FROM THE HOLY LAND.

Exploration and Discovery in Carmel.

HAIFA, Sept. 24.—During the two months that I have been camped on the highest summit of Mount Carmel, I have visited no fewer than twenty ruins of ancient towns and villages. Of these I have discovered six which were heretofore unknown, the others having been found ten years ago by the officers of the Royal Engineers sent out to survey Palestine by the Society for Palestine Exploration.

Prior to that time, this historic locality was a terra incognita. The tourists who visited the mountain, like the pilgrims who journeyed thither for devotional reasons, satisfied themselves with a short stay at the convent, and even then did not understand that they were only on one mountain spur of a highland region thirty-five miles in circumference, where almost every hilltop was crowned with a ruin, and every gorge might open up new and unexpected beauties of scenery.

It is only after so exhaustive an examination as I have just accomplished, that any idea can be formed of the extent of the population by which Carmel was once inhabited, of the high state of civilization which must have prevailed here, and of the extent to which its lovely hills and valleys were cultivated. These ruins bear a great resemblance to each other; and although they none of them cover a very great extent of ground, they were built of most solid materials, and to judge by some of the architectural remains, and the elaborate carvings and devices, they must have contained some handsome buildings.

The houses were built of blocks of draughted stone, usually four feet long by two and a half feet high, and two feet thick. The door jambs and lintels, which in some instances are still *in situ*, were of six, seven or eight feet long by two feet six by two feet. In these were holes or sockets, in which the pivots worked. Some of the lintels over the doors were ornamented with devices; these were usually hexagons and circles, in the centre of which were ovals or other ornamental scrolls. Sometimes there was an animal, such as an eagle or a leopard, or seven-branched candlesticks, or raised bosses or crosses; here and there was a cornice with a florid carving evidently of the Roman period, with fragments of columns or capitals. But some of these ruins have been inhabited by later inhabitants, who used the old stones for their more modern constructions, and too often chipped off the carving. Indeed, they are the ready-made quarries of the country people of the present day, who come and carry off the stones to build their houses.

A notable and melancholy instance of this has occurred in the case of a place called Khurbet Semmaka. This was the most interesting ruin in Carmel, and was discovered ten years ago by the officers of the Palestine exploration survey. Here they found the portal of what once had been an ancient Jewish synagogue still standing, its door jambs and lintels elaborately carved, part of the walls and fragments of the columns which formed an enclosing colonnade were in position, and formed the subject of much speculation, as it was the only specimen of Jewish architecture in this part of the country, and presented some features which were different from anything hitherto discovered; and it was therefore suggested that the building must have been built at a different period from any of those the remains of which still exist. Judge of my disappointment on visiting this spot to find that, with the exception of three feet of one door jamb, all had disappeared; there was scarcely a stone left. The inhabitants of a Moslem village about two miles distant had within the last decade made a clean sweep of all these most interesting remains. Fortunately they still exist in the Palestine Society's memoirs in the shape of most accurate drawings and measurements, which were made by the survey and have since been published.

Apart from the actual stones themselves and the carvings which are to be found upon them, the objects of interest which mainly cluster round all these Carmel ruins are ancient olive mills and wine presses, often in a very perfect state of preservation, tombs and cisterns. First, in regard to the olive presses. I found more than a dozen of these. On two occasions they were hewn out of the living rock. The lower stone, which was circular, had usually a diameter of eight feet, with a raised rim outside nine or ten inches high, and a raised socket in the centre, in which was a hole six feet square, where the upright was fitted to hold the lateral beam which worked the upper stone. This was usually five feet in diameter and eighteen inches thick, and had a hole pierced through the centre. Through this the long beam was passed, to which, as it extended far beyond the circumference of the lower stone, the horse was attached which worked the mill, the upper stone travelling on its broad edge around the lower stone over the olives. From the lower stone a gutter was carved into the vat, also hewn out of the living rock, into which trickled the oil. I often found near these mills huge limestone rollers about three feet in diameter and seven feet long. On the sides of these were four vertical lines of sunk grooves, four or five grooves in each line. Taking 2.7 as the specific gravity of the stone, they must have weighed about two tons each. What their functions were, or whether they had anything to do with the olive crushing process, I am at a loss to conjecture. The wine presses were nothing more than huge vats, also hewn out of the living rock, sometimes above ground in the shape of sarcophagi, sometimes pits eight or nine feet square and the same in depth.

The limestone hillsides in the neighborhood of these ruins were almost invariably honeycombed with cave tombs, whose doorways were often richly ornamented with devices, and in one instance I found an inscription in Greek characters so much defaced that I could not decipher it. They usually consisted of only one chamber, eight or ten feet square, but were sometimes larger, and contained either kokim or loculi under arcosolia, sometimes both. The kokim are tunnel-shaped excavations, usually 7 feet long, 2 feet 6 wide, and the same in height—in other words, just large enough to contain the corpse. Tomb, with its arcosolium, on both sides about two feet high, also large enough conveniently to contain a body. It is cut out of the living rock, as well as the arch which overspans it. Sometimes there is a large arched recess opening out of the central chamber, containing several loculi. On more than one occasion I found a circular stone like a millstone in a groove in the doorway, which only required to be rolled a couple of feet to close the tomb completely, but the tombs are generally closed by an oblong stone slab, not unfrequently ornamented with devices. I also found several sarcophagi.

