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EDITORIAL NOTES.

An intrepid balloonist, Capazza, has invented and tested a new parachute for his air-ball. On a recent trip he ripped open his balloon at an altitude of 4300 feet, and gradually descended to earth at the rate of 4½ feet per second. The parachute is precisely similar to those which have already been in use, the only difference being that it is opened above the balloon before the time of the ascension. It is thought that Capazza has succeeded at last in doing away with one of the greatest dangers of ballooning, for with the new parachute the sickening fall through space which has too often been reported might easily be prevented.

One of the great difficulties which road-makers have to contend with is the precept of that famous road-maker, Macadam, that "all mud should be brushed from the road-surface before applying stone." An inventor has recently come to the front with a machine which promises to remove all dried mud and dust. In appearance it is rather similar to the street-roller, but its power is directed to raising the wind by means of a gigantic pair of bellows, whose breath will effectually drive before them every particle of loose earth into a great hod which stands ready to receive all waste material.

The action of the Russian cruiser *Zabiaka* in the recent seizure of three British sealing vessels sailing in the North Pacific beyond Russian jurisdiction, is severely criticised on all sides. The *Rosie Olsen*, the *Willie McGowan*, and the *Ariel*, the captured vessels, were engaged in a peaceful and legitimate business—their officers had offered no insult to the Russian Government—and the vessels were beyond doubt in neutral water, yet they were suddenly borne down upon by the cruiser, the vessels were forcibly taken, the crews removed to the *Zabiaka* and finally landed at Petropavlosk, where, without food, clothing or money, they were ordered to shift for themselves. A day or two later an American vessel was seized and its crew treated in the same inhuman manner. The action of the Russian Government in permitting the outrage has not as yet been explained. The whole trouble may have arisen because DeLevron, the cruiser's captain, who may be either an officious or a corrupt man, took an undue advantage of his position. In that case an apology from the Russian Government, coupled with the cashiering of the high-handed captain and an indemnity to the ill-used sailors, will probably be satisfactory. While, on the other hand, if the insult has been prompted and allowed by the authorities at St. Petersburg, a serious international question will have to be fought out.

The greatest dam of modern days has just been completed in India. The dam is built across the valley of the Tansa, about 70 miles north of Bombay, and makes a vast storage tank for the water service of the distant city. The measurements of this triumph of masonry are: Length 2 miles, greatest depth 118 feet, and thickness 100 feet at the bottom, narrowing to 16 feet at the top. The entire contents of the dam, the cut-stone, rubble stone and cement, gives the enormous total of 32,000,000 cubic feet. The pipes are laid from the dam to the city above the ground, as there is no fear of stoppage by freezing. The whole work of excavating and constructing has occupied 42 months of labor, and the contractors are satisfied that nothing but an earthquake can crack or injure the structure.

The culture of bees has been receiving much attention of late both from our own people and in England. The Herefordshire Bee-keepers Association has attracted much interest by inculcating better methods of raising bees and also of securing the honey of the busy little insects. A bee van travels through the Shire at regular intervals. At each stop lectures on bee-culture are given, improved hives and varieties of bees are sold, and practical illustrations of removing the honey without injury to the workers are given. Each year an increasing number of hive owners agree to abandon the wicked and wasteful process of smothering the bees with the common smudge of sulphur and brown paper. Our Provincial bee-keepers would do well to secure the excellent pamphlets on the subject which are issued by the Association.

All students of Scripture will be interested in the happy discovery which has been made in the hen-yard of a Catholic Seminary in Jerusalem. A priest, who is somewhat of an antiquarian, observed the curious shape of a large hollow oval stone, which was doing duty as a water dish to the ducks and chickens. On examination a partly effaced inscription was found in the ancient Hebrew writing. The translation reads thus—"Three Thousand Shekels, King David's weight." There is little doubt that this is one of the "weights of the sanctuary" to which the Scriptures refer. Its weight is exactly that of the Hebrew talent or 3000 shekels. It is known that the ancient weight was made of stone and was symmetrical in shape, while the hollow on top is easily accounted for by the efforts of the makers to secure the exact weight. The stone, which is now in the Louvre in Paris, has witnessed many startling changes in the world's history, and it serves in our modern times as another of the many striking proofs of the authenticity of the Scriptural Record.

When we consider the complex wants of mortals which *Damo Natura* is capable of providing for, we do not show too much astonishment when confronted with some curious facts which have lately been collected by arbor-culturists. The useful cocanut tree is of course well known, the invaluable bread-tree provides a most nourishing food, the weeping tree of the Canary Islands is a source of comfort to the natives in times of drouth, as its leaves are constantly wet, while the wine-tree of the Mauritius has a somewhat similar charm. Sicily boasts an ash whose sap without any process of refining will harden into sugar; the gum of the wax-tree of the Andes is quite as valuable as the genuine bees-wax; the butter-tree of Africa is more profitable than any cow, for its product is estimated at some 400 lbs. each year. In South America a unique milk tree flourishes, the sap of which is preferred to the lacteal fluid. China is the home of the soap tree, the seeds of which are noted for their cleaning powers. In short, *Natura* seems to have been long ahead of man in providing for his future needs.

Recent reports of brigandage in Italy and Sicily would seem to indicate that the old-world ruffianism and demands for ransom are still tolerated in these countries at least. The Press of Italy in editorial capacity hotly denounces the French and English newspapers who comment upon the disgraceful state of affairs, but, nevertheless, the news columns in each Italian issue have a mysterious disappearance or an unmitigated murder, or robbery to report. The wretches who perpetrate these crimes in Italy are not as yet known, and because of the ineffectiveness of the national military and police force, very little investigation is being made. In Sicily there is little doubt as to the identity of the scoundrels, and a certain excuse can be made for them. The Island is sparsely settled—the roads are exceedingly poor, and all manner of natural caves and dens abound. The owners of the wretched little farms till their scanty acres, but owing to the impoverished soil, they can scarcely wring a living from the unwilling ground. Brigandage presents itself as a more profitable occupation—the needy gentry of the island profess themselves willing to assist the desperadoes—and the new trade is taken up. Whatever may be the cause it is high time that the security of the travelling public should be guaranteed.