received here state that no insects have appeared this year at Manhattan, Kansas, nor, so far as is known, west of that place or Waterville, 100 miles west of Atchison, there are no tidings of general disaster as yet from the more easterly counties in this State reached by the invasion of last year. The only counties from which reports come of general devastations this year are a portion of Vernon, Bates, Cass, Jackson, Clay, Platte, Buchanan, Andrew, and portions of Johnson, Lafayette, Ray, Clinton, and Holt. But the invasion of last year extended through the whole or portions of 21 other counties lying eastward or southward of those named, in which, if any insects have this year appeared, it has not been as yet reported.

Thus the region in this State in which the insects have appeared embraces only seven full counties on the western border, from Andrew to Bates, inclusive, and adjoining parts of six other counties. In the north little damage is reported in Holt; in Clinton the most easterly point reached is Grayson, 29 miles from Leavenworth; from Ray there are no definite reports; "near Lexington" is the most easterly point of reported devastation in Lafayette; about Warrensburg fields have been destroyed in Johnson; and only the northern portion of Vernon is known to be infested. In Kansas the most southerly point of known destruction is near Fort Scott, and a line thence to Waterville, cutting off the north-eastern corner of the State, forms a limit beyond which to the westward no reliable reports state that general injury has been done. It is quite probable, however, that there may be damage in scattered localities in the south-eastern portion of the State. But an irregular belt not more than 120 miles wide, from Waterville, Kansas, to Savannah, Missouri, and thus lapping over the border and extending little more than 120 miles from north to south, embraces all the points at which the devastation is known to be serious.

Within that area, moreover, the injury is very variable. Almost every report speaks of destruction "in some places" within a county or neighborhood. In some localities the devastation is terrible; others not far distant entirely escape. The eggs of the locust are never deposited in low, wet ground, but on firm, dry, and elevated spots. The long, hard Winter killed all the eggs in some situations, but not in others. Millions of eggs were destroyed by plowing in the Fall, or before the severe frosts late in April. Millions of insects, hatched in favorable spots in April, were destroyed by the subsequent severe frosts. Thus the spots from which destroying insects finally come are comparatively rare, and the young insects, being wingless as yet, have very limited powers of locomotion, cannot cross streams, avoid low, wet ground, and suffer greatly from storms, of which there have been several of late. Hence it is natural that the destruction should be, as everywhere reported, by no means extended over a whole neighborhood, but mainly confined to certain tracts.

Winter wheat, except in few instances, was so far advanced as to escape, and the young insects have been able to eat only the very late and tender corn. Spring wheat, other grains, many vegetables, plants, shrubs, and grass, they devour with fearful voracity. Pointing to a paved street, one gentleman said, "In three days my best grass-land was stripped as bare as that pavement." The locusts even bore into the ground, devouring the roots of plants. Unable to fly, they have not stripped the trees, as the full-grown locusts do, but they are bad enough at best. On the whole, however, there is reason to hope that the injury will be slight compared with that of last year, when it is roughly estimated that property worth about $50,000,000 was destroyed. Some farmers will lose severely, but the devastation is by no means as general, even within the much more limited area affected. The general panic has tinged nearly all reports. The few who have suffered make it known; the many who only dread, but have as yet lost little or nothing, naturally make known the losses of others. But the devastation would indeed be terrible, if it should continue long.

The best of the news is that the climate and the parasites have done their fatal work. I suspect that the severe changes and excessive rainfall of our climate at this season are the most fatal features. Adapted by nature to an even, very early and very dry Spring, the insects grow weaker every day in this region and soon begin to perish. In Buchanan County one man shoveled up 15 bushels from alongside a fence, on which the creatures crawled to escape the wet. At Lawrence and Topeka, Kansas, they are perishing rapidly, and it is reported that they are dying everywhere in the southern part of that State. This evening, dispatches from Atchison state that the territory occupied in Kansas is growing narrower, "the hoppers going eastward." As they cannot go far without wings, but can and do die, this news is good. A few days ago they were plentiful at Waterville, 100 miles west, but the latest dispatches from Atchison say that they now "reach about 40 miles west and 20 miles north" of that place. In Buchanan and Cass Counties, Missouri, they have also begun to disappear.

