SUMMER LETTERS.

AMONG THE ADIRONDACKS.

EXCURSIONS FROM KEENE FLATS.

KEENE FLATS.—From this little mountain hamlet many interesting excursions may be made. One day at least must be spent at Edmund's Ponds, about 11 miles from Keene Flats—a strange misnomer that gives to many of these beautiful sheets of water only the dignity of ponds. These, like so many other of the Adirondack lakes, are in pairs. In a narrow defile, walled in by high and frowning cliffs, with only room for a road on one side close to the overshadowing mountain, there is a wild and gloomy grandeur about the place quite unlike any other spot we visited. One might conjure up any horrible visions here, for the loneliness and wildness become really oppressive. The narrow road runs straight the entire length of the two lakes, with no possible chance of turning to the right or the left, if any prowling beast should show itself—an encounter which at any moment seems the most likely thing in the world to happen—with nothing but the deep, black water on one side and almost perpendicular cliffs on the other. With all my love for camping out, I think I could scarcely wish to spend a night in such a place as this. No signs of life, not even a boat, is seen on either lake. Yet the finest trout are taken here, and parties often come for fishing.

The ride to North Elba is another favorite excursion, though let no one connect the idea of ease and comfort with a ride over these rough mountain roads. The intolerable jolting makes riding a thing simply to be endured, not in any sense to be enjoyed independently of the scenery. Over Keene Mountain, through the long stretches of woods, with the mountains closing around you, and out at last on the magnificent plateau, brings you to North Elba. It is not a village, only houses scattered here and there, the one central place being Scott's, a favorite stopping-place with all travelers through this region. His large, fine farm has been owned and tilled by him for fifty years, and his well-spread table and neatly-kept house make it an attractive resort. The view is different from any other in the whole Adirondack region. The plateau itself, level as a plain, is 1,500 feet above the level of the sea, and around it is this great amphitheater of mountains, Marcy, Colden, McIntyre, Wallface, Whiteface and a host of less prominent ones. For a distant mountain view it is unequaled. From Blynn's, a mile or two distant from Scott's, and quite shut out from the rest of the world (being on the bank of the Ausable River, just at the point where parties come in from the Indian Pass), we had a much better view of these mountains. Though 12 miles distant, we could look into the Pass, with Wallface rising perpendicularly 3,000 feet high, and McIntyre sloping away on the opposite side. Colden, or Scalp Mountain, as the Indian name signifies, we could see very distinctly. It was freshly scalped, for the week before came the fearful storm which bared its side anew, and entirely altered Lake Avalanche, that lies at its base. The slide came down into the lake with such terrific force that it sent the water rushing up the opposite side, carrying a cabin 30 or 40 feet up a slope lying at an angle of nearly 45 degrees. We looked that way with longing eyes, and hope some day to see for ourselves the many wonders of which we have heard so much.

About two miles from Scott's, and on still higher ground, is the John Brown farm, said to be the highest cultivated land in the State. We looked with interest to his early home, where he dwelt without reproach, no one saying aught against him—a rare tribute in this region, where one hears oftener the censure than the praise. But with far deeper interest we looked at his last resting-place after his tragical end. He sleeps in the door-yard of the old homestead, with a granite bowlder for his monument—more significant and grander far than any sculptured marble.

A ride of a few miles from Scott's brings us to Nash's, "beautiful for situation." On the bank of a little lake, smooth and glassy as a mirror when we saw it, it looked a very tempting spot, and was crowded, as all these places are. A walk of 15 minutes carried us over the intervening hill to Lake Placid, one of the noted points among the Adirondacks, not only for its own singular beauty, being just what its name implies, but also from its position at the foot of Whiteface. This noble mountain is 5,000 feet high, and from its summit is obtained the celebrated lake view. Marcy is unrivaled for its mountain view, Whiteface for the lakes. In a clear day, 52 may be distinctly seen. We did not go up—indeed, it was so shrouded in mists that we could not even tell with certainty where it was. That is another pleasure held in reserve which we hope the future may yet give us.

In going to North Elba one is struck by the difference in the woods. After passing Keene Mountain, we rode through whole forests of feathery tamaracks; and the evergreen, instead of being dense, compact pyramids with spreading bases, are here, perhaps, not less compact, but taller and much more slender, more cone-shaped, but tapering at the last to a graceful arrowy point, it lifts its monumental column of green into beautiful outline against the sky.

I should prove recreant to many pleasant memories, if among the Adirondack trees I failed to make honorable mention of the white birch—its bark gleaming like silver amid its dark, glossy foliage, and "a thing of beauty" to me everywhere. It seemed an act of Vandalism, which, nevertheless, I could not resist committing, to strip off the bark, and separate it into its numberless paper layers, each so beautifully marked, and of such exquisite texture. Cut fingers, torn dresses, and broken knives, were light penalty to pay for the frequent theft. The tree has a wonderful tenacity of life, and a marvelous faculty of healing its wounds, else I could hardly have had the heart to do it. I have seen an old weather-worn, storm-beaten birch, with its ragged bark flying like pennons the whole length of its trunk, touched with a match, and in an instant it was wrapped in flames—a fiery column 40 or 50 feet in hight, crackling, roaring, leaping upward—a strange sight in the still, green woods.

