

HOUSEHOLD.

The Apple Tree

See the graceful apple tree
In the spring,
Bursting buds now unto me
Glow thought-brinz,
Of the happy nesting future
When the tree we watch and nurture
Will be robed in fairest verdure,
Then will sing
In its boughs the livelong morning,
Merry birds, the tree adorning,
And their pretty nestlings warning,
Twisting
In the apple tree

Now in summer see the apple tree
Bending low,
Green leaves waving happily
To and fro,
Dropped the dainty fragrant flowers
From their owners' dainty flowers
In their fragrant feathery showers,
Swoozers of snow,
Then it was the wee germ started,
As a ray of sunshine darted
Through it, and new life imparted,
And it grew.

Blissful days of song and story
Now we greet;
Radiant in her wealth and glory,
Autumn, sweet,
Brown and gold have turned the meadow
Down the green steal fitful shadows,
And its entering the tree throws
At thy feet,
Drops a gift so soft and yellow,
Apple falling ripe and mellow,
Each more luscious than his fellow,
Such a treat!

Fruitful apple tree,
Stands the brave old apple tree,
Brown and bare,
Icy limbs long helplessly
Here and there,
Stripped of all his summer beauty,
Robbed of all his golden fruit, he
Seems to plead so sadly, mutely
For our care,
That I stop to look in pity;
Then a joyous thought comes quickly
Soon glad spring again will tity
Close so fair,
Our old apple tree.

—Frances Rhodes Saunders, in Housekeeper

A Housecleaning Episode.

Once more stand face to face with the inevitable housecleaning. Every housewife dreads it, even if men do pretend to believe that we are just in our "element."

There is no getting around it, health and cleanliness demand this annual upheaval, so why rebel? Yes, dear diary, you know I dread it, don't you? But let me tell you a secret; I am going to control the housecleaning this spring, and not let it control me. You know what I mean. You know how many times I have neglected you for weeks, and then the "reign of terror" over have come weary, penitent and humble, with only a clean house to show for loss of strength and patience.

Yes, we know it is wrong, no Christian can afford to throw off her armor, and become a veritable "Xanthippe" for the sake of cleanliness even, but alas! ambition tries to make us compass the work of two days in one; the result is, we overwork, and forget in the haste and confusion to watch our words. But this year behold a reformation.

You will not be neglected a single day, for I have pledged myself to just one room a day. I shall rest every afternoon, then I will not get worried or fretted, and as a safeguard I will take a text each day to work by. To day I have chosen: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Here comes my helper, so an revoir.

The foregoing is a quotation from my diary on one April 1. And now for the sequel of that "ideal" housecleaning day. I laugh every time I think of it, and it always serves as a tonic when I am about ready for the "inevitable."

That is a good starter—a good dose of laugh tonic, sisters—so I will pass on to the sequel of that morning, and if it causes you to laugh at my expense, all the better.

Things never do move off quite as we plan them, especially during this dreaded season. Expected paperhangers or help fail us, etc., and so we might better start out expecting disappointments, and then we will not be thrown off our guard when they come. But back to this memorable morning. I will not attempt to give "my way," for I never followed the written "how" of any other housewife. I will only venture to say that I begin with the attic and work down.

That year I intended to be thoroughness itself, even to having the floor mopped with turpentine and water, for O, careful housewives, I suspected moths had left their egg around as a result of my inability to say "no" when a friend in need begged the privilege of storing "just a few things" in said attic.

So with "this one thing I do," in my heart, I started for the first floor (leaving my aged mother to attend to any possible callers), accompanied by a Hollander, willing and stout. I said: "Now, John, I want you to carry down all the bedding and clothes you see here and put them on the lines and whip them, and then sweep and mop the floor."

So he decended the flights of stairs with load after load, until he said good naturedly: "Guess you keep boarders, mum, you got so mooh bed tings." At last, smiling his content, he said: "Dot's all!" And I followed after to see if he understood hanging and whipping; then said I as I handed him the beater: "Now, John, I want you to give everything a thorough beating, for I am afraid there are moths in some of them." At my words, poor John turned red, then white, dropped the beater, and started, saying: "I'm mooh afraid of mofs!"