Many artificial means for getting rid of the insects have been tried, but none of them has proved very successful. What man is powerless to do for himself, however, his allies, the birds, beasts, reptiles, and parasitic insects do for him in the extirpation of these pests. Chickens, turkeys, and hogs devour the locusts in great quantities; many kinds of birds not only slaughter the insects but hunt for their eggs in the ground; and toads, frogs, and snakes feast upon them. But more effective than these or all other agencies of destruction, except the climate, Prof. Riley considers the parasitic insects, several of which he describes. Of these, some eat the eggs; others fasten upon the living body and suck it to a dry shell; and others pierce the bodies of the locusts and deposit therein eggs which speedily develop into grubs. The locust dies, and the grub, in a few days, is a full grown fly, ready to lay its share of fatal eggs. Attacked by all these enemies and enfeebled by the climate, the vast swarms of locusts, so numerous at first as to frequently impede or stop railroad trains by their crushed bodies, speedily vanish from the earth. What, then, can the far less numerous and more sickly young expect, when, cut off from reenforcements, they have to meet all these destroying agencies in the Spring? From Bourbon County, Kansas, news comes that "some kind of insect has destroyed the grasshoppers, as they lie dead in heaps on the roadside." In Jefferson County, a farmer finds that a parasite has destroyed thousands in his locality. It would not be at all surprising if the plague should everywhere be at an end before any of the hoppers get wings, but in any case their numbers must by that time be vastly reduced by natural enemies and by the climate.

But as yet the young insects hop south-eastwardly, as their fathers flew before them, and eat with a voracity worthy of their sires. Although, being wingless, they make little progress, the farmers generally do not know how long their movements will be thus delayed. One other cause of panic and of a thousand false reports should be mentioned. An ordinary and comparatively harmless grasshopper so closely resembles the full-grown Rocky Mountain locust in general appearance that, by the unscientific observer, the distinction would be scarcely noticed. But the two differ entirely, both in destructiveness and in habits. The locust does not live through the Winter, but lays eggs in the Fall which hatch in the Spring. The grasshopper, on the contrary, hibernates, hiding itself in some safe place, comes out as large as ever in the Spring, and then lays eggs. Yet, in a host of cases—no one can tell how many—the appearance of the full-grown grasshopper from his Winter retreat is actually believed and widely reported as the beginning of a new invasion of full-grown locusts. But the devouring locust never gets wings as early as this, even in his far-off home, and never appears on our Western border earlier than July in years of emigration. The harmless grasshopper is at this season a full inch in length, with wings extending beyond his body. The devouring locust is at this season a wingless little creature, smaller than a small cricket, and nowhere half an inch long. But thousands of poor farmers see in the grasshopper the ghost of the dreaded locust that died last Fall.

There is not the least reason to apprehend another invasion this year, even when the locusts of the mountains get wings. Two migrations in successive years, but never three, have occurred. We have had two, the smaller preliminary invasion in 1873 and the larger in 1874, and no fears need be entertained of another for several years. But because of this mistake thousands of farmers who are really beyond all danger have been panic-stricken, and any number of false reports have been sent out that "the grasshoppers" are invading again. In view of the Governor's proclamation, perhaps some ignorance among his people may be excusable.

Great apprehensions are felt in counties ravaged last year but not yet seriously troubled, that young insects may yet be hatched there also, or that the grasshoppers, slowly moving in other counties, may speedily arrive in vast hosts. Except in certain localities, these apprehensions are almost wholly groundless. On the extreme northern border of this State, in Western Iowa, and a part of Nebraska, it is still possible that injury may be done by insects yet unhatched. But south of 40°, the Kansas line, wherever eggs were laid, if they have not hatched already, there is every reason to believe they will not hatch at all. As to the movement of the young insects the best proof is given by the fact that, having been hatched out for three weeks in certain counties, they have as yet not appeared at all in adjoining counties toward which they are moving. Until the end of June farmers not quite near the line of present devastation need have no fear, and by that time crops will be mainly advanced beyond danger, while by far the greater part of the insects, if not all of them, will probably have perished. But it is not strange that there is a widespread panic. The farmers remember the frightful devastation in years of migration. They do not know that the young locusts are less destructive, and cannot last as long or move as far. They hear that the creatures are trying to move south-eastward, and do not know that they will be without wings until the end of June, or that, being an unnatural and unhealthy progeny, they are dying off already. Thus it is not strange that thousands of poor farmers, blessed with a sensational press and a pious Governor, grow disheartened, neglect farm work, curtail purchases, talk of selling their lands, and wait with dread for the coming plague which, to most of them, will never come.

