English Reviews for June.

Burbank Anticipated—About Earthquakes—The Position of Woman in Spain—An Oldtime Actor.

BURBANK ANTICIPATED.

John de Garlande gravely reckons nettles, thistles and foxgloves among garden plants—only they are to be placed "at the side." Again, we may suppose that they were used as herbs, though it might be thought that nettles and thistles could be gathered at every step in those ages. Possibly they improved under cultivation. The resources of science then were even more remarkable in some fields than now. Pliny gives some examples. Would you have white lilies flower purple? Dry the stalks in early autumn and hang them up in smoke. The little knots which we call bulbils will begin to swell in March. Steep them in lees of red wine and plant them out in trenches; when grown they will flower as you wish. But this is an insignificant achievement compared with the triumphs of fruit culture promised by Nicholas Bollarde. Mr. Luther Burbank is styled the "Wizard of Horticulture" in the United States, but some of his happiest successes were foretold by this monk of Westminster in the fifteenth century. He told the public of his day how to grow cherries without stones and apples without cores, how to make sour fruits sweet and to give them what color you please. Early grapes are still so precious that no undertaking could be found perhaps more certain to yield boundless wealth than the production of them, enforced, in any European country suitable. But unless Nicholas Bollarde was mistaken, it is very easy. Set a young vine beside a cherry tree. When it is well established bore a hole through the tree at the height most convenient. Pass the vine through it and pare away all the bark of the portion actually in the hole. Fill up carefully to exclude the air. When that vine is old enough, it will fruit at the same time as the cherry. In this unbelieving age gardeners will object that paring off the bark would certainly kill the leading shoot, which is to perform this miracle, and we must admit that it seems too likely. But the operation would be a pleasant and interesting exercise for the patients of a lunatic asylum. They might also graft a peach on a nut tree with the expectation that its fruit would contain a toothsome filbert in place of a barren stone. Or they might water a peach tree with goat's milk three days before it burst into flower, and hope to see it bear pomegranates after that treatment.—Frederick Boyle, in The Cornhill Magazine.

ABOUT EARTHQUAKES.

Among the many strange relationships which earthquakes hold to various natural phenomena there is possibly one between the times of their occurrence and of irregularities in the revolution of the world. For many years it has been observed that there are slight but irregular changes in latitude, or, in other words, the axis of our earth does not always point in the same direction. The pole wanders about in a mean position, sometimes in a path that is nearly circular, while at others it appears to be exceedingly irregular, and even retrograde. The world top is not spinning truly, but it slightly wabbles. When the change in direction of its axis is sharp large earthquakes have been frequent. If a swiftly moving body is, so to speak, compelled to turn a corner, that it should be subjected to strains which might result in yielding is easily conceivable. Regarded from this point of view, the times at which strata in seismic strain give way are to some extent governed by erratic movements in the rotation of our sphere. The earthquake and the wabble may, however, be due to a common cause, and the question therefore is one which requires closer examination.—John Milne, in The National Review.

WOMEN IN SPAIN.

Oriental usage with regard to women still prevails in Spain, where there are no suffragettes and no problems of sex. Even in society in Madrid men do not pay afternoon calls on married women, the chief form of entertainment being the evening party, or tertulia. The jealousy of Spaniards of both sexes is notorious. The Eastern habit of secluding their women is still prevalent among most Spaniards. Hence the illiteracy of the women, the tiresome formality of Spanish functions, the conventionality of society manners. Occasionally an American lady in the diplomatic "set" tears down the barriers of convention, and astounds "society" by her Western ways; but Spanish women regard the innovation as we would the capers of a circus horse in Rotten Row, and you may live years in Spain on the best terms with a Spaniard before he invites you to meet his wife. You may catch more butterflies in an afternoon than obtain even a sight of the faces of the women whose husbands you meet daily in the course of a whole year's acquaintance.

But in dancing the Spanish woman is queen of her sex. To see the real thing you must get hold of a gypsy band, or visit some humble dancing place in Seville or in the south. There is no dancing in the world so poetic, passionate, suggestive or graceful. Spain is the true home of the dance. There are the jota of Aragon, with its fine abandon yet stately time; the tango, resembling the danse du ventre, of Moorish Spain—the dance of gesture and suggestion; the graceful cachuca, with its chironomic play of head and arms; the jaleo de Jerez, which gypsies dance in whirling fantastic measure; the quaint dances of the Basque provinces, and scores of minor local dances more or less alike peculiar to different localities. But the great dances are the bolero, the seguidilla, the chacona and the fandango of the south. These dances are the soul and epitome of Spain. In all of them prose-gesture—the mystery of true dancing—plays an important part; in all of them the poetry of love and motion is exhibited with extraordinary subtlety and expression.—Austin Harrison, in The Nineteenth Century.