The cisterns are of two kinds, bell-mouthed and of demijohn shape, or open rock-hewn reservoirs or tanks. At one ruin I found an extensive system of these latter. There were no fewer than six, of which the largest was forty feet by twelve, all close together, divided only by narrow ledges of the solid rock out of which they had been hewn. They were from fifteen to twenty feet to the soil at the bottom, now overgrown with shrubs, so that in reality they are probably much deeper. In some cases stone steps led to the bottom, and on the sides were deep niches from which evidently sprung arches to form the roof, for there can be little doubt that the most of them were originally covered. From the great number and extent of these cisterns it is manifest that the inhabitants were, in some instances, entirely dependent upon them for their water supply.

At the southeastern extremity of the mountain is the spot known as "the place of bounding," or sacrifice, because tradition assigns it as the locality where Elijah had his controversy with the prophets of Baal, and in commemoration thereof the Carmelite monks are at this moment building a church there, and using, in the very work, some of the stones of a neighboring ruin, regardless of all antiquarian considerations. I feel, therefore, a malignant satisfaction in the conviction at which I have arrived that they are building their church on a spot which is indisputably not the place on which the altar of Elijah was erected, if we are to believe the Biblical record, for it is in full view of the Mediterranean, and it would have been quite unnecessary for Elijah to tell his servant to "go up and look toward the sea," for there is no higher point to go up to, and he could see the sea himself. But about a mile from this spot there stands, curiously enough, a pile of stones in a locality which would exactly fulfil the required conditions. I came upon it unexpectedly almost concealed in a thicket of underwood. The stones are placed one upon the other without cement, and average eighteen inches square and eight or nine thick, forming a rude altar about twelve feet long and four high. The breadth varies, as they have been broken away, but there is a large artificial slab, six feet square, lying at the base. Though I do not for a moment mean to imply that this was the original altar, the unusual shape and position of this pile suggests that it may have been the result of some sacred tradition connected with the Biblical event. From it the ground swells back and upward in every direction, so that a vast crowd might have been assembled around and witnessed whatever was going forward, which would have been impossible at the traditional locality. A ten minutes' walk would have taken Elijah's servant to a neighboring summit which commanded a full view of the sea, and the twelve barrels of water required to drench the altar could have been obtained from some rock-hewn tanks in the immediate vicinity, while the path which passes the pile leads straight down to the hill on the bank of the Kishon, where tradition has it that the priests were massacred. Moreover, it was in the centre of the most populous part of the mountain. Within a radius of two miles and a half from this pile of stones there are no fewer than twelve ruins of ancient towns and villages on the various hilltops and mountain spurs which surround it.

The fact could give a better idea than this of the populous character of Carmel in the days of the prophet. Not very far from this I discovered half way down the steep flank of the mountain a fortress of a most ancient race, the stones which were piled one above another three high to form the ramparts being immense massive unhewn boulders weighing from two to three tons each. I am not aware of anything of the kind having yet been found in Palestine, and as carving one back to a period probably anterior to Jewish occupation, I regard it as the most interesting discovery I have made.

THE EMPEROR OF CHINA AT HOME.

The ruler of the 250,000,000 of people of which the Chinese nation probably consists is now within five years of his majority, and is an occupant, while yet a minor, of the same apartments in which lived the Emperor who preceded him on the dragon throne. There, says an account translated from the *Nord Deutsche Zeitung*, he eats with gold-tipped chop sticks of ivory, and sleeps on a large Ningpo bedstead, richly carved and ornamented with ivory and gold, the same on which the noble-minded Emperors Khang Hsi and Chien Ling used to recline after the day's fatigue in the last century and the century before. Like one of those living Buddhas who may be seen on the Mongolian plateau, he is honored as a god by his attendants, who kneel to him. The seclusion in which he is kept is also far more complete. The building in which the Emperor resides is called Yang Hsin Tien, and is a little to the west of the middle of the palace. At the back of the central gate on the south side is the great reception hall. When Ministers of State and others enter for an audience at four, five, or six in the morning, according to custom, they have to go on foot to the centre of the palace, over half a mile, if they enter by the east or the west gate; and when they get on in years they can appreciate the Emperor's favor, which then by a decree allows them to be borne in a chair instead of walking.