This letter will not be in vain if it helps to dispel the panic of farmers beyond the line of probable danger. It may also give, even to those of ravaged regions, reason to hope that the plague will soon disappear, and there will yet be time to win some return from the generous soil and genial climate of this fertile region. Already farmers of Jackson, seeing that the pests begin to die off, are obtaining seed in order to plant for a new crop this year. Nor will this letter be in vain if it helps to remove, in some measure, that stolid prejudice of ignorance against scientific inquiry, which sought in the last Legislature to abolish the State Entomologist altogether. A State so fortunate as to have the services of a man so zealous, so practically useful, and so highly appreciated in the scientific world, if it should abolish that office, would deserve a plague of locusts every year as a punishment for its semi-barbarism. W. M. GROSVENOR.

St. Louis, May 21, 1875.

THE GRASSHOPPERS IN NEBRASKA.

SMALL AMOUNT OF DAMAGE DONE BY THE INSECTS—THEIR DEPARTURE INTO MISSOURI—LESSENING OF THEIR NUMBERS BY PARASITES.

[FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

LINCOLN, Neb., May 19.—Last year, as is well known, Nebraska suffered terribly from the ravages of the grasshoppers, and was compelled to call upon the more favored States for aid during the past Winter. The locusts came from the south-west, entering the State along the Republican Valley, and pursuing a north-easterly route, laid waste some of the fairest portions of the State. Although they came after most of the small grain had been harvested the corn crop was almost destroyed by them. They disappeared in the north-eastern part of the State; and, although the flight of some of them could be traced in Iowa, Dakota, and Minnesota, by far the largest portion disappeared without leaving a token of where they died.

Early this season it was reported that the grasshoppers had deposited their eggs in many places in the State, along the route of their flight, and that the eggs, with the first warm days of Spring were beginning to hatch. Within a few weeks past these reports have been more or less verified. In several of the south-eastern counties, where the ravages last season were very slight, millions of young grasshoppers suddenly appeared and at once began their destructive work. The early wheat and oats, the blades of which had appeared above the surface, were attacked, and every field was laid waste. The insects departed in a south-easterly direction passing into Missouri, where, it is reported, they are continuing their ravages. Since their departure from Richardson County and other south-eastern counties of this State, however, the wheat and oat fields are again covered with blades of these grains, and there is no doubt that the damage done by the grasshoppers is very slight, and that a good crop will be raised upon the fields over which the pests traveled. Replanting will not be necessary. Indeed, the farmers in that part of the State are to be congratulated that the locusts descended upon their fields so early in the season, rather than just before the crops matured. Reports have been coming in daily, also, of the reappearance of the grasshoppers in some of the western counties, but the reports state that the number of locusts is so slight that no danger is anticipated from them.