I ran after him saying: "Why, moths won't hurt you, do come back, I will pay you more than you ask." But no, he acted as if he could not get out of my sight too quickly, and only replied: "No, no, mofs, I mooh afraid!" Do you wonder that annoyed as I was at losing him, I sat down and laughed uncontrollably at the idea of a man running away from possible moths? I learned later that he did not understand my meaning, and thought I met the germ of diphtheria, a disease that had been very prevalent and fatal that season. Anyhow I was left in the lurch, but thinking of my text, I said: "Never mind, let the clothes hang there until lunch time, and then I will send the man to hunt up some one not afraid of mofs." So back to the attic I went, and so busy was I looking through trunks and sorting bundles that I forgot all else, until, hark! "thunder," then for the first time I noticed that the attic had grown dark, and—"O, these clothes!" I flew downstairs, and looked in dismay at that array of bedding representing three generations. I looked up and down the street, but there was no help to be had for love or money. The thunder roared and the lightning flashed and I did just what you would have done,

good sisters, in such an emergency, even if "la grippe" had worn you to a shadow, and you thought you had little strength—I lunged and I tugged, until clothes, feather beds and all the rest of the heirlooms, were under shelter. Then the rain fell in torrents, and "weak as a rag," I threw myself on the sofa and cried?—no, no, I glanced towards my open desk, and as I contrasted my vanquished self with the madam who, a few hours before, talked so glowingly to her diary, I laughed, then thinking of my text, I laughed again, saying: "Well, it was a good one, the evil of this day is sure y sufficient."

One "sequel" is usually considered enough, but I think I will add another. I am not the only one who smiles as a result of the Hollander's blunder. I can afford to smile as I recall it all, as it never can occur again by any possible chance, for my attic is now almost as bare as the cupboard of the famous "Mother Hubbard," and my heart is made warm as I think that its contents are no longer food for moths, but in the homes of the needy, thanks to the lesson sent me by the manna of "mofs."

If any of my sisters are carelessly or selfishly hoarding up "heirlooms," or unnecessary bedding and clothes as I was, I almost hope you will see yourselves reflected in an unflattering a mirror as I did that April morning, and that the result will be more empty attics, and less suffering poor.

Desserts of Nuts.

The "foam of ches nuts," hazelnuts, or of any nut makes a dainty dessert. For this purpose the nut must be shelled and blanched, boiled till thoroughly soft in water, then drained and washed and rubbed through a fine puree sieve. About a cupful of the flaked chestnut meats will be sufficient to use with a pint of cream. Whip the cream to a stiff froth, sweeten it with powdered sugar, using about three heaping table spoonfuls, adding the flaked chestnuts (sprinkling them in by degrees). You may use a tablespoonful of Maraschino to flavor this dessert, or a little orange flavor if you prefer it to the liquor. Let the dessert be thoroughly chilled before it is served. Sometimes a half-cupful of grated chocolate, sweetened and flavored, is added to the foam. The clear pulp of the boiled chestnuts is sometimes passed through the puree sieve, slightly salted and served in a mound, surrounded by whipped cream and garnished by quarters of glace oranges.

Keeping Fruit and Meats.

Some meats and most fruits keep best at a temperature slightly above the freezing point. The essential thing is that fermentation shall not take place and a temperature some degrees above freezing will ordinarily prevent it. Milk may be kept sweet in the hottest weather by sealing it in a glass jar and placing the jar in a porous vessel of water. The constant evaporation of water through the pores of the containing vessel suffices to keep the milk at a temperature low enough to prevent fermentation.

Tried Receipts.

Green Pea Soup.—Boil and mash through the colander 2 qts. of peas, and add 1 lb. of butter and 1 qt. of sweet milk; then stir into a little milk, one tablespoonful of flour, and add it to the other ingredients while they are boiling, to thicken it. A slice of good, cold boiled ham imparts a fine flavor.

Buns.—Early in the morning make a sponge of one quart of flour. As soon as it rises well, beat into it 2 eggs, 2 tablespoonfuls of lard, 2 tablespoonfuls of sugar. Put it to rise again, then work in enough flour to make a soft dough; roll it out and cut like biscuits, only a size smaller. Put two together, with butter between, and bake in a slow oven.

Egg Turbot.—One dozen cold boiled eggs chopped fine, one and a half pints of cream gravy seasoned highly with pepper salt, celery salt, and a little minced parsley. Mix with the minced eggs the juice of a half a lemon, stir them into the gravy and bake with cracker crumbs strewn over the top. Serve hot.