JAMES QUIN.

The son of an Irish barrister, himself intended for the bar, lack of means and consciousness of ability sent Quin onto the stage. He made his first success in 1720, when he persuaded Christopher Rich to allow him to appear as Falstaff in the "Merry Wives of Windsor." After Booth's death he advanced still further in public esteem by what he modestly described on the playbill as "his attempt" to follow that tragedian in his greatest part of Cato. He so delighted the audience by his attempt that after his delivery of the line, "Thanks to the gods, my boy has done his duty!" they cried, "Booth outdone! Booth outdone!" and after he had spoken the then famous soliloquy on the immortality of the soul the enthusiasm reached such a pitch that, in answer to a vociferous demand for an "encore," Quin was obliged to repeat the speech. From this night Quin, as an actor, reigned supreme for ten years; it was a solemn reign, dignified, weighty, traditional. He was unsurpassed in such characters as Falstaff and Sir John Brute, but in tragedy he did no more than uphold, with fine elocution, ponderous majesty and rugged independence, that solemn unreality of speech and action which, both in England and France, was then considered the appropriate expression of tragic sentiment. As in France Le Kain was the first to restore nature to tragic acting, so did Garrick in England, by a similar return to nature, expose the dulness, the lifelessness of the settled methods of the actors of the type of Quin. And Quin had too much good sense not to see it himself, for as a man he was the rather coarse embodiment of that rough but ready witted, prejudiced but generous and warm hearted disposition which we admire and respect in Dr. Johnson. The few of Quin's sayings preserved to us almost make one regret that he had no Boswell by his side. Lords and bishops, clergy and gentry, all were represented in the circles of Quin's many friends who delighted in his wit and conversation. He could hold his own in an argument with any man. One instance must suffice. At some gathering Bishop Warburton, dictatorial and overbearing, was arguing in support of royal prerogative. Quin said he was a republican, and thought that perhaps even the execution of Charles I by his subjects might be justified. "Aye," asked the indignant Warburton, "by what law?" "By all the laws he had left them," answered Quin. The shocked Bishop then cited the wrath of the divine judgment as visited upon the regicides; they all, he said (though it is not strictly true), had come to violent ends. "I would not advise your lordship," said Quin, "to make use of that inference, for, if I am not mistaken, that was the case with the twelve apostles." Horace Walpole greatly admired this instance of the player's readiness and aptness of retort.—H. B. Irving, in The Fortnightly Review.

A SCOTCH VERDICT.

The objection usually taken to the verdict "not proven" is that it leaves an unfair stigma upon the prisoner when admittedly there is not sufficient evidence to convict him of crime. It is said by some of those who defend the verdict that the stigma is left, not by the verdict, but by the facts which are disclosed at the trial and upon which it has rested. But then, while the public may at the time be acquainted with the facts disclosed in evidence, what they remember after the lapse of years is simply the verdict of "not proven"; and I cannot doubt that if it is found in the case of a prisoner who is really innocent, the injury to character and future prospects must inevitably be great.

But there is another and a more serious objection to the verdict. In the main, "not proven" is a verdict favorable to a criminal, and there are many cases in which, if the jury were driven to choose between the verdicts of "guilty" and "not guilty," they would probably find the prisoner "guilty." In my personal experience—I mean, in cases in which I was engaged as counsel or judge—I do not remember a single case in which a prisoner, whom on the evidence I believed to be innocent, was accorded merely a grudging verdict of "not proven"; while I remember many cases in which, through that verdict, those whom I thought guilty escaped. Generally speaking, the verdict "not proven" simply means that the jury think that the prisoner is guilty, but that being of opinion, or holding in deference to the opinion of the presiding judge (though they are not bound to follow his view of the facts), that the evidence is not sufficient, they will not take the responsibility of convicting. But why, in that case, do they not find the prisoner "not guilty"? The verdict would seem to be used by juries in order to relieve their consciences and preserve their self-respect, or perhaps as a convenient basis for compromise. They will not find the prisoner guilty, and they will not find him not guilty: they acquit him, no doubt, but they place indelibly on record their view that in their opinion the innocence of the accused is extremely doubtful. Now, if a prisoner is innocent, this is an unfair verdict; but whether a prisoner is or is not innocent, he should be given a verdict of "not guilty" if the prosecutor has failed to prove his case.—Lord Moncreiff, in Blackwood's Magazine.