THE FRANCONIA MOUNTAINS.

A REMARKABLE JOURNEY UNDER MANY DISADVANTAGES—A VERY PECULIAR FUN—THE MOUNTAINS AND THEIR SCENERY—THE PROFILE HOUSE, ITS PATRONS, AND MODES OF ENJOYMENT—THE VIRTUE OF LYING IN BED LATE.

PROFILE HOUSE, N. H., July 31.—To persons of extended travel, the outliers of the Appalachian range known as the Franconia and White Mountains are not very remarkable for grandeur or altitude. Still, they are among the highest on the eastern slope, and Washington enjoys a superiority of apex to any single mountain on this side of the Republic. As we have to go to the Rockies or South America or Europe to see loftier mountains, we naturally attach importance to those near our own door, and overrate them by an easy process of imagination. As an American I feel called upon to admire to the fullest capacity of my admiration our New-England Switzerland, and to remember, if the Alps, and even some of the Carpathians, Apennines and Pyrenees tower above the peaks of this section, that these look as high as most of those in Poland, Italy or Spain, and are really higher than the poor pinnacles furnished to Great Britain. One may have a patriotic eye as well as a patriotic heart. I think I must have, for until my present visit to this region I cherished the delusion that I had never seen a mountain in the Carpathian or Apennine range which dared to lift its head above Washington. Having recourse to the proper authorities, I discovered that Gariuriti, Poyana-Ruska, and other eminences in Transylvania (how learned cramming makes one seem!), were about 9,000 feet, and Monte Corno, which I had often surveyed, was nearly 9,600 feet. I fancy there must have been some mistake about those measurements, but I am confident that our native mountains have scorned to take advantage of their full hight. If the Franconia and White Mountains had not been very well worth seeing, I shouldn't have come here so often. The fact that I am here settles the question—at least for myself.

I have visited these Mountains by various routes, and as the last route was the most tedious and disagreeable, I cordially recommend it to the large class of travelers whom I am fortunate enough to dislike. For fear that some of them won't come this way, I'll explain its disadvantages. I had intended to leave New-York by the Norwich boat in the afternoon, or the New-Haven boat in the evening; but the person to whom the carriage was intrusted had undertaken to study one of the war maps in *The Herald*, and so, instead of coming to me, was sent to Bloomingdale. Annoyed by the disappointment, I engaged a man who took *The Times*. He hadn't heard of the war, and carried me promptly to the New-Haven station at 8 a. m. The day was intensely hot, but I got along with tolerable comfort until I reached Springfield. Then I took an accommodation train, (so called from the fact that it accommodated everybody but the passengers) where I changed cars so frequently that I had no time to sit down. After vainly endeavoring to pass various cows which the engineer misiook for lightning express trains, we reached White River Junction about dusk; but whether it was on the same day or two days after quitting Springfield, I have never been able to tell. I asked the conductor the day of the week; but he had been so long on the journey that he had forgotten what year it was; and as I observed him closely, I perceived that time was beginning to tell on him. We were at the junction anyhow, and were informed that we could go no further that night, the engine having by rapidity of action become too rusty for use. The hotel was not fascinating from the outside; but as there was no other I went to it. I asked for a room, and was shown one in which Tom Thumb could not have worn his hat. I objected to the apartment, but was assured it was the largest in the house, and the only defect in it was the hight of the ceiling. The heat was excessive; but by way of counteracting it there were two huge feather beds on the bedstead; so that those who wished to keep cool could get between them. When I remonstrated against feather beds, the servant proposed to build a fire in the stove, saying he felt rather chilly himself. Regarding him as a humorist, I was about to throw him out of the window, but he swore he never made a joke in his life, and convinced me of his truthfulness by telling me that he was a regular contributor to *Punchinello*. Desiring to bathe, I asked for some towels, failing to recognize what I supposed to be a pen-wiper as one of the articles required. "Towels!" echoed the servant. "Do you think, sir, that this hotel is made of towels?"

"Why, have n't you more than one towel in the house?"

"Certainly, sir, we've got any quantity of towels, or rather we had. The other one was carried off this morning by a gentleman, who in receiving his change at the office put the towel in his pocket-book with some postal currency. We are after him now, but we haven't caught him yet." Supposing the man was on foot, and that a train like that I had come on had been sent in pursuit of him, I knew the chase was hopeless. I ordered half a dozen towels peremptorily, and after nearly an hour the boy returned with two new ones, having exhausted the market, and given a new impetus to the flax trade.

I went to supper, but, finding the greater part of the meal absorbed by the table-cloth, I drank a glass of warm water and fought musketoes as a substitute for going to bed. Gentle reader, if you should ever be within fifty miles of the White River Junction, be sure you stop before lessening the distance by a foot. Then turn around, and travel in the opposite direction.