Prof. Aughey of the Nebraska State University has been engaged in an investigation of the habits of the grasshopper for several years past, and at this time of general fear of the pest in the State his opinions about the insects are looked upon with much confidence. Prof. Reilley, State Entomologist of Missouri, has also given the subject special attention, and says he is of the opinion that the grasshoppers die out in a few generations after their migration from their native sandy or gravelly plains. Prof. Aughey fully sustains him in this opinion, and has made numerous experiments to verify it. One experiment conclusively proves that the grasshoppers of the first generation coming here are stronger, more agile and more voracious than those of the succeeding generation hatched upon the soil of this State. The same result was proved by caging them and ascertaining how long they could live without food. In some places, also, the eggs that were laid in different years since 1864 did not hatch out. This was owing chiefly to the extreme changes from a wet to a dry and from a hot to a cold atmosphere. The Professor is of the opinion that, were it not for this, long before this time the locusts would from their enormous numbers have devastated the entire country, as far east as the Atlantic. Prof. Aughey further states that as early as 1865 he noticed that enormous numbers of grasshoppers in Northern Nebraska took flight early in June, in a southerly and south-easterly direction, but he was unable to learn by inquiries made in many directions whither most of them went. He asks if it is not possible that they may have soared so high as to get into the trade winds, which wafted them into the ocean; but says this theory of course needs verification. Another interesting result of Prof. Aughey's investigations is the discovery of small red parasites that feed upon the bodies of the grasshoppers. Three years ago he first discovered these parasites, but only about one in a hundred of the grasshoppers seemed then to be affected. Two years ago these parasites were vastly more numerous, and last year fully two-thirds of the grasshoppers examined by the Professor had from 2 to 30 of these enemies of their peace fastened upon them. Thousands of grasshoppers fell dead in crossing the Republican Valley, and as they continued through the country on their flight the number of the dead was greatly augmented, and all of them seemed to be destroyed by this parasite eating into their body at the base of the wings. The Professor also states that while in Dakota County, in the north-eastern part of this State, last August, his attention was called to the fact that these red parasites were devouring the eggs which the grasshoppers had laid. This report he verified by examining hundreds of nests, and within the last few days he has examined many localities around Lincoln where the grasshoppers have appeared, and in spots found the ground covered with their bodies. Upon examination he discovered that they had been literally devoured by this minute parasite. May not these natural enemies of the grasshoppers become so numerous as to reduce the numbers of the locusts and release the land from their ravages? Mr. Aughey also gives it as his opinion that as grasshoppers always migrate in 35 or 40 days after they are hatched, those sections of the State where the young insects are now devouring the crops, or have already devoured them this season, will be freed from them at least as early as the 1st of June. By that time, judging from their habits in previous years, a few fields of small grain, etc., will be entirely destroyed. Even the devastated fields will have ample opportunity to recuperate and may produce average crops, unless new hordes arrive from distant regions later in the Summer, which is possible but not probable. The present outlook, therefore, is very good. Little damage has been done this season, and the swarms of young grasshoppers are certainly leaving the State. Unless some fortunate circumstance intervenes, Missouri will suffer this year as Nebraska did last year.

A REMEDY FOR THE GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Going the rounds of all the papers is the news of the coming grasshopper scourge. And a Governor of one of the Western States has appointed a day of fasting and prayer to beseech God to alter his laws and kill the insects. Now, this appointment of a fast day is a pure relic of heathendom; it is acting precisely as do the heathens to appease what they call the wrath of the gods. Why not exercise a little common sense? Why not use a small amount of experience? When the Eastern World is scourged with locusts the inhabitants gather them, dry them and use them for food. Why not have our Western friends learn this source of profit and life to themselves?

Why does not the Governor advise every family in all that country to raise all the turkeys and chickens that it is possible for them to hatch out from all the eggs that can be obtained in the country. By so doing the Western farmers can be saved and made rich by the poultry business. If after hatching out millions and millions of turkeys and chickens, the grasshopper crop should fail, then feed corn and other grains—and much profit will come to them, whichever course they pursue. Do this work, and the farmers of the West will be living in keeping with the laws of God, and prosper. Let the grasshoppers come, and be ready for them, and all in that country will soon praise the Lord for them, and by and by will pray for a grasshopper year to appear to feed the poultry. A.

Winchester, N. H., May 18, 1875.

DEATHS FROM STARVATION IN MISSOURI.

CINCINNATI, May 24.—A special dispatch to *The Enquirer* from St. Louis says that three children of a family named Findlay, residing near Sedalia, Mo., died Friday last from starvation. The family have been in destitute circumstances all the Winter. Many other people in that neighborhood are suffering for food, and a meeting of citizens has been called to obtain relief for them.

When a negro woman on Levee-st. was informed the other day, by a meandering reporter, that the price of sea-kotis had increased 15 per cent during the present month, she elevated her hands and exclaimed: "De Land only knows what is to become of poor folks! Seems jif de more we worked de oftener de white folks go and riz de price on de necessaries of life."—[Vicksburg Herald.

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE

A FORCING PROCESS IN RELIGION.

THE EXPERIENCE OF A YOUNG CONVERT AND BACK-SLIDER.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: I was very much interested in your correspondent's letter on "A Religious Life," not only for its cleverness and humor, but also for its truthfulness. I did not know but an experience of mine, somewhat unlike his, might be interesting and perhaps instructive, as illustrative of the forcing process in religion.

