"INCURABLE."

A GHETTO TRAGEDY.

By I. ZANGWILL,
Author of "Children of the Ghetto."

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Cast off among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, Whom thou rememberest no more, and they are cut off from thy hand. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in dark places, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Thou hast put mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them; I am shut up and I cannot come forth. Mine eye wasteth away by reason of affliction. I have called daily upon thee, O Lord, I have spread forth my hands unto thee.—Eighty-eighth Psalm.

There was a restless air about the refuge. In a few minutes the friends of the patients would be admitted. The incurables would hear the latest gossip of the Ghetto, for the world was still very much with these abortive lives, avid of sensations, Jewish to the end. It was an unpretentious institution—two corner houses knocked together—near the east lung of London; supported mainly by the poor at a penny a week, and scarcely recognized by the rich, so that paraplegia and vertigo and rachitis and a dozen other hopeless diseases knocked hopelessly at its narrow portals. But it was a model institution all the same, and the patients lacked for nothing except freedom from pain. There was even a miniature synagogue for their spiritual needs, with the women's compartment religiously railed off from the men's, as if these grotesque ruins of sex might still distract each other's devotions.

Yet the rabbis knew human nature. The sprightly hydrocephalous paralytic, Leah, had had the chair she inhabited carried down into the men's sitting room to beguile the moments, and was smiling fascinatingly upon the deaf blind man who had the Braille Bible at his fingers' ends, and read on as stolidly as St. Anthony. Mad Mo had strolled vacuously into the ladies' ward, and, indifferent to the pretty white-aproned Christian nurses, was loitering by the side of a weird, hatchet-faced cripple, with a stiletto-shaped nose supporting big spectacles. Like most of the patients, she was up and dressed. Only a few of the white pallets ranged along the walls were occupied.

"Leah says she'd be quite happy if she could walk like you," said Mad Mo in complimentary tones. "She always says Milly walks so beautiful. She says you can walk the whole length of the garden." Milly, huddled in her chair, smiled miserably.

"You're crying again, Rachel," protested a dark-eyed, bright-faced dwarf in excellent English, as she touched her friend's withered hand. "You are in the blues again. Why, that page is all blistered."

"No, I feel so nice," said the sad-eyed Russian, in her quaint accent. "You sall not tink I cry because I am not happy. When I read sad tings—like my life—den only I am happy."

The dwarf gave a laugh that made her pendant earrings oscillate. "I thought you were brooding over your love affairs," she said.

"Me!" cried Rachel. "I lost too young my leg to be in love. No, it is Psalm 88 that I brood over. 'I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up.' Yes, I was only a girl when I had to go to Königsberg to find a doctor to cut off my leg. 'Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.'"

Her face shone ecstatic.

"Hush!" whispered the dwarf, with a warning nudge and a slight nod in the direction of a neighboring waterbed, on which a pale, rigid, middle-aged woman lay with shut, sleepless eyes.

"Se cannot understand Englis," said the Russian girl proudly.

"Don't be so sure. Look how the nurses here have picked up Yiddish!"

Rachel shook her head incredulously. "Sara is a Polis' woman," she said. "For years dey are in England and dey learn noding."

"*Ich bin krank! Krank! Krank!*" suddenly moaned a shrivelled Polish grandmother, as if to corroborate the girl's contention. She was squatting monkey-like on her bed, every now and again murmuring her querulous burden of sickness, and jabbering at the nurses to shut all the windows. Fresh air she objected to as vehemently as if it were butter or some other heterodox dainty.

Hard upon her crooning came blood-curdling screams from the room above, sounds that reminded the visitor he was not in a Barnum show, that the monstrosities were genuine. Pretty Sister Margaret—not yet indurated—thrilled with pity, as before her inner vision rose the ashen, perspiring face of the palsied sufferer, who sat quivering all the long day in an easy chair, her swollen, jellylike hands resting on cotton-wool pads, an air pillow between her knees, her whole frame racked at frequent intervals by fierce spasms of pain, her only diversion faint blurred reflections of episodes of the street in the glass of a framed picture; yet morbidly suspicious of slow poison in her drink, and cursed with an incurable vitality.

Meantime Sarah lay silent, bitter thoughts moving beneath her white, impassive face like salt tides below a frozen surface. It was a strong, stern face, telling of a present of pain and faintly hinting of a past of prettiness. She seemed alone in the populated ward, and, indeed, the world was bare for her. Most of her life had been spent in the Warsaw Ghetto, where she was married at 16, nineteen years before. Her only surviving son—a youth whom the English atmosphere had not improved—had sailed away to trade with the Kaffirs. And her husband had not been to see her for a fortnight.

When the visitors began to arrive her torpor vanished. She eagerly raised the half of her that was not paralyzed, partially sitting up. But gradually expectation died out of her large gray eyes. There was a buzz of talk in the room—the hydrocephalous girl was the gay centre of a group; the Polish grandmother who cursed her grandchildren when they didn't come, and when they did, was denouncing their neglect of her to their faces; everybody had somebody to kiss or quarrel with. One or two acquaintances approached the bed-ridden wife, too, but she would speak no word, too proud to ask after her husband, and wincing under the significant glances occasionally cast in her direction. By and by she had the red screen placed round her bed, which gave her artificial walls and a quasi-privacy. Her husband would know where to look for her.

"Woe is me!" wailed her octogenarian country woman, rocking to and fro. "What sin have I committed to get such grandchildren? You only come to see if the old grandmother isn't dead yet. So sick! So sick! So sick!"

Twilight filled the wards. The white beds looked ghostly in the darkness. The last visitor departed. Sarah's husband had not yet come.

"He is not well, Mrs. Kretznow," Sister Margaret ventured to say in her best Yiddish. "Or is he busy. Work is not so slack any more." Alone in the institution she shared Sarah's ignorance of the Kretznow scandal. Talk of it died before her youth and sweetness.

"He would have written," said Sarah sternly. "He is wearied of me. I have lain here a year. Job's curse is on me."

"Shall I to him," Sister Margaret paused to excogitate the word, "write?"

"No. He hears me knocking at his heart."

They had flashes of strange savage poetry, these crude yet complex souls. Sister Margaret, who was still liable to be startled, murmured, feebly, "But——"

"Leave me in peace!" with a cry like that of a wounded animal.

The matron gently touched the novice's arm and drew her away. "I will write to him," she whispered.

Night fell, but sleep fell only for some. Sarah Kretznow tossed in a hell of loneliness. Ah, surely her husband had not forgotten her; surely she would not lie thus till death—that far-off death her strong religious instinct would forbid her hastening! She had gone into the Refuge to save him the constant sight of her helplessness and the cost of her keep. Was she now to be cut off forever from the sight of his strength?

The next day he came by special invitation. His face was sallow, rimmed with swarthy hair; his under lip was sensuous. He hung his head, half veiling the shifty eyes.