The rooms of the Emperor consist of seven divisions. They are provided with divans covered with red felt of native manufacture, and the floor with European carpets. The cushions have all embroidered on them the dragon and the phœnix. Pretty things scattered through the rooms are endless in variety and are changed in accordance with any wish expressed by the Emperor. The rooms are in all thirty yards long by from eight to nine yards deep and are divided into three separate suites, the throne room being in the middle. Folding doors ten feet in height open into these apartments to the north and south in the centre of each. The upper part of these doors is in open work in which various auspicious characters and flowers are carved. At the back paper is pasted to admit light to the rooms. The front is ornamented with gilding, sculture, and varnish of various colors. Those doors remain open even in winter, because during the cold season a thick embroidered curtain hangs in the doorway, which, by its weight, keeps its place close to the doorposts and prevents the cold air from entering. In summer this is replaced by a curtain of very thin strips of bamboo to admit the breeze. The silk threads used in sewing the strips of bamboo together are of various colors, and, passing through the whole texture of the curtains from the top to the bottom, are very agreeable to the eye. These summer and winter curtains are rolled up to give air to the rooms when required. Exit and entrance are effected on each side of these curtains by side doors.

Along the whole front of thirty yards there is a covered flight of steps fifteen feet wide. The roof over these rests on two rows of pillars. The pillars shine with fresh vermilion both within the rooms and on the steps outside, and are decorated with sculptured work partly gilt and partly varnished. The Hoppo, who lately returned from Canton, gave the Emperor a present valued at $8,000. It consisted of chandeliers holding 500 wax candles each. The Emperor has also some electrical machines and numberless foreign curiosities. He was vaccinated when an infant, before his high destiny was thought of, otherwise it would have been difficult to vaccinate him, for his person being sacred when Emperor, no lancet can touch him. His mother, the Princess of Chun, who is a sister of the Empress of the West, will be raised to the rank of Empress Dowager when he is 16, and his father will also be made T'ai Shang Huang. At that time he is to be expected by precedent, so that after three years there will be two Empresses Dowager, but in this case they will be sisters.

The Princess, his mother, goes in to see him once a month, and kneels when she first speaks to him, but rises afterward. His father does likewise. The Emperor studies Chinese daily for an hour and a half, and Mantchu also for an hour and a half. He spends two hours in archery and riding, and in winter amuses himself with sledging. He has a little brother of five, whom his mother takes with her when she goes to the Palace. The teachers who instruct him kneel to him on entrance, but afterward sit. The Emperor has eight eunuchs who constantly attend him, besides an indefinite number for special occasions. He has his meals alone, and the eight eunuchs wait around him restraining him if he takes too much of any one dish. His school room is at the back of the Yang Hsin Tien, already described, and the hall in which he holds conference every morning with the Ministers is a little to the east.

AN IMPERIAL CHAMOIS HUNTER.

The Austrian Emperor's Hunting Box in the Valley of the Murz.

From the London Daily News, Oct. 19.

At the entrance of the narrow valley of the Mürz, bounded on either side by steep rocks, at the foot of which beautiful green pine forests give shelter to the game, lies the Emperor of Austria's favorite little hunting château, Neuberg. In many places the rocks rise out of the narrow valley so suddenly as to make vegetation on their sides almost impossible.

In this solitary spot the Emperor of Austria, with his son and several royal guests, has spent a week, devoting his time entirely to hunting the chamois and deer. The Emperor is an enthusiastic sportsman. It would not be possible for the Emperor to have his Cabinet Ministers at Neuberg, because the castle is so very small that all ceremony is excluded from it, and the monarch cannot withdraw and leave his guests to themselves. He is with them all day either at the chase or at meals, which are merry and homely, without any of the ceremony without which the court officials at Vienna or at the larger castles will not let them take place. Neuberg is the only place to which the Emperor admits cards, which he never touches.

Of nine deer that were killed, the Emperor's was the finest shot, although he had, of course, given up the best place to Prince William of Prussia. The imperial party killed thirty-five chamois that same day, and of these Prince William killed as many as seventeen. The Emperor was delighted at his success, and congratulated him upon it. All the game killed during the day is laid out on the lawn of the castle courtyard in the evening, upon pine branches, and the jagers and huntsmen stand around it in military position and with lighted torches, ready to answer any question that may arise on the subject of the animals, each of which is marked with the initials of the noble hunter who killed it.

The Emperor and his guests after dinner walk round the courtyard to inspect their day's work, and afterward return to the spacious parlor, where card tables have in the mean time been set. The Emperor's guests, with the Crown Prince, sit down to their whist, and the monarch looks on for an hour or so, and then, without disturbing them by taking leave, he retires to his own apartments and goes to rest. The Emperor dislikes going to bed after half-past 9, and he is certainly one of the earliest risers in all Vienna, since he never gets up later than 5 o'clock. It is difficult to believe how fringed he lives, never touching any of the fine dishes served at his table, but content with a piece of boiled beef and some vegetables.

The number of chamois killed in one day is so large because the game is driven by a chain of drivers past the place where the royal hunters have taken their stand. Every gentleman has his beaucham and three jagers to load his rifles for him and hand them to him. But the Emperor and his son are very fond of going out shooting quite alone on what is called the "pirsch," or stalking. The foresters and hunters have for a long time previously watched the deer, and can tell pretty certainly where their favorite feeding places are. The Emperor, accompanied by one jager only, goes to some such place, and sometimes has to watch for several hours until the animal approaches. After some time the deer will raise a cry; it will either call the herd or challenge some other deer to a fight. While this noise lasts the hunter may ventur to approach, but he must stop the progress the instant the cry ceases, and may not move again until the deer raises his voice once more.

