

News, Notes and Notions.

Making War Impossible.

THE joyous prospect that science may make war impossible is held out by a French scientist, Dr. Gustave Le Bon. He says this consummation may be arrived at within 50 years. "I made a series of experiments with M. Branly," says Dr. Le Bon, "for the purpose of finding out the degree of permeability of various bodies with regard to Hertzian waves. We found that these waves were able to traverse stone walls more than 3ft thick, whereas they were stopped by a sheet of tin no thicker than a cigarette paper. A fissure no bigger than the hundredth part of a millimetre (1-2500 of an inch) was sufficient, however, for the waves to pierce the sheet. In space these waves are propagated spherically in all directions. Given these facts, it is conceivable that physicists will succeed in directing these waves, in making them travel on the same plane, and in the same direction. It has already been found that polarised waves move along the same plane. It would be sufficient to direct a sheaf of parallel waves. There would thus be no loss of electric energy. Meeting an obstacle, such as a ship or a powder magazine, these electric radiations would 'charge' the whole metallic portion of the object thus met with. The metallic framework would splutter with the electric sparks discharged. The network of metallic wires on ships, torpedo boats, etc., would provoke an atmosphere of sparks which would cause the magazines or the shells to explode. The Hertzian waves directed in parallel waves would penetrate the arsenals, casemates, fortresses, or powder magazines, destroying everything on their passage. This application of Hertzian waves is as yet impossible, for in order to reflect these radiations the length of whose waves varies from 500 to 2000 yards, it would be necessary to employ parabolic mirrors 10,000 yards or more high. If Hertzian waves of less length were utilised, the problem might be resolved more quickly; but these waves would be transmitted only a few score yards. But once the discovery of an apparatus for transmitting parallel waves is made, and war is rendered impossible. The physicist who finds out how to direct parallel Hertzian waves will make his discovery known by directing methodically his waves on the vessels of a fleet gathered together, let us say, like the English fleet at Spithead, or the German fleet at Kiel. Many millions would be engulfed, some lives sacrificed, but what a formidable power would be revealed to the eyes of the whole world! What an immense service would be rendered to peace! I am convinced this is not mere fancy," says Dr. Le Bon. Our grandchildren will see its realisation."

Harriman's Harangue.

Mr E. H. Harriman, admittedly described by the interviewers as the "Railway Olympian," paused in a rapid journey homeward across the American continent to discourse at Chicago on the economical and political tendencies of his country. The great millionaire, whom Mr Roosevelt once denounced as an "un-American citizen," declared roundly that

the course of events had vindicated him and proved that Mr Roosevelt was grossly wrong in his attacks on the railway interests. After denouncing the Roosevelt Administration as criminally extravagant, Mr Harriman delivered himself of the following political aphorisms:—

"Regulate the Government; it needs regulation far more than do the railways."

"Prevent the recurrence of an Anarchistic Attorney-General."

"Don't elect a demagogic House of Representatives."

"See to it that the Senate is not filled with a lot of heebiebies."

Mr Harriman declared himself on the tariff question to be a "flexible Protectionist."

Supposed Ho Fired First.

At last we have a pistol that cannot miss. It seems incredible, but no matter how poor a shot you are, you are certain to hit the person you aim at, and even the exact part of his body you choose. The only drawback about the new weapon is that it only works at night or in the dark. In the light it is no better than any other revolver. But it is at night that the pistol is most needed, and it is then the hardest to hit for the man armed with the ordinary revolver. The invention is simple enough. It can be fitted to any revolver or rifle. Above the barrel of the revolver and exactly parallel to it, is a little tube containing a lens and an electric lamp. At the rear of the tube is a little spring to be pressed by the thumb of the hand that holds the weapon. Electric wires connect with a small dry battery kept in the pocket or under the pillow, or wherever it is convenient. Suppose you awake at night with the feeling that there is a burglar in your room. You point the pistol where you think the burglar lurks, and with your thumb press the little spring. A spot of light appears where you have pointed the weapon, and you move this around till you find him. In the centre of the spot of light is a black dot. This dot shows where your bullet will strike. The instant you see the burglar in the light you can pull the trigger and be certain to hit him somewhere. If you wish to hit his head or put a bullet through his heart, just move the black dot to his head or heart, or wherever you wish, and pull the trigger. At a distance of 90ft the spot of light is about 6ft tall and as broad as a man. The black dot at that distance is about the size of an orange. The objection brought against this firearm is, unfortunately, true: "It shoots as straight for a burglar as for a householder."

Musical Manners.

Mme. Carreno, who visited us some months ago, is evidently not only a great classic artist, but a very clever and outspoken conversationalist. The interview with her in the London "Standard" is one of the best things of the kind we have read. She asks, for instance, why so few musicians have good manners. Perhaps the Wagner cult may have something to do with that. The manners of that distinguished composer were, to put it mildly, not pretty. She then turns

to some of the modern "music," and pours all the scorn upon it which we should expect from one steeped in the spirit of the great masters. She talks of pianoforte music the difficulty of which is not excused by its effect, and adds very pertinently that if a young pianist is looking for difficulty he will find it in trying to play a Chopin study really well. Is it not a well-known fact, too, that, simple as they seem, the melodies of Mozart are among the hardest things to sing properly? Finally, Mme. Carreno denounces the commercialism which is doing its best to vulgarise and degrade even the musical world of our day. "All this puffing, trumpet-blowing, and self-advertising is pitiable," she says. And so it is. When, for instance, one cannot enter a concert-hall without having the photograph of some popular performer thrust under our noses at every step, with his name underneath it, free of all prefix (as who should say "Beethoven" or "Bach"), the charm of the piece is killed straight away, however delightful the concert may prove.

