of Princeton, furnishes to the volume this striking table of scholarship taken from the authentic records of the university:

	Foot ball.	Base-ball.
First honor men (first in class)	1	2
High honor men, above 95 per cent.	23	13
Second honor men, above 90 per cent.	31	17
Good, above 75 per cent.	29	30
Low, above 50 per cent.	37	34
Failed	8	3
Total	129	99

The table includes men who have played since 1874.—*N. Y. Times*.

HEREDITY.

Now, the longer I live the more I believe in blood—good blood, bad blood, proud blood, humble blood, honest blood, thieving blood, heroic blood, cowardly blood, writes the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage in the December *Ladies Home Journal*. The tendency may skip a generation or two, but it is sure to come out, as in a little child you sometimes see a similarity to a great-grandfather whose picture hangs on the wall. That the physical and mental and moral qualities are inheritable is patent to any one who keeps his eyes open. The similarity is so striking sometimes as to be amusing. Great families, regal or literary, are apt to have the characteristics all down through the generations, and what is more perceptible in such families may be seen on a smaller scale in all families. A thousand years have no power to obliterate the difference. The large lip of the House of Austria is seen in all the descendants, and is called the Hapsburg lip. The House of Stuart always means in all generations bigotry and sensuality.

Scotch blood means persistence. Dutch blood means cleanliness and good breeding. English blood means reverence for the ancient. Welsh blood means religiosity. Danish blood means fondness for the sea. Indian blood means roaming disposition. Celtic blood means fervidity. Roman blood means conquest. The Jewish faculty for accumulation you may trace clear back to Abraham, of whom the Bible says, "He was rich in silver and gold and cattle," and to Isaac and Jacob, who had the same family characteristics.