Quitting the Junction by another accommodation train (very accommodating for cripples who have been left behind), I crawled to Wells River. The managers of the road, dreading the effect of the high rate of speed upon passengers, ordered them to be placed on board of a freight and cattle train for Littleton, where I arrived just in time to wait seven hours before the coach set out for the Profile House. After getting into the coach at the hotel, which is very neat and comfortable, by the bye, I had to wait nearly two hours more for the train. It would not have arrived that night, but, happening to run off the track, it made better time than usual. There is an end of all things they say (I wish I could think so of the Junction Hotel), and, after a suffocating ride in the heat and dust, with eleven passengers inside and one or two so crushed that they didn't count, nine on top, and several distributed along the road, I arrived here a hotter and a "madder" man than I had ever expected to be when I set out.

If there be anybody that I have any particular reason to hate, let him come to the Mountains by this route, and stop over at White River Junction, as he values my detestation.

You know I am not what the splendid rowdy, Alcibiades, would have called a *kephale thanatike* in any sense—I don't believe in the principle at all; but I am glad to find a house so excellent as this, and to say as much. It is the best in the Mountains, and if I were going to stay among them for the season I should certainly take up my abode here. I may be prejudiced from the fact that I have probably the best room in the hotel; but all the rooms seem very neat, airy, and comfortable. This house is situated in what is called the Franconia Notch—*the* Notch is among the White Mountains, near Crawford's—and the mountains rising abruptly all around it, and literally overshadowing it, remind me of the Vale of Chamounix on a small scale. It would seem as if Nature, in a landlord's mood, had cut out a place among these peaks and rolling hights to put a hotel into, and set some of the most attractive features of scenery within convenient distance. The Profile has not perhaps as favorable a position for sight-seeing as the old Flume House, six miles south of this; but it is better, pecuniarily speaking, for the proprietors of the Profile, who, having bought the Flume House some years ago, shut it up, except as a place for temporary refreshment. They also derive a certain income from letting horses and wagons to convey tourists to the various places of interest in the vicinity of the Flume House, from which, if there were any boarders there, the excursions might be made on foot.

The first object of curiosity here is the famous Profile, or the Old Man of the Mountain, visible 300 or 400 yards from the hotel, a most remarkable resemblance to the outline of the human face. From the road, about 1,000 feet below, the stone image looks so exactly as if it had been cut out with a chisel that I have known skeptical persons to climb up Jackson Mountain and take the trouble to see with their own eyes that Nature was the only sculptor employed upon the overhanging cliff which is so striking a counterfeit. The Profile is not solid as it seems at a distance, but consists of five granite blocks, altogether 60 or 90 feet long. Beneath the image is a small pond called the Old Man's Washbowl, and near the cliff is a peculiar-shaped rock which looks so much like a cannon as to give that name to the Profile Mountain.

Half a mile from the hotel, in a northerly direction, is a very pretty piece of water known as Echo Lake. The echo is not awakened from the shore, but from a boat near the middle is repeated a number of times. The drive to the Flume is extremely pleasant, bordering, as it does, the Pemigewasset River, and carrying you by the Basin and in the vicinity of the Pool, whose clear waters, large rocks, and cool shade make it delightful for idlers, sentimentalists, and pic-nickers. The Basin is a bowl-like cavity, about 30 feet deep and 50 feet in diameter, caused by the whirling of large stones by the force of the current in a natural hollow of the rock. The sparkling water with which it is filled flows over and down the rocks in several silvery cascades. The Flume is a rocky channel worn by the water, with perpendicular sides, 70 or 80 feet above the bed of the stream. It is a cool, wild, and curious place, and the vast bowlder resting between the two walls and threatening apparently to fall every moment, though in reality it is very secure, adds greatly to the attraction of the phenomenal locality. The rocky channel is about 25 or 30 feet broad, and probably a quarter of a mile in length, and gives a better idea of the wearing power of water than can be had anywhere among the mountains.

There are any number of climbs, rambles and drives in this neighborhood, and riding and excursion parties are constantly coming and going from the hotel, which is the only sojourning place in the immediate vicinity. One large and solitary cottage, owned by a New-Yorker, is near the house; the inhabiting family taking their meals at the Profile, thus dispensing with the services of a cook and table waiters. The season is now at its hight. The hotel is full, and will be until the end of the month, and far into September if this burning weather continues. The fiery temperature of the past six or seven weeks has been favorable to all the Summer resorts, certainly to this one, where I presume there must be fully 600 persons quartered comfortably. New-York is more largely represented at the Profile this year than it has ever been before, though the bulk of visitors are from New-England. The arrivals and departures are constant; a great many persons remaining only a day or two, and then flitting off to other famous spots. Still, the Profile has more regular boarders than any hotel in the mountains—boarders who come about the middle of July, and remain until the beginning or middle of September, according to the state of the thermometer. The price of board is $4 a day, as it is at nearly all the hotels in New-England which claim to be first-class and to cater for fashionable patronage, meaning the people ambitious of dress and willing to spend money freely.