The hunters sometimes spend ten minutes in a most uncomfortable position, with one foot advanced and the other upon their knees. If they made the slightest movement the deer would take the alarm, and be lost for that day. At last the hunter has got near enough to be able to fire. At about 100 paces distant stands the deer erect, his graceful horns clearly visible in the dim morning light. The hunter will not fire unless the animal's position is favorable, for if his back be turned, the best shot would only wound him enough to drive him away at a rapid pace, and he might escape and hide himself in the thick underwood, where no one could find him and only the rapacious animals of prey would profit by his death. But if he turns ever so slightly, the hunter takes aim, and before the sound of the firing is repeated by a tenfold echo, a clapping noise proves that the ball has pierced the shoulder. The animal will make one powerful bound, and, after running a short distance, will fall dead to the ground. Many of the Emperor's shots kill the deer instantly, so sure is his aim.

A Quaint Old London Custom.

From the London Standard.

A quaint old custom was gone through on Tuesday, Oct. 16, at the Chambers of Sir Frederick Pollock, the Queen's Remembrancer, in the Royal Courts of Justice, when, on the part of the Corporation of London, Mr. Secondary Dickens, Sir Thomas Nelson the City Solicitor, and Mr. Marshall Pontifex, the late Under Sheriff, attended to render tenit service due to the Crown in respect of certain property granted to them centuries ago. Mr. Pontifex having handed in the late Sheriff's accounts, which on motion of the Secondary, were filed and recorded, proclamation was made "Tenants and occupiers of a piece of waste ground called the Moors, in the county of Calop, come forth and do your service."

The City Solicitor on that presented himself and cut one faggot with a hatchet and another with a billhook. The next proclamation was "Tenants and occupiers of a certain tenement called The Forge, in the parish of St. Clement Danes, in the county of Middlesex, come forth and do your service." Sir Thos. Nelson, in discharge, counted six horseshoes and sixty-one nails, the Queen's Remembrancer saying, "Good number." With these proceedings, which had been witnessed by, among others, the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, ended. The forge in question was pulled down in a riot in the reign of Richard II., and not restored.

POETRY OF THE PERIOD.

The Song of the Flatiron.

I sing the song of the flatiron,
The flatiron heavy and hot,
The Nihilist brave of the laundry,
Who for others' rights cares not a jot;
For, whether to smash, smutch, or mangle,
To rumple, rend, roughen, or rip,
I laugh at all laws, in the Chinaman's claws
Or the Irish girl's lion-like grip.

Over surfaces soft, starched, or sodden,
I press, plough, and pound in my power,
Frantic cries in hall bedroom and boudoir
Are my deep-rooted, delicate dower;
But, hilarious, I leap to my pastime,
Of creases and kinks I am king,
And of folds that criss-cross I'm the flat-footed boss
As my song self-complacent I sing.

The curling tongs clank with amazement,
The fluting iron wrinkles with spite,
As washboard and wringer their victims
Prepare for my fiendish delight;
And I hiss as I scorch cuffs and collars,
I smoke as the wristbands I fray,
And I laugh fit to drop as the shirt buttons pop
And the plaits packer under my play.

In embroidery and old lace I revel,
Fine needlework dies at my touch,
And, with me at my best, not a garment
Need wait for Time's sundering clutch,
And still my brave song of the flatiron
I sing with a jovial lip
As I tramp, twitch, and twist in the Chinaman's fist
Or the brawny Hibernian grip.

NATHAN D. URNER.

The Old Village Depot.

From the Toledo Blade.

There stands the old station house out in the rain,
A stone's throw away from my door,
With its wind-racked walls and its weather-racked pane,
And its rickety, rat-haunted floor;
Its sashes are sealed and its lintels are gashed
With the jackknives of twenty long years,
And the eaves where the wings of the swallow once dashed
Are touched with the kinship of tears.

Old house! it looms up like a ghost in the gale,
And gibbers and groans in the blast,
And speaks with a weird and a weariless wail,
Of the dim, irrepealable past
On the old dingy platform that girt lies it round,
The wealth of the prairie once poured;
And daily the carriage of commerce came down
With the wares of the merchant aboard.

'Twas here where our brothers went off to the wars,
We blessed them and bade them adieu;
And we welcomed them home, with a banner of stars,
When the terrible conflict was through;
And here where the bare-footed boys are at play
The war trumpets thundered of yore—
And here came the coffins, in ghastly array,
Of the heroes that fell on our shore.

'Twas here the young bride, in her beauty and bloom,
To her cheek felt the parting kiss press,
And here had with rapture the heart of the groom,
As he cradled her form on his breast;
And here in his sanctum the miser would creep,
To shelter himself from the blast,
In the merciless midnight, and dreamed as he slept
Of the happier days of the past.

