

ORNAMENTAL CEMETERIES.

The ancient custom of planting cemeteries and decorating monuments with garlands of flowers, strongly prevailing at different periods in foreign countries, was carried to some extent in various parts of England. In the "Flora Domestica," it will be observed that the Romans alluded to the practice in their wills, and were strongly reprobated by the primitive Christians, but in the time of Prudentius the latter had adopted it, which is expressly mentioned both by St. Ambrose and Jerome.

At the present time, in Germany and Switzerland, it is very usual to observe the tombs cultivated with shrubs and flowers, and the monuments adorned with festoons of roses and jessamine. In the beautiful little churchyard at Schwytz almost the whole of the ground is covered with pinks; but amongst the numerous spots appropriated to the purposes of cemeteries, there is none equal to the churchyard of Wirfin, in the valley of the Salza. The tombs are ornamented with arabesque forms, with pendant vases, in which are placed flowers, and on either side perennial shrubs are planted, and, in addition, some graves are daily strewed over with fresh-gathered flowers, by friends or relatives of the inhabitants.

In some parts of this country, about the middle of the last century, the practice was very prevalent of strewing sprigs of rosemary upon tombs, particularly in the north, and likewise to place a basin of sprigs of boxwood at the door of any house at which a funeral was to take place, as alluded to in the following by Wordsworth:—

"The basin of boxwood just six months before,
Had stood on the table at Timothy's door;
A coffin over Timothy's threshold had passed,
One child did it bear, and that child was his last."

While in allusion to the practice, we may exclaim with Shenstone, "Oh customs meet and well!" We cannot allow ourselves to be dissatisfied with the age in which we live, because these and similar pleasing observances are not directly encouraged by some of its tendencies. For the future we have the best hopes; and if we take this view, that while the advance of civilization destroys much that is noble, and throws over society an atmosphere somewhat dull, it is only by its peculiar trials, no less than by its positive advantages, that the utmost virtue can be matured. And those who vainly lament that progress of earthly things, whether for good or evil, is certainly inevitable, may be consoled by the thought, that its sure tendency is to confirm and purify the virtue of the good. G. J. RHODES.

Notices of Books.

Historical Sketch of the Electric Telegraph, including its Rise and Progress in the United States. By ALEXANDER JONES. Imported by JOHN CHAPMAN, Strand, London.

Electricity and the Electric Telegraph; together with the Chemistry of the Stars. By GEORGE WILSON, M.D. F.R.S.E. Longman and Co. London. 1852.

The first of these books forms a far more complete record of the establishment and improvement of the electric telegraph in the United States than we yet have of its origin and rise in this country. In saying so, we do not mean to homologate all its statements in reference to the national question as between the two countries. There is much less inclination, however, shown in this work, to deify the chief American telegraphist, Morse, than some of his fellow countrymen appear to have.

It is rather salutary sometimes to see ourselves reflected in the eyes of a rival nation, even though the mirror should be one of those which ludicrously exaggerate our most unamiable features; and on this account, and as we remember more than once noting some of the stock-jobbing abuses of the telegraph in America, we shall quote just a few lines in which our own present, or rather past, or at least passing, national system is sketched, with what truth or error we do not here pretend to say:—

"In England the electric telegraph has become a monstrous monopoly, being chiefly owned and

worked by railway stock-jobbers. The people at large are, in a measure, shut out from its benefits. Their monopoly was created by purchasing up patents from successive inventors, such as Davy, Bain, &c. and fighting weaker claimants in lawsuits."

The author, however, is rather impartial, for he adds that—

"In the United States it looks as though a similar monopoly had been attempted; not by the purchase of others' rights, but by the multiplication of patents and re-issues made, to claim everything pretty much in the lightning way, and on these expanded claims to fight off all competition in constant lawsuits. In this, however, success has been only partially realised."

The second of the treatises last named constitutes one of the little shilling volumes of the traveller's library, and makes no pretension to contain a historical record of the progress of the telegraph in this country. It gives, in popular and often figurative and rather free language, an account of the process rather than of the progress, though beginning with a rapid review of the advancement of electrical and electro-magnetic science in general. On page 58, however, the author thus alludes to the originators of the telegraph:—

"We have said nothing regarding the history of the electric telegraph, which cannot yet be written otherwise than in the faintest outline. Its earliest scientific originators were Oersted, Ampere, and Wheatstone. Its chief practical constructors have been Wheatstone and Cooke in England, to whose merits we need not again refer; in Scotland, Bain, a man of great inventive skill and ingenuity; in America, Morse, another distinguished mechanical genius; and on the Continent, Siemens, of Berlin, the deviser of the Prussian subterranean telegraph. Lastly, we make special mention of Brett and Crompton, who have achieved the construction of the first transmarine telegraph. It must be left to the survivors of these ingenious men, and of the many others who by discoveries in science or practical trials have made the telegraph what it is, to adjust their great but various merits."