It is not thought that spiritual salvation depends so much on clothes here as it does on the island of Manhattan; albeit the prospect of the best woman's getting to Heaven if she changes her gown only twice a day is not brilliant according to the accepted authorities who worship Paris and pray morning, noon, and night to the Goddess of Mode. What we style country hours are observed here. Breakfast is served at 7 and dinner at 2 o'clock, with a margin of an hour for lazy folks who have not had the benefit of New-England training. It is a trifle inconvenient for a Gothamite, especially if he ever has had the misfortune to be connected with morning newspapers, to be up and dressed at 7 o'clock; but as there is nothing to do after 11 in the evening—they have no night in this region except what the Almanac contains—he is forced to go to bed, and to rise betimes, having usually exhausted Sleep about daylight. I am a firm believer in the virtue of late rising, and all appeals to my sympathy in behalf of the worm that was caught for being abroad so early having been utterly abortive, I can understand the feeling of one of Le Sage's heroes who refused to leave his bed at 6 a. m. to fight a duel, vowing he would not appear in public at such an unrighteous hour to escort Venus to Olympus; but accepted the challenge for mid-day; went out at that hour, and was duly made a romantic subject for the undertaker. What is the use of quitting the city to get up so near daylight for? The next time I come to New-England I intend to bring with me luncheon enough to last until I return to a place where people understand that the spirit of an enlightened Christianity depends largely upon the time of taking breakfast. How can a man keep all the Commandments and observe all the proprieties when he takes his coffee and toast while the dew is on the grass, and the sun is too drowsy to shine? J. H. B.

NOTES.

A number of Philadelphia gentlemen provided the fashionable guests of Cape May with a series of comical amusements on the lawn of Congress Hall, one afternoon last week. There were foot-races, races with wheelbarrows, blindfolded, and climbing a greasy pole. These attractions drew a larger assembly than any hop or other amusement given this season, not less than 3,000 persons being upon the lawn, piazzas, and balconies, as spectators. Several purses were contended for, and everybody present was delighted. Another novelty in the way of amusements at the Cape was a moonlight hop on the lawn and piazzas of the Stockton House. The waltzing and galoping in the moonlight, on the very shore of the sea, the roaring of the surf mingling with the music, was very romantic and delightful. The fashionable young ladies begin to express fatigue and to show signs of *ennui*, the rounds of regular gayeties having become monotonous with repetition. Novelties, therefore, are eagerly looked for....The trip from Montreal down the St. Lawrence and up the Saguenay River to Ha Ha Bay is 370 miles in length. Of this distance 64 miles is on the Saguenay. A citizen of Springfield, who recently made this tour, writes to *The Republican* that in a genuine Indian birch-bark village, opposite the mouth of the Saguenay, on the banks of the St. Lawrence, he met an Indian girl with flaxen hair. Whether it was a freak of nature, or whether our New-York fashions had reached this aboriginal belle, he could not determine.... Patrick S. Gilmore is at the Minot House, Cohasset.

Mrs. Elizabeth Murray, the renowned water-color artist, is at North Conway, N. H. She has a Summer studio in a barn, which she has made, it is said, a very charming resort. Mr. Murray, her husband, the British Consul at Portland, has been passing a short vacation with her. He is a fine elocutionist, and frequently reads for benevolent objects. He has read for the Baptist Society during his present visit at North Conway. Greenport, on the eastern end of Long Island, at the terminus of the Long Island Railroad, is nearly filled this season with families from Brooklyn and New-York. Most of the private houses in the place, as well as the hotels, contain boarders. There is no surf-bathing, but the still-water bathing is excellent. Rowing, sailing, and croquet playing are the amusements. The bay at Greenport is a favorite resort of the New-York and Brooklyn Yacht Clubs....."Big Bone Springs" is the pretty name of a Summer resort in Kentucky. It is derived from the huge fossil bones which have been disinterred in great numbers from the bank of a creek flowing near the Springs. Many collections of these bones have been made, and the supply seems inexhaustible. The springs are situated in a circular valley. Three of them have been fitted up for the public. At one of them the water, which is sufficiently disagreeable in taste to cure every known disease, is barreled for shipment. Another pours its water through an upright hollow log 12 or 15 feet in length. It is so clear that a silver coin at the bottom is plainly visible. A curious claim for these waters, and one particularly effective in Kentucky and the West, is that they are an antidote of intoxication. The landlord of the hotel may thus offer inducements to a certain class of patrons in the shame of unlimited facilities for repeating the nocturnal spree. A party of Cincinnati medical gentlemen, says *The Commercial* of that city, have fully tested the waters in this direction, and pronounce them a success.

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE.

THE PARTITION OF FRANCE.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Since France is so revolutionary, and such a disturber of the peace of Europe, why would it not be well for the Great Powers to divide France between them? C. W. H.