Sister Margaret ran to tell his wife. Sarah's face sparkled.

"Put up the screen!" she murmured, and in its shelter drew her husband's head to her bosom and pressed her lips to his hair.

But he, surprised into indiscretion, murmured: "I thought thou wast dying."

A beautiful light came into the gray eyes.

"Thy heart told thee right, Herzel, my life. I was dying for a sight of thee."

"But the matron wrote to me pressingly," he blurted out.

He felt her breast heave convulsively under his face; with her hands she thrust him away.

"God's fool that I am—I should have known; to-day is not visiting day. They have compassion on me—they see my sorrows—it is public talk."

His pulse seemed to stop. "They have talked to thee of me," he faltered.

"I did not ask their pity. But they saw how I suffered—one cannot hide one's heart."

"They have no right to talk," he muttered, in sulky trepidation.

"They have every right," she rejoined sharply. "If thou hadst come to see me even once—why hast thou not?"

"I—I—have been travelling in the country with jewelry. The tailoring is so slack."

"Look me in the eyes! The law of Moses? No; it is a lie. God shall forgive thee. Why hast thou not come?"

"I have told thee."

"Tell that to the Sabbath fire woman! Why hast thou not come? Is it so very much to spare me an hour or two a week? If I could go out like some of the patients, I would come to thee. But I have tired thee out utterly——"

"No, no, Sarah," he murmured uneasily.

"Then why——?"

He was covered with shame and confusion. His face was turned away. "I did not like to come," he said desperately.

"Why not?" Crimson patches came and went on the white cheeks; her heart beat madly.

"Surely thou canst understand?"

"Understand what? I speak of green and thou answerest of blue."

"I answer as thou askest."

"Thou answerest not at all."

"No answer is also an answer," he snarled, driven to bay. "Thou understandest well enough. Thyself saidst it was public talk."

"Ah-h-h!" in a stifled shriek of despair. Her intuition divined everything. The shadowy sinister suggestions she had so long beat back by force of will took form and substance. Her head fell back on the pillow, the eyes closed.

He stayed on, bending awkwardly over her.

"So sick! So sick! So sick!" moaned the grandmother.

"Thou sayest they have compassion on thee in their talk," he murmured at last, half deprecatingly, half resentfully. "Have they none on me?"

Her silence chilled him. "But thou hast compassion, Sarah," he urged. "Thou understandest."

Presently she reopened her eyes.

"Thou art not gone?" she murmured.

"No; thou seest I am not tired of thee, Sarah, my life. Only——"

"Wilt thou wash my skin and not make me wet?" she interrupted bitterly. "Go home. Go home to her!"

"I will not go home."

"Then go under like Korah."

He shuffled out. That night her lonely hell was made lonelier by the opening of a peephole into paradise—a paradise of Adam and Eve and forbidden fruit. For days she preserved a stony silence toward the sympathy of the inmates. Of what avail words against the flames of jealousy in which she writhed?

He lingered about the passage on the next visiting day, vaguely remorseful; but she would not see him. So he went away vaguely indignant, and his new housemate comforted him, and he came no more.

When you lie on your back all day and all night, you have time to think, especially if you do not sleep. A situation presents itself in many lights from dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn. One such light flashed on the paradise and showed it to her as but the portico of purgatory. Her husband would be damned in the next world, even as she was in this. His soul would be cut off from among its people.

On this thought she brooded till it loomed horribly in her darkness. And at last she dictated a letter to the matron, asking Herzel to come and see her.

He obeyed, and stood shame-faced at her side, fidgeting with his peaked cap. Her hard face softened momentarily at the sight of him, her bosom heaved, suppressed sobs swelled her throat.

"Thou hast sent for me?" he murmured.

"Yes; perhaps thou didst again imagine I was on my deathbed?" she replied, with bitter irony.

"It is not so, Sarah—I would have come of myself—only thou wouldst not see my face."

"I have seen it for twenty years—it is another's turn now."

He was silent.

"It is true all the same. I am on my deathbed."

He started. A pang shot through his breast. He darted an agitated glance at her face.

"Is it not so? In this bed I shall die. But God knows how many years I shall lie in it."

Her calm gave him an uncanny shudder.

"And till the Holy One, blessed be He, takes me, thou wilt live a daily sinner."

"I am not to blame. God has stricken me. I am a young man."

"Thou art to blame!" Her eyes flashed fire. "Blasphemer! Life is sweet to thee—yet perhaps thou wilt die first."

His face grew livid. "I am a young man," he repeated tremulously.

"Thou dost forget what Rabbi Eliezer said: 'Repent one day before thy death'—that is to-day, for who knows?"

"What wouldst thou have me do?"

"Give up——"

"No, no," he interrupted. "It is useless. I cannot. I am so lonely."

"Give up," she repeated, "thy wife."

"What sayest thou? My wife! But she is not my wife. Thou art my wife."

"Even so. Give me up. Give me Gett (divorce)."

His breath failed, his heart thumped at the suggestion.

"Give thee Gett!" he whispered.

"Yes. Why didst thou not send me a bill of divorcement when I left thy home for this?"

He averted his face. "I thought of it," he stammered. "And then——"

"And then?" He seemed to see a sardonic glitter in the gray eyes.

"I—I was afraid."

"Afraid!" She laughed in grim mirthlessness. "Afraid of a bed-ridden woman!"

"I was afraid it would make thee unhappy."

The sardonic gleam melted into softness, then became more terrible than before.

"And so thou hast made me happy instead!"

"Stab me not more than I merit. I did not think people would be cruel enough to tell thee."

"Thine own lips told me."

"Nay—by my soul——" he cried, startled.

"Thine eyes told me, then."

"I feared so," he said, turning them away. "When she—came into my house, I—I dared not go to see thee—that was why I did not come, though I always meant to, Sarah, my life. I feared to look thee in the eyes. I foresaw they would read the secret in mine—so I was afraid."

"Afraid!" she repeated, bitterly. "Afraid I would scratch them out! Nay, they are good eyes. Have they not seen my heart? For twenty years they have been my light. Those eyes and mine have seen our children die."

Spasmodic sobs came thickly now. Swallowing them down, she said: "And she—did she not ask thee to give me Gett?"

"Nay—she was willing to go without. She said thou wast as one dead—look not thus at me. It is the will of God. It was for thy sake, too, Sarah, that she did not become my wife by law. She, too, would have spared thee the knowledge of her."

"Yes, ye have both tender hearts! She is a mother in Israel and thou art a spark of our father, Abraham."

"Thou dost not believe what I say?"