SOME LONDON BIRDS.

We have it on record that during the reign of Henry VIII the spoonbills bred in the Bishop's Park, at Fulham, still an open space for Londoners. That quaint bird has now completely disappeared from our shores as a breeding species, and those few wanderers which at odd times still find their way here pay for their recklessness at the hand of the heedless gunner or the remorseless collector. In the sixteenth century there was also a well established heronry in the same park at Fulham, and even now we have the consolation of knowing that we need not go far out of the metropolis to find the bird nesting, for there are heronries in Richmond and Wanstead parks, in both of which places they are rigorously protected. It was, too, in still more recent time that snipe were shot on the Lambeth Marshes, and no doubt the red shank and many another marsh loving bird haunted the place, which is now built over. Like the heron, the snipe is still to be found on the outskirts, and only last year I found three nests with eggs within fifteen miles of the city and within two hundred yards of one of the main roads from London.

Though these birds have been driven away by the encroachments of a great expanding city, it is a comfort to the bird lover to see that within recent years other species have arrived to take their place. The moor hens, or moat hens, as they were called in bygone days, in their wanderings found our London parks eminently suited to their taste, and have spread to almost every suitable lake within our borders that possesses the attractions of reeds or overhanging undergrowth. They may be seen at all seasons of the year making their way quietly across the water with curious jerks of the head and tail, exposing the pure white feathers below. Often, too, they may be seen wandering in search of food on the grassy banks in company with the other waterfowl, and it is amusing to watch them strutting about with the same peculiar jerky movement and showing extreme resentment if too closely approached by their companions. The bird is crepuscular in habits and delights to croak and wander about in the twilight. It is possible that in consequence of its fondness for the hours of dusk the white of the under part of the tail may play an important part in revealing its presence to its mate, in much the same manner that a rabbit is often only seen in the dark as it scuttles along by the glint of its white tail. A still more interesting bird has taken up its abode in similar quarters. This is the little grebe or dabchick, which only thirty years ago was almost unknown to our parks.—F. H. Carruthers-Gould, in the Cornhill Magazine.

ABUSING THE FRANKING PRIVILEGE.

The great postal reformer, Sir Rowland Hill, not only took part in the franking of newspapers apparently without authority, but actually used them in a very ingenious manner to deprive—I shall not say defraud—the postoffice of some of its legitimate revenue! The matter is thus referred to in his "Life" (Vol. I, page 239): "In the year 1823, taking a holiday excursion through the Lake District to Scotland, and wishing to keep my family informed as to my movements and my health (then in a depressed state), I carried with me a number of old newspapers, and in forwarding them according to the useless form then required, while I left the postmark with its date to show the place, I indicated my state of health by selecting names according to previous arrangement, the more Liberal members being taken to indicate that I was better, while Tories were to show that I was falling back—Sir Francis Burdett was to imply that I was in vigorous health, while probably Lord Eldon would have brought one of my brothers after me in anxiety and alarm." There is the following note with reference to the foregoing: "In 'Postoffice Reform' [by Sir Rowland Hill] this anecdote is given as of a friend, but, in truth, I was my own hero. It must not be supposed that in franking these newspapers I was usurping a privilege. In those days newspapers, unless franked at least in appearance, were charged as letters. But any one was at liberty to use the name of any peer or member of the House of Commons without his consent!" —R. S. Smyth, in Chambers's Journal.

THACKERAY AND THE "SOCIETY NOVEL."

With Thackeray began a new process of decay. It was he who established the modern society novel of the West End of London. The object of society being admittedly mutual entertainment, genuine high tragedy had to be suppressed. Within his own sphere of life he was too comprehensive a master to exclude the fatalities of sin and accident, and he indulged freely in pathos of the gentler kind, but yet in books like "Vanity Fair" and "Pendennis" we are an immeasurable distance away from the moral sublimity of the "Antigone," of "Hamlet," or even of the strongest scenes in Dickens. With Thackeray began the literary fashion of making a telegraphic announcement of the catastrophe and then closing the door upon the victims. As a new device this often produced a powerful effect, e. g., in that brief sentence, concluding a chapter of mixed narrative, humor, action and pain:

> Darkness came down on the field and city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face dead with a bullet through his heart.

