IS IT EVER RIGHT TO SPEED THE DEPARTING SICK?

Prominent Men in Several Professions Voice Their Sentiments on the Advisability of Shortening the Pains of the Dying.

Should euthanasia be practised in certain cases of idiocy, incurable insanity and persons dying in agony from an incurable disease, like cancer? Recently this question has been brought forward by the suggestion of Miss Anne S. Hall, of Cincinnati; indorsed by Professor Charles Eliot Norton, of Cambridge, Mass., that physicians should be intrusted with authority to shorten the days of such of their patients as are afflicted with a painful and incurable disease—patients who cannot possibly recover, and whose agonies would only be prolonged by keeping them alive. Often, as physicians know well, persons afflicted with a painful disease, apparently without hope of recovery, suffer an agony not only painful to those about them as they writhe upon their couches, but which makes the sufferers long for release. Would it be right in such cases to put an end to the anguish of mind and body to hasten the seemingly inevitable end by the practice of euthanasia, by the use of poisons? The Tribune has submitted the question to a number of well known physicians, lawyers, clergymen and laymen of the city, and secured many opinions.

Evidently there is a strong feeling upon the subject. While most of these opinions agree with David regarding taking the life of the "Lord's annointed," and are opposed to "medical murder," as some term it, in each class, with the exception of the lawyers, there is at least one to favor euthanasia. The physicians, however, shrink from the idea of assuming the responsibility.

Those who look favorably upon euthanasia are Dr. W. Oliver Moore, professor emeritus in the New-York Post Graduate Medical School; the Rev. Dr. Madison C. Peters, pastor of the Baptist Church of the Epiphany, and Robert Erskine Ely, director of the League for Political Education.

Those who favor it, however, are emphatic in declaring that any authority granted should be safeguarded carefully. One suggests that a law be passed authorizing the Governor or Mayor to appoint a board of well known physicians who could be relied upon by the family doctor in a given case, after the patient and his family had consented, to decide if the illness was incurable. Another proposes that one physician of good standing should have power to call in two others of the same character, and if these three agree, then the patient should receive a sleeping draught from which he would not awake. The facts should then be put in writing, signed by the three under oath and filed with some public official desigated for the purpose.

A great many reasons are given why the authority should not be bestowed upon the disciples of Æsculapius. Each is characteristic of the profession from which it comes, and some show that their authors also look at it from the point of view of some one or more of the other professions. Physicians, as well as the clergymen and lawyers, say that life, having a divine origin, ought only to be terminated by Him who gave it. They say euthanasia would lead to all sorts of medico-legal complications. It would place too much power in the hands of unscrupulous physicians, who would be willing to prostitute their authority for the benefit of designing persons who might profit by the death of another. Not even the most skilled doctor, these declare, can say that a case is incurable, for too many persons who have been given up by their physicians are to-day walking the streets and leading useful lives. The Hippocratic oath, "I will give no deadly poison to any one," would also be antagonized in case such authority was given to them.

The lawyers point out that by means of such a law a cunning murderer might conceal his crime; that the only justification for snuffing out the flame of life is that of self-preservation of the individual and the State. They agree with some clergymen that it would open the way for an increase in the number of suicides. It would tend to make incurables the victims of scientific experimentation, and an honorable profession the subject of constant fear and suspicion. It would inflict some of the terrors of the Inquisition upon the aged, infirm and incurably ill, and it would also burden the courts with cases involving the exercise of the right of physicians to take the lives of their patients.

One lawyer would not deprive the sick of the benefit of the cures which may be discovered in the future. Several of these objections are raised by the clergymen and laymen as well. Emphasis is laid upon the loss to the world of such exhibitions of heroism as that displayed by Dr. Harper in his last days and the inspiration which society gains from them. It would rob the world of its great teacher of unselfishness, for a part of the burden of the sick would be removed from those who are well, and the lessons of the last hours of life to those who remain would lose in their force.

DOCTORS' OPINIONS.

The opinions follow:

DR. S. A. KNOPF, of No. 16 West 95th-st., one of the leading specialists in this country in the treatment of tuberculosis:

"I must answer with an emphatic 'No.' First, the medical profession has for its highest ideal the preserving of life. Second, even the most skilled physician will admit the possibility of error, and it happens now and then that a seemingly incurable person is restored to health. What would be the possible consequence if the practice, advocated by Miss Anne S. Hall, and indorsed by Professor Charles Eliot Norton, of Cambridge, Mass., should come in vogue? We would add a new crime, deservingly called medical murder and paralleled only in its disgrace to civilization by that other heinous crime, judicial murder. Third, to the skilled physician it is possible, by the aid of carefully administered drugs, to relieve suffering and the agony of the dying, without shortening the patient's life.

