

to from £7,000 to £8,000, sufficient to pay off the claims which endangered the library and armour, and so restored the whole to the family. The house and shootings of Abbotsford are at present let to a tenant, and a dispute having arisen between the tenant and the county assessor as to the amount of rental upon which the house should be assessed, the matter came up a few days ago for adjudication in Edinburgh, before the Lands Valuation Appeal Court. As all who have visited Abbotsford know, there is a charge made of one shilling a head for all visitors; this during last year gave to the proprietor the sum of £419, which sum the assessor wished to include in the assessable rental of the house.

The following admirable parody on Browning occurs in a recent English publication entitled "Oxford Wit and Humour":—

CALIBAN UPON RUDIMENTS.

Rudiments, Rudiments, and Rudiments!
'Thinketh one made them i' the fit o' the blues.

'Thinketh, one made them with the 'tips' to match,
But not the answers; 'doubteth there be none,
Only Guides, Helps, Analyses, such as that:
Also this Beast, that groweth sleek thereon,
And snow-white bands that round the neck o' the same.

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease.
'Hath heard that Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands, and the rest o' it. That's the case.
Also 'hath heard they pop the names i' the hat.
Toss out a brace, a dozen stick inside;
Let forty through and plough the sorry rest.

'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor wrong in them,
Only their strength, being made o' sloth i' the main—
'Am strong myself compared to yonder names
O' Jewish towns i' the paper. Watch th' event—
'Let twenty pass, 'have a shot at twenty-first,
'Miss Ramoth-Gilead, 'take Jehoiakim,
'Let Abner ly and spot Melchizedek,
Knowing not, caring not, just choosing so,
As it likes me each time, I do: so they.

'Saith they be terrible; watch their feats i' the Viva!
One question plays the deuce with six months' toil.
Aha, if they would tell me! No, not they!
There is the sport: "come read me right or die!"
All at their mercy—why they like it most
When—when—well never try the same shot twice!
'Hath fled himself and only got up a tree.

* * * * *
'Will say a plain word if he gets a plough.

SCIENTIFIC AND SANITARY.

A FOREIGN medical man has discovered that coffee is a powerful antiseptic, the effects noted being probably due to the empyreumatic oils developed by roasting. It is pointed out as singular that good and bad coffee produced precisely similar effects, but what is meant by "good" and "bad" is left to the imagination.—*English Mechanic*.

DR. RICHARDSON cites the Jews as a living example of the advantages of sobriety. The remarkable vitality of their race strikes him as something astounding. Oppressed by cruel laws in the past, and living in abodes where others must have died, they yet contrived to exist. The explanation, according to this indefatigable apostle of Hygeia, is that which was given by Haller, a leading German doctor of the last century. It is that they lead, as a rule, simple lives, and are mindful of the expressive maxim in Proverbs, "wine is a mocker." Dr. Herman Adler has pointed out that, although Judaism does not denounce the taking of wine in moderation, there runs throughout the Hebrew literature the strongest condemnation of intemperance. It is, however, we are told, a mistaken idea that during Passover Jews are forbidden to take fermented wine. What is forbidden is the product of fermented grain, for which reason strict Jews at such time are restrained from the use of such liquors as whiskey.—*London Daily News*.

The second volume of "The Report on the Scientific Results" of the *Challenger's* voyage has recently been published, and it is no whit less interesting than its predecessor. The deep sea is full of wonders. There are fish living 2,600 fathoms down; some blind, others almost eyeless, which are so compressed from the weight of the water that when brought to the surface their bodies expand. Three miles down there is no light and no change of temperature. Being no light there is no vegetable growth, and the fish feed on each other—at least, so many of them as have teeth probably do so. Those without teeth, no doubt, feed on animalculæ. From Professor Tait's experiments it seems that at a depth of six miles the sea is compressed about 620 feet. May this compression long continue; for should it cease something like 2,000,000 square miles would be inundated.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