"I can disbelieve it and still remain a Jewess." Then satire boiling over into passion, she cried vehemently: "We are threshing empty ears. Thinkst thou I am not aware of the judgments—I, the granddaughter of Reb Shloumi? Thinkst thou I am ignorant, thou couldst not obtain a Gett against me—me who have borne thee children, who have wrought no evil? I speak not of the Beth-Din, for in this impious country they are loath to follow the judgments, and from the English Beth-Din thou wouldst find it impossible to obtain the Gett in any case, even though thou didst not marry me in this country, nor according to its laws. I speak of our own Rabbonim—thou knowest even the Maggid would not give thee Gett merely because thy wife is bed ridden. That—that is what thou wast afraid of."

"But if thou art willing," he replied eagerly, ignoring her scornful skepticism.

His readiness to accept the sacrifice was salt upon her wounds.

"Thou deservest I should let thee burn in the lowest Gehennah," she cried.

"The Almighty is more merciful than thou," he answered. "It is He that hath ordained it is not good for man to live alone, and yet men shun me—people talk—and she—she may leave me to my loneliness again." His voice faltered with self-pity. "Here thou hast friends, nurses, visitors. I, I have nothing. True, thou didst bear me children, but they withered as by the evil eye. My only son is across the ocean; he hath no love for me or you."

The recital of their common griefs softened her toward him.

"Go," she whispered. "Go and send me the Gett. Go to the Maggid; he knew my grandfather. He is the man to arrange it for thee with his friends. Tell him it is my wish."

"God shall reward thee. How can I thank thee for giving thy consent?"

"What else have I to give thee, my Herzel, I who eat the bread of strangers? Truly says the proverb, 'When one begs of a beggar the Herr God laughs!'"

"I will send thee the Gett as soon as possible."

"Thou art right, I am a thorn in thine eye. Pluck me out quickly."

"Thou wilt not refuse the Gett, when it comes?" he replied apprehensively.

"Is is not a wife's duty to submit? Nay, have no fear. Thou shalt have no difficulty in serving the Gett upon me. I will not throw it in the messenger's face * * * And thou wilt marry her?"

"Assuredly. People will no longer talk. And she must bide with me. It is my one desire."

"It is mine likewise. Thou must atone and save thy soul."

He lingered uncertainly.

"And thy dowry?" he said at last. "Thou wilt not make claim for compensation?"

"Be easy—I scarce know where my cesubah (marriage certificate) is. What need have I of money? As thou sayest I have all I want. I do not even desire to purchase a grave—lying already so long in a charity grave. The bitterness is over."

He shivered. "Thou art very good to me," he said. "Good-by."

He stooped down—she drew the bed clothes frenziedly over her face.

"Kiss me not!"

"Good-by, then," he stammered. "God be good to thee!" He moved away.

"Herzel!" She had uncovered her face with a despairing cry. He slouched back toward her, perturbed, dreading she would retract.

"Do not send it—bring it thyself. Let me take it from thy hand."

A lump rose in his throat. "I will bring it," he said brokenly.

The long days of pain grew longer—the summer was coming, harbingered by sunny days that flooded the wards with golden mockery. The evening Herzel brought the Gett, Sarah could have read every word on the parchment plainly if her eyes had not been blinded by tears.

She put out her hand toward her husband, groping for the document he bore. He placed it in her burning palm. The fingers closed automatically upon it, then relaxed, and the paper fluttered to the floor. But Sarah was no longer a wife.

Herzel was glad to hide his burning face by stooping for the fallen bill of divorcement. He was long picking it up. When his eyes met hers again, she had propped herself up in her bed. Two big round tears trickled down her cheeks, but she received the parchment calmly and thrust it into her bosom.

"Let it lie there," she said stonily, "there where thy head hath lain. Blessed be the true Judge."

"Thou art not angry with me, Sarah?"

"Why should I be angry? She was right—I am but a dead woman. Only no one may say Kaddish for me—no one may pray for the repose of my soul. I am not angry, Herzel. A wife should light the Sabbath candles, and throw in the fire the morsel of dough. But thy house was desolate; there was none to do these things. Here I have all I need. Now thou wilt be happy, too."

"Thou hast been a good wife, Sarah," he murmured, touched.

"Recall not the past, we are strangers now," she said, with recurrent harshness.

"But I may come and see thee—sometimes." He had stirrings of remorse as the moment of final parting came.

"Wouldst thou reopen my wounds?"

"Farewell, then."

He put out his hand timidly. She seized it and held it passionately.

"Yes, yes, Herzel! Do not leave me! Come and see me here—as a friend, an acquaintance, a man I used to know. The others are thoughtless—they forget me—I shall lie here—perhaps the Angel of Death will forget me, too." Her grasp tightened till it hurt him acutely.

"Yes, I will come—I will come often," he said, with a sob of physical pain.

Her clasp loosened. She dropped his hand.

"But not till thou art married," she said.

"Be it so."

"Of course, thou must have a 'still wedding.' The English Synagogue will not marry thee."

"The Maggid will marry me."

"Thou wilt show me her Cesubah when thou comest next?"

"Yes. I will borrow it of her."

A week passed. He brought the marriage certificate.

Outwardly she was calm. She glanced through it.

"God be thanked!" she said, and handed it back.

They chatted of indifferent things, of the doings of the neighbors. When he was going she said: "Thou wilt come again?"

"Yes, I will come again."

"Thou art so good to spend thy time on me thus. But thy wife. Will she not be jealous?"

He stared, bewildered by her strange, eerie moments.

"Jealous of thee!" he murmured.

She took it in its contemptuous sense, and her white lips twitched. But she only said: "Is she aware thou hast come here?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Do I know? I have not told her."

"Tell her."

"As thou wishest."

There was a pause. Then the woman spoke.

"Will you not bring her to see me? * * * Then she will know that thou hast no love left for me."

He flinched as at a stab. After a painful moment he said, "Art thou in earnest?"

"I am no marriage jester. Bring her to me. Will she not come to see an invalid? It is a *Mitzvah* (good deed) to visit the sick. It will wipe out her trespass."

"She shall come."

She came. Sarah stared at her for an instant with poignant curiosity; then her eyelids drooped to shut out the dazzle of her youth and freshness. Herzel's wife moved awkwardly and sheepishly. But she was beautiful; a buxom, comely country girl from a Russian village, with a swelling bust and a cheek rosy with health and confusion.

Sarah's breast was racked by a thousand needles; but she found breath at last.

"God bless thee, Mrs. Kretznow," she said gaspingly. She took the girl's hand. "How good thou art to come and see a sick creature!"

"My husband willed it," the new wife said in clumsy deprecation. She had a simple, stupid air that did not seem wholly due to the constraint of the strange situation.

"Thou wast right to obey. Be good to him, my child. For three years he waited on me, when I lay helpless. He has suffered much. Be good to him!"

With an impulsive movement she drew the girl's head down to her and kissed her on the lips. Then, with an anguished cry of "Leave me for to-day!" she jerked the blanket over her face and burst into tears. She heard the couple move hesitatingly away. The girl's beauty shone through the opaque coverings.