"Presumably, the advocates of the theory under consideration would wish to include the hopelessly insane, criminally or otherwise, the idiots, and perhaps even the habitual drunkards. It is evident that the distinguished persons above mentioned have no medical training, otherwise they would know how all true physicians are imbued with the idea that since such diseases as were just mentioned are preventable we must try to prevent them. Next to healing, the physician's constant occupation is to prevent disease. Many diseases formerly considered incurable and unpreventable (for example, tuberculosis), have, thanks to modern knowledge, diminished just as much, if not more, through preventive as curative measures. Why should we not look to the decrease of other diseases through proper prevention as well?

"These eloquent words of the Rev. Minot J. Savage contained in his sermon of 'The Growth of Pity,' preached on Hospital Sunday, January 7, are a far better answer to the question than I have been able to give: 'It would be a beautiful world, I suppose, if there were not in it the need of prisons or hospitals or insane asylums or any charities, because all the people were healthy and strong, and competent and able to take care of themselves. It would be a fine world if we could attain that condition; but I have serious question as to whether it would be so fine a world if we reached this by wholesale slaughter, if we should demand systematic and scientific murder of the sick, and should leave alive only those who were strong and well. They tell us that public life is weaker, that nations are not so strong as they would be; but I believe that precisely the contrary is true. Those nations to-day where there is the most of this tender care, the most sympathy, pity, love, where the incompetent and the poor and the weak are best cared for, are the mightiest in battle, if it comes to war, mightiest in finance, mightiest in manufacture, mightiest in all that goes to make up a strong dominating national life.'"

DR. W. OLIVER MOORE, professor emeritus in the New-York Post-Graduate Medical School: "The physician should decidedly not be intrusted with the power to practise euthanasia. It would put too much power in the hands of one person, who might be unscrupulous. As the law now stands it would be homicide.

"Although I have answered the questions as I have—it is in view of the existing laws—I am thoroughly in favor of giving to incurable patients a 'euletus.' The best way, I think, would be to have a law passed authorizing the Governor or Mayor to appoint a board of well known physicians, who should be called upon by the family physician, in a given case, and they to decide if the patient is incurable. Of course this should be done only by the consent of the patient and his family. In this way one could safeguard the whole matter. Otherwise, if left to one or two persons only, all sorts of medico-legal complications would arise.

"Of course, the great objection that will be raised against any such law is the religious one, which is still so strongly held to."

DR. HENRY S. STEARNS, ex-president of the Medical Society of the County of New-York: "Human knowledge and judgment being still finite qualities, error is sure to occur and numbers of lives be knowingly ended which might have been saved. In the most desperate cases my experience is that pain already suffered or effects of high temperature or presence of toxins in the circulation, or the certainty of the near approach of death have so dulled the capacity to suffer pain that it would be imposing a needless hardship on my profession to saddle it with the responsibility of wilfully shortening the patient's life. Of course this argument is entirely unnecessary, except in cases where the patient is quite conscious, able to exercise judgment and unequivocally asks to be killed. This last combination I believe every one will admit occurs with the greatest rarity.

"The only doubtful cases in my mind are those of 'monstrosities' at birth, but they die soon enough to save them from all suffering, so that the parents would be the only ones to think of, and, personally, I should not care to kill a human being, no matter how horrible its form, merely to save two people from disagreeable recollections."

Dr. HENRY P. LOOMIS: "No human being has either the moral or legal right to decide for another matters of life and death. Sometimes patients considered by physicians hopeless live for years, improve and even recover. Human foresight is limited even with the most skilled. Morphine given hypodermically gives freedom from pain and comfort even to those suffering from the most painful of incurable diseases."

Dr. JOHN D. QUACKENBOS, physician and hypnotic specialist: "It would be tantamount to murder. Besides, it would open up endless temptation to crime. The medical profession is pledged to the care and preservation of life. The course suggested would be antagonistic to the spirit of the Hippocratic oath."