And here came the message, more fleet than the dove,
Over the wandering, wavering wire,
That filled us with grief, or that thrilled us with love,
As we peacefully sat round the fire.
Ah, the old station house! it will soon tumble down,
Its timbers are crumbling away;
But its record is writ on the heart of the town,
And its glory abideth for aye.

J. S. MATTHEWS.

A Dilemma.

From the Boston Globe.

To write, or not to write, that is the question.
Whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer
The torments of being in love, or to end them
A young lady to write in her autograph album,
And having kept the book two years, more or less,
Not to write in it at all?
Or to take the pen against a host of doubts and fears,
And, by once writing, end them? To start—to write—
To write!—perchance to blot! Ah, there's the rub;
For in that darksome blot what feelings are
Shown forth—nervousness, distrust of self,
And many others—to be sure.
When one is writing to his girl, for then
If he should make a blot, he draws a line
Through it, and
It was intentional, and meant to mark
A place where he did kiss. And she
Hears the blot, sees the line, and kisses it, and thinks
That she is happy.

Going By.

From the Wheelman.

She pushes back her bonnet brown,
A rustic glance to raise,
Her dimple-black eyelashes slipping down
To veil the bashful gaze;
In pierced hem, white and russet gown,
A dreamlike maiden painted,
Half bold and wholly shy
She lifts her head, her foot she stays,
As I go by.

The lonely pastures stretch behind
In yellow sunshine heat;
I watch the dappled river wind
By shallows clear and sweet;
Thro' mazy footpaths far and blind,
With silver birch and poplar lined,
My leafy way shall lie
Beyond them runs the village street,
And I—go by.

Across the laurel-bordered rise
The hills are blue as steel;
The splendor of the harvest skies
Is white against my wheel
Again the lark, o'er wheat and rye rise,
The graceful arm, the restive eyes,
The gesture, frank and shy,
A stranger's glance—I feel appeal
As I go by.

I cross the bridge. I mount the hill
All black with hemlock shade;
I pass the ancient, ruined mill,
The green and silent glade.
Yet haste or linger where I will
Her girlish figure draws me still
Back to the road, to stay
Late, late I come, my mountain maid,
And all the world goes by!

DORA READ GOODALE.

A Pretty Vassar Senior.

From the Philadelphia Call.

Did you on the campus pass her?
That's the finished maid of Vassar,
Whose wisdom, like Minerva's mighty,
Blends with the charms of Aphrodite.

With language eloquent and tropic
She can talk of anything
And will thrill you if it suits her
Till your heart's not worth a kreutzer.

Owner of a thousand graces,
Decked in satins, silks, and laces
And deep diamonds that re-echo
Forth she comes; oh, let us listen.

Now your whole mind she'll be tensing
With things Asian, Roman, Grecian,
Take you through, without apologies,
All the ologies and mythologies.

She knows Shakespeare's, Goethe's fancies,
New book-phrases, French romances,
German mind-mists presumptuous,
And that nightmare nihilistic.

Every reign and revolution,
Chemistry and evolution,
Stars and suns and epochs during
Ages past and pre-Silurian.

The very Crichton of a daughter—
She rides a horse and rules the water,
Knows all sciences and graces,
Lawn tennis, archery, and croquet.

She can tell each tongue's declension,
Talks of azimuth, right ascension
And gives you sums—there is no fazzing her—
Of seconds, Moodies-ic, and Wagner.

Fascinating fawn like creature,
Fair in form and fine in feature,
Sweet as a zephyr from samatra,
A pretty, rose-lipped Cleopatra.

The Old Fiddle.

From the Washington Post.

We little know the thoughts that sweep
Each heaving bosom as they part,
As on life's toilsome march they hear
The sounds they once loved best.

The cricket with his shrill refrain,
The thrush at close of day,
The cow bell swinging in the lane,
The bleating far away;

The partridge drumming on his log,
The tree toad in his tree,
The yellowhammer's first spring note,
The humming of the bee;

The moaning winds, the beating rain,
The sift of drifting snow,
All these are sounds that bring again
The thoughts of long ago.

But of them all, each one but brings
Some part of life's long riddle,
While none calls back so many things
As one old, well-tuned fiddle.

Distinction and Difference.

From the Chicago News.

But yesterday I spoke of Jones.
Well, what about him? Has he died?
"Oh, yes," said Brown in careless tones,
"He's an unlucky dog, old pard!"
"Just so," said I, "I suppose that we
Chip in and give the lad a life."
"Guess not," said Brown, "don't count on me,
I think you'd better let him shift."

To-day again I mentioned Jones.
And said he hadn't been around.
"Yes, yes!" said Brown in eager tones,
"I wonder where he can be found?
I wish he'd happen now this way!
He's just the man I want to meet!
You haven't heard? Why, yesterday
He made a rousing pile on wheat!"

Above Casualty.