THE *British Medical Journal*, referring to a case recently reported, says: "That a bullet, or a fragment of a larger projectile may remain imbedded in the brain for months, or even years, without causing any very serious symptoms has been proved by a table of seventy-two cases collected by Dr. Andrews of Pennsylvania. Sir Thomas Longmore has put on record the case of an English officer who, with a musket-ball imbedded in his brain, was able to discharge certain military duties during nine years after the receipt of the injury. In several of these instances the foreign bodies were of considerable size and weight. A well authenticated case has been published in which recovery followed the removal on the twenty-seventh day after the injury of the linch-pin of a cannon, which had been driven into the brain through the frontal bone. Hughes, an Irish surgeon, has published an instance in which a patient lived for fourteen months without any bad symptoms, with a portion of the breech of a gun in the

anterior lobe of the brain. One of the most remarkable of such injuries is that recorded by O'Callaghan, and referred to in Erichson's 'Surgery,' in which an officer lived for nearly seven years with the breech of a fowling-piece, weighing three ounces, lodged in the forehead, and resting on the surface of the brain, from which it was separated by a false membrane."

THERE are certain occupations which predispose to the occurrence of consumption. It is common amongst stonemasons, grinders and polishers of steel, dressers of flax and feathers, straw plaiters, iron and coal miners, tailors and sempstresses. In many of these the inhalation of foreign particles into the lungs sets up irritation, which proves injurious and deteriorates the constitution; in others the result is occasioned by the combined operation of sedentary employment, impure air, exhaustive work, and bad food. On the other hand, cooks, butchers, tanners, tallow-chandlers, and soap-boilers enjoy to a great extent an immunity from this terrible scourge. They get good wages, and as a concomitant have plenty to eat and drink, whilst the constant contact with oil and fat is probably not without its influence. A consideration of these facts may in some instances be of service in deciding on the choice of an occupation. Sedentary habits and want of exercise, intemperance in any shape or form, excessive indulgence and debauchery of all kinds powerfully influence the development of phthisis, especially in the young. Imperfect digestion, and the resulting malnutrition, favour the occurrence of the disease. It is probable that a bad set of teeth, by preventing the proper mastication of food, is not without its influence. Some doctors lay great stress on a deficiency of fat in the system as a cause of consumption. It is an undoubted fact that most consumptives have a great dislike to fat, and will not eat it unless absolutely made to do so.—*Family Physician*.

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

STRANGE MARRIAGE LAWS.

THE *Times of India* publishes the rules which the Bombay Government, with the assent of the Governor-General, has drawn up for regulating the marriage expenses of the Kadva Kambi caste in the district of Ahmedabad and Kaira. Power to make these rules is given under the Act for the prevention of female infanticide. Some of them are curious. The *chennlo*, or present given at betrothal by the bride's father to the bridegroom's father, is not to exceed one rupee and seven *suparis* and betelnuts. The marriage *chennlo* payable to the bridegroom's father may be one rupee and shall not exceed one hundred rupees. The value of the cocoanuts distributed at the marriage procession is not to exceed ten rupees, and the same limit is fixed on the value of the *mosalu*, or present by the bride's maternal relation. The payment at the ceremony, when the bridegroom touches with his finger his mother-in-law's dress, must not go beyond two rupees. The number of dinner-parties given by the bride's family is not to be more than five, and the number of guests at each not more than twenty-five. The marriage party going to the bride's village are not to spend more than thirty rupees, and when the bridegroom is invited to a social evening at his father-in-law's house he is not to be paid more than two rupees, nor to take with him more than five men.

HIGHER WAGES AND STRIKES.