In the Sunday-school with which I was connected children were not supposed to be eligible for conversion until their 13th or 14th year, but after some such age were plied pretty vigorously with exhortations and admonitions. I used to regard a revival at that time as a sort of mill, into which an assorted batch of Sunday-school scholars was put, and, after the necessary processes were gone through with, each was turned out with a passport for Heaven. When I was about 13 the teachers began to talk to me on the subject of religion. I did not feel that I was at all wicked, but I was at the critical period of life, and had certainly not been converted, as I understood it. If I was not converted I must be wicked; consequently I tried to get up an artificial conviction of sin. I did not intend to be a hypocrite, but believed conviction to be so necessary a preliminary to conversion as to warrant any means of getting it. I had heard about people lying awake all night in great trouble and praying, but in the midst of what was intended to be a fervent and despairing petition I would drop asleep in the most provoking manner. The truth was I regarded it as a matter of bargain and sale. I conscientiously wanted to perform my part and have all the necessary symptoms. It was as if I had said to a boy, "If you'll give me an apple I'll have the toothache;" but when the time came I had no toothache; conscientious boy that I was, I did the only thing that I could do, tied up my jaw and tried to feel as if I did have the toothache. Well, I went to a revival determined to go up to the altar if I felt moved, as they used to say. After the meeting had been in progress some time and several had gone forward, I saw an old gentleman coming down the aisle evidently intending to speak to me. I was immediately seized with a vague sort of scare, stepped out of the pew and went up. I tried to realize the situation I was in but had no satisfactory feelings of any kind. When I was released, for I could not help feeling it to be a release, I found myself the object of much attention. Several young ladies came up and shook hands with me; looked at me very lovingly, and went away without saying anything. They evidently regarded me as being in a very interesting and peculiar state. I went forward for several nights until I began to imagine that I felt better when I arose and took a seat among the brethren. After this I joined a young people's prayer-meeting, took part in the services, and did everything that a new-fledged convert was supposed to do. As the whole thing was for the most part meaningless to me I soon began to tire of it. I also was much shaken in my allegiance by the discovery that our leader, a young man who sang and prayed with great fervency, was anything but an exemplary character. From this time on I held a merely mechanical connection with the church, and became what was called a back-slider. Now I have no doubt revivals have done much good, but why can't people learn that to force children in such matters only makes them hypocritical, and perhaps destroys their belief entirely. E. K. P.

Morristown, N. J., May 22, 1875.

SAVE THE SILENT LETTERS.

SOME THINGS THAT ARE NOT TO BE "BOILED DOWN."

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: In a recent number of THE TRIBUNE, a correspondent, commenting upon your editorial headed "Boil it Down," says: "By actual count your article contains 337 silent letters—that is, letters that are not of the slightest use in expressing the written idea or the sounds of the words as spoken. Fourteen per cent of your article conveys no idea, expresses nothing, and is worse than useless, because it occupies valuable space." Then follows a computation of the amount of waste room in the columns of THE TRIBUNE through which these ghosts of letters stalk without any soul, or idea, or function whatever. And with apparent candor the author remarks: "If they would only 'squeak and jibber,' there would be a modicum of sense that would justify the parade, but they do not. There they stand stupidly, stolidly silent."

Now I protest against this, and desire to lift up my voice to defend these silent letters against an assassin who would not only ruthlessly murder his mother tongue, but would at the same time bury from sight the records of her birth, the volumes of history, the evidence of moral revolutions and political changes contained in her silent letters. History is not merely the ghost of the past, it is also the guardian of the present and the future. These letters which contain so much of history are not "stupidly, stolidly silent." They live to the eye if not to the ear. They talk to us as do the trees, the flowers, the sky, the hills. Take, for instance, the word "chorus," which occurs in the first sentence of the editorial referred to. The initial sound is represented by the English letter "k," and if the only object to be gained in expressing words by written characters were the representation of sounds, then might "chorus" begin with a "k," and one of the 337 silent letters be summarily disposed of. Of what use are the two letters? They link the word indissolubly to its parent, the Greek *chorós*, and as the eye rests upon it there flashes upon the mind a vision of the ancient Athenian theater, free to every citizen of that proud city, crowded to its utmost limit with eager listeners and spectators. As if by magic there floats to the ear an echo of the rhythmic measures of Sophocles and Euripides, and the music of feet moving in time to the exquisite harmony of the verse. Then come thoughts of the manifold changes since that ancient time and feelings of thankfulness that we have been permitted to inherit a portion of the wealth of the Greek language.

Who shall say that these letters are "stolidly silent?" They are not so but to him who willfully closes his mind to the stories they would fain tell and the philosophy of history they would fain proclaim. We would recommend economy of time, of space, of money. The nature of economy we do not attempt to discuss, but venture upon the assertion that it will not pay even Americans to sacrifice the English language for the sake of speed or space.