And yet even in this instance the effect is only momentary. A humorous chapter follows. In Thackeray's hands the novel reached the extreme of complexity. Characters, emotions, scenes press upon one another so fast that even the thrilling announcement of George Osborne's fate does not trouble us long. Tragedy did decline, even though it had some splendid lights of sunset. With Thackeray's successors brevity and reserve lost the force of freshness and became a mere literary fashion, until at the present time the full meaning of the change has become evident. The novel had reduced tragic art from a climax to an episode; the society novel suppressed its utterance or thrust it out of sight. It became not merely incidental, but momentary.—Edith Searle Grossmann, in the Contemporary Review.

AFFORESTATION.

Every now and again a plea appears in print for the afforestation of some of the waste land in this country, but it does not receive the attention which the subject deserves. Professor Schlich, of Oxford, recently wrote a letter to the "Times" urging the desirability of giving labor to the unemployed in the planting of trees, and pointing out that in England alone there are over 2,000,000 acres of mountain and heath land available for the purpose, while there is another million in Wales, more still in Ireland and far greater areas in Scotland. In the eager march of humanity one is apt to lose sight of the absolute necessity of preserving an abundance of plant life. Every green leaf performs every day a chemical process which the human chemist cannot attempt to imitate. The living cells of the green leaf are outlined with the remarkable green substance known as chlorophyl, which has the wonderful power of making use of the radiant energy of the sun and causing it to effect a dissolution of the small amount of carbonic acid gas present in the atmosphere. This very stable chemical compound is silently and easily separated by the sunlight into its constituents of carbon and oxygen, and the latter is returned to the air, while the former gas builds up the body of the plant, which ultimately becomes human food. For, when all is said and done, the meat and the eggs and the milk upon which we feed consist only of the materials originally produced by the plant, and so the human being is really a vegetarian after all, and without the green leaf he certainly could not exist. So the carbon which has been sucked for us from the atmosphere by the green leaf is recombined in our bodies with the oxygen we breathe, and liberated again into the air, where but for the green fields and forests it would ultimately accumulate to poison us. Man can never spread his cities over the entire earth, therefore, for his lungs no less than his stoves and fires are always throwing carbonic acid into the air, and the green leaves alone can entice it back again and transform it into food, while at the same time leaving the oxygen pure and fit for breathing.—Chambers's Journal.

FREE THOUGHT CHURCH

Cosmian Hall Society Relic of Community Days in Florence, Mass.

Florence, Mass., June 16 (Special).—An evidence of the broadening of religions is the fact that the Cosmian Hall Society, of this city, the first religious body in the United States to organize on a platform of entire freedom of thought and speech, has dwindled down to a congregation of 150 from 600, and that it is only a matter of time, probably, when the society will dissolve.

Cosmian Hall has had all sorts of epithets thrown at it. It has been called "a Godless institution, "a hall of iniquity," "the home of cranks," "a nest of perdition" and "a hall of darkness." But its members have been unmoved by such criticism, knowing it was only an institution where a man might speak his inmost thoughts and voice his deepest convictions without molestation. Cosmian Hall is just what its name implies, a hall, or rather an institution, for every one. Any one may speak there, no matter what his creed or nationality. It is open to Christian Scientists, agnostics, atheists, woman suffragists, Theosophists, Dowieites, "Holy Jumpers" and New Thoughtites. The keynote of the institution is that every man has a right to his particular opinion and also a right to express it.

The Cosmian Hall Society is a relic of the "community days," when there was a community in Florence similar to the Brook Farm experiment. The members of the community used to meet on Sundays, not so much for worship in any conventional sense as for instruction in everything that pertained to human welfare. When the community broke up the meetings continued until 1863, when the Free Congregational Society was formed, and in 1874 Cosmian Hall was built. With the erection of this hall came a congregation from all the towns around, many riding miles over bad roads in springless wagons. In those early days some of the most prominent speakers in the country expounded doctrines in that hall, including William Lloyd Garrison, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, A. Bronson Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Rabbi Schlesinger, Susan B. Anthony, Felix Adler and John Fiske.

Among the most eloquent speakers was Sojourner Truth, an old colored woman. She was wholly uneducated, but her retorts and arguments were generally right to the point. She once said, "Three-thirds of the people are wrong," when some one in the audience sang out, "That takes them all, Sojourner." With a twinkle in her eye she quickly responded, "I am sorry, as I had hoped there were a few left."

At one time a small boy fell off the dam in Mill River and, as fortune favored him, struck in the only safe place possible, a narrow, deep pool. Sojourner, hearing of the accident, remarked, "If the devil made him fall, the Lord had fixed a place for him to light in."