New-York, Aug. 12, 1870.

THE MIDLAND RAILROAD.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: In my transactions with the millers of Oswego, I have had flour shipped from that place, via the "Midland" to Oneida, thence to Canastota, via New-York Central. The cost of carrying 20 barrels flour from Oswego to Oneida, 40 miles, is $2 80, while the cost of the same from Oneida to Canastota, on the New-York Central Railroad, five miles, is $3 02. The comparison will show the people what benefit they may expect from the completion of the "Midland," and the benefit already being derived.

Peterboro, N. Y., Aug. 12, 1870. J. N. WOODBURY.

CONSERVATISM IN VIRGINIA.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: I should think it would appear rather strange to those who have labored so hard for reconstruction to read the comments of the Southern Press on the candidates whom they (the editors) propose to Congress, and the recommendations they give them in order to secure their election. A man in this part of the country cannot be elected "*Doz Pelter*" unless he has a good Rebel record, and while he is canvassing he must abuse Union men and "Radicals." We would like to send a good Republican from this District to Congress; one that does not have to be relieved of his disabilities, and then join the Democratic party under the plea of Conservatism, and abuse the administration and "Radicals" generally, and one, too, who was not a delegate at the Convention that nominated Seymour for the Presidency. Conservative, Oh! Conservatism when wilt thou appear in thy true garb and cease to do mischief! G. W. R.

Marion, Va., Aug. 11, 1870.

WHY POLICEMEN DO NOT DO THEIR DUTY.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: The position of police officer in New-York City requires an amount of both physical and moral courage never before needed. The number of desperadoes who prowl about our streets committing every variety of misdemeanor and villainy in defiance of the laws, have been largely increased since they have become conscious of their influence at the polls and their consequent immunity from punishment. They swagger and boast of their power with higher authorities when under arrest, and threaten to "break" the officers who dare to do their duty. That all this is not mere boasting, we have too many painful proofs of late. Partly for these reasons and partly from the fact that they have so much of "unjustifiable clubbing," "brutality of an officer," &c., many policemen are not to be found when needed.

We have in our ward a brave and fearless officer (Lambrecht) who never fails, when possible, to bring the guilty to justice, as his record of arrests will show. For the part taken by him in a recent and most important case, he has been traduced and villified without stint by friends of the criminal and by sympathetic reporters, while no word of appreciation or encouragement has been awarded him by an indebted public. Could he have been bribed or intimidated, his convicting testimony would have never been given. But offers of money and threats of personal violence were alike unavailing, and, in consequence, murderers have received a check. Let the press, judges, and citizens, sustain our police, and we shall have more good officers and fewer criminals. NINETEENTH WARD.

New-York, August 12, 1870.

THE ACCIDENT IN THE BAY.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: The disaster in the Bay of New-York yesterday evening to the steamer Norwalk is but the forerunner of others far more appalling if some authoritative prevention is not speedily furnished. Thousands of innocent persons are daily allured by flaming advertisements and cheap fares to patronize excursion boats that are positively floating rotten shells, fit hardly to sustain the weight of their machinery and boilers, without the additional tunnage of human freight. The Norwalk is a dangerous boat, and steamboat men who know her well long since pronounced her so. She has been sunk once before. A searching investigation should be made into the habits of her officers. There is a steamer plying on excursions up the Hudson, carrying several hundreds on each trip, that is positively a man-trap. When she is laden her hull buckles like a withe; her copper is all crumpled on her bottom and sides, and her builder has been heard to say that he knows not the hour she will break her back. More than one-third of the people who went down the bay last Monday to see the New-York Yacht Club Regratta, were quite close to eternity, with nothing but a rotten plank between them and the other world. There are boats plying in our harbor with boilers so thin that a boy could drive a marlin-spike through the iron plates. Samples have been seen by the writer at the Navy-Yard, and I think Chief-Engineer Wood of the United States navy has some specimens on hand now. There should be a thorough inspection of these excursion boats, and only a limited number of passengers allowed on board at one time. Had any accident occurred on Monday last when 100,000 people were on board the craft in our harbor, who would have rescued them? All the boats there were so crowded that it would have imperiled any vessel that would have gone to render assistance. One-half, yes, two-thirds of all the so-called life-boats attached to *excursion* steamers are unfit for the service they may be called upon at any moment to perform.

For the sake of humanity lend your helping hand to avert the horrors which hourly stare us in the face. I write knowingly, having been for nearly thirty years familiar with steamboats and steamboating. There are plenty of good excursion boats and temperance captains and pilots. Let the public know who they are, and let the public patronize them. The Government has locked the safety valves, so that the dangers of boiler explosions on races have been lessened. Now let some authority guard human life against rotten, broken-backed and paper-shell boats, and some guarantee be given that the good boats shall be managed by sober men who can feel the awful responsibility imposed upon them while carrying thousands of their fellow beings. NAUTICUS.