Dr. G. S. TRACY, of No. 240 West 102d-st.: "There are strong arguments both for and against the euthanasiast. In years gone by Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, Lord Bacon, Lord Byron, Sir Thomas More, Berlioz, John Keats and many others were strong advocates of euthanasia. I have no doubt that those who have given any thought to this subject will agree that the greatest good to the greatest number would be accomplished if the State would remove from this world all idiots, chronically insane and some criminals. However, it is only the few who would agree to take such extreme measures. When it comes to the question of intrusting to physicians the authority to shorten the days of such of their patients as are afflicted with a painful and incurable disease, there are but few among the medical profession who would be a party to any such procedure. While many physicians would feel justified in hastening the death of one about to die whose sufferings were so great as to render his existence unbearable, nevertheless they would feel that the fallibility of human judgment would stand in the way of such a practice. A physician's function is to give relief and prolong life. The rule in the profession is laid down in the Hippocratic oath, 'I will give no deadly poison to any one.' Yet we as physicians feel it would sometimes be kinder and more humane to do so. How often we see a fellow creature smitten with a hopeless disease and suffering the tortures of the damned until death comes as a deliverer. Should we deliberately give a fatal dose in these cases we would be considered in the eyes of the law murderers. But there are exceptions to all rules. A physician is always justified in giving relief, especially in hopelessly incurable cases of cancer—these cases ought certainly to be made comfortable, even considering the possibility of the patient never awakening from the last dose of the opiate. I am not in harmony with the theological argument that suffering must be borne because it is the will of God. I do not believe that the Almighty Father desires His children to suffer great physical pain. It seems unthinkable that an all wise, all merciful Creator would be pleased or honored by the useless suffering of His creatures. On the other hand, I believe that He expects us as physicians and acting as His agents to relieve all human suffering so far as we are able. Many thinking men are of the opinion that there are exceptional cases, incurable and suffering extreme, and hopeless agony, who should be allowed to decide for themselves whether they will bear it to the bitter end or die by their own hands. At this stage of our civilization I believe it would be of doubtful benefit to the community to delegate to physicians generally the legal power to hasten the death of hopeless cases, for, in the end, I believe it would bring the profession into discredit."

Dr. GEORGE RYERSON FOWLER, one of the leading physicians of Brooklyn: "There is only one question involved in the proposition set forth, and that is the one of expediency. When all considerations of humanity, of Christianity and of science are put aside, and the doctrine of the survival of the selfish alone considered, then will the deliberate taking of human life by other than a judicial process cease to be murder."

Dr. JOSEPH H. RAYMOND, of the Polhemus Memorial Clinic of the Long Island College Hospital: "Few, if any, physicians desire the power to curtail life for the purpose of putting a patient out of the agony of an incurable disease. Few would exercise it if they had it. Those who would be willing to exercise it I would not trust with it. It would enable rascally physicians to do away with human life for pecuniary compensation when such life stood in the way of some designing person. Lives would be sacrificed if the practice existed because of the inability of physicians to foresee the outcome of disease. Many an individual is now leading a useful life whose life has been despaired of by his physician. The proposition is a momentous one, and schould be condemned by all right minded persons."

LAWYERS' VIEWS.

Lieutenant Governor M. LINN BRUCE: "God is the giver of life, and He alone has the right to take it, except when done in self-defence or self-preservation by an individual or by society."

ISAAC FRANKLIN RUSSELL, professor of law in New-York University: "It is impossible to assume in the present state of science that the patient may not recover. Life is the gift of God. As man cannot give life, man should not take life except as a penalty for crime. The physician cannot be more than an agent for the patient, a hireling doing his bidding. Life is a holy trust; suicide is an awful crime against heaven and human society alike. Man must live out his day, and should not rush unbidden into the presence of his Maker. The power suggested could not possibly be safeguarded adequately."

WALTER S. LOGAN, ex-president of the State Bar Association: "I certainly do not think that a physician should be intrusted with the power to commit murder or that he should be exempt from the operation of the laws prohibiting murder. It is the business of the medical fraternity to save life, not to take it. I do not think that the present laws require any amendment in that regard. Even the consent of the patient himself should not be made sufficient to warrant the taking of the patient's life. A person who is so far gone as to wish his own life to be taken is not likely to be in a proper frame of mind to determine the question for himself as to whether it should be taken. Certainly he should not be killed without his consent. I doubt very much whether it can be safely said that any disease is incurable. It may be incurable in the state of the art to-day, but tomorrow there may be a discovery which would enable it to be cured. Give the patient the chance of such discovery.

"There are two insuperable objections to the atrocious proposition that physicians should be intrusted with authority to shorten the days of such of their patients as they consider to be incurable.

"First—It would tend to make crime easier. All that one who wishes to commit murder has to do is persuade a physician—if he is not one himself—or induce a physician to pretend to be persuaded that a man has an incurable disease, and then murder becomes legalized. It would be often an easy and comparatively safe way of putting an enemy out of the world.

