

when the digestive powers of one's stomach have been overtaxed at a Christmas dinner, or when the innumerable follicles in its internal or mucous coat are unable to secrete gastric juice because of even temporary indulgence in that which a successful plebiscitum might have prevented the importation of; if, we repeat, the picture should be "took" at such a time, an ordinarily healthy male may find himself rejected by even the most liberal of companies, and he may have to endure the additional mortification of having a chart of his stomach displayed to his friends by some unfeeling life agent. We confess to a wish to see the march of science arrested. The savants have gone far enough.

The only good use to which this German invention can be put, if it can be made as handy and come-at-able as a bottle of Winslow's soothing syrup, is when wanted to ascertain what is the matter with the crying baby's 'tittle tummy, and to locate the whereabouts of any missing articles not intended to be swallowed by the healthiest of infants.

That Bridge Business. There would seem to be no sound reason why Englishmen should exhibit so much annoyance at their Government for buying bridges, or anything else for that matter, from the United States. However, the commotion caused by the great advertising given to some American iron works may result in a desirable change being effected in the bridge-building industry as hitherto conducted in the older country. It will be remembered that, in response to an order from the British War Office, the Pencoyd Iron Works built and shipped a bridge of seven spans, each 150 feet long, to be thrown across the Atbara river in the Soudan. The bridge was completed in five weeks, and the Philadelphia "Record" calculates that "not since the Israelites crossed the Red sea has there been any such rapid constructive work for getting across the water in Egypt."

The British builders surprised at such speedy work charged their Government with giving some advantage to the Americans in the way of earlier knowledge of the specifications of the work required. But it is claimed that the expedition with which the order was filled is entirely due to the American fashion of having sections of anything required in their line always ready for delivery.

Another American Exchange says:—

"Our locomotive builders have just received their third order from England within a few weeks. An American bridge company, which was the lowest bidder a year ago for a bridge in Holland, has just secured the contract for a bridge in the Soudan, partly because its bid was nearly 40 per cent. less than the bids of Englishmen, and partly because it could do in six weeks what Englishmen demanded as many months for. This difference in time tells the story. The English bridge builders have had less training from experience than ours. They have had no competition worth speaking of and they have not developed."

Fires and Wires.

Considerable amusement was created at the presentation of the Telephone Girl in this city by a comedian representing a German electrician, owing to his frequent assertion that he wished to "fix the fires." Yet there is a very close connection between the wires he was in search of and the conflagrations they sometimes cause, and always assist to prolong. Of the recent serious fire in Craig street, by which the insurance companies suffered another heavy loss, the "Gazette" says:—

"In getting to their work the firemen were hampered considerably by the telegraphic and telephonic wires, which had to be cut wholesale; and when they did get to work their efforts seemed to produce but little effect so fierce a hold the fire obtained, while at least a couple of lengths of bursting hose did not tend to aid them in their work."

Of the possible cause of the fire, the same paper remarks:—

"The engine and boiler rooms, on the ground flat, were in total darkness all the time, which showed the fire did not ignite there, and it is probable a defective electric wire was the real cause."

Surely, it is high time that steps should be taken in the direction of burying some part of the dangerous network of wires and levelling the forest of poles which, at present, render the work of the firemen so ineffective and dangerous, in addition to disfiguring the principal thoroughfares of the metropolis of Canada. It would be quite justifiable were the fire insurance companies to unite in charging additional rates on buildings rendered almost unapproachable for firemen and their apparatus by reason of a cordon of electric, telephonic and telegraphic wires.

Another Surprising Insurance Law.

The constant reader of United States insurance news cannot well refrain from wonderment at the apparent delight with which the legislative bodies of the different States enact laws whereby the insurance companies are continually harassed, and the agent's lot made to resemble that of the policeman in the Pirates of Penzance. Last week we chronicled the extraordinary condition of insurance matters in Arkansas, where the Attorney-General has filed suits against no less than sixty-three companies hitherto doing business in that State. The law under which the suits in question were brought is said to be one of the most sweeping and far-reaching measures of the kind ever enacted. But the Arkansas companies had scarcely recovered from such a sharp and sudden shock before another State appears in the arena with an enactment concerning which the New York "Journal of Commerce" feels constrained to say:—

"The legislative antics of the Populists in the West appear to have been outdone this year by New Hampshire, where a law affecting insurance has been enacted which provides as follows:

"Any person or persons who feel aggrieved by any rates charged by any fire insurance company doing business in the State may complain to the insurance Commissioner, who shall hear the parties, and if