

## DEBTS OF HONOR.

Debts of honor, so called, are those unknown to the law and which cannot be collected by legal process. Among them are debts contracted at the gambling table or in other forms of betting, and the security is simply that of individual obligation among people of the same kind. Whatever the law regards as contrary to public policy comes under this head, the law declining to assist in corrupting the people by legitimatizing such transactions. In European countries the debts which have only moral instead of legal security are more numerous than in this country. A series of reports from United States consuls on this feature of the laws of foreign countries has been recently published, in answer to a circular from the National Board of Trade. This circular asked the consuls to collect evidence as to what debts are not collectible by law in the various countries and to state how they are generally paid. The answers reveal some interesting local customs.

The general summary shows that though debts of honor are outside the legal pale they are usually paid in full, the penalty for refusing payment being that the delinquent debtor is ostracised by the clubs and other organizations which provide the means for contracting the obligations. This appears to follow the general rule, for in all parts of the world such debts are ordinarily paid, even though the debtor is execution proof and refuses to pay what the law would compel him to pay. In Sweden doctors' bills are debts of honor, as they also are in Austria, while in the latter country a lawyer's fee that reaches the amount of the property in litigation has no standing in the country. China has a long schedule of debts of honor, among them being services rendered by physicians, dentists, priests, fortune-tellers, clairvoyants and others and moneys loaned at rates exceeding the legal rate of interest. It is regarded as a disgrace to be a drunkard or to supply a drunkard with liquor, so that drinking debts are extremely rare. On this point the consul at Amoy says that when such debts do exist the creditor is both ashamed and afraid to acknowledge the fact, and as a natural consequence, to take any steps toward the enforcement of his rights. In both Germany and France a man may be sued for drinking debt. Few European bankrupts ever pay in full, perhaps because those who can do so do not fail in business. Bankruptcy does not relieve the Russian debtor, who must pay when ever he is able to do so. In Russia and Greece debts never outlaw. In France outlawed debts are seldom paid. In Belgium, of six hundred and twenty bankrupts in a period of ten years only twelve were rehabilitated.

Though in many European countries the winner of a bet cannot enforce collection in the courts, there are some exceptions to the rule. In Italy, the Netherlands, Russia and Spain the laws enforce the payment of bets made on athletic contests, such as football, cricket, racing, etc., the exception being evidently made

to encourage the athletic sports, to which the youth do not take very kindly. The moral seems to be from all this, the less law there is in some instances to compel the payment of an obligation the more scrupulous the debtor is to discharge. There are few instances where gambling debts and others outside the protection of the law are not promptly met if it is within the power of the debtor. It is this that preserves the gambler's occupation, since if his debtors were not held by something outside the law itself the debts would never be paid, and gambling would not pay those who win. It is a peculiar state of affairs which shows men more willing to pay such debts than they are to pay those recognized by the laws.

## SHIPPERS AND HANDLERS.

The *National Provisioner* says that it is a well known fact that the relations of shippers and commission merchants (or handlers, as we call them for short) have become much strained during the last few years. Thoughtful men on both sides have tried to ascribe this to various causes, among others to an increase in competition, and hence to a cutting in commission. Careful shippers have refused to deal with men who will work for less than the regular commission on the ground that "every laborer is worth his hire," and that if a man works for less money than others to clear expenses and make a living there must be "a nigger in the fence somewhere." These shippers are right. Reliable commission merchants, who will charge a fair and full commission, are apt to watch the markets carefully in the interests of their consignors; and since they can expect to have a supply of produce on their stands all the time, there will be no temptation for them either to hold over or to sell too quickly, but they will put a figure on their goods and sell them at market prices. A man who works for a "cut commission" cannot devote much time to each individual shipper. He will either speculate on his consignor's goods, or try and get rid of them quickly in order to make up by an increased quantity of sales what he loses by a decreased commission. These, however, are not the only drawbacks. Men who cut commissions must make a living as well as those who do not, hence if the consignments are not large the difference must be made up on returns. In a rising market they will take the poultry for their account and will make returns to the shipper at a low figure, selling, however, at a higher price for their own account. It has also come to our observation that in all the large markets of the country those men who do business for less than it is worth command a poorer class of trade, and hence they have to give larger credit than others, and their returns to the shippers are necessarily slower than those of first-class houses that refuse to deal with butchers who do not pay promptly. All of these causes combined are, in our opinion, the reason why the relations between shippers and commission merchants are more strained than they need be, and it is our advice to the former that it

would be better in the end to pay a full commission to a first-class house than to deal with a poor house at a cut figure.

## A PECULIAR STEAMSHIP.

One of the most peculiar craft that has ever visited Montreal is now at that port. The steamship is called the *Turret*, and is built to combine the greatest carrying capacity with the lightest possible draft and the lightest expense in running. The *Turret* came from Sydney with a cargo of coal for the Dominion Coal Company, and it is in the coal trade between Montreal and the lower ports that she will run. The *Turret* deck is of a quite entirely new type. The shell rounds off upwards and inwards, terminating in an upright turret running from stern to stern of the vessel. The curved plating is thick and strong, and is the same as that of the hull right up to the turret deck. The turret deck itself is about a third the width of the vessel, and forms the working deck, upon which are fitted the hatches, winches, bridge and other deck erections. The engines are aft, leaving a clear hold from the engine room bulkheads to the forepeak. There is a short mast forward with a military top for outlook purposes. The stem and fore-castle deck are after the usual fashion. The turret deck standing at height of 11 feet to 12 feet above the water line, gives greater seaboard, and being narrow, greater stability than the ordinary type, while it serves as a permanent feeder for grain cargoes. The general contour of the hull, with the engines aft, affords the largest possible carrying space, and a single continuous hold, free from obstruction, with a large hatchway, permits of easy towing, and rapid handling of cargo. The *Turret* was launched last November, and since that time has weathered a severe storm on the Atlantic with perfect ease, has traded on the American seaboard for several months, and her first balance shows that she has earned sufficient to pay a return at the rate of 23 per cent. per annum. The *Turret* carries 3,200 tons dead weight on a net register of 1,365 tons and a draught of 18 feet. Her measurement capacity was 157,500 cubic feet, which is equal to a cubical capacity of 125 feet net register ton. She is owned by Messrs. Peterson, Tate & Co., of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and was built and launched from the yard of Messrs. W. Duxford & Sons, Sunderland, the patentees of the turret deck. Another steamship of the same type, called the *Turret Age*, has also been launched, and will shortly make her trial trip. The *Turret Age*, in general design and appearance closely resembles her sister ship the *Turret*, but is built on finer lines, has more powerful engines, and will probably steam at a higher rate of speed. The *Turret Age* will carry 3,650 tons dead weight, or a net of 1,362 tons, so that she carries nearly 30 per cent. more dead weight than the ordinary type of the net register tonnage.

The *Western Tobacco Journal*, of Cincinnati, says that while the manufacture of cigars and snuff is decreasing, that of cigarettes has largely increased.