Ginger Snaps.—Beat together well, half pound of butter and half pound of sugar, and then add a half pint of molasses and a half tea-cup of ginger; mix with one pound and a half of flour, knead it well, roll very thin and cut into small round shapes. Bake in a moderately hot oven.

Sweet Wafers.—Beat 6 eggs; add 2 ozs. melted butter, 1 pt. of flour, 1 1/2 cups of sugar, 1 cup of sweet milk. See that the wafer irons are hot before you begin to use them. Cook the wafers quickly and roll while hot.

Orange Syrup.—Squeeze the juice through a sieve; and to every pint add one and a half pounds of powdered sugar. Boil it slowly and skim as long as any scum rises, then take it off the fire, let it get cold and bottle it for use. Be sure it is well corked. It is an excellent flavoring for custards and sauces.

Pancakes.—One pint of sweet milk, two tablespoonfuls of butter, four eggs, two-thirds of a cupful of flour, and salt to the taste. The butter must be melted, and the eggs beaten separately. Mix the ingredients thoroughly. Butter a small frying pan, and pour in one-half cupful of the batter, move the pan around so that the batter will cover it, and place it over the fire until brown; then remove from the heat and the pancake will rise.

Sponge Pudding.—Two ounces of flour, two ounces of sugar, one pint of milk; boil all together, then add two ounces of butter, and six eggs beaten separately. Stir all together well and bake in a pudding dish (set in a pan of hot water) for an hour.

Sauce for Above.—One egg, butter the size of an egg, one and one-half cupfuls of sugar, beat all together until very light then add one cupful of boiling water, and flavor with vanilla or orange.

Candied Peels.

I have made candied lemon and orange peel for years, as good if not better than what we buy. Soak the peels in weak brine (a half-teacupful of salt to three pints of water is about right) for two days; drain well, make a thick syrup of granulated sugar and water, enough to cover the peels. Cook slowly on back of the stove if there is a heavy fire, stirring occasionally, to give each piece the same share of cooking and syrup. As the syrup boils down be very careful about its burning, but boil all into the peels possible. Take out on plates, pouring what syrup remains over them. Put in a warm place to dry gradually. You are sure to be delighted with the result.

VILLAGE NATURALS IN SCOTLAND.

A Drroll Class.

A race which has all but passed away from the country-side in Scotland since the passing of stringent vagrancy Acts and the reformation of local authorities is that of the half-witted wanderers, or "naturals," as they were to be called, whose idiosyncrasies a generation ago formed one of the occasionally painful characteristics of most rural districts. A sort of privileged mendicants, they were never turned from the door of cottage, manse or farm-steading. This friendly reception was due partly to superstition, which made it unlucky to refuse hospitality to those mentally afflicted, and partly for fear of the unreasoning vengeance which some of them had been known to perpetrate; but most of all to pity, which everywhere looked upon them with a kindly and excusing eye. Stories of their exploits and sayings, by no means always so "throwless" as might have been expected, but generally containing a biting grain of humor which tickled the fancy, were current every-where about the country; and sometimes they even did a useful service which could have been effected by no more sane and sensible person.

It is recorded in the life of Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, that he owed something of the dawn of his inspiration to one of these wanderers. One sunny summer day when a lad of twenty he was herding his sheep on Hawkshaw Rig, above the farm of Blackhouse, on the Douglas Burn, in Yarrow, there came up to him

ONE OF THESE NATURALS

named Jock Scott, well known and welcomed on that country side for his poetic proclivities. To while away the time Jock, who was then on his return from a peregrination in Ayrshire, recited to the Shepherd the whole of a wonderful poem called "Tam o' Shanter," made by an Ayrshire ploughman of the name of Burns. To that recitation, no less, perhaps, than to the storied surroundings of the hills of Yarrow among which he dwelt, Hogg owed the opening of his eyes to the poetic light that never was on sea or land, and to the magic of that elfin under-world in which he was to dream his exquisite dream of Bonny Kilmeny.