"Oh, God!" she wailed. "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, let me die now. For the merits of the patriarchs take me soon, take me soon."

Her vain passionate prayer, muffled by the bedclothes, was wholly drowned by ear-piercing shrieks from the ward above—screams of agony mingled with half-articulate accusations of poisoning—the familiar paroxysm of the palsied woman who clung to life.

The thrill passed again through Sister Margaret. She uplifted her sweet, humid eyes.

"Ah Christ!" she whispered. "If I could die for her!"

BEAUTY IN DISTRESS.

Why a Girl Swimmer Sat on a Cold Raft Till After Sundown.

From the San Francisco Examiner.

The whispering waves rose and fell after the manner of whispering waves at Santa Cruz and elsewhere. There were not many bathers in the surf, for the best of the day was past and the smile had all gone out of the weather.

This was Wednesday afternoon. Away out beyond the float a black speck showed now and then. It was the head of the girl that swims better than anybody else at Santa Cruz. The float is the limit of the ordinary swim down there, but to her the swim to the raft is but the first step of a journey. She swims away out beyond the line of boats that do what they can to make the sunset picturesque.

On Wednesday she tarried at the deserted float on the way out to sea, and when she had gone there remained on the float a bathing skirt. Skirts are rather cumbersome in long-distance swimming. The wind rose a bit and by and by a little wanton wave went over the raft and carried the garment to the edge and other waves reached for it and finally it left the raft and went dancing merrily shoreward. The bay is very breezy nowadays at Santa Cruz, and the skirt was hurried along. Nobody noticed the garment until it had floated close in, and nobody paid much attention then.

After a while the girl who swims better than any one else turned her strokes shoreward. She reached the raft and looked for her skirt, which by this time was being used as a mop by the washing waves on the sandy shore. While a skirt is inconvenient in a long swim, it is practically indispensable in a walk up the beach when a lot of people are looking on. So the best swimmer at Santa Cruz huddled up on the float, where a ladder prevented the people on the beach from seeing whether she had on a bathing skirt or a ball dress.

Pretty soon people noticed her there and wondered why she did not come in. The interested sun, tarrying as long as it could, for there was no ladder on his side, had at last to set, and it got colder and colder. More people came on to the beach to wonder. They did not think she was hurt or in danger, for she made no outcry, but it did not seem possible that anybody would voluntarily sit on a wet raft after sunset.

At last somebody saw the skirt swashing around in the sand. The girls and matrons comprehended and giggled. Maybe some of them thought it served her right for being able to swim so well. The cause of the trouble was apparent, but the remedy was not clear. It was very cold by this time, and nobody wanted to swim out to the raft, even to rescue the distressed one. There was no boat handy, and it looked for a time as if the best swimmer at Santa Cruz would have to roost on the cold, wet raft until dark.

But the occasion, as is customary with crises, produced its hero. Addison Mizner, in a new bathing suit, burst through the wondering throng, seized the garment, and plunged into the yeasty sea. As he neared the raft the girl dived and swam to meet him.

She got her skirt and the rest was easy.

AN AMERICAN IN EUROPE.

Observations Upon the Life and Politics of Twenty-five Years Ago.

BY THE LATE
JAMES SHEPHERD PIKE.

XV.

Abbotsford in 1863.

Leaving Durham we enter a picturesque belt, in which we continue well into Northumberland. In the northwesterly part of this county we suddenly come upon long wastes of barren moors. We saw sheep feeding, and some grouse, which even the cars did not frighten, as nobody shoots these birds but their owners. The country is utterly barren, neither hedge, nor forest, nor farm house, and only here and there stone walls, and some small streams in broad and shallow beds of gravel. Crossing the Cheviot Hills, we suddenly find ourselves in a lovely and diversified country, as highly cultivated as any part of England. This character continues till we are set down at Melrose, in Scotland, by the side of the Abbey, and within three miles of Abbotsford.

At Melrose we put up at a quiet, old-fashioned hotel, which had every appearance of having flourished in the heyday of Scott's glory, and had never had a change in any of its appointments from that day to this. Scott is greater to the eye of America than to that of England. In the latter country there was a great aristocratic class which he always seemed to be trying to climb up to, but never to reach. He acted as though he thought they were far above him, and they very complacently accepted the acknowledgment.

I noticed about Abbotsford and on the road to Abbotsford that the thorn hedge does not flourish, but looks broken and thin and straggly, and a gray moss incrusts the trunks. The hackmatack, or larch, is a predominant tree among the black growth in the north of England and in Scotland. It is to be found at the Duke of Rutland's, in Lincoln, and it is everywhere seen on the railroad between Melrose and Edinburgh.

To Abbotsford is half an hour's drive through a not unpleasant country. The atmosphere was heavy with mist and rain. We were stopped at a small doorway or gate on the side of the road, where we saw nothing but a hedgerow with trees. Opening the gate, we found a gravel walk descending a hill, which we followed, as it wound down by the side of a high stone wall with ivy growing upon it. In a moment the dwelling of Walter Scott appeared still further down the hill, the roofs not rising to the road we had left, the building being thus quite out of sight from the highway. The place is uninhabited, and seems still and lonely. We followed down our winding path till we reached the house. There appeared to be no carriage road. Pursuing our way past the end of the house, we came to the front, which faces the valley which extends still further down, at the foot of which runs the Tweed, which showed itself a muddy stream after a small quantity of rain. The ground is level for fifty feet or more from the house, and then smoothly terraced down to the piece of interval which skirts the hither side of the stream, and which is overflowed in freshets. Beyond the river rise some large hills, the tops rounded and bare of trees. The view from the house is not extensive, and would be improved if it sat further up the hill. There is no view whatever except directly in front.

The building is a large, irregular pile, three stories high, and of picturesque appearance, exhibiting a great contrast to Voltaire's house at Ferney. After an external examination we found our way back to the house, where we were admitted and taken over the premises by a gruff guide. How can a guide be otherwise than gruff who has to attend every day to a multitude of brainless tourists, and repeat the same thing to every one, besides having to answer a thousand tiresome questions? There were small doors at the end and in front of the building, but nowhere a main front entrance or a large main hall.

We entered a contracted basement hall and descended a narrow winding staircase, which led directly to the door of the study on one hand and to the armor hall on the other. We were taken first into the former, a small room of about 12 by 15 feet, and holding Scott's writing desk and the leather-covered armchair in which he used to sit. Here on the lower shelves, on one side, behind glass doors are the remains of the author's personal effects, his walking staff, his hatchet, &c. His manuscripts are in Edinburgh, and belong to the city. There is a little anteroom to the library, and a small climbing stairway to his sleeping room in an opposite corner. There is but one window in this study, and this looks out on a small garden, which lies on the hill in the rear of the house, but which in Scott's time was only a gravelled courtyard, affording no view at all.