The various details and varieties of the telegraph are described in an easy and entertaining way; and, much in the same off-hand style, with a dash of Carlyleism in it, the volume finishes with a somewhat original and suggestive chapter on the chemistry of the stars, in which the possible differences of worlds are shadowed out by the actual differences, proportions, and numbers of the elements combined in our own, every markedly different proportion in the relative quantities and numbers of the same elements necessarily constituting a markedly different sphere of existence or life, even with one and the same absolute range of "elements."

Miscellanea.

ARCHITECTURAL CONDITION OF THEATRES.—The Spanish Government has ordered an investigation to be made into the architectural state of all the theatres in Spain, and that those which may not be in a good condition shall be closed. A similar inquiry into the condition of the London theatres would not be useless, especially in respect of the safety of approaches, the ventilation, and means of egress in the event of fire.

ELECTRO-TELEGRAPHIC PROGRESS.—Our East-Indian dominions are within three years to be traversed by 3,000 miles of electric telegraph. Preliminary investigations as to the best modifications of the telegraph have already been made by order of the Governor-General.

—It is proposed to protect submarine telegraphs by placing the copper wires, gutta percha, and chemical covering, in a metallic casing, to be secured in the angular recesses of a link-iron-chain, one single being capable of protecting five to ten insulated wires, and one chain from thirty to forty. It is also proposed to fix a testing apparatus in water-tight boxes attached to buoys at every one or two miles, the wires in the testing-box being connected with the submarine wires below, so as to indicate the line of telegraph, and to detect and repair defects by raising the cable to the surface.

BURNING LIME.—One ton of good limestone, says a writer in the *Agricultural Gazette*, will produce, when burned, between five and six barrels of lime. With a good draw-kiln, containing from fifty to sixty barrels, and the stones properly broken, which may be something larger than road metal, or to pass through a ring four inches in diameter, one barrel of good culm will burn five or six barrels of lime when the kiln is in good working order. The rates we have paid, when the wages were about 8d. to 1s. per day for men, were one penny per barrel for breaking the stone, and one penny per barrel for burning the lime, exclusive of quarrying, carriage to kiln, and culm. The process is, in lighting the kiln, to put in a large quantity of the roots of trees, waste timber, or all together, in the bottom of the kiln; this must be made level on top, and then a layer of broken stones, say four inches thick, then a layer of culm, then a layer of broken stones, then culm, and so on till the kiln is filled. A greater quantity of fuel will be required with the first few layers than the succeeding ones. The kiln is then set fire to from the eye, and as the great mass of fuel first put in wastes away, the limestone, &c. settles down: the kiln must be kept filled by adding fresh layers of broken limestone and culm. When the kiln is in full operation, the stone may be broken to a larger size, and the fuel economised. When full, the kiln is drawn till the limestone appears at the eye red hot, when you must stop. In the first three or four drawings, the stone, most probably, will not be burned enough, but after that an experienced lime-burner will always produce well-burned lime if the stone be good.

IMPROVED MACHINERY FOR PLASTIC AND METALLIC PRODUCTS.—Mr. Charles D. Archibald, of Portland-place, has recently taken out a patent for improvements in the manufacture of bricks and other productions of plastic materials, in cutting, dressing, and shaping the same, as well as articles in stone, wood, and metals, and in the machinery and apparatus employed therein. The brick machinery claims are for a method of screening the clay or other materials before delivery into the moulds, the heating of the moulding surface by steam, hot air, or water, the arrangement of the moulds in reciprocating carriages between pressure rollers, discharging the bricks by means of carriages on inclined planes, and giving concave or other shapes to their faces by projections on the pressing cylinder. For cutting and shaping machinery a rocking or tumbling motion is produced by the direct action of steam power: there is a peculiar combination of headstock and mode of adjusting and securing the cutters, several sets of which may be used in the same jaws at various angles; and for dressing or polishing, the apparatus may be lowered or raised at pleasure, thus causing an equal and uniform motion on the surfaces to which they are applied.—Messrs. Woodworth and Mower, of the United States, have taken out an English patent for some new brick-making apparatus, in which percussion is used to consolidate the plastic materials in the moulds. A sliding mould-charger is in connection with the ram, or piston, in such manner as to render it a part of the mould some time after a percussion of the ram. The moulds have inclined sides, and are connected with machinery, which lifts the moulded article previous to a second percussion, so that it does not adhere to the mould, and allows the compressed air to escape. There is also an arrangement for giving the necessary depression in the face of the brick; and the entire mass is turned out of the mould in an equal state of condensation.

ISLINGTON CATTLE MARKET.—On Monday in last week the cattle market, in the Lower-road, Islington, was offered for sale by public auction at Garraway's, by Messrs. Farebrother, by direction of the mortgagees. The property comprises the market, which stands on about sixteen acres of freehold land, building-land, public-houses, private dwelling-houses, shops, and leasehold property, &c. and the whole was offered to public competition in one lot. The first offer for the whole property was 45,000l. and it was bought in at 52,000l.