New-York, Aug. 13, 1870.

A KIDNAPPED BABY RECOVERED.

After two months of most mysterious disappearance, a kidnapped baby has been as mysteriously restored to its parents in New-Orleans. Not only those nearly interested, but the entire public, seemed to have shared an unusual anxiety respecting the lost child, and the community took up the case with almost as much eagerness as though each one of them were the parent of little Mollie Digby. The civic authorities not only lent all the assistance in their power, but even added largely to the liberal rewards offered by the father, Mr. Thomas Digby, for the discovery of the child. The story of its loss was very brief. A young lady, a friend of the family, was holding the child in her arms in the street; its brother was playing beside them. There was an alarm of fire, and the young lady, wishing to see where the fire was, permitted a mulatto woman and a negress, one of whom asked the privilege, to hold the baby and follow her, while she went toward the fire. The two women got rid of the little brother by sending him to buy bananas, and then they and the baby permanently disappeared. No effort nor ingenuity was spared, but not a single known clue to the whereabouts of the missing child was discovered. One of the most horrible suspicions possible fastened itself on the public mind. It was supposed that, as no other conceivable motive for the abduction seemed tenable, the act had reference to what is known as the Voudou superstition, and fears were entertained that the child might actually have been sacrificed in the performance of some of the rights of fetichism. But speculation about the abduction, as well as the hope of recovery, almost died out, after the lapse of so long a period.

On the 9th instant a gentleman called at Mr. Digby's residence, and stated to that gentleman that he had a child at his own house that he thought must be the missing infant. Although frequently deluded and disappointed before in following up mistaken discoveries, Mr. Digby felt so impressed by the genuineness of this, that he scarcely knew whither the gentleman led him. He was taken to a private residence, of evident elegance and respectability, and there, in the arms of the wife of the gentleman who had brought him thither, he found his missing child, in fair health and nicely dressed.

Not stopping to thank anybody, much less to make inquiries, Mr. Digby snatched his child and hurried home with it. An investigation was afterward commenced by the police, aided by Mr. Digby. The house was again found, and the explanation offered by the gentleman and his wife was simply that the child was left with them to be returned to its parents on the condition that no questions should be asked. This stipulation was disregarded, and the place where the child had been kept for at least three weeks previous was ascertained. This, strange to say, was a private lying-in hospital, the last place in the world where any deficiency of babies might be expected to occasion their abduction from others. The women who keep this "hospital" declare that they received the child from somebody unknown to keep till called for, and being tired of waiting for somebody to call for it, sent it to the gentleman and lady, who recognized it from the printed descriptions, and arranged its return.

Back of this statement investigation is at present baffled. The obscurity hightens, as is usual, under the forms of judicial procedure. A woman has been, within three or four days, arrested and identified as the kidnapper; but her motives remain unsolved and inexplicable. Mollie Digby, as a young lady, will probably not make a thousandth part the sensation she has as a child, nor evoke half so much conversation by anything she may say as she has before she was able to talk.

EDUCATIONAL.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION—SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING.

LANCASTER, Pa., Aug. 12.—The Pennsylvania State Teachers' Association closed its Seventeenth Annual Session here last night. Though not the largest, it was one of the most harmonious and satisfactory of its meetings. Before the revision of the school law in 1854, any one might teach school in this State, who could induce the directors to employ him; no certificate of qualification or of character was required. The act of 1854 provided that all applicants for the position of teacher in the common schools should be duly examined by the County Superintendent (an office established that year) for the county wherein the person desired to teach, and that any school district employing a person to teach, who had not been so examined and therefore not having a "certificate," forfeited its quota of the State funds for that year. Under this act, the State Department issued certain instructions explaining the meaning and intent of the law. County Superintendents were instructed to examine applicants, and to issue "permanent certificates" to such only as possessed the maximum degree of qualifications set forth in the "instructions;" "provisional certificates" might be issued to persons of inferior attainments, "good for one year only." The school officers, aware of the fact that a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers could not be found, placed the maximum low, and provided, in the granting of provisional certificates, for a yet lower grade. As teachers became better qualified the standard of qualification was raised. Examinations were made more thorough, until finally a "permanent certificate" was issued to those only who had attained a high degree of skill in the art of teaching, and who were masters of the branches required by law to be taught in the common schools. These certificates, however, were issued by the several County Superintendents, each with his own standard, and his own method of applying the standard to the applicants for examination; this fact, coupled with the up-grade movement toward higher qualifications, gave rise to great inequality. Persons unable to obtain a permanent certificate in one county might cross the line and take rank among the highest. Another difficulty, however, is found in the legal provision that a certificate, either permanent or provisional, is good only for the county in which it is issued. The graduates from the normal schools may, after teaching two years, and giving evidence that they possess the legal qualifications, receive a professional certificate. This whole arrangement of certificates is unsatisfactory to the teachers, and every year an effort is made to reconstruct it, but no acceptable scheme has yet been devised.