It is also told that at one time a grave Puritan of Hadley came to Florence and asked of one of the free thinkers, "What do you do here Sundays?" The reply was, "We rest, sometimes do pressing work, read, think, hold meetings, and try to behave as well as we do Mondays." "Have you no minister?" was the next solemn question. "No," was the answer; "we all speak if we wish, men and women. You can come and say what you please; we will treat you well, but we may not agree with you and may ask questions." Then, picking up a stick and rapping on the fence, the free thinker continued: "You notice when I rap on one spot the sound is monotonous; when I move my stick it varies. Don't you like the variations? You are not foolish enough to quarrel with the stick or the rail because these sounds differ, but you like to hear them and you make up your mind which is best."

Anti-slavery sentiments often had a high hand in the meetings in Florence, and several orthodox ministers who had been driven from their churches on account of their anti-slavery views took refuge in the society. The artist, Charles C. Burleigh, jr., made many impassioned speeches for the freedom of the slaves, and at one of them a bad egg, hurled by an enemy, struck him on the forehead. Coolly wiping his forehead, he said, "I always thought that pro-slavery arguments were unsound."

Intemperance and tobacco received their share of attention among the speakers, and one of them was wont to say: "Tobacco is yet too respectable to be talked about. Rum used to be, but it does behave so badly that its conduct is spoken against now by many respectable people, and when women come to the front they will open wide the doors and sweep it out."

Now the Cosmian Hall society has a pastor who is called a "resident speaker," the Rev. Alfred Free. He preaches every Sunday morning, but at the close of his address he invites the congregation to express contrary views or set forth a new thought. He is at liberty to speak on any subject he sees fit, and the time the government took over the Philippines he delivered an emphatic anti-imperialist address, although the president of the society was chairman of the city Republican committee and a dyed-in-the-wool Republican. On Sundays, when he is absent, he often makes arrangements for a layman to speak in the pulpit. Although he has absolute charge of the Sunday meetings, the platform is open to any one on week days.

Although the society has assumed now something the form of the radical wing of the Unitarian Church, it has features peculiar to itself. There is no such thing as pew rent. The annual income from the endowment is $1,600, and expenses above that are met by individual subscription.

Free suppers are another of its especial features. Once in two weeks the Ladies' Industrial Union gives a supper to which every one is invited, and for which no one pays a cent, but a saucer is passed around at the close of the repast into which every one gratefully drops two cents to pay the woman who washes the dishes. After the supper there is a literary or musical entertainment, and this is followed by a dance until 10:30 o'clock.

It has the only endowed young people's religious society in the country. Dr. Joseph Martens left $5,000 to it and the income is devoted entirely to charity. The names of persons who receive aid from the society are not known even to the young people themselves. All that is necessary is for the applicant's name to come before the treasurer, and after satisfactory statements from responsible people the charity is extended.

An applicant for membership to the Cosmian Hall Society is not subjected to an examination on the soundness of his theology or as to his theory of living. He simply needs to present his name and he is admitted. All that is required of him is that he be a reputable sort of person.

The Sunday school is free from all theological teachings. The youngest members are instructed in nature studies and the oldest members study Shakespeare. Biography is studied by the boys and girls and the value of famous lives pointed out. The Bible is studied as literature, but there is no attempt to mould a faith or establish a creed. The theory is that the child's mind should be filled with a love for the truth, and thus he will be stimulated with a desire to know the truth and to do the right. Sometimes there are Sunday school concerts, at which papers on literary subjects are read or some ethical teaching is set forth.

Cosmian Hall is attended by some of the most prominent and influential residents of Florence. Practically all animus toward it has died out, but occasionally it crops out in an amusing manner. Recently the Rev. Mr. Free was accosted on the street by a white bearded stranger, who, pointing to Cosmian Hall, asked. "Is that the wicked institution where they try to dethrone God?"

"See here," replied Mr. Free, "do I look like a man who would steal sheep or throttle a baby in its cradle?"

"No, indeed, sir," was the astonished answer.

"Well, I'm the pastor of that wicked institution. Good morning."

At the time of McKinley's death, when memorial services were being held all over the country, Mr. Free offered Cosmian Hall for a union service, as it has the largest auditorium in Florence. The Methodist and the Congregational pastors accepted, and the proper notice of the service was put in the papers. But immediately beneath this notice was another announcement to the effect that another union service "of a more religious character" would be held in the Congregational Church in the evening.

But generally Cosmians, Methodists and Congregationalists entertain the most cordial relations toward one another. The Rev. Mr. Free says he can see the time when the society will be no more. The endowment will then be turned into the industrial schools of Florence, which are another trace of the "community times."

MEDICAL DELUSIONS.