We passed out of the study by a small corner door into the main library. This is the largest room in the house, and is 18 or 19 feet by 37 or 38, though announced in the guide books as being 50 by 60 feet.

There is a recess which looks out on the terraces and the stream below, the waters of which are barely visible. The ceiling is elaborately carved in small panels of oak, from curious devices copied from Melrose Abbey, and the room is lined on nearly all sides with books behind wire-gauze doors.

At the end of the library is the drawing room, 23 by 18 feet, fronting still the terrace and river, and next to that comes the dining room on the same front, not quite so large, in which the great author died.

There are two other small rooms, filled with all manner of curiosities and relics, and from these we pass into the long, narrow room, where there is another rich collection of armor, Roman camp kettles, and every other kind of curiosity, which is called "the Hall," though it seems to have no particular claim to the appellation.

Here is the last suit of clothes worn by the great novelist, in a glass showcase, now placed beyond the reach of mischievous hands. Formerly some one filched a button from the coat when it was in a more exposed situation. The coat is a dingy brown, and looks the worse for wear. The trousers are a small black-and-white plaid, and the vest some light-colored thin stuff. A pair of buff leather gaiters and a pair of stout shoes close the inventory.

In one of the smaller rooms is the gun of Rob Roy Mac Gregor, and in a showcase of curiosities his great leather purse and numerous other similar trophies of the curious industry of Scott.

The collection is very remarkable as the labor of one man, and he a hard-working author. But the stranger regards it only as he regards any other museum, and in this light it is more curious than extensive.

In the "speak a bit" or anteroom of the study is a cast of the author's head taken after death. Its great height, as shown in all his pictures and busts, is seen by this to be no exaggeration. The shaven poll measures from its top to the root of the nose, or base of the skull, six inches, while from that point to the under side of the chin is but five and a half inches, a very unusual proportion in the human head, to which I do not recall any parallel except in the busts of Bacon and Voltaire. Abbotsford was only a toy when Scott bought it. It is thought not to be worth much for cultivation even now.

The present proprietor is an eminent London lawyer, Mr. Hope Scott, who follows the Scottish custom and takes the name of his wife when he marries an heiress. He belongs to the Hope family of Amsterdam, who were originally Scotch. The first of the family was a money lender in Edinburgh, and loaned to the court, and at last got ennobled as Lord Hopetoun, a house which still exists. Mr. Hope Scott married Lockhart's daughter, and inherits Abbotsford by this marriage.

We bid adieu to the solitary state of Abbotsford and ride back to the Melrose, stopping at the famous abbey of that name, which is now converted into an object of commercial speculation. It lies in the village, and we enter the grounds through a locked gate in a high fence. It is a clean cut, beautiful specimen of a gothic ruin, which looks as if it existed to show how an attractive and orderly ruin could be manufactured. The grass grows in the most approved style of English shaven lawns, and nothing can be more dainty than the manner in which everything is kept. Some longer, wilder, and more withered grass, and even weeds, would be more in keeping with the place. But it is Melrose Abbey kept in order for dainty people, and it is not worth while to be hypercritical.

We trod the grounds as we had done those of Abbotsford, remembering with amazement how the marvellous power of Scott had peopled this whole region with the children of his imagination.

He brings a fat annual harvest of tourists to fill the pockets of railway owners, hotel keepers, hack drivers, and porters, and endows with perennial prosperity whole districts of country. If anybody can be called a public benefactor in Scotland, it is certainly Scott.

Edinburgh.

After viewing the ruins in a Scotch mist and drizzle, we hurried into the cars and went on to Edinburgh, the road thither running through a charming country all the way. We meet with very few of the barren gravel hills which abound a little further south and form the moors. The cultivation is even more neat than in England. The grain stacks are circular, and sometimes twenty of them lie together in a yard, well thrapped over the thatching. These small stacks are a necessity of the climate, as fine weather in autumn and winter cannot be depended on. The days are short, no more than seven hours between sunrise and sunset in midwinter in Edinburgh, and shorter still as you go north. The sun rises here in January at a quarter before 9 and sets at a quarter before 4.

It is a striking peculiarity of Edinburgh that its buildings are constructed of a stone of gray color, which does not blacken by time and smoke, a great relief in these high and gloomy latitudes. A deep ravine splits Edinburgh in two lengthwise, which is crossed by several bridges. It is broad at the bottom, and affords a commodious outlet for the railroad trains. Princess street, the chief street of the city, runs along the top of the ravine on one side, and throughout its broad and airy way fronts the opposite hillside, whose buildings rise story after story above one another, showing by night a brilliant broadside of illumination, rising in places no less than sixteen stories. A little way up the gorge the castle projects into view, standing steep over the ravine, the hither side lined with gardens. All the streets in this part of the town are wide and and airy from their height, and open spaces and squares surround them.

On Calton Hill is an unfinished monument to the heroes of Waterloo, consisting of a few columns, which are yet to swell into an edifice when the original plan is carried out.

At the foot of the hill lies the palace of Holyrood. Beyond are the crags, and rising still higher in their rear is the single round abrupt hill with the flat top known to all the world as Arthur's Seat.

At Holyrood we examined the long line of portraits of the Kings of Scotland, actual and fabulous, amounting to some 100 and over. As the Kings themselves are mostly apochryphal, it is not to be presumed that the likenesses are in all cases exact. In this gallery the Pretender kicked his heels high after his two victories over the English, just before the final settlement at Culloden. It is a good dancing hall, but he danced too soon.

The rooms of Mary Queen of Scots remain in their original condition. They are the theatre of a romantic page in the history of Scotland, and while other parts of the castle have been renewed these are allowed to remain untouched. Mary's sleeping room and bed and chamber furniture; her little supper room, from whence Rizzio was dragged out to be assassinated; her dressing room and audience chamber, where Rizzio was despatched with fifty-six wounds, remain unchanged, the floor yet discolored by Rizzio's blood. Her mirror still hangs on the wall and a fragment of one of her blankets remains on the bed. The walls are covered with tapestry brought by her from France, looking old and faded, and darned in places to keep it from falling to pieces. Here, too, is the forlorn bedstead on which Charles I. and the Pretender slept, its velvet curtains hanging in rags and tatters.

The stairways remain up which Rizzio's assassins climbed and descended. The little room where he was supping with Mary when surprised measures but 7 by 11 feet.

The palace is small, comparatively, and has a regular quadrangular courtyard, giving the building a very habitable air.

The old chapel adjoining, in which Mary was married, is a roofless ruin, and its floor continues to be used as a burying ground. It is well known as the remains of an abbey of some 700 years' standing.