"Second—The moral effect would be entirely bad. The safety of human life against violence in our day is due very largely to the sacredness with which it is held. In olden days it was held less sacred, and crimes of violence were much more frequent. Anything which tends to relax the sacredness with which life is regarded tends to encourage the crimes of violence.

"The community necessarily has to reserve to itself the right to punish the highest of crimes by the infliction of the death penalty, but barring that exception, I know of no man to whom it would be safe or proper to intrust the determination of the question of how long another man shall live. The law as it stands is both just and humane."

WILLIAM HEPBURN RUSSELL. "A physician most certainly should not be intrusted with the power in any case. To intrust such power to the hands of physicians would be to substitute their opinions for the power of nature and the will of God. It would promote conspiracies to murder and might soon render murder what De Quincey has described as 'one of the fine arts.' It would also tend to make 'incurables' the victims of scientific experimentation. I do not think it would be right to intrust them with this power, but on the contrary would regard it as necessarily criminal and morally wrong. Palliation in incurable cases by the use of opiates or even anæsthetics may be tolerated and probably should be practised. Suicide in some cases of dreadful suffering may be excusable, but murder by physicians would be monstrous.

"I do not rest my objection entirely either upon humanitarian or religious grounds, although the proposition seems to me to be objectionable from both standpoints. The main and unanswerable objection, as I think, is that to place such power of life and death in the hands of physicians would be:

"First—To make an honorable profession the subject of constant fear and suspicion, especially in the minds of aged persons and those incurably ill.

"Second—To promote criminal conspiracy to murder.

"Third—To take away life without the consent of the victim.

"Fourth—To inflict the terrors of the Inquisition, not only upon the aged, the infirm and the incurably ill, but also upon their relatives and friends, among whom necessarily the widest divergencies of opinion as to the application of a system of scientific murder must exist.

"Fifth—To burden the courts of justice with cases involving the exercise of the right of physicians to take the lives of their patients because of the opinion that their diseases were so painful and incurable as to justify their annihilation without their own consent."

GEORGE GORDON BATTLE, ex-Assistant District Attorney: "I am of opinion that no such power should be intrusted to physicians.

"Life is given to men only by the Divine Power. It should be taken only by that Power, except when it is necessary to take the life of one to preserve the life of another or to maintain that law and order which is essential to civilized society. In other words, the only ground on which the taking of the life of one man by another can be justified is that of self-preservation.

"Now the preservation of society is the preservation of each human being forming a unit of society, and therefore the laws establishing capital punishment are in the essence laws for the protection of the men who compose society.

"Consequently, the law which permits one man to kill another in self-defence is really founded on the same principle which justifies the State in inflicting capital punishment for the preservation and protection of its citizens.

"But in the case which you mention there is no such principle. The reason for permitting a physician to take the life of a patient hopelessly ill is solely humanitarian. It is grounded on the feeling of compassion for the sufferer. This is not an adequate reason. There is here no balance of life against life. If we concede that the desire to avoid suffering justifies the taking of human life, then at once we open the door for the justification of suicide, and for arguments permitting men to put each other to death for reasons which seem in the individual case to be sufficient.

"The laws which should be, and in the main are, the crystallization of human wisdom and experience have never permitted the taking of human life except in self-defence, or for the preservation of society. They have always recognized the fact that life is more valuable than anything except another life.

"And it is permitted by law to inflict the death penalty only after a trial by jury and a review by our highest court. To allow a physician acting on his own responsibility and with all the limitations of human fallibility to extinguish the fire which can be lit only by Omnipotence would be monstrous.

"As concrete illustrations of the danger of placing such a law on our statute books, it can readily be seen that an ignorant or a corrupt physician might be made the instrument of revenge or cupidity, and that by means of such a law a cunning murderer might well conceal his crime."

CLERGYMEN AND OTHERS.

The Rev. Dr. R. S. MACARTHUR, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church: "The highest teaching of medical practitioners is that it is their business to save and not to take life. The origin of life is still the profoundest of mysteries. Biogenesis, the view that living organisms can come only from living parents, is still dominant along the whole line of scientific thinking. God alone is the author of life; only He who gave life may take life. The judgment of no physician or physicians may safely be trusted as to when the recovery of a patient is impossible. Who can tell what diseases are absolutely incurable? It is the duty alike of patients and physicians to prolong life so far as patience, pluck, prayer and medical skill will enable them so to do. To the author of life must be left the responsibility of taking life."