Many Still Survive from Dark Ages of Credulous Faith.

An East Sider suffering from acute rheumatism was taken to the Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital yesterday wearing a pair of eels, long defunct and dried, by way of garters. He showed much distress when they were removed by the nurse, being firmly convinced that they would cure his rheumatism in time.

The laugh of science to the contrary notwithstanding, medical delusions in surprising number still survive from the ages of faith. Any physician who practises among the poor and ignorant can testify to this, and it is in particular the staff and students of an institution like the Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital, which receives its patients largely from the lower East Side, a quarter teeming with variety, who are made to appreciate most fully the extent of superstition regarding remedies for disease.

Italian immigrants are peculiarly interesting in this respect. They frequently attribute stomach trouble to cat's hairs supposed to have been swallowed, and persist in eating eggshells to cure it. They also eat snails as a remedy for consumption, though here they are supported by a highly respectable authority—that of "The Accomplished Physician," published in 1656, which declares that snail water, "owing to the cool, clammy and glutinous substance of the snail," is particularly grateful to the consumptive. These Italians use castor oil whenever their feelings become at all excited, either by joy or sorrow, burn rolls of waxed paper in their ears to cure the earache, and willingly go through the even more heroic treatment of lighting fires on their bare stomachs when they have dyspepsia.

The trouble with these people is merely that they have not advanced with the times, but are still holding beliefs which are held by the most intelligent and best educated men of a few centuries ago. An apothecary's shop in Queen Elizabeth's time was stocked with things that strike moderns as singular enough, considered as medicine. These were crabs' claws, foxes' lungs, stags' hearts, boars' tusks, seahorses' teeth, elks' hoofs, precious stones in powder, flying fish, tortoises, alligators, dried toads, worms, scorpions and even human mummies. These latter were quite popular as a remedy for epilepsy, vertigo and palsy, besides being supposed to heal wounds and mortifications. Mummy cost 5s. 4d. a pound, or $1 28 in our money, and was a recognized staple of commerce. But, being so expensive, an artificial substitute was invented which is described by Crollius in his "Royal Chemist" as calling for "the carcass of a young man, some say red-headed, not dying of disease, but killed." It is probable that this ghastly recipe was responsible for many of the mysterious disappearances common in those thrilling days. Human skulls sold for as much as eleven shillings apiece, and were given in the form of a powder, mixed with a little oil.

The most highly esteemed prescriptions of the oldtime apothecary were those which cost the most, and which must needs, therefore, include powdered precious stones. "Gascon's powder" was one of the most costly of these medicaments, being prescribed by the great physicians for their more important patients. It cost forty shillings ($9 60) an ounce, and was made in equal parts of crabs' eyes, pearls, white amber, Oriental bezoar and the black tips of crabs' claws.

Precious stones, too, were thought to have much efficacy when worn as amulets. The ruby protected its wearer from plague and pestilence; the amethyst kept a man steady and sober; bloodstones stopped bleeding; the onyx prevented epilepsy; the topaz cured inflammation; the opal strengthened weak eyes; and the emerald prevented foolishness and aided the memory. Concerning the emerald, an old writer further testifies: "It takes away vain and foolish fears, as of devils and hobgoblins, folly and anger, and causeth good conditions; if it do so worn about one, reason will tell him that being beaten into powder and taken inwardly, it will do much more."

The use of herbs and plants as medicines, of course, agrees with modern practice; but the old physicians made the mistake of considering them as possessing semi-magical properties. It was believed that they were the dwelling places of good and evil spirits which worked their good and evil wills upon those who touched them. The old rhyme says:

> Trefoil, vervain, John's wort, dill
> Hinders witches of their will,

and these four plants had extraordinary reputations in the Middle Ages for both natural and supernatural powers. The trefoil is common in the United States to-day, especially in the South, and has certain legitimate medical properties. The vervain is allied to our native verbena, and was anciently believed to be effective against all poisons and the venom of serpents, as well as against bewitched drinks and the like. It was also efficacious for witchcraft. Anne Bodenham, the celebrated witch of Salisbury, used to send her pupils into the fields to gather vervain and dill. The sun worshippers of Persia always carried vervain when they approached their altars. They gathered it when there was neither sun nor moon, and poured a libation of honey upon the earth in reparation for their robbery. St. John's wort was called "Fuga demonium" in the old days, because it routed evil spirits. It was a common ingredient of magical concoctions, and is still gathered with much ceremony by the peasantry of France and Germany when St. John's Day (June 24) comes around.