From the Palace of Holyrood we rode up through the Canongate, passing John Knox's old house and his church, and the site of the old Tolbooth, now occupied by a church, till we reached the castle. Here is a large old-fashioned cannon, supposed to have been forged in Mons in 1421, like some others still to be seen on the Continent. It has a 20-inch bore, and is made of lateral bars of iron an inch thick, laid like the staves of a barrel and jacketed with wrought-iron hoops three inches in thickness.

As the wind blew fiercely and the heavy clouds were threatening, our stay on this lofty eminence was shortened. We could see how fine a view the site commanded on a clear day. Indeed, all Edinburgh, and everything in its vicinity, is to be seen from various points in its neighborhood.

It is difficult to exaggerate the beauty of the views about Edinburgh. The surrounding eminences are numerous and lofty, Arthur's Seat being the highest, and rising to 800 feet. But the drizzle and darkness of autumn in these latitudes damp the ardor of the traveller as well as restrict the dimensions of his horizon. But one cannot escape the view of the broad sweep of cultivated country, the picturesque hills and high bluffs, all within reach of a drive of a couple of miles.

Burns's monument in Edinburgh is a circular tower, ornately finished, with a room at the base in which is a bust of the poet, and a great number of his manuscripts and letters framed and hung on the wall. There is also Burns's sword cane, used when he was an exciseman. In his signatures to the most of these letters Burns spelt his name Burness. A notable peculiarity of Edinburgh is to be seen in the number of its institutions called hospitals, which have been founded from time to time by rich men, and go by their name, for the purpose of affording education and a home for orphans. Some of them are of magnificent proportions. The Queen wished to purchase one of them for a palace, but it could not be diverted from the purpose to which it had been devoted.

One of the show places of Edinburgh, interesting to a descendant of the Pilgrims, is the house where John Knox dwelt. It was built in 1490. It remains unchanged, and the chair in which he sat is still preserved. The ceilings are low and the rooms as dark and gloomy as was the old reformer's theology. But Scotland bravely adheres to him and his teachings, and the study and practice of theology is still a chief source of national entertainment. The Rev. Dr. Candlish stands at the head of modern Scotch divines now that Dr. Chalmers is gone. His delivery is marked by an extraordinary nervous twisting and squirming of his body, which at times almost threaten to throw him out of the pulpit. This singular manner is copied by his pupils to such an extent as to often excite the ridicule of the worldly minded.

Among the other notabilities of the city is Prof. Simpson, the celebrated physician, whose fame is world wide. He has a large house with a broad and deep entrance hall, which is always crowded with patients, mostly of the female sex, who come to consult this great proficient of the healing art. They take their turn, and it often happens that not the half of the persons present in any one day are able to reach the Doctor. He is the son of a baker, and to a noble patient who came from England and professed that she had certainly met him at some hotel in Edinburgh years before, he replied: "It is very like, madam; I served hot rolls at that tavern for many years."

He is short and fat, with a benevolent expression of countenance, and very simple and unpretending in his ways. His mind is vivacious and suggestive, with a quick and active recollective power. He is curious, ingenious, voluble, and entertaining, and his spirit is as ambitious as it is canny and gentle. He is specially interested in Scottish archæology, on which he has published an entertaining and exhaustive address of great merit. He is looked upon in Scotland as the discoverer of anæsthesia, while in reality this honor belongs to New England. The Professor's connection with this great discovery was the substitution of chloroform for ether, which was the agent first used at the Massachusetts Hospital. The Professor is bold in the use of remedial agents, and he does not hesitate to resort to the Cæsarean operation in extreme cases. But for his intellectual diversions, he declares, he would die of women and children. Yet the time he takes for them must be robbed from his patients.

The magnificent pile reared in Edinburgh to the memory of Walter Scott fitly emphasizes the relative significance he bears in the Scottish mind to his countrymen. If not the Great Man of Scotland, he is indubitably its Great Author. And all the remaining monuments of Scotland put together would fail to rival this one ornamental pile. Jeffrey's inscription is labored and costive, and does no justice either to himself or his subject. He suffered the critic to get the better of the man.

But whatever Scott's relative prominence, the figure of Burns swells before the mind of the visitor in commanding proportions, and the memorials of no other are so eagerly sought out.

The story of the rustic's brief career of eight or ten years has sunk deep into the world's heart. The weary way he trod is reverently followed, and every step deepens the interest that is felt in his fate, till we reach his petition to a relative, from his dying bed, praying for ten pounds to keep his "emaciated body" out of the jail that threatened him.

It is pitiful to read the memorials which now disfigure his monumental edifice in Edinburgh. Here is a distinguished duke giving him, not of his abundance, which was the real want of Burns, but that cheapest of all commodities, advice, which he did not want. The amount of it all was to stop writing verses, to devote himself to some great work, and quit drinking gin, advice at once worthless and impertinent under any circumstances, but especially so to a man dying of poverty.

The British Government is sometimes reproached for its grudging hospitality to Burns. But to tell the truth, it must be exonerated. It is understood that Burns implicated himself by his poetic ardor while an officer of the Government, to an extent quite inexcusable for any patriotic subject. He sympathized with the French revolutionists in a manner not compatible with his loyalty to his own Government. It is bad enough in a subject to do this, but for an officer under the Government it is worse. Still, it was but the ardor of the poet, not the vice of the man. The Government, to its honor, did not resent or punish; it could not reward.

In the Land of Burns.

On our way back to England we took a circuit by the way of Ayr. About three miles from the village is the house where Burns was born. It is now owned by the Burns Society. This is an association of gentlemen who assemble there annually, or oftener, to commemorate his memory. They have erected a large hall in the rear of the cottage for their meetings. Its walls are adorned by likenesses of the poet, quotations from his poems, and numerous other memorials. The entire premises are let as a house of entertainment for £100 a year. In large letters it is proclaimed that the occupants are "licensed to sell spirits and beer." The chief interest of the place consists, of course, in the original cottage, which is unchanged throughout.

It is of stone, laid in clay mortar, with a heavy thatch roof. The side walls are very thick, and the ceiling can be easily reached with the hand. It has a stone floor, just as it was originally made. There are two rooms below, and a low garret above. The one in which the poet was born has a small recess large enough to admit of a bed, six feet by four. Here he came into this world. The little window, which afforded the only daylight at that time, contains four panes of 6x8 glass. A front window has been added since.

Adjoining is the sitting, or "best," room; though the difference is imaginary. We tried in vain to persuade the female servant who was in charge to show us the garret, into which Hawthorne says he climbed through the trap door, which is the only method of ingress.

The walls of the house extend beyond the "best room" on the street, and here was the stable under the same roof. At the opposite end a small addition has been made in modern times, where the company is entertained. The bedroom is now occupied as the kitchen, while the walls and rude furniture of the other are plastered all over with the names of visitors. When the furniture gets entirely covered it is sold off at a good price as original, and another set is introduced.