At the meeting, just closed, two Committees, that on "Permanent Certificates," and again that on "State Aid to Teachers," went over the whole subject, and presented different plans, neither of which were acceptable to the Association. The matter, referred to a new Committee, therefore goes over to the next annual meeting, just as it has gone over during 15 years of the life of the Association. A foolish jealousy between the teachers prepared at the Normal schools and those educated elsewhere is the major difficulty in the way of a final settlement. A State Board, before which, at appointed times in different parts of the commonwealth, all applicants for admission to the "Profession of School Teacher" could appear for examination, is the most feasible solution offered. The records of the examinations would be filed in the School Department at Harrisburg, and certificates that should be evidence of admission to the profession might be issued under the seal of the Department to all who are by the records of the State Board entitled to them.

The status of Normal Schools and their relation to other institutions of learning in the State also remains an unsettled question. By the act of 1857 the State is divided into 12 "Normal Districts," and in each of these a State Normal School may be established. The mode is briefly this: Whenever an institution of learning within one of these districts shall ask to be recognized by the State authorities as a Normal School, a Committee shall be appointed to proceed to the place and examine the buildings, property, apparatus, and facilities for teaching; and if these come up to the requirements of the law, especially in the item of "value of property," then, upon the report of the Committee, the Department at Harrisburg shall recognize the institution as the State Normal School for that District, and shall cause to be paid to the Trustees thereof the sum of $15,000. Provision is also made for the payment of 50 cents a week to certain pupils at said school, and $1 a week to any wounded soldier studying there, and upon graduation, and the signing of a pledge to teach in the public schools of the State two years, the graduate receives $50.

Five State Normal schools have been established, and three or four more will be recognized during this year, under the provisions of this act. These, by reason of State aid, are enabled to offer cheaper rates to young men and women seeking instruction than those offered by the private academies. The Normal schools are, therefore, crowded with students, while only the first-class academies are able to maintain their places against them. Many indifferent private schools have lost their patronage, are earning only a scanty living, or have been closed. It is a well-known fact that only a small proportion of the students leaving the Normal schools become teachers, so that the Normal schools are, in reality, academies with "normal classes" for teachers. The owners and friends of private academies demand, therefore, that the Normal schools shall be made professional training schools, as the law contemplated; or if not this, that the State aid shall be extended to all such private academies as are willing to establish "normal classes." Many of the friends of the State Schools, fearing that the ambition to rate high in the number of pupils is keeping down the grade and embarrassing the course of instruction, join in the demand that a more professional character shall be given to the instruction. The curriculum is too thoroughly academic; the Professors too much engaged in teaching the elements of the so called "Common School Branches," and give but little attention to the higher technical training. It is charged, also, that the Professors employed in the Normal Schools are fresh graduates from these schools, and that there is, therefore, a lack of that depth and breadth of culture so necessary to the success of the institutions, and which alone distinguishes the teacher from the hearsay and explainer of lessons. This subject was ably presented by Prof. Wyers, proprietor of what is confessedly the best conducted private academy in the State, on the one side, and by Prof. Brooks, Principal of the Normal School at Millersville, on the other side. The discussion, conducted in the spirit of fairness, and with the view of serving the best interests of the commonwealth, resulted in a more perfect understanding of the actual condition of the Normal Schools and their true relation to the State. It was agreed that until these institutions are sufficiently endowed to dispense with the patronage of mere academic classes, the public cannot demand of them exclusively professional training.

"Religious instruction," or the Bible in the Common Schools, occupied more time in the Association than any other subject before it at this meeting. [The result of this discussion has already been reported in THE TRIBUNE]. Prof. Brooks of the State Normal School for the Second District presented the following resolution, for the purpose, as he said, of putting in form and recording the sentiments of the Association:

Resolved, That it is the opinion of the Pennsylvania State Teachers' Association that there should be religious instruction in the schools, and that the Bible should be made the basis of such instruction.

Opposition to this resolution came from two sources: First, from those opposed to religious instruction; and second, from those who thought it impolitic to give public expression to their convictions. Time was given for full discussion, several attempts were made to postpone, lay on the table, or otherwise dodge a direct vote, but finally the resolution was adopted by a very large majority. Subsequently a resolution offered by State Superintendent Wickham was adopted, disclaiming any desire for legislation, or State influence in the matter. The result therefore amounts to a declaration on the part of the Association in favor of the Bible in the common schools, to be used by the teachers, to be read at the opening of the school each day, and to be made the basis of such moral and religious instruction as the teacher may from time to time impart. It was conceded by all that the great precepts of the Bible, held and believed by all Christians and many of them also by Jews as true, and which are at the foundation of public and private morality, may and should be taught, free from sectarianism and in a manner that will not offend any sect or party.

A subject peculiarly Pennsylvanian, "The Study of the German Language in the Public Schools," presented by Prof. D. L. Schaedler of Bethlehem, representing the *Verein* Press Association, was referred to the Executive Committee, and will come up for consideration next year at the meeting in Williamsport.