Collinsville, Conn., May 24, 1875. M. R.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: To-day being the day set apart for the annual decoration of the graves of the Southern soldiers who are buried in our cemetery here, it was observed by all classes with more than usual interest. A large crowd was in attendance, and the ceremonies were of a most interesting character. The annual address was delivered by Major Howard Falconer, a gallant ex-Confederate soldier. It will, I am sure, tend to the consummation for which the Southern people most devoutly wish: the healing of the wounds of the war, the dying out of the bitterness necessarily engendered in such a conflict, and a genuine restoration of fraternal relations between the two sections of our great Union. During the Summer of 1874 the 3d United States Infantry (Col. Del. Floyd-Jones, commanding) was stationed in this city. Several members of it died while here, and were buried in our cemetery, where their bodies now rest. To-day their graves were covered with fragrant flowers by fair ladies and by men who had been earnest Confederate soldiers. The entire South wishes you God-speed in the sacred work of reconciliation, and hope in 1876 to meet the North at the Centennial and rejoice with patriots from every section that sectional bitterness has died out, and that our 100th anniversary finds us a great, prosperous, and united people. That is the earnest hope of the South. Yours, truly, F. W. J.

Holly Springs, Miss., May 15, 1875.

HAMILTON AT THE COLLEGE REGATTA.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: By sudden illness both of the Hamilton College delegates were kept from attending the Regatta Convention at Springfield; but though not represented there, the college will have a boat at Saratoga. The crew, with two substitutes, has been chosen, and is at work on the water. The men vary considerably in hight and weight, the bow being 5 feet 7 inches in hight and weighing 147 pounds, while much heavier men occupy the waist. Their average weight is 162 pounds, and their age 22 years. No rigid bill of fare has been adopted at the training table, but instead food which is inviting as well as wholesome is provided, the principal aim being to secure simplicity in diet. The Mohawk River at Utica furnishes a course of two miles. The men go to the river every afternoon to practice. They take lunch in Utica, and return partly by street cars and partly on foot. The length of their walk from their work and to and from their meals is 11 miles. The general management of the crew is in the hands of E. G. Love of New-York, a graduate of the college. The question is often asked, What success can a college situated so far from navigable water expect to have? The answer is that she cannot hope for great glory, but that the regatta will encourage athletic sports and stimulate a spirit of loyalty among students and alumni. L.

Clinton, N. Y., May 20, 1875.

GROWTH OF BUFFALO.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: A portion of the State Insane Asylum, which has been building here for several years past, is approaching completion. It is situated in a most charming suburb near the new park, and from its position can be seen for a long distance. It is built of red sandstone, its proportions are massive, and it is an institution of which all citizens of Buffalo can justly feel proud. A yearly appropriation of $100,000 from the city enables work to be carried on at a reasonably rapid rate upon the park. The roads are all laid out, and at present one is being macadamized. With its various approaches it will afford a 10-mile drive, a want long felt in Buffalo. Heretofore the city has possessed no good drive, the surrounding country being uninteresting and the roads generally bad. One of the pleasantest features of the park is a lake with well-turfed, sloping banks. The lake covers what was formerly a swamp. Business is reviving. The late reduction of canal tolls has had a very beneficial effect here, and will materially help its merchants. Considerable activity in the building trade is being manifested, and several handsome blocks are being erected for business purposes. C. A. G.

Buffalo, May 12, 1875.

INTERJECTION VS. PRONOUN.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Though not a "clerical reader," will you permit me to say, in reply to the question of "Pronoun" in THE TRIBUNE of May 20, that it "is grammatically correct for a clergyman to say: 'Jesus Christ, and Him crucified shall ever be my theme.'" "Pronoun" asks "Why should the personal pronoun here be in the objective rather than in the nominative case?" The answer is, because Paul (I. Cor., ii, 2) put it in the objective case, and the clergyman only quotes his words. Why does not "Pronoun" object to "Christ" being in the objective case, as it bears the same relation to "shall be" that "Him" does? "Pronoun's" mistake consists in thinking that "Him" is the subject of "shall be;" whereas, neither "Him" nor "Christ" is such subject, but the whole phrase, "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," is the subject of "shall be," and as such may be said to be a noun in the nominative case. How would it sound to say: "Jesus Christ, and He crucified," &c? INTERJECTION.

Jersey City, May 20, 1875.