A quarter of a mile further on is Kirk Alloway. Its roof is gone, but its walls are standing, and in good condition. It is in the middle of a small, well-filled graveyard. One hundred yards distant is Bonnie Doon and Tam O'Shanter bridge. It is known as the "Old Bridge." It is wholly of stone, very high, and good for a thousand years. A single arch spans the stream, which is here bordered by trees, and looking beautiful as a dream.

A picturesque garden and monument to Burns stand close by and overlook the scene. Within the monument, which is a sort of circular temple, is a bust of the poet, ludicrously dramatic. It might as well be called a likeness of the Angel Gabriel as of Burns.

The country, which all about here is very attractive, becomes at Ayr flat and uninteresting, and so continues for a long way along the coast toward Glasgow.

The sea, which washes this whole coast near by Burns's birthplace, never seems to have raised an emotion in the poet's breast. He was a child of the earth and sky.

The cars took us from Ayr to Mauchline by the way of Kilmarnock, whence we rode out two miles to Morsgrial, the farm where Burns lived four years and his brother eighteen, and where so much of his poetry was written. It contains now, as then, a little over 100 Scotch acres, and the house in which the brothers lived still stands.

The farm is well situated at the top of a small hill, and adorned with some large trees near the house.

The soil seems rich and fruitful, as does the field where he ploughed up the daisy and the mouse's nest. It now rents for $10 an acre per annum to a thrifty Scotchman.

Fifty miles distant, on the down road to Liverpool, we come to Dumfries.

Here the poet lived his last five years, here he died, and here in the churchyard stands his monument. The house wherein he dwelt is small, in a narrow street, but comfortable for a "poor man," as he calls himself at the time he lived there. It is of stone, and now has a slate roof. We took a carriage six miles to the Ellisland farm, where Burns once lived, and for three years struggled with his fate only to succumb at last. The soil of this farm is dry and gravelly. It contains eighty-five Scotch acres, and rents for the incredible sum of £200 per annum at the present time. The rents of the Scotch farms strike one as impossible prices, which could only be wrung from hopeless, hard-working penury.

The shilling we paid the old woman for showing us the house and the pane of glass where Burns had written with a diamond "An honest man is the noblest work of God," she declared was the first cent she had ever received on that score, though she had lived there seventeen years.

The house is situated away from the main road, at the end of a long lane, facing the winding Nith, which runs half hidden close in front. The place is cosey enough, but there is no view as at Morsgrial.

A statesman who deals only with the present is soon forgotten. Unlike the poet and the philosopher, who treat of things of eternal interest, his memory soon fades.

Here, for example, is a great monument in Edinburgh to the memory of Lord Melville. It stands on a pillar, like Trajan's column, and is more conspicuous than all other monuments and statues in Edinburgh put together, except Scott's. Most travellers are forced to inquire, Who is Melville? One finally recollects that he was a member of the British Cabinet in Pitt's time. But here he stands in Edinburgh attracting universal attention from every visitor, while we have to look close to find the memorials of Burns, Hume, Knox, Adam Smith, Chalmers, Watt, and many other eminent Scotchmen far better known to the world, and who will be far longer remembered. It does injustice to a man to have his monument greater than his reputation.

They have a large library in Edinburgh called the Advocates' Library, one of five in these islands, entitled by law to receive a copy of all books published in the Kingdom. This great library I found shut to-day (Friday), not to be opened till Tuesday following, in consequence of this being Sacramental Fast week. Because the religious people appoint a Church fast on a Thursday, all reading, investigation, and literary labor dependent on this great public institution must be suspended by everybody, not only for that day, but for the four succeeding days. This may be called forcing grace to abound.

The Scotch mind is a singular compound of credulity and incredulity of faith and skepticism. The typical Scotchman believes every fable of his religious system. He dotes on the prophecies, he thinks they have been fulfilled, and are being fulfilled in modern times, and are to be fulfilled to the letter, in future history. That is the letter of the interpretation of his Church. Thus he undoubtingly holds that the Jews are to return to Palestine, and believes the overthrow of the Pope is foretold in the Scripture.

Apropos of the overthrow of the Pope, he was a bold and ingenuous man who first attacked the Papacy from the prophecies. The audacity of a man is wonderful who wrests the Scriptures from the possession of God's vicegerent on earth, who claimed to be their peculiar guardian, interpreter, and custodian, and in an important sense their author, since it is he who compiled them, who has pronounced upon their authenticity.

To profess to find in this very book of God, thus confided to the Pope and his Church, the record which confounds his claims, and makes him out a charlatan and a pretender, who is to be ignominiously dethroned and destroyed, shows a capacity of belief which would not seem to be easily overtaxed, as well as a boldness of exegesis not easily matched.

Yet, while all this and more of the same sort is readily enough digested by the Scotch mind, its skepticism of all the modern phenomena of spiritualism, animal magnetism, rappings, and table turnings, is unhesitating.

The devout Scotchman holds all these things to be utterly untrustworthy, in whole and in part, and wholly unsustained by evidence; as, in fact, being unsustainable by evidence, since what is testified to is so strange and so unnatural—thus taking the very ground occupied by Hume in regard to miracles, that human testimony is inadequate to their support, because it runs counter to the experience of mankind.

It is in this way that these stout religionists adopt a method of reasoning which if applied to their own faith would not leave it an inch of ground to stand upon.

But then we shall not blame the Scotchmen too much, for theirs is an inconsistency common to all mankind, only we have it here in a very prominent form.

HOW FRANCE BUILDS ROADS.

HIGHWAYS AROUND ST. ETIENNE, HAVRE, MARSEILLES, RHEIMS.

Durability, Smoothness, and Cleanliness of the Roads—How Broad Tires Help—The Advantage of Instant and Minute Repair.

The French road system of to-day was founded by the first Napoleon and finished by the third.

During the last dozen years no important new roads have been opened, and few new roads of any kind, the work now required being to keep up the network already laid out. This splendid system of highways has raised the value of lands and contributed to the national wealth by putting peasant proprietors in easy communication with their markets.

Typical French roads of the highest class are those in the departments of the Loire and the Isère. In the Isère are perpetually snow-clad Alps, 11,000 feet high, and furious glacial torrents descend upon the roads now and then. Commercial Agent Loomis of St. Etienne says he has seen, after a summer rain of thirty-six hours, fifty yards of national road, including a small bridge, washed away by a torrent from a cloud-capped ice field, with an almost vertical fall of 2,000 feet, and yet has found the road repaired and made passable within three hours by the road men in that remote region.

Thorough construction, vigilant watching, and prompt repair are the secrets of French success with roads. They are of three kinds, national, department, and township. The general rule in rural districts, is to sacrifice the straight line in order to follow the valleys as much as possible, rising by gentle grades where this is required. Side drainage is provided for, and the road, of course, is highest in the middle, the sides sloping transversely about an inch to the yard.