Tastes the Same Anyhow.

The origin of the name whisky has puzzled the dictionary makers, but most of them have followed Johnson in making it derive from the Irish word usquebaugh, which he defines as "an Irish compound distilled spirit, drawn from aromatics; the Highland sort by corruption they call whisky." Noah Webster, dissatisfied with this, says in the earlier editions of his dictionary that it is derived from the Welsh "gwiski." In the late editions he tells us it is either the "Irish or Gaelic usage, water; in use-beatha, whisky, properly water of life." Thus the learned lexicographers. Now comes one who has made wine and spirits a life study and written authoritatively about them in many books, with the assertion that these learned gentlemen are all wrong. This is what he says:—"If our lexicographers will but turn their attention to that good old English word whisky, and then bear in mind the tendency of the people for nicknaming, the matter will assume another and different aspect. Whisky means a light chaise which came into use originally to avoid the taxes that were levied on vehicles according to their size. The name originated in the country districts and is derived from the root 'whisk.' For marketing the liquor this vehicle was in great demand among the smugglers, for, owing to its lightness, rapid time could be made when necessity demanded. The smugglers could not bandage themselves with so cumbersome a means of travel, and the one-horse whisky holding a cask of five or ten gallons safely hidden beneath the seat not only allayed suspicion, but was also an exceedingly handy vehicle for travelling through byroads and unfrequented paths."

Beauty Spots.

It is stated on good authority that "patches" are to be the fashion again. There was a time when these beauty-spots were one of the most effective weapons in woman's armoury, and they came to have even a political significance in the time of the Georges. Whigs wore their patches on one side of the face. Tories on the other, thought it seems almost incredible that a woman would allow her political principles to stand in the way of putting the patch wherever it looked prettiest. Probably

she found the prettiest place first, and then decided what her politics would be. The situation of the beauty spot is a very delicate matter. If a girl has good eyes, for instance, but doesn't care for her mouth, she must put the beauty spot near the eyes. If she has a dimpled chin, but a nondescript nose, an inferior eye, she should put the beauty spot low down, so as to call attention to her superiority in the matter of chin. The great point is not to advertise a plain feature by putting the beauty spot near it, and the tiny black spot does undoubtedly set off a pretty face. There is said to be also much subtle significance in the situation of the patch, but this "language" is complicated and would be wasted on the average young man. It is best to put the patch wherever it looks best, and let it do its deadly work without trying to express any special meaning. At one time these patches had most elaborate shapes. The plain black disc was varied with half-moons, stars, and even a tiny roach and horses. It is very improbable such extremes will ever be fashionable again, but the beauty spot is frequently a beautifier and so is sure to have a vogue once more. It is to be hoped the modern ideas of cleanliness will strongly tabu the old custom of powdered coiffures, and leave that to the days when ladies only did their hair once a fortnight.

Amazing Possibilities.

One of these days there will be no more keys. An inventor of Denver, Colorado, has made a lock that opens on the gramophone principle—that is to say, by speaking into it; and since it is obviously easier to whisper a secret into a key-hole than to find the key that fits it and go through the usual performance; and since the inventor claims that this is the safest form of lock yet devised, no great stretch of imagination is required to see keys as obsolete as flint-and-steel, and the curious but pleasing picture of doors, safes, and boxes opening to command just like the case of the Forty Thieves. There will be difficulties, little annoyances, of course; but then inconveniences attach to keys, as everybody knows who has lost one. To begin with, there is the "key-phrase." This is the phrase that opens the lock, and a peculiarly violent brain-storm would certainly result on standing outside the front door in the pouring rain at an unfortunate hour of the morning and cooing into the key-hole every imaginable (and some unpaintable) phrase but the right one. That is one little trifle. Then there is the fact that these ingenious locks will only respond to vibrations of the voice that exactly coincide with the vibrations recorded in the mechanism. One sees and appreciates and admires the inventor's cleverness here. In the case of a safe the burglar will have to study voice-vibration and to study hard if he is to get any return for his night's work. But the thing vibrates, so to speak, both ways. What will be done when the safe-owner has a cold? Will he go mad in front of his safe, or will he have it blown up with dynamite and tell them to get up from the cellar the dear old antiquated lock-and-key safe that his grandfather used? These are the problems that must be wrestled with when estimating the happiness that posterity is to enjoy from all the marvels it is going to have.

HEARNE'S BRONCHITIS CURE.

Those who have taken this medicine are amazed at its splendid healing power. Sufferers from Bronchitis, Cough, Croup, Asthma, Difficulty of Breathing, Hoarseness, Pain or Soreness in the Chest, experience delightful and rapid relief; and to those who are subject to Colds on the chest it is invaluable, as it effects a complete cure. It is most comforting in allaying irritation in the Throat and giving Strength to the Voice, and it neither allows a Cough nor Asthma to become chronic, nor Consumption to develop. Consumption is not known where "Coughs" have, on their first appearance, been properly treated with this medicine. No house should be without it, as, taken at the beginning, a dose or two is generally sufficient, and a complete cure is certain.

Small Size, 2/6; Large Size, 4/6 Sold by all Chemists and Medicine Vendors, and by the Proprietor, W. G. HEARNE, Chemist, Geelong, Victoria. Forwarded to any Address, when not obtainable locally.