

CHIT-CHAT AND CHUCKLES.

THE TUNKUNTEL.

"What is a Tunkuntel?" he asked,
 "And have you got one here?
 Why don't you let me play with it?
 And why is it so dear?"
 "A Tunkuntel," I vaguely said,
 "I've really never seen.
 Is it a kind of animal?
 I don't know what you mean."
 "Oh, yes, you do! Don't tell me that!
 You know it very well.
 For you always say you love me
 More than a Tunkuntel."

—St. Nicholas.

In a paper recently read before the American Philosophical Society, R. Meade Bache announces that from experiments by himself and others he is led to believe electricity may soon be applied to the purification of water. The exact method by which this result is to be accomplished is not divulged, but it will consist of such an operation upon the predatory bacteria as will destroy the dangers now prevalent in the drinking-water they besoul. Every consideration of good health adds emphasis to the hope that Mr. Bache is not a deluded prophet. Electricity will score its grandest triumph if it eliminates the perils that lurk in contaminated water.

Japan commenced railway building in 1870, and at the end of last year had 10,402 miles in operation, with 874 miles more under construction. About one-half of the mileage is owned by the Government. The rapid progress made by this enterprising country is in striking contrast to the timid conservatism which has prevented her great neighbor, China, from allowing the locomotive upon her soil, with the exception of the building of a few miles of local road chiefly for coal transportation. While Japan is prospering, infused with the spirit of the nineteenth century, China is still centuries behind the rest of the world.

It is of the utmost importance to all concerned that there shall be no narrowness on the part of the World's Fair management in dealing with the electrical exhibit. This feature of the fair will be easily the newest, and, in all probability, the most interesting from a scientific standpoint of all that vast array of the products of human industry and ingenuity. If properly encouraged it will be so extensive as to embrace every discovery and every appliance known to man in a field that is widening daily and whose resources have been developed during recent years in an astonishing degree. Compared with previous exhibits of this class, that at Chicago will be a revelation, for progress in electrical science has been most marked in America, and there can be no doubt that the American exhibit alone will prove to be a marvel.

A HUMOROUS CANON.—There was a quaint old canon in Newcastle some years ago who never minded what he said or how he said it. One very wet day he noticed some strangers in his church (people who he knew attended another on finer days,) so, after the service, he toddled down the aisle and said to them audibly, "I am very glad you make a convenience of my church on a wet day." This same oddity went to visit a sick man during the absence of one of his curates, and began to read a part of the Church prayers to him, at which the old man expostulated, saying, "Mr.—always made his prayers up as he went along; he couldn't understand them printed prayers." The canon at this flared up, and withered the old man with these words: "If you think I am going to wrestle with the devil for your sins while you lie in bed doing nothing but being umpire, you are very much mistaken. Take these prayers I give you or none at all."

DELTA.—Of the formation of deltas an admirable instance is offered to us in the Lake of Geneva. At the upper end of the lake the Rhone enters discoloured by mud; but when it leaves the lake its waters are a transparent blue—the mud has been deposited in the lake. As this has been going on for centuries we may expect to find some evidence of the work of the river. This is given us in the alluvial tract which stretches from the head of the lake for some six or seven miles. It is a marshy plain, higher than the level of the water, and occupying what was once the bed of the lake. If this state of things continues the Rhone will entirely fill up the lake. The rate of the advance of the delta may be gathered from the fact that the Roman town, Portus Valesia, which stood on the margin of the lake, is more than a mile and a half inland, the river having added to its delta this quantity in about eight centuries. The delta of the Mississippi has an area of 12,300 square miles. The river brings down 1-1321 of its weight of solid matter, or more than 6,000,000,000 cubic feet annually; yet such is the vast size of the delta, that Sir Charles Lytell computes it has been in course of formation for 33,500. The Ganges performs even a greater work of transportation. In the four rainy months, at 500 miles from its mouth, it was found to bear seawards 577 cubic feet of solid matter a second! Its annual discharge has been computed to be 6,368,077,440 cubic feet—an amount of matter equal in weight to sixty Great Pyramids of Egypt, although the base of that great pile covers eleven acres, and its apex is 500 feet above the level of the plain.

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