Where ride the inner guides to-night?
A snowflake fell upon my hand,
Soft as a spirit's touch, and white,
Brought back from the interior land
Unto a mother's sight.

I heard some strains of music when
The moon sank o'er the wood,
And if they never come again
Their meaning well I understood:
The singers once were men.

Wouldst follow up the stair of beams—
Good stars have dropped it for our kind—
To mount above the land of dreams,
Where reason permeates the mind,
Where all exists and nothing seems?

Ah! pity for the soul of him
Who never hears the saintly song,
Nor sees the beings on the rim
Of the great zone, where all belong
When life has reached the cherubim.

EDWARD S. CREAKER.

PROGRESS OF THE GREAT LICK TELESCOPE.

It appears that the project of building great telescopes is easier in the conception than in the final execution. Twelve months ago I visited Mr. Alvan Clark's optical works at Cambridgeport, Mass., and saw the great Streuve object glass placed for the first time within its colossal tube and pointed toward a celestial object, and after the Clarks I was the first to test its powers.

It was still uncorrected, but worked to a marvel, considering that the most delicate and artistic touches had still to be added. Yet it must be confessed that an astronomical telescope directed at a fixed star is one of the most disappointing things to look through, and even with the biggest telescope objective which ever left the hands of the optician, there was no exception to this rule. With all its powers, this wonder and masterpiece of the Clarks was unable to resolve the disc of the far-off star, and in this respect it was on a level with a little dollar instrument, a mere plaything in the hands of a child. Its wonderful light-gathering properties, however, were startling, and the feeble rays of the star were increased to a blaze of light. It has since been delivered to Prof. Streuve, and in his hands and under his able management the work may be expected from this noble instrument.

But on a table in the workshop was placed the great telescope objective, three feet in diameter, made for the Lick observatory in California, which in size would dwarf the king of telescopes, and to start for Russia.

It may not be known to all that achromatic object glasses are made of two distinct lenses, one made of flint glass and the other of crown glass, the two combined making the perfect lens. In this instance the flint glass lens was only present, its companion being daily expected from France. A few days ago I wrote to Mr. Clark asking what progress he had made with the Lick objective, hoping, as the preparations in California were so advanced, that the lens was nearly finished. The public will probably be surprised to hear that the first chip off the glass has still to be made, and that the lens I saw last year in its crude state still remains in the same condition.

It appears that the crown glass disc has not yet arrived, and Mr. Clark dare not attempt the labor of polishing the immense flint portion until he is assured that the companion is forthcoming. When it will be ready, if ever, appears to be a problem to be solved only by time.

There is no doubt about the ability of the Clarks to grind and polish the objective if the material ever reaches their hands; but the difficulty in obtaining a solid disc of crown glass three feet in diameter, perfect in all respects, can hardly be appreciated. Even the Streuve glass, which was smaller, had a bad flaw in it right in the centre. Mr. Clark offered to order another disc, but Mr. Streuve, fearing the long delay accepted the lens in that state.

It will thus be seen that, however forward the observatory may be, a long time may elapse before the great 36-inch Lick telescope will be in position interpreting the mysteries of the heavens.

JOHN MICHELS.

COLLECTING SEALS.

The Quaint Devices in Brown, Black, and Red Sealing Wax.

"There!" said the collector, tilting up a long white box: as he did so a stream of seals in red, brown, and black was poured upon the table. Some of the larger fell upright instead of flat and rolled in a circle until, after a few dizzy gyrations, they collapsed. Then the collector took from the bottom of the box some sheets of paper, on each side of which half a dozen or more seals with bright red background and dull figures in relief were pasted.

"There are about a thousand of them—the result of several years of unremitting search or exchange with other collectors. Over in Germany, where all documents and every important letter bear seals, they are collected about as frequently as stamps are here. I know of collections over there much larger and much better classified than this, because collectors who began as boys continued the hobby as men, and as they grew older became more systematic. This collection I made when I was a boy at school in Germany. I haven't added a seal to it since I returned to this country, some twelve years ago. But I often look over the seals because many of them, especially the older, have quaint and curious designs. Most of these I obtained from a relative who, holding an important Government position for life, received many documents and letters in sealed envelopes. The seals on the documents of course I could not touch, but those on the envelopes I got. It was a great temptation often to get the seals from the documents. They were usually State seals of enormous size—some so large that they were encased in large wooden boxes and suspended from the parchment by ribbons. Of course I got many duplicates, and these I exchanged. I remember that especially one seal which I got quite frequently was eagerly sought for by other collectors, and I got some valuable impressions in return. Let me see" (delving with his hands among the pile); "there it is. It's in brown. The relief in the middle represents a Bishop in the highest robes of office, standing underneath an arch which rises between two turreted castles. The Latin characters encircling the centre piece show that it is the seal of the Bavarian city Aschaffenburg. It was prized because the design is clear cut and extremely effective. I got for two of them two remarkable seals. Here they are on this sheet. Unfortunately the edges are broken, so I can't tell how long the die has been in use, as the date is not preserved. But I have never seen figures in sealing wax stand out so high. They are certainly a quarter of an inch in thickness. I should judge they came from some religious institution. The inscriptions are somewhat blurred. But you can make out around this female head the words: 'Regina Angelorum.' The head seems that of the Virgin. See how beautifully the impression gives each feature, the fine lines about the lips and chin, and the effective draping of the fabrics in the hood and the dress about the shoulders. The other impression is that of a saint."