Macadamizing is the rule of construction, except for the towns, and the layer of broken stones is usually placed directly on the beaten ground, though sometimes a layer of sand or stones intervenes to help the drainage. To the removal of old material, worn and wasted by use, the French give great attention. After their roads are finished they are carefully rolled by the compressor, which consists of one or two heavy cylinders drawn by horses or propelled by steam. For nearly half a century the French engineers have generally used on roadways built for heavy traffic basaltic rock where it can be had near by. Its cost is about $1,500 for the amount used on a mile of road, and Mr. Loomis says that it is not only far better, but about 30 per cent. cheaper than the crushed granite formerly so much employed.

The cost of constructing a paved roadway Mr. Loomis puts at $2.35 per square metre, with 8 cents a year for repair, or, on a macadamized road, from 5 to 10 cents. Keeping in mind that a kilometre is six-tenths of a mile, we learn that the average cost of building a road per kilometre is $6,600, the valley roads costing about $4,000 and those in the mountains $9,000. The annual cost of repair is $4.40 per kilometre, while that of street paving per square metre is $2.43. These small estimates for fine roads are largely due to the cheapness of labor in France, an ordinary workman getting 58 cents a day; a man and horse costing $1.55 per day; a foreman, $20 per month; a supervisor, $600 per year; an engineer, $1,000, and a head engineer $2,000.

Durability, evenness, and cleanliness are the attributes which Consul Knowles of Bordeaux ascribes to the French roads of his district. "They are swept and watered every day, and kept in scrupulous order. No rugged eminences or depressions jar the nerves of the traveller riding over them. Neither dirt, decay, nor rubbish is about to suggest neglect or ill care. They are immense garden paths, amid a marvellous landscape of verdure and cultivation." The materials are usually marble, flintstone, or ophite cleansed from foreign substances. Each piece must be able to pass through a ring 2½ inches in diameter. When the layer is put down smaller pieces fill in the interstices, and then comes to rolling with the thin layer of clay or earth on top. In the Department of the Gironde the inhabitants of the district as a whole bear the cost of construction and maintenance. Each taxpayer must work three days each year or furnish a money equivalent, the latter being reckoned at two francs for a man or a horse or an ox, and one franc for a cart, while a day is reckoned at ten hours of labor for a man and eight for a beast of burden.

Mr. Knowles says that "the streets in the larger cities of France are, as a rule, paved with the ordinary cobblestones, resting on a 6-inch deep bed of sand and earth. The stones are quarried principally in Belgium, and vary in size from 5 to 3⅜ inches in length and breadth and 4⅜ in depth to 7⅛ by 4⅜ in length and breadth and 6 in depth." When money is appropriated for a road-building contract one per cent. is retained as a fund for the widows and orphans of those who are fatally injured while working on the roadways.

It is only fair to note that the superiority of the French to our own roads is largely due to the trifling damage caused by frost in France compared with that which almost destroys our roads every year. Mention has already been made of the fact that the 7-inch coating of broken stone forming the body of the French road has a bearing surface of sand, clay, or soil. But such a construction, as O. F. Williams of Havre notes, "would neither withstand the sharp pressure of loaded wagons having narrow ties, nor the upheaval of the usual frosts of the North American winter." Mr. Williams even thinks that "American pavements are very much better constructed than are those of France, all classes being considered," but they "become destroyed in a short time, while those of France increase in excellence with age." And besides her broader tires and greater immunity from frosts, a leading element in the superiority of France is that "all roads have perpetual attention" there. When a rut appears, it is instantly filled and most carefully repaired. The difference between that system and our own is very marked. Then, as to tires, Consul Knowles well makes this observation:

> Every freighting and market cart here is a roadmaker. Its tire is from 3 to 10 inches in width, usually from 4 to 6, and so rolls the road. With the few four-wheeled freight vehicles used the tires are rarely less than 6 inches, and the rear axle is about 14 inches longer than the fore, so that the rear or hind wheels run in a line about an inch outside of the line rolled by the fore wheels; thus with a 6-inch tire two feet of road width is well rolled by every passing wagon. The varied gauge is also usually observed with cabs, hacks, and other four-wheeled vehicles, so that they become roadmakers instead of rutmakers, as in our country.

The narrow-tired wagon rides more smoothly over a bad road, but the broad tire helps to prevent the road from becoming bad. We are also at a disadvantage from the greater cost of roads here, both in material and labor. Each of these cost perhaps double as much, while double the depth of material must be used with our frosts and tires. Hence it is not surprising if our roads cost eight times as much as those of France, when equally good. An important hint is also given by Mr. Williams in noting that whereas in Europe farm ponds are placed so as to catch surface water, and every spring is confined and utilized; American owners of lands abutting on the highway actually turn their water into the highways.

Consul Trail of Marseilles says the annual cost of maintaining the roads outside of the city in the Department des Bouches du Rhone, which is about the size of Delaware, is $458,000. The material is taken near at hand, limestone being preferred. The highways are paved, if very heavy, or where macadamizing will not do, as, for example, when it wears rapidly into dust, which is blown away under the action of violent and continuous winds. In Marseilles the streets of heavy traffic are paved with porphyry at a cost of $3 to $3.50 per square yard, including material and labor. It makes a hard pavement, but becomes too smooth, and this can only partly be obviated by using smaller blocks. In streets of lighter traffic or of steeper incline a hard sandstone is used from La Ciotat, which wears only one-third as well, but does not become so slippery, and its cost is perhaps $2.50 per square yard. Side and cross streets, with very light traffic or heavy incline, are macadamized at a cost of about $1 per square yard, exclusive of sidewalks, about half of this sum being for the broad sandstone gutters.

Consul Preston says that the country roads around Cognac are as good as he ever saw. Consul Atwell, of Roubaix, in the Department du Nord, states that the soil there being sandy clay, ten or twelve inches of gravel, broken brick, slag and so on is first put down as a foundation for the paving stones or broken stone or macadamized material. In the Nantes district, according to Consul Bennett, the country roads are as smooth as asphalt and very solid. A species of quartz is found to give the best results in durability. The cost of repairs is about 5 cents per square metre. The paving of Paris is of course better known here than that of the French country roads, in its varieties of stone, wood, asphalt, and gravel. Consul-General King, however, gives in detail the prices paid for constructing and repairing all four. Rheims, according to Consul Angier, paves its streets with granite Belgian blocks from the Vosges, which cost for a square metre $2.52, while sand at 42 cents and labor at 23 cents make the total $3.17. The country roads are made of crushed stones.

The general conclusion is that the administrative and engineering skill characteristic of France in other matters is shown also in her system of road construction, which is not less remarkable for the excellence of its original construction than for its methods of prompt and thorough repair, which are specially worthy of imitation in America.