

pendent upon a temporarily disordered nervous action, may be an efficient cure. An amusing example was recently furnished by the child of a Christianly Scientific mother. In playing with other children this little one received a bump, which created temporarily disordered nervous action. True to her mother's teaching, she refused to cry, asserting that she felt no pain, a statement which her effort at self-control rendered questionable: she certainly inhibited or controlled a manifestation of that pain. In a moment, however, she suggested to her playmate that, as there was not candy enough to go around, the playmate should imagine that she was eating candy, when she would have the sweet taste in her mouth. Here the success of the hypothesis ended, and at once a lack of harmony in the playmate's environment arose which resulted in a protest against the paucity of the supply of sweets.

It is a very old observation that a dominant idea is valuable in controlling the human being, and whether it be in the bearing of pain or in the devotion which leads the Turk to die contentedly before the Russian bullets, belief is a factor that may be turned to great advantage. Indirectly, Christian Science may prove an aid to medical science. The intelligent physician of to-day could receive no greater aid in the scientific practice of his profession than to be emancipated by his patients from the obligation invariably to prescribe a drug. When people are willing to employ physicians to order their lives so that they may live in health, the custom which binds the physician to prescribe something for his patient will be unnecessary. As we have become more civilized this state of affairs is gradually coming into place; but there still lingers the expectation that the doctor's visit means drugs. Christian Science and Faith-cure, more refined than the spiritualistic beliefs which have preceded them, form an interesting study in mental pathology, and mark an advance from the grosser stage of table-tipping and magnetic doctors to a recognition of the fact that among the weapons employed by the scientific physician of to-day an appeal to a determined purpose to overcome pain is worthy of a place beside antiseptics and anodynes and tonics.

Country Roads.

THERE are few signs that the quite persistent agitation of the question of improving the condition of country roads, which has been in progress for many years, has had an appreciable effect upon the dwellers of our country towns. It may be that in a few isolated instances better and more scientific methods of road-building have been adopted, but in the great majority of towns the old method of scraping the dust and compost from the gutters back again upon the roadway from which travel and the storms of heaven had removed it is the sole form of repair which has been put in practice. The roads are continued thus, in about equally bad condition, throughout the year. They are heavy and even miry in the spring and fall, and dusty and muddy by turns throughout the summer. It is the literal truth that the prevailing method of repairing is the same now as in the early colonial days, when any road was considered good enough for all purposes so long as it had not in it rocks or holes of sufficient size to upset a carriage. As a people we should not have lagged so far behind the nations of the Old World in the art of

road-making if we had not passed so soon from the colonial or frontier stage of settlement into the railroad stage of communication. The advent of the railroad not only threw the post-roads, which were the only lines of communication upon which anything like systematic care was exercised, out of use, but by opening up new regions for settlement they dispersed people over a much wider area, and made the general building of good roads impossible. All roads became simply avenues of approach to the railways, and all were treated with equal neglect.

Appeals have been made many times to the rural population to improve their highways for their own economic benefit, the contention being that a well-made road is the best investment which the inhabitants of a town could make, since it would save them its cost many times over in lessening the wear and tear of vehicles, horses, and oxen, and in economizing time. They could carry heavy loads over it at all seasons of the year with much less strain upon animals and vehicles and far more quickly. It has been estimated by excellent authorities that the present slipshod method of road making and repairing, with its system of "working out the taxes," and the delay and wear and tear, cost each household not less than ten dollars a year. This is far more than the cost of schools, and almost as much as all State and Federal taxes combined. It seems to be impossible, however, to make much impression with arguments of this kind. The country people look at the first cost of the proposed improvement, and refuse to look beyond that to the benefits which the investment would bring.

The great increase in the "summer-boarder industry" during recent years ought to exert a powerful influence in the right direction. That industry has become so important in New England that two governors in that region, those of Maine and New Hampshire, called attention to it in their annual messages last January, and suggested plans for its further development. The governor of New Hampshire estimated the amount of money left in the State during the previous year by summer visitors at \$5,000,000. There are many other States in which this would be a reasonable estimate of the revenue from the same source. The editor of a Vermont newspaper went into particulars upon the value of this industry at the close of the season in August last, and in the course of his analysis said that the presence of one thousand city boarders in a rural country was equivalent to the bringing in of \$100,000 in money to be left in exchange for the products of the inhabitants; that the good effects were felt in every farm in the country, supplying close at home a good market for all its products; and that, taken all together, the "summer-boarder industry leads all others, brings in the most money, and pays the most profit." The same authority went on to say, "But the summer-boarder industry never can be built up if the people go on spoiling the beauty of their roads by cutting away their decorations of shrubs and vines and flowers, which are the very things that the summer boarder comes to see and enjoy." He was dwelling especially upon the esthetic side of the road question, but what he said affords an equally strong argument upon the practical side of it, for there is no surer magnet for the summer boarder than well-made roads which afford pleasant driving at all times.