"That is a very curious impression between the two," said the reporter, pointing to a large red seal. The red impression represented a wheel, a horse shoe, a hammer, and other implements.

"It dates from 1727," said the collector, "and is the seal of the Blacksmiths' and Wagon Makers' Union of a large city. This union has always existed so long a time is rich and powerful. The one above it is so mutilated that it is impossible to classify it. All that is preserved is a portion of the centre, which is very curious and old fashioned, representing a saint crushing a huge snake with his foot, and grinning with exultation. The foot, as you see, is large enough to crush any snake, and his mouth big enough to grin by proxy for the army of saints. In fact his feet are so large, and his mouth so far, that it lay on his back and opened his mouth he would resemble the water jump on a steeple chase course."

"You say you can't classify this; are the others classified?"

"In a rough way into seals of noble families, seals of States and cities, and seals of religious and secular institutions. The small loose seals in a heap here belong to the first class. You see this grayish stuff in this seal? The impression is very clear, and I thought I might get a duplicate of it. So I pressed some soft putty over it and so got a die. On removing the putty I let it harden, then poured sealing wax over it, and when the wax cooled broke away the putty. In this way I obtained a fair duplicate.

"Have you any seals which date back further than the trade union of 1727?"

"Yes: there is one from 1623. The central piece is a Phœnix rising from her ashes. The inscription is well preserved. It reads: Sigillum Illustris Gymnasii Hanoviensis—Seal of the Illustrious College of Hanover. This black seal, with the figure of Death carrying his scythe as a dude carries his cane, is old and curious. Here is a pretty modern one—a star and a bundle of arrows in bold relief. It's the seal of an association for protecting German emigrants to Texas.

"What are those bright red seals with dull centres pasted on sheets?"

"They are mostly of German townships. In many of them the Prussian eagle forms the most prominent feature. Others are more original. Here, for instance, is a swan gliding gracefully through the water, here an angel riding on a lizard, a knight in heavy armor on horseback, a city gate, a church on a mountain side. But here is the glory of the collection—this large seal of the city of Herborn, dated 1281. It represents a Bishop on his throne receiving homage from civilians. Above are five castles, roundabout the inscription, and beneath the date 1231."

Twenty-four O'Clock.

From the Philadelphia Times.

A peculiar clock, which marks the hours from one to twenty four, has recently been completed by a German mechanic at Reno, Nev. The invention is of the kind soon to be adopted by several of the railroads. The most conspicuous innovations are in the marking upon the dial and in the movement of the wheels which run the hands. The minute hand, instead of making twelve revolutions to every revolution of the hour hand, as in other clocks, makes twenty four revolutions while the hour hand passes around once.

A Great Riot About a Hindoo Cow.

From the London Times.

CALCUTTA, Oct. 21.—A serious riot between Hindoos and Mussulmans occurred at Delhi on the 15th inst. on the occasion of the Eedul Bakhar festival. A dispute arose about a cow which the Mohammedans wished to slaughter. The Hindoos affirmed that it belonged to a temple, and offered to purchase it for 1,100 rupees, but the Mohammedans declined the offer. An affray then began, and continued until the arrival of the Deputy Commissioner with a large body of police. Nobody was killed, but several men were severely wounded.

THE BUYING MANIA.

Observations of a Floor Walker on Women who Buy for the Sake of Buying.

"Shopping," said an experienced floor walker, "is, to a considerable extent, a habit, and I know many instances in which it has grown into a passion. The remark is often made that women come into these large general stores and compel our salespersons to show them whole lines of goods out of pure wantonness. I do not think that such is generally the case. The purchasers are seized with the buying mania, that is all, and if they happen to be out of ready money, they feel obliged to make believe buy. I know those customers tolerably well and can pick them right out if I can only get a sight of them in the doorway. They will enter sort of cast down, but brighten right up as soon as they get their eyes on the goods. The sight seems to act on them somewhat as a cocktail operates on a man; its a regular morning stimulus. Women haven't the head to stand against a genuine mark down, and if they can't buy themselves, they are bound to see other people buy.

"A man whose wife deals pretty largely here told me last summer that she had bought seventeen dress patterns in two months, and had only had three of them made up. He said the habit ran in his wife's family. Her sister, it seems, had about two dozen pair of new shoes of all kinds on hand last winter, and only stopped buying when her husband told her a yarn about a woman being sent to a private asylum for doing such things. A dozen pair is not very strong, but two dozen beats even Napoleon III., who had only twenty pair of boots when he was trapped at Sedan.

"No, I do not think the buying mania is stronger than kleptomania, but it is quite as strong, and, in my opinion, a good deal more genuine. Cases of true kleptomania are rare.