A NEW DEVICE IN GRAPE CULTURE.

Three years since Mr. E. F. Underhill, late Clerk of the Assembly, and for many years a well known stenographer and journalist in this city, removed to Brocton, Chautauqua County, and commenced the cultivation of grapes. In learning the practical details of vineyard cultivation and management, the idea of a simple device suggested itself to him as a substitute for the tediously applied, and often costly and insecure, substances which had always been used to the vines to stakes or trellises. This, after two years' of experiment, he perfected in a little implement which he calls the vine-lock. It is made of wire, and has forms adapted to securing the shoots or canes, whether their growth is perpendicular, oblique, or horizontal. It has the merit of simplicity and cheapness, and, being made of metal, can be used for years, while each season the grape-grower has always been compelled to get a new stock of material for ties. When once attached to the stake or trellis, it remains there for use until by decay it breaks and falls off. While it holds the vine with perfect security, there is sufficient grace within the lock to admit of the shoot or cane attaining its full growth. When it is considered that on every acre of grape-vines, from five to ten thousand ties are necessary each season, making hundreds of millions in the aggregate vineyards of the country, the value of a little contrivance like the vine-lock, which will save half the labor of tying, can be easily seen.

ITALY.

ATTITUDE OF THE KINGDOM—DEBATE ON THE NEUTRALITY QUESTION.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

FLORENCE, July 30.—In all parts of the peninsula there is but one voice "strict neutrality"—not even the annexation of Rome, as the price, would atone for an alliance with France against Prussia. The withdrawal of the French troops from Rome, and this time it seems a real withdrawal, as the officers of the Papal legions are returning home in search of laurels and glory, excites no enthusiasm. It is a return to the Convention of September, with an additional article that the Italian army shall not only prevent any invasion from without, of the Papal territory, but shall repress any attempt from within to upset the shaky old edifice. Individuals sometimes make the same mistake twice over, nations rarely, and I may venture to say that, with the blue cross over the tricolor, no Garibaldian or Mazzinian bands will ever again invade the *Agro Romano* to complete the programme of 1860, of "One Italy with Rome for its Capital under Victor Emanuel, King by the Grace of God and the will of the people." The long and hopeless waiting for "a revolution to begin in Rome" came on the 28th October, when ten Garibaldians mustered in ten thousand on the hights above the bridge of Momentana, ready to second the faintest sign, has taught us how little to expect from a population whose best and bravest are in prison or in exile, whose masses have grown up under the shadow of the cowl. So it is not the fear of losing a chance that was ours yesterday, which places us in suspense. The question is, what shall we have to pay, and the growing conviction is, we are drifting into an active alliance with France; perhaps we are already allied under the king's sign and seal.

"Will the Government maintain rigorous neutrality with the other Powers who have declared it? Why did the English Government in its declaration to the House omit Italy from among the neutral Powers? Up to what point will our armaments be brought? Have any negotiations been entered into touching the occupation by the French of the Roman States, and the Convention of the 15th of September? Will such a line of policy be adopted as, without offending liberty and without compromising unity, shall resolve the Roman question in accordance with the plebiscitum? Will the Government promise to contract no pledges which may compromise the nation without previously consulting Parliament?"

To these direct and concise questions Visconte Venasta, one of the originators of the September Convention, and the man in the present Cabinet most suspected of servility to France, replied: "We shall observe neutrality between the belligerents, scrupulously observe the duties traced by international rights, and, in common with all other Powers who cannot systematically disclaim all interest in great European questions, shall preserve our liberty of action and watch that in any case the liberties of Italy shall not be compromised, parliamentary prerogatives will not be infringed."

The English Government has not undertaken to publish a bill of the neutral Powers; as to the Roman question, the intentions of the French Government are not fully known; there has been no official exchange of communication between the two Governments—two declarations must suffice. The first is that the determination of the French Government relative to the presence of its troops in Rome is considered by us as independent of the line of conduct which Italy may be called upon to pursue in present circumstances. The second is that the worst alternative of all would be for us to avail ourselves of the position in which France now finds herself in order to add to her embarrassments, and to menace directly or indirectly a policy of violence with regard to the Roman question.

In the debate of July 31, Signor Visconte Venasta said that he was able to condense in one the replies to the various demands made by different orators. The French Government had officially made known to them that after the late discussion on foreign affairs in this House it proposes to withdraw its troops from the Papal States and return to the September Convention. The Italian Government had but to take note of this declaration, seeing that the Convention has never been broken, and to declare in its turn that since the French Government is ready to carry into execution this international act the Italian Government would fulfill its part with loyalty.

The debate then proceeded.

La Porta—Up to yesterday the September Convention was a dead letter; the French troops occupied Rome and the Italian Government held its peace. Now that France needs her troops to fight Prussia we return to the Convention, and we are to substitute our soldiers for the French soldiers at Rome.

Visconte Venasta—We shall not go to