There is not a rural town within boarding distance of a great city which could not at slight expense assure itself all the city boarders that it could accommodate by the simple process of systematically and intelligently improving and beautifying its roads. If it were to appoint a town committee with power to employ experts, or to obtain expert advice, and to carry out the suggestions thus obtained in road improvement, the mere public advertisement of that proceeding would attract boarders from all directions. The expense would not be great. In nearly every case the gravel or cracked stone necessary for the construction of a serviceable, well-drained road can be obtained within moderate distance. There is, for example, in some parts of Orange County, in New York State, a kind of soft red

sandstone to be found in great abundance, which crushes readily under the wheels and makes a hard, firm road-bed which is never dusty and never muddy, which is yielding to the horses' feet and most agreeable to ride over. Ordinary gravel can be used with almost equally good results. The main thing is to secure something like scientific knowledge in the construction of the road and in the mixture of materials. The vicious idea that anybody can make a road by shoveling dirt into the middle of it from the gutter, or, what is the same thing in a wholesale form, hauling it there by means of a "scraper," must be abandoned at the outset, and not only abandoned but prohibited. Until that is done no reform will be possible.

OPEN LETTERS.

A Play and an Actor.

"FRENCH may be sometimes heard spoken in the Rue de la Paix" of the gay capital of France, says Henry James, and, similarly, it may be said that there may sometimes be seen upon the stage something that looks like nature. I am not of that goodly company of graybeards — though for their opinions I entertain the most profound respect — who contend that the drama is in its decadence, and that the actresses of to-day are not the radiant creatures, nor the actors the brilliant geniuses, who made splendid the glad theaters of two generations ago. Two centuries have nearly slipped by since Colley Cibber cried out against the decadence of the drama and indignantly inveighed against the lewd undraped French dancers and posturers who usurped the then "inconstant stage" of England and drove from it its noblest ornaments. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, in 1702, Steele made public protest, in the prologue to his comedy of "The Funeral," against the supremacy on the stage of matter as opposed to mind; of the ascendancy of the carpenter, the costumer, and the property-man, and the power of the mountebank to banish even Shakspeare from the boards. This protest is worthy of reproduction at this time when the outcry comes, as if it were original, against the carpenter's, machinist's, and upholsterer's drama, so called.

Nature's deserted and dramatic art,
To dazzle now the eye, has left the heart;
Gay lights and dresses, long-extended scenes,
Demons and angels moving in machines;
All that can now or please, or fright the fair,
May be performed without a writer's care,
And is the skill of carpenter, not player.
Old Shakspeare's days could not thus far advance;
But what 's his buskin to our ladder dance?
In the mid region a silk youth to stand,
With that unwieldy engine at command!

The drama has always been, from its birth up, apparently, in a state of decay; the living can easily remember when France denied Christian burial to actors, or when England by formal decree made them vagabonds before the law, and every one is familiar with the old nursery rhyme:

Hark, hark! the dogs do bark,
The beggars are coming to town,
Some in rags and some in jags,
And some in velvet gowns.

But every one, possibly, does not know that the "beggars" therein referred to were the strolling players, though of them there was once the afterward great queen of tragedy, Sarah Siddons, whose portrait Sir Joshua Reynolds painted as the "Muse of Tragedy," and who, reverently painting his name upon the hem of her garment, declared that in being permitted to do so he had achieved fame enough. My authority for saying that Mrs. Siddons was one of the nursery doggerel "beggars" is David Garrick, who, in an unpublished letter to Moody, asks, "Do you know anything of a Mrs. Siddons strolling down your way?" Edmund Kean was another of the motley crew of vagabonds who strolled and starved along England's green lanes or icy roads for years together before he stood the triumphant master of the stage on that bitterly cold and stormy night when, dressed in the gabardine of the Jew, he evoked the plaudits that shook the roof of Drury Lane by his incomparable acting, and by which he saved the fortunes of the house.

I do not believe that the old actors were better or greater than the new. I rather think that they were only different from these, and I am not at all assured that the "sing-song" declamation of Mrs. Siddons, of which Hazlitt makes mention, was as effective as the hurtling words of Bernhardt which are flung straight at the hearts of the audience from her tongue with the force of David's sling, with the directness of the stone, and with effect as startling if not as tragical. Garrick was, no doubt, a great actor, but was his power to subdue an audience to his humor greater than Salvini's in tragedy? It would appear, from all that we know of him, that Garrick was a more accomplished comedian than tragedian. Still, I do not believe that he was the superior of Burton, Burke, Warren, or Jefferson.

I know that the "Clémenceau Case," the "Brass Monkey," and other plays of which they are respectively representative, still hold the stage. I also know that the plays for which the former stand justify all the condemnation of the acted drama which ignorance, begot of prejudice, or wisdom, begot of morality, has thundered against it from pulpit and sanctuary.

At a time when the undraped spectacle, the vapid burlesque, the tainted comedy, the over-wrought melodrama, seem to be most aggressive in their popularity, and at a time when the remaining great old actors of