The Rev. Dr. S. PARKES CADMAN, of the Central Congregational Church, Brooklyn: "I am of the opinion that the power of ending life under all conditions should be left in the hands of God, except in those cases where the law of the land inflicts capital punishment for murder."

The Rev. Dr. MADISON C. PETERS, pastor of the Baptist Church of the Epiphany: "I have come across many cases where the shortening of the days of the patients would have been an act of humanity. I have seen cases of hopelessly insane in padded cells suffering tortures indescribably horrid; such cases certainly might by a board of physicians be freed from their sufferings. Keeping some sick alive means prolonging misery, but I would not in any event invest authority to shorten days to one or two physicians. I would be afraid of the abuse of authority."

Dr. JOSEPH SILVERMAN, rabbi of the Temple Emanu-El: "I do not grant that any disease is incurable. A physician's duty is to assist nature in curing disease and prolonging life."

The Rev. Dr. CORTLAND MYERS, pastor of the Baptist Temple, Brooklyn: "'Thou shalt not kill' is sufficient for a man who believes in God and His revelations. More than this, humanity would suffer because the gate would be opened to the greatest injustice, wholesale murder."

The Rev. Dr. MINOT J. SAVAGE, of the Unitarian Church of the Messiah: "If all the physicians in the world were perfectly wise and perfectly good it might be a matter then to consider. It seems to me that in the present condition of affairs the discretion would be so liable to abuse that it would not be wise to trust it to anybody."

The Rev. Dr. THOMAS R. SLICER, pastor of All Souls' Unitarian Church: "Until physicians become omniscient they cannot expect to be clothed with omnipotence. The physician of largest experience will be the most reluctant to think that he is infallibly sure that a patient is incurable. Although tremendous strides have been made in surgery and in diagnosis of disease, these advances should be put at the service of continuing human life, and not be regarded as equipment for destroying it. The proposal to cut short the chapter of suffering leaves out of sight the fact that the sufferer is a human soul, and that the development of the ethical and spiritual nature is so intimately associated with bodily conditions that the decision to ruthlessly separate them is too grave to be entertained by serious people. The proposal to put out of pain the incurably sick is likely to degenerate into a desire to put out of the way the burden of the sick. The whole matter seems to me to be the result of a very superficial view of human nature. Pain is not the worst thing in the world, and the ministry to its relief by the soul's sustaining power is a far higher service than that of chloroform."

The Rev. Dr. CHARLES HERALD, pastor of the Bethesda Congregational Church, Brooklyn: "We do not know His plans for any of us. He can kill and make alive. When His time comes we shall be released from pain. Man has no right whatever to take life."

The Rev. ROBERT BAGNELL, pastor of the Metropolitan Temple (Methodist Episcopal):

"I do not think it right or wise to intrust a physician with such authority under any conditions.

"First, it would be very difficult for physicians always to be certain that a patient was incurable. Medical science, in spite of its very great advancement of recent years, is still so incomplete that the best physicians are sometimes mistaken in their diagnosis of a case.

"Second, it ought to be a matter of the greatest importance to increase the estimate of the value of a human life and to deepen the solemnity of death, so that men and women will increasingly appreciate life for all that it stands for in opportunity and responsibility; and death, in its tremendous significance, as the close of human life here. If the power to take life is given to physicians it will result, in the very nature of things, in the lessening appreciation of life and must inevitably result in a great many suicides, for men and women will reason that mental maladies are just as painful and as likely to be incurable as physical maladies, and that they are as good judges of the one as the physician is of the other, and if a physical disease makes death justifiable surely incurable mental trouble should also make it justifiable, and thus reasoning many men will be encouraged to commit suicide.

"Third, the power to take human life is a very great responsibility, and it seems to me that no man ought to be intrusted with it. There would be questions of property. Heirs would be anxious for death to come that they might inherit the wealth. Many complications would set in involving the physician's integrity, and unquestionably it would be another opportunity for crime.

"Finally, such a movement is contrary to God's law as expressed in nature and the Bible. The preservation of life, under all conditions and all circumstances, except as a punishment for high crime, is everywhere emphasized, both in nature and in the Scriptures, and there never can be a time when man will have wisdom enough to assume that he knows more than God, and directly violate an explicit command of God."

ROBERT ERSKINE ELY, director of the League for Political Education and lecturer on economics: "I believe that whenever a physician of regular standing—that is, one who has received a diploma from a reputable medical school—is convinced that a patient cannot possibly recover and that to prolong his life would mean the prolongation of intense great suffering, he should have the power to call upon two other physicians of good standing and, if these three agree, that then the patient should receive a sleeping draught from the effects of which he would never awake.