Solomon's seal was another of the wonder-working plants, said to be the herb which Solomon used to cure epilepsy by placing it in a ring applied to the nostrils of the patient, from which circumstance arose the popularity of the magical ring or seal that figures in so many Eastern tales.

Curious stories are told of the mandrake, a scion of the potato family, the fruit of which used to be called the "love apple" (a name later applied to the tomato), no doubt because to eat of it generously produced temporary insanity. It was much used in love philters to awaken the tender passion, and the most efficacious specimens were obtained from the vicinity of gibbets, where evildoers swung by the neck. There was but one way to gather the mandrake, under pain of death for mistake, since the belief was that it groaned aloud when pulled from the ground, and that whoever heard the sound fell dead on the spot. The custom was to fasten a dog by the tail to the plant and beat him until in his struggles he tore up the mandrake by the roots. The person superintending the operation had his ears stopped with pitch, and so escaped, but the dog, for which the same precaution was not taken, heard the groan and died.

Extraordinary cures were accomplished by some familiar flowers in the olden times. The anemone was thought by the ancients to be an emblem of disease; and Pliny says that physicians recommended that the first anemone seen in the spring should be picked and concealed in a scarlet cloth until sickness came, requiring that it should be hung around the neck. The juice of the forget-me-not was credited with the power of hardening steel until no metal could resist it. The peony was used by Pæon, the famous physician of ancient Greece, from whom it takes its name, to cure wounds. Demons were supposed always to flee from the spot where it grew.

The elder tree also had some remarkable properties. An old writer declares that "if one travel with two little sticks of elder in his pocket, he shall not fret nor pant, let the horse go never so hard." A piece of an elder branch cut out between two knots used to be worn around the neck to cure erysipelas; and in the Tyrol to-day elder bushes are planted on new graves in the form of a cross, it being believed that they will blossom in due time if the soul formerly inhabiting the body lying underneath has been received into Paradise.

A NEW ISTHMIAN RAILROAD.

Mexico is about to take a 1,200-mile "kink" out of the line of international commerce which has been using the Panama route. At the same time it will give the American transcontinental railroads a tremendous shock by opening a new short route from the Atlantic to the Pacific, which they cannot control. By the end of the year the new railroad across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec is to be opened to interoceanic traffic on a large scale. The railroad has been completed for some time and is in operation for local traffic. It is only awaiting the completion of its terminal ports to begin handling ocean freight. These ports, though they will not be fully completed in less than two or three years, will soon be sufficiently advanced to be used by vessels of any size.

The railroad, being 600 miles north of the Panama Railroad, is that distance nearer the natural line of the world's East and West commerce. It will bring New York and North Atlantic ports 1,200 miles and New Orleans and Gulf ports 1,400 miles nearer to San Francisco, Japan and China. The sailing time from New York to Coatzacoalcos, the Atlantic terminal port, will be six or seven days, two days less than to Colon, the Atlantic port of the Panama Railroad. Cargo from a vessel landing at Coatzacoalcos, say of 10,000 tons, can be aboard another vessel in the harbor of Salinas Cruz in four or five days. In an emergency the transshipment could be accomplished in thirty-six hours. The same freight could not be transferred across the Isthmus of Panama in less than three weeks, possibly longer. At Salinas Cruz, the Pacific port, the vessel is two days nearer San Francisco than it would be at Panama. This serves to illustrate what the new route means in saving time.—World's Work.

RUSSIAN TYPES.

Tragedy and Pathos Found in a Tiny Village.

By Charles Tower.

Cherniyama, the Black Pit: no more accurate description could have been found for my Russian village, and the very name (which, mark you, is of no official devising and is not so much as acknowledged in their maps) is in itself a contradiction of the popular theory of the stupidity of Little Russian peasantry. It lies northwest of an insignificant railway station on the line from Wolocyska to Schmerinka; a mere dip of the ground in the black dreariness of the plain, a desolate relic of new Scythian attempts at settlement.

We arrive (if you will come, too) at the wayside station by the very early train from Kieff with intent to visit an English engineer at the sugar mill, ten miles away. Cherniyama, squalid, miserable, is but a collection of mud-and-wattle huts, with rare panes of glass in a few windows and wattle chimneys half burned away. The church is of mud and wattle, like the huts, save for the roof and tower, which are shingle covered. The village street is a slough of mud in autumn and spring, a caked and putrid dung heap in summer, and only in winter is it covered by the garment of white snow, which has done so much in poetry and legend and picture to mask the horrors of Holy Russia.