Of later wanderers like Jock Scott on that Border side Dr. Russell, in his "Reminiscences of Yarrow," has recorded an anecdote or two. Jock Gray, supposed to be the original of Davie Gellatley in "Waverley," is described as wearing knee-breeches, and fastening his stockings with glaring scarlet garters. Like many of his kind, he was strong in mimicry, especially of the ministers whose services he attended, and whom he could frequently be induced to "take off" with great effect. Once the wife of the minister of Selkirk asked him to furnish forth an imitation on of her husband. That gentleman was in the habit of reading his sermons, a habit much reprobated in those days. The saltiness of Jock's reply may therefore be understood when he told the lady that before he could comply with her demand she must give him "a bit o' paper." Sometimes his zeal for ministerial duties carried him further than mere mimicry. It is recorded that on one occasion he managed to make his way into the pulpit of Ettrick kirk before the arrival of the minister. When the latter himself reached the foot of the pulpit stairs and discovered the occupant of his place, he called out, "Come down, John." The predicament reached its climax when the congregation heard the answer, "Na, sir; come ye up; they're a stiff-necked and rebellious people; it'll tak' us bath."

When Jock was a lad the minister of Yarrow once told him he was the idlest boy in the parish, and suggested that he might at least herd a few cows. "Me herd cows! me herd cows!" said Jock. "I dinna ken gersh [grass] frae corn;" a rejoinder which suggests the idea that Jock may possibly have been something of the knave as well as a little of the fool. Jock latterly used to wander about the country with his father, an old mendicant, who, with a gift of prayer, was accustomed to conduct family worship in the cottages in which the pair were lodged for the night. It is recorded that one night during this function, Jock, who doubtless felt the

GNAWINGS OF HUNGER.

just then, twice or thrice lifted the lid of the pot on the fire, and was heard speculating in somewhat forcible language as to when his parent would conclude. A strong affection, nevertheless, existed between the two, and when at length the old father died Jock at once took to his bed and within a week also breathed his last. Some of the verses of this worthy, containing no small inkling of pawkly humour, are preserved, with a description of their author, in the "Memoirs of Dr. Robert Chambers."

Jock Dickson, another wanderer of the same sort, whose father, nicknamed "Cool-the-kail" from the length of his sermons, had been minister of Bedrule, was a visitor in Yarrow, and was wont for many a day to find quarters in the various mansees in which his parent had been known. He was distinguished chiefly by the cut of his clothes. These consisted of "a long blue coat, with very wide and long tails, and a double row of brass buttons down the back as well as in front, knee-breeches, and shoes with buckles." On account of these habits—ments the boys of some of the towns through which he passed were accustomed, merciless and conscienceless as boys constantly are, to follow him with the shout of "Daft Jock Dickson! Buckles and pouches! Buckles and pouches!"

On the south shore of Loch Lomond many of the inhabitants still living remember Will-o'-the-shore. A fearsome sight he was, to children and persons not acquainted with the neighbourhood, as he went about the quiet roads grumbling to himself regarding his wrongs, and muttering vengeance on all and sundry. His clothes were always in the last stage of tatters; his head had no covering but a great shock of matted hair; and

HE SLOUCHED ALONG

with his great splay feet naked in all weathers. His usual custom upon entering a house, which he did without ceremony, was to "wecht the women," as he called it. Upon one occasion he rushed into the mansion-house of Caldervan, and straightway seizing its mistress by the waist, to her dismay lifted her into the air. Matters were put right, however, by the lady's sister, who was present, suggesting to the too energetic and somewhat dubious visitor

that what he wanted was a "jelly piece." "Ay," said he; and no doubt to her immense relief, set his burden down. Something more than a suspicion existed that Will's pranks were not confined to the comparatively harmless one of "wechting the women." The opening of field-gates during the night, and the consequent serious straying of cattle and sheep, were frequently attributed to him. Further and even worse deeds of spiteful mischief contributed to make him sufficiently feared as the evil genius of the country-side; and it was no small relief to the farmers, as well as to women and children of his district, when he finally disappeared.

Egg Will was a character of a different sort in the same neighbourhood. A good-natured "sumph," with broad fat face and harmless hands, he went about the district with a long basket, gathering eggs, which he carried to Dumbarton for sale, thereby contributing in some degree to the support of himself and widowed mother. In this way he was a beneficent friend to the farmers among whom he went; and upon coming to a bed of thistles growing by the road, he would be seen to set down his basket and attack the enemy, routing them out with immense energy and indignation. His chief peculiarity, however, was unbounded admiration for people of title; and at all the public functions—cattle-shows, fairs, and sports—he might be observed, with open mouth and undisguised worship,

FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS

of the Duke of Montrose. Upon one occasion a late minister of the district, who was blind, was being led through a cattle-show at Drymen by one of the present proprietors of the neighbourhood, then a boy, when the Duke was seen approaching, followed a few paces distance by his kumble worshipper. The minister's guide whispered to him that the Duke was coming towards him, but at that moment some other object detracted His Grace's attention, and he turned aside. The follower behind, however, perceiving the expectant attitude of the minister, seized the golden opportunity. "How do you do, Mr.—?" he said, throwing his utmost powers of mimicry into an imitation of the ducal accent, and entirely deceiving the unfortunate clergyman whom he addressed. "I am very well, I thank you, my Lord Duke," replied the latter, sweeping off his hat to his interrogator; and then, on a hurried whisper of "It's Egg Will!" from the boy at his side, he more suddenly and with less dignity clapped his hat on his head again; and with an angry exclamation turned on his heel and made for home. Will's purpose, however, had been sufficiently served; and never to his dying day did he forget that he had once been taken for the Duke of Montrose.

Old-Fashioned Gardens.

There are no gardens nowadays like those we remember in our childhood. The dear old flowers are out of fashion.

Their places are usurped by hybrids, with long Latin names, which nobody can pronounce, or translate, and which would not pay for the trouble in the event of success. How well we remember the old-fashioned garden! It was generally on a south slope, where the sun lay golden and warm all the summer day, and the brow of the hill sheltered it from the blighting winds of spring, and from the frosty breath of early autumn.

All the family took pride in it, and did their share of the work in it. Each of the little girls had her own particular flower-bed, and cultivated her own pet rose-bush, in some secluded corner.

The boys raised wonderful melons and squashes, and grandmother had her patch of thyme, and hyssop, and rue, and wormwood, and sweet marjoram, and tansy, and a score or more of these old-fashioned plants, whose very names have gone out of the memory of the present generation.

Nobody could keep house without tansy to "spot" cheeses, and hyssop for a cough, and rue for the measles, and wormwood for sprains, and thyme and sweet marjoram for the legs of veal and lamb, which came in season every spring.

There was the asparagus bed, where imitation green peas were gathered in April, and where, later on in the year, grew and flourished those green feathery sprays, with coral berries, which once adorned every looking-glass in the country, and hung in bunches from the hooks in the plastering, and kept the pine and spruce boughs company in the wide old fire-places through the summer.

There were rows of hollyhocks, and sun-flowers, and princes' feathers, and rose of Sharon, and nasturtiums, and gilliflowers, and bed of June pinks, and sweet-william, and marigolds, and bachelor's buttons, and jonquils, and was there ever any flower, however sweet, that could equal a June pink for fragrance?

Beside the fences blossomed the old damask rose, and the double white rose, with a heart like the inside of a sea-shell, and the lilacs and sweet briars filled up the spaces with their hairy luxuriance.

One did not have to nurse plants like these, and shield them, lest the wind of heaven blew too roughly upon them; they were tough and hardy, and acclimated, and they amply repaid the little care bestowed upon them.

Nothing in the old-fashioned garden was so rare that it could not be spared to make up a bouquet for the best room, when the minister was coming to tea, or Sarah Ann was expecting her young man, and the rosy-cheeked school-children, who peeped through the gate on their way to the rustic school-house were made glad by nosegays of pinks and heart's ease whenever they asked for them.

The ribbon borders and beds of to-day were unknown; nobody had ever heard of the Umbilicus Sempervivum, or the Scrupularin Chrysantha; fortunes were not invested in garden statuary, and ornamental urns and flower-pots, but the old-fashioned garden was just as beautiful, and its flowers just as sweet, and the whole thing was a great deal more satisfactory than the elaborate garden of these times.

There are no flowers lovelier than those our grandmothers cultivated, and we make a mistake to exclude them from our gardens, because they are old-fashioned. And while we would by no means be unmindful of the very beautiful novelties being constantly put forward by our florists, we would still retain in our gardens the pinks, and sweet williams, and pansies, and marigolds, and hollyhocks, and all their old-time companions even at the risk of being called an old fogey of the female persuasion.

COUNTRY HIGHWAYS.

The Evolution of the Trail, the Bridle Path and the Wagon Road.

Under the caption of "The Ways of the World," Mr. Edward W. Perry is contributing to the New York Observer a series of articles on roads and road-making.

In his first article Mr. Perry says:—Pathless wildernesses are myths. Every habitable part of the earth has its roads. Across the bleak plains of the frozen north, among the peaks of rugged mountains, over broad and grassy prairies, and through the depths of tropic jungles, man has for centuries had his highways.