"The facts regarding the case should be put in writing and should be signed by the three physicians under oath. This paper should then be filed with some one of the public authorities, such as the Board of Health."

JAMES H. HAMILTON, head worker of the University Settlement: "I say most positively that a physician should in no case be intrusted with the authority to shorten life. Human life is the most fundamental and sacred of all phenomena with which we have to deal, and it is the highest province of the physician to foster and prolong it in every way possible. The last moments of life are often the best. The greatest illumination, the most exalted feelings and the most gentle and helpful service to one's kind are often incidents of the last hours of this life. The agonies of death purify the soul, not only of the dying, but of the living, and perhaps nothing does so much to purge people of low and unworthy thoughts and lift them to a higher plane of living as the inspiration of a deathbed. At such times the ministrations of the physician are more sacred and more valuable than those of a priest in the keeping and the cherishing of the sacred spark to the last possible moment."

Dr. DAVID BLAUSTEIN, superintendent of the Hebrew Educational Alliance: "Man cannot decide as to which life should be allowed to end in a natural way and which life should be shortened by man. Not only is the normal life sacred, but the life of the abnormal mind is in accordance with law, and man must not assume to terminate it. The pain and sufferings of the physically weak do not justify man's interference with life. The noble and the ideal is the result of mental and physical agony."

MRS. BOOTH'S POSITION.

Mrs. Maud Ballington Booth, who has been referred to from time to time as an advocate of euthanasia, has asked The Tribune in the following letter to express her exact views on the subject:

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Having seen several notices in the press in which my name is coupled without qualification with those who advise the infliction of death on the hopelessly insane and diseased, I should be very glad if you will give due prominence to the following statement:

Six years ago, after some of our terrible railroad wrecks, I wrote an open letter to the press and letters to all the presidents of the railroads, urging that a properly equipped medicine chest be carried on all trains. My idea was not the taking of life but the saving. I have looked up this old letter and quote the paragraph in which I speak of anæsthetics:

"Why not equip every train, or, better still, the conductor of each train, with a small case, containing chloroform, ether, stimulants, bandages, lotions for bruises and antiseptic solutions for the washing of wounds? These could be packed in a very small case and would represent no very costly outfit. Accidents often occur far from towns, and many precious moments, if not hours, when lives could be saved, are of necessity lost for the want of the necessary materials. Would it not be an unspeakable comfort to bystanders, as well as the sufferers, if those dying in agony could be rendered unconscious by a few breaths of a merciful anæsthetic, to say nothing of the prompt aid which could be rendered to those who might yet be saved?"

My idea was merely to mitigate the sufferings of those who were dying by rendering them unconscious. I have never written anything to the press nor advocated in public anything more than the above states.

I have corresponded with Miss Hall and know what has led her to take her present stand. Privately I may sympathize with some phases of the question, but publicly I have never taken any step that could be construed into making me an advocate of these drastic measures.

New-York, Jan. 8, 1906. MAUD B. BOOTH.

CURIOUS CEREMONY IN A POLISH VILLAGE.

In commemoration of the legend that tells how the birds and beasts of the field came to worship the Infant Jesus, the young Polish peasants occasionally dress up as various creatures, such as the stork and the bear, and go round the houses singing. They are paid with gifts of cakes and sausages. —(Illustrated London News.

ON THE PACIFIC COAST.

Heavy Rainfall Worth Millions to Farmers and Fruit Growers.

San Francisco, Jan. 18.—No less than five storms in succession have swept over Northern and Central California in the last ten days. Rain has been almost continuous, with high winds. The result has been a heavy rainfall along the coast and in the valleys, and a phenomenal snowfall in the mountains. Not for thirty years has snow fallen so heavily in the Sierras and along the line of the Central Pacific in Nevada. In California storms have banished all fear of drouth, and now the danger lies in excessive rain, causing floods along the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. If the temperature remains low in the mountains all will be well, but should warm weather prevail disastrous floods are sure to come. The storms have been worth millions to the California farmers and fruit growers, as they have thoroughly soaked the soil. The rainfall is still behind that of last year, but Sacramento has had seven and one-half inches and San Francisco six and one-half inches.

Last August one Smith, a tax collector, fled, leaving a shortage in accounts of $51,672. The attempts seem to have been made to force the National Security Company to pay this amount to the city. The surety company was on Smith's bond for $100,000, and immediately after his arrest the officers of the company asserted they would make good the shortage. Now it is said that they claim they cannot be held liable for taxes that were paid outside office hours. Responsibility for this delay in collecting shortage from the surety company appears to be on Mayor Schmitz, who was requested to make formal demand on the company, but failed to do so.