A REVIEW of the industrial outlook at home and abroad reveals several interesting phases. In this country strikes and labour disturbances may be said to have been at a minimum during the closing months of 1889. Last year, as a whole, was one of the least disturbed as regards strikes and lockouts in some time. Since January 1st, and particularly since March 1st, there has been a larger number of strikes than in the same period of 1889, but the number of men on strike is smaller. But it must be remembered that strikes and lockouts, while in a measure indicative, are not conclusive evidence of the state of trade and labour. Of late years the tendency to consider carefully before striking has become more marked. The business outlook is now more often consulted, and there are fewer sympathetic strikes, or strikes designed to show the power of "labour," independent of the logical necessity for the strike in question. There is also a feeling that business conditions and the outlook may make or mar a strike, no matter what is the condition of the particular trade involved. In one line, coal, the conditions and outlook have been particularly discouraging. Mild weather and kindred causes have operated powerfully to depress mining. In some sections of the anthracite region the destitution arising from the lack of employment has been and is very great. *Bradstreet's* has for several weeks pointed out why the coal trade is perhaps one of the most depressed industries in this country. The building trades have been active, with most disputes heretofore arising out of demands for shorter hours or more pay. The depression in the ingrain carpet trade seems likely to cause a restriction of production and consequent loss of employment. Strikes of New York city cloak and skirt makers—the former on account of union disputes, and the latter to restrict the "sweating" system—have favoured the employees. The near approach of May 1st renders the extent of the eight hour movement one of wide interest. In a recent interview Mr. Samuel Gompers gave a brief sketch of the probable scope and character of the movement which will make itself apparent within five weeks.

According to that gentleman the building trades will be the first to demand the proposed short day. The trade selected to lead the advance, the carpenters, is said to be the best prepared to make the demand. It numbers 73,000 men, with a large strike fund, and the organization covers the entire country. While the movement as regards hours is to be a national one, the question of wages paid is to be left to local settlement. The men themselves will have to decide whether the same or lower wages will be demanded or accepted, not the federation itself. Upon the success of the carpenters' demand will no doubt depend the question of other trades taking similar action. The year 1889 compares favourably with the preceding four years as regards the number of men striking or locked out. Compared with the large number of men on strike in 1886, there is a decline of nearly two-thirds; and, compared with 1888, there is a falling off of 9.8 per cent. The English industrial situation presents some sharp contrasts to that ruling in the United States. The demand there is not one for shorter hours, but almost exclusively one for more pay. No sharper contrast could be mentioned than that furnished by the English and American coal trades respectively. After securing advances aggregating nearly 30 per cent. in the trade as a whole, the English miners have won a further advance of 10 per cent. after one of the largest (as regards numbers) strikes on record. Nearly every other branch of industry in Great Britain has been subjected to pressure by employees for an advance in wages.—*Bradstreet's*.

MAGNITUDE OF THE STELLAR CREATION.

THE starry heavens present a field to our vision of such beauty, grandeur and immensity that the human mind is lost in wonder at beholding them and asks in vain, under old theories, for a consistent explanation of their physical structure. It is constantly reiterated by astronomers that stars are composed of heated, luminous matter; consequently, uninhabitable. That the fixed stars, with our sun the nearest, are fire balls, or melting furnaces, ever ready to devour nebulae, and everything else around them that is tangible, in order to supply light and heat for the cold and dark universe of space. This old theory cannot longer be rationally sustained, and must give space to the newly discovered law of Actien, *i.e.*, combustion. More than six thousand stars meet the gaze of the naked eye in its survey of one night. Astronomers say that the fabulous number of 20,000,000, all aglow, can be seen with a powerful telescope. When we consider that the nearest of these is 200,000 times as far from us as the sun, and that it would take from three and a half to twenty-one years for the light which reaches us to cease, if they were extinguished, we cannot grasp and hold the vast conception in our minds. Yet it is supposed that each of these is a central sun with its own colony of planets circling round it, which in size are vastly superior to those of our own solar system and are travelling through space with such speed that it is impossible for us to comprehend it. The star Sirius is said to be moving fifty-four miles a second, or 194,400 miles per hour; a flaming mass, leading its brood of planets through illimitable space.—*Stephen M. Allen, M.A., in the April Arena*.

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