"Is not kleptomania a result of what you call the buying mania?" asked the reporter.

"Not by any means. The two cases are entirely different. The chronic shopper has the habit of buying, that's all; I have seldom known one to steal anything. The true kleptomanias, however, acts from an irresistible impulse which only breaks out occasionally. There are bogus kleptomaniacs—imagine, we call them—who tuck away anything they can lay hands on; but they are nothing more than thieves. People exaggerate somewhat as to the number of shoplifters detected in stores; we watch people closely nowadays.

"The women who are the most fond of buying mania well developed are the specialists. A woman used to come in here who would buy six dozen handkerchiefs at once, and even repeat the act on the following day. Inadvertently that she is an excessivist lady, why, it seemed to be her husband. He whose sold twelve gross of handkerchiefs purchased by her, at auction, and his wife did not miss them. It is lucky that he is a very wealthy man. As for the stocking rage, they all have fifteen dozen used to be enough, but now a run, but stockings of all varieties are now the craze. This has been the case for a long time, but this year it is stronger than ever. I do not think the average woman is ever so entirely happy as when she is buying those articles. The trade runs in streaks on stockings; when we marked down those isle thread, silk-finished stockings from 50 to 15 cents this house was stormed. We have about twenty varieties of these goods, varying from 20 cents to $8.50 a pair. There is a grade at $12, but we sell few at that price. The affection for stockings is very general among women. The rich buy three or four dozen of a kind, and the poor buy. I have known plenty of women who were hardly able to buy anything at all to pay 75 cents or $1 for a single pair of stockings. I would be willing to make a small bet that if a woman felt her habitual call to shop, and had but a dollar, she would pass that amount in at the stocking counter.

"Some ladies take very strongly to white goods and keep an immoderate quantity on hand, but it is not a very expensive taste. Those, however, who indulge in a multitude of hats, as some do, will have to pay quite heavily for their fancies. You would not think a dozen hats a small number, for a lady to buy in a single season. Well, I have known women to purchase thirty within that time. All women who have the means and the time indulge in some leading article. It is only when they cannot afford that particular thing that they take to the thread and needle business.

"Which are the most extravagant? The large buyers, by all odds. If you want to contrast to look over some of the collections of laces in private hands, you would be surprised. There are women in New York who have laces to a larger amount than the average dealer is able to keep in stock. Fans also are a rage. I know a lady who has forty fans, but despite how she doesn't manage to keep herself cool with them."

LOST BANK BOOKS.

The Precautions Used to Prevent the Finders from Drawing the Money.

A rosy-cheeked young woman, whose eyes were red from crying, went into an east side savings bank yesterday, and, between her sobs, said to a clerk:

"Sure I've lost it. I don't know what to do."

"Your bank book, hey? What's the number?"

"I don't know, sir."

"When did you make your first deposit?"

"On the 25th of February. My month was up on the 24th, and I came down the next day and put in $7."

"What's your name?"

"Mary O'Brien, sir."

A giant ledger was swung around on a revolving stand. There was a great fluttering of its big leaves, and the clerk ran his finger down a long column of names.

"No, 9,782," he said. "Now tell me the names of your mother and father, where you were born, and your occupation."

The girl did so, and the clerk, after taking the number, told her to come back in a week.

"What are you going to do with it?" the reporter inquired.

"Advertise for the bank book," said the clerk. "We don't turn up at the end of a week we will give the girl a new one. The chances are about even of the old one being returned. It may be rumpled up and blew around the street until picked up by some ragpicker, or it may be found by some person who may read the advertisement of its loss. It is of no earthly use to any one, for nobody can draw the money, as we know that the book has been lost.

"Why did you ask the young woman the names of her parents and where she was born?"

"Just to see if she was really the owner of the lost bank book. When a person opens an account with the bank, he writes his name in that big book near your elbow. Then we ask him certain questions, and note the replies. This is done as a means of identification. If the young woman who was just in had been unable to answer the questions I asked her I would have kept her book if I could."

"Are many bank books lost?"

"We don't average more than 150 to 200 a year. Some banks lose fewer books. Where the depositors are mainly servant girls and young clerks and workingmen, such as we have here, there are more lost. It is amusing to notice the way the loss affects different people. Some come in looking as if their best friends had died; some seem frightened, and others are defiant, thinking that they have committed a crime, and have got to brazen it out.

"Does the same person ever lose more than one bank book?"

"Yes. I once knew a laboring man who lost three bank books in a year. He used to come in every Monday between 12 and 1 o'clock and deposit $3. He carried his bank book in his trousers pocket doubled in the centre. He always kept the number, so it wasn't very difficult to give him a new book. We never advised any of his books, because it was pretty certain that no one would ever pick them up.

"Do the people that find bank books ever try to draw the money?"

"Once in a while, though I do not remember of any one having done so lately. You see there are numerous safeguards to prevent the wrong person from getting the money. Every depositor is warned to report to the bank