The death of Charles Main at Portsmouth, N. H., removed one of the prominent figures of pioneer life in San Francisco. Main founded the big wholesale saddlery and harness house of Main & Winchester, and for fifty years he was conspicuous in the business life of this city. It is a curious fact that his manager for half a century, John R. Hayes, died here last week.

California Hall, the new administration building at the State University, Berkeley, was dedicated this week. The building is to be erected under the Bernard plans. It will cost $250,000. On the third floor will be the Bancroft library, recently acquired by the university, the most valuable collection in the world of printed and manuscript material relating to Pacific Coast history.

Professor Griffin, head of the German department of Stanford University, has been obliged to take a year's leave of absence because of partial failure of eyesight. He will spend his time in Germany attending lectures and doing work which will cause no strain on his eyes.

San Diego has a public park of 1,400 acres in the mesa land, between the city and the little valley in which Padre Junipero Serra built the first of mission churches along this coast. The park is unimproved, but work of development will begin at once, as the Forestry Bureau has offered to give 1,000 fir, pine and spruce trees if the park commissioners will agree to care for them.

Luther Burbank, the famous breeder of plants and flowers, has been ill of grip at his Santa Rosa home. He is now slowly recovering.

The city of Bellingham, Wash., has agreed to cut a trail up the side of Mount Baker if the Sierra and Mazuma clubs will make that city headquarters for mountain climbing. These two clubs select some new mountain each year as the scene of their midsummer outing.

MR. ASTOR'S ANCIENT TUDOR CASTLE.

Historic Structure Being Restored at Great Expense and the Grounds Being Lavishly Improved and Beautified.

Just where the River Eden passes out of the fertile weald of Kent, and by the north of the historic Castle of Hever, a small band of enthusiasts interested in psychical research keep nightly watch and ward every year for one week. They look for the ghost of Anne Boleyn, one of the ill fated wives of King Henry VIII.

Tradition says that the unquiet spirit of the dead Queen Consort crosses the old bridge over the river during Christmas week. The old bridge has disappeared, however, and a newer and more handsome structure has taken its place. With the destruction of the ancient bridge the ghost of the Lady Anne, say the credulous villagers, has been effectively laid. Certain it is that the lone watchers at Hever saw no spectre this winter.

Mr. William Waldorf Astor is now the owner of the castle and the surrounding grounds, and is carrying out one of the most remarkable and comprehensive schemes ever conceived. What he is doing has hitherto been Mr. Astor's secret, and the greatest precautions have been taken to keep curious outsiders from gaining any inkling of Mr. Astor's plans.

The general scheme of this new Astor estate—Mr. Astor has another estate at Cliveden—comprises the following:

Restoration of the castle to its ancient battlemented glories.

Building in ancient style a series of castle villages.

A model farm.

An Italian garden.

A lake of forty-five acres.

An artesian well and capacious reservoir.

Widening and changing the course of the River Eden.

A new public road three-quarters of a mile long.

A strong bridge over the river, with wide spans, broad roadway and steel frame.

A large power house for electric light, etc.

An extensive deer park.

Some notion of the extent of this gigantic task can be gathered from the carting operations. The contract for these was given to a local man, who had a score of horses of his own. They were all needed. He looked round for more, and secured the help and co-operation of local farmers.

Altogether some forty horses had been constantly engaged for two years up to last August, and will probably be needed for three years to come. One week's cartage bill a year ago amounted to £95, and the amount paid has averaged about £380 a month.

More than 195,000 tons of material have passed over the roads leading to and from the estate.

The number of men employed has varied between 1,500 and 3,000. At Christmas of last year, when more than half the men had gone home for a brief holiday, 740 workers left behind each received a plum pudding, three pounds of beef and one ounce of tobacco. This year similar gifts were distributed to more than five hundred of Mr. Astor's laborers.

The problem of housing all these people perplexed every one concerned. In Hever itself there are only the old Henry VIII Inn and a handful of scattered cottages. The most populous village in the neighborhood is Edenbridge, three miles away.

Temporary huts were erected in the grounds, long files of men tramped backward and forward to Edenbridge, and all the minor hamlets were crowded beyond the memory of living men. Rents, of course, rose, and 10s. 6d. a week is the price for a tiny cottage at Edenbridge.