These were at first so faintly marked that the eye of civilized man would have been unable to discover them. With increased use they became more distinct, until at last many were so wide and smooth that the blind might safely follow them.

Where men had beasts of burden their passing feet widened and wore smooth the trails, and bridle paths were made. That the packs might freely pass, branches were lopped off here and there, then trees were cut away, rocks were removed and easier grades were made in some ascents, for wheels had come into use. Increase of traffic followed, as always happens when means are improved or increased. Then serfs were made to work at stated seasons, to widen and smooth the common way yet more, that vehicles might the more easily roll along, and our present plan of "working the roads" was thus born.

But that was in ages of darkness and despotism, when a few favored men robbed the many, separately weak, of their fair share of property and of liberty.

For man is conservative. To this hour, after centuries uncounted of opportunity and evolution, in lands whose people boast of high achievements, he is still content to use roads that are in roughness, in steepness and in muddiness what they were generations ago. He seems to believe—it cannot be said truly that he thinks—that continued endurance of ills he knows, is easier than would be the mental exertion of deciding what are the better ways, and of screwing up his courage to the point of adopting those ways. For it requires courage to change from old and accustomed methods.

Leaders of reforms are usually denounced as extremists by their fellow men. To move the masses as far as they should go, their leaders must go farther. But can it be shown that the most extreme of reformers has persisted in blunders as wasteful, as costly, as absurd as those to which the conservative element obstinately adheres?

I have in mind a bit of road where such conservatism is often shown. There an engineer carried a wagon road half a mile or more along one side of a high spur of a mountain, and further back along its other side. An even and easy grade was thus secured, and the bed of the road is the solid rock, hewn smooth. But the distance around the point is twice as great as is that from the spot where the old trail parts from the new and smooth roads, to go zigzagging five hundred feet up that rough and rocky spur and down again, to the place where that ancient path joins again the modern way.

Sometimes an arriere so far forgets the traditions of his fathers as to permit his mules to go around by the new road; but a caballero in the saddle—never! And the Indians, who bear on their backs or their heads burdens which they will market in the city eighteen miles away, seem to never dream that it would be easier for them, and quicker, to go around the rocky point than it is to clamber over its broken height.

One of northern brain can think of only one cause for following so difficult, tedious and costly a way, when an easy and inexpensive one is at hand—and that cause is identical in nature with that one which leads millions of people in the United States to continue, year after year, generation after generation, to use as public highways the muddy, rough lanes which are in place of the clean, smooth and hard roads they may easily have if they will; and that cause is conservatism.

As population grew and traffic increased in some countries, roads were improved until, where wise forethought was combined with great governing powers, public highways reached, centuries ago, a nearness to perfection never since surpassed, perhaps never since equalled. Growth of military and civil power brought need of smooth and easy roads over which couriers could travel swiftly, armies march rapidly, and the spoils of conquest be moved quickly to escape possible pursuers, to add to the power of the conquerors, and increase the wealth, comfort and beauty of their central strongholds—the home nests whence those rapacious birds of prey swooped down on their victims.

Such were the great roads of Memphis, of Babylon and of the Roman empire. Such was the evolution of that wonderful highway system built by that wise and courageous nation of true Americans who four centuries and more ago had roads which have never since been equalled in extent and in workmanship by any others in the western world, and have been surpassed by few roads of modern days.

Yet our own need of perfect highways is incomparably greater than was theirs. The aggregate of the distances over which we have to move the products of our forests, our mines, our farms and our factories, greatly exceeds that of the distances traveled by those ancient races; the quantity of our products is vastly more than the total of the products of their empires could have been, and the conditions of our climate, our soil and our civilization make our need of smooth, dry and hard roads much more urgent than any want of the kind that people could have known.

Hard Times and Railroads.

That the still prevalent financial stringency has been disastrous to the railways of the United States is evident from the fact that one-fifth of their total mileage has got into the hands of receivers. An important consequence will be that the various companies will be unable to meet their obligations to the Government, and the question is now before the House Committee on Pacific railroads. The first instalment of bonds issued by the Government in aid of the construction of the Pacific roads, and amounting to \$2,302,000, falls due next January, and must be provided for during the next fiscal year, being payable at the date of their maturity. The whole amount involved is about \$135,000,000.