Our first call is at the crazy teahouse. Over yonder by the table is Bogdan. Presently he will put his pipe to his lips again and blow for us the melancholy minor music which suits so well the endless melancholy of his life. Bogdan has no story. He has been all his life a slave on the fields, and his hopes and dreams at their wildest have embraced no more than a square patch of ground to call his own and whereon to grow a bit of maize and, perhaps, a cabbage. It is enough for him that the sun shines in summer and the snow falls in winter, and that with his pipe he is welcome through all the village which is at once his home and his world.

Next to him is the Pole. His real name is forgotten, but Chort (Old Nick) they called him when he came first from the frontier, and Chort he will remain. He is the village conspirator; a little crazy, they say, but the man has no intellect, and a queer, spider-like gift of organization, so that it is rather pathetic to find him decaying in this Despond. His story, or so much of it as he has ever been willing to tell, is simple and characteristic.

He was a member of a sokol, one of those gymnastic associations which number altogether some forty thousand men banded together for the protection of Polish privileges and the prosecution of the pan-Poland campaign. He and his fellows formed wild and yet magnificent schemes for the restoration of Poland from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and he used all his powers in the cause. He organized agencies throughout South Russia, established a revolutionary press in Lemberg, and, crowning achievement of his brief career, actually enlisted into the service an official in the fortress of Kieff. And all the while Chort, the brain of the whole system, was to all appearance a quiet and harmless student, living the life of a recluse in Cracow. His last work was to distribute some thousands of manifestoes through the medium of Easter eggs. Of course, ultimately the trick was discovered, but the mischief was done; half the garrison of Kieff had read the dangerous literature and discussed it quietly among themselves.

Then the Russians caught him. They could and did prove nothing against him, but they watched his every movement, quietly destroyed his correspondence and thwarted his efforts; finally they stopped him at the frontier on his way back to Cracow and tore up his passport. Then, because they preferred to keep him under observation, and did not think fit to kill him outright (he was a subject of Franz Josef), they allowed him of their clemency to turn back to Cherniyama. He knows he must never leave it; so perhaps there is something in this theory of madness, after all.

And last of the little group in the teahouse is Gregory, the Beggar. He sat by the door of the great cathedral in Kieff for years, and took such benefit from this, his only birthright, that presently he came to Cherniyama free for all time of the need to beg. He is emeritus of the mendicant ranks, and, like all other emeriti, he loathes the rest for which he worked.

Not all the beggars by St. Andrew's steps have such a history. One stands yet, as he has stood winter and summer, at the side of the lowest step. His rotten coat is decaying slowly from him, and in winter the death wind touches him now and again to the quick. His feet are bound in cloths, his hands are crossed upon his breast, and his face is turned upward to the gleaming cross above. Tourists cast a careless glance at him. The mild eyed peasants disregard him. Still that one figure stands motionless in his place, and in his single person marks the beginning of the end of orthodoxy in Russia. They call him the unbeliever, because his faith has thrown over the forms of faith, and in one terrible moment he understood that the temple itself is but the pedestal of the cross.

Once a child of his lay sick in Moscow, and the doctors said there was no help on earth that could save her. One after another those that he called in told him that nothing could be done, and one after another took the price of their helplessness and went away. At the last came a prophet, a seer, and told him that there was but one way to save the child's life: "If the Bojemater comes into a house the devil departs out of it." So they told him, and so he believed; and therefore he gave up that little store of paper currency which was the half of his own soul, the hard earned pittance which gave him a position above the outcast and the destitute who are the lowest estate. He bought fair linen and spread out the feast to which the Mother of God was to be made welcome. So the priests and the bearers, the prophets and the seers, Korah, Dathan and Abiram and all the company of On, brought the most holy picture into the house and set it at the head of the table. "He loveth a cheerful giver," they said, and made much merriment in the house. Also they took a gift of the man for the propagation of the picture gospel, and afterward they went away. But the child died; and the father stands all the days idle, and in the night he crawls away to some shelter under the sandstone cliffs.—(Macmillan's Magazine.

NAMES AND THE LAW.

Speaking generally, the law of England allows a person to assume and use any name, provided its use is not calculated to deceive or inflict pecuniary loss. So the Court of Appeal lately laid down the law in Dockrell agt. Dougall, and this attitude of the law, "The Law Journal" remarks, is characteristic of our Br[illegible] love of liberty. French law is much more st[illegible] it forbids any citizen to bear any name other than that which is expressed in the registry of his birth, or to add any surname to his proper name. German law is the same, only it goes a little further in imposing a penalty on any one giving a false name to an official.—Dundee Advertiser.

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