Mr. Astor is having all the newer stonework removed, and to replace it he has reopened a quarry in the castle grounds. The panelling has been washed so that not a trace of the linseed oil remains. The second and outer moat is to be reopened, while a drawbridge in quite the olden style will give admittance to the principal entrance.

One room, called after Henry VIII—in which that bluff British King is declared to have slept while on a visit to Anne Boleyn—will be set apart for Mr. Astor himself, and the historic long gallery will be the resting place of the masterpieces of many famous artists. Anne Boleyn's room is to be untenanted.

When Mr. Astor took possession of his new estate he found surrounding the building a cluster of barns, oasthouses and other structures necessary for farm work and hop growing. There were also stables and servants' quarters. All these he has demolished. In their stead there are now a series of old fashioned semi-Tudor cottages. These join the castle, to which they are connected by a bridge and a subway on its western side.

All the cottages, about a hundred in number, are under one roof. They are to be partitioned off, and some will be devoted to Mr. Astor's guests and others to household servants. The roofs are of red tiles, and the majority, if not all of them, are the spoil from ancient buildings of the county. The whole structures are in their architecture contemporaneous with the style of the castle itself.

The Italian gardens are on the eastern side of the castle. They are bounded on each side by a wall some twelve feet high. Parallel with one of the walls runs a row of stone pillars, while four pavilions, with arched roofs supported on eight pillars, stand at fixed and regular intervals.

It is proposed that trailing plants shall be grown to throw their branching shoots over the intervening space between the pillars and the wall, thus forming one long, delightful arbor. Still going west, a series of steps will lead down to the lake.

The lake is not the least interesting feature of the enterprise. Three large and two smaller steam navvies have been employed in digging out the clay, while six locomotives and two hundred wagons have carried the superfluous earth away.

The bottom of this great excavation is covered with a complex network of railway lines, so that the appearance presented is not unlike that of a fairly busy railway junction. The lake runs parallel with the river, and the inrush of water when the time arrives will be controlled and regulated by enormous sluicegates, the operations of which are to be directed from the powerhouse, a mile and a half away. The lake is to be stocked with fish, and motor and steam launches will be introduced.

Great pipes, more than three and a half feet in circumference, have been laid under the river, at a depth of fifteen or sixteen feet from the river bed. Through these pipes run others, of smaller dimensions. One set will carry the sewage from the castle to the farm; the other set the drinking water from the reservoir. All that is needful in the way of machinery will have the powerhouse as its centre.

When the pipes were laid under the river it was unnecessary to resort to tunnelling. A deep trench was dug, the pipes were laid in position, and then a new course for the river was dug over them. The work in the other section was undertaken as soon as the water had been tranferred to its new bed.

Throughout the estate the course of the stream has been altered. At one time the River Eden was prone to overflow its banks, to the annoyance and consternation of Hever villagers. Mr. Astor has added several bends and a series of weirs and waterfalls, which enhance the picturesqueness of the stream, and its capacity has been more than doubled. The general opinion at Hever is that, thanks to all these operations, the distressing floods are now at an end.

Originally there were three farms on the estate. Two of these have disappeared. The remaining one has been so transformed and perfected that it is probably without equal in the United Kingdom. No money has been spared in the laying out and decorations. Expensive oak has been introduced into the very cowsheds and piggeries.

More than £300 was expended in woodwork alone for one building. The walls of the pigsties were treated with a mixture of new milk and cement, while chocolate and white tiles decorate the cowsheds. The dairy is exquisite. The floor of one of the departments is panelled with mosaic work that was inlaid by Italian workmen, while a richly carved fountain plays in the centre.

A large tract of country is to be fashioned into a park for deer, and several of these animals are to be imported as soon as everything is ready for their reception. This park is to be inclosed by a wall of timber nine feet high, and will be well wooded. Already a large number of young saplings have been planted, and, as occasion arises, they are to be transplanted to convenient spots.

The architecture of the new powerhouse is in conformity with the general scheme. The new road separates it from the castle, and it is on the same side as the River Eden.

Its site was somewhat low, and suffered much in time of flood. In the future, however, this land will be safe from the sudden rising of the water. Before building operations were begun a foundation of cement thirty-three inches deep was laid. So much of this material was utilized that seventy tons a day, continuously for six weeks, disappeared in the soddened ground.

The cost of the new road and the bridge amounts to considerably more than £6,000. In this work, as on his other estate, Mr. Astor has spared no expense. The road is probably the widest and most soundly laid in the whole county. It is straight, strong, and with the least possible fall. He has bound himself by contract to maintain this new highway at his own expense for two years, and a gang of roadmen is kept constantly employed upon it.—(London Express.