INDEPENDENCE ABRIDGED.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: That you now publish the best paper on the continent I will not question. An improvement in one particular would, I think, draw to its support more largely still the intelligent and non-partisan minds of the country. I refer to the bitterness with which it alludes sometimes to the President and other public men. My position has led me into an extended personal and pen correspondence with the professional and literary classes, and I have found a very rapidly growing confidence in your paper. But the chief objection to it has been the one stated above. Your "independence" is commendable, but is there not sometimes a "muchness" about it that allows of an abridgment? I have procured all your "Extras." The enterprise and judgment exhibited in such departments as the literary, scientific, &c., have certainly a high appreciation on the part of the intelligent public. Put a curb on your treatment of some of our public men, and the paper will approach nearer perfection than any of its cotemporaries. CONNECTICUT.

Southington, Conn., May 20, 1875.

PLEAS DURING INVESTIGATIONS.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Dr. C. C. Cox, in his letter about the Indians, concludes by saying, "More forbearance and less sweeping criticism would be becoming." That is always the cry when an abuse is being examined. It reminds me of the pickpocket who strongly objected to having his person searched for the stolen property, and finally observed to the policemen, "What a morbid, unhappy nature yours must be! To live in such a constant state of suspicion of my fellow men would kill me." Respectfully yours, F. W. ALEXANDER.

Baltimore, May 19, 1875.

USE OF THE LEAD AT SEA.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: I think I can give you a safe method of preventing ocean accidents like that of the Schiller. The entrance to the British Channel from the Atlantic end has been carefully surveyed and the soundings have been accurately marked on the charts. A vessel getting upon soundings (which can be told by the color of the water and the instincts that a sailor has), by taking soundings several times, at intervals of an hour or two, and noting the courses and distances, and comparing these soundings with the soundings marked on the chart, can ascertain the ship's position exactly. This I have seen tried. Returning to London from the West Indies a good many years ago, a vessel was worked up the Channel by soundings altogether. The first land made was St. Alban's Head, nearly mid-length of the Channel and a long way inside of the Scilly Islands. The weather was foggy, and the wind such that we made a long and a short tack, and a good many of them. I can recollect very well our surprise and satisfaction at seeing how well the soundings agreed with our reckoning. Our danger was from these same Scilly Islands. In the accounts of the wreck of the Schiller I do not see anything about casting the lead. The captain *supposed* he was five miles south of the Scilly rocks. It makes one shudder to think of running a ship in a fog and expecting to hit such an imaginary mark as that, and so many lives depending upon guess-work. One of your correspondents would prefer to go to Europe by a line that advertises that its vessels will not go ahead in a fog. There is no occasion to stop a steamer's progress. Only slacken the speed, and heave the lead overboard a few times. The log gives the correct distance sailed, and the chart shows the spot reached. If the insurers of the Schiller had inserted a clause in the policy that the course shaped for in entering the Channel should be 20 miles south of the rocks or the insurance would be forfeited, they would now be counting their profits, instead of mourning their losses, and how much suffering and untold sorrow would have been avoided. If you will carefully look at the accounts of past and future shipwrecks you will find, I venture to say, that they have and will be caused by criminal neglect of the use of the lead. O. F.

Rockford, Ill., May 18, 1875.

JUDGMENT ON STREET MANNERS.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: All Winter the discussion has been going on, and it has reminded me of the apple that the gods threw down, of "woman's rights" and "woman's wrongs." First there came a stinging criticism of "ladies' want of politeness in public conveyances," then an eager protest and denial of the same; next, we were told that it was the gentlemen who were wanting in this respect, with various allusions to the days of chivalry. After all that can be said, it seems to me that all are right and all are wrong. There are women who are impolite enough to forget to thank the gentleman who resigns his seat to them in a crowded car, just as there are men rude enough to chew and spit therein; ladies who are extravagant, and gentlemen who are likewise afflicted; ladies who crochet, and work, and make quilts all day, and ladies who are idle; and also there are gentlemen who have corresponding occupations. But I think that with it all, we have not gone backward in true manliness and womanliness as the years have gone; and I say it in the face of the "Centennial" and the old tales of heroes and heroines that have been raked up thereby. Whether in the knee-breeches and cocked hats, brocades and short-waisted dresses, or the quiet dress suits and more graceful drapings of to-day, human nature always was and is the same. There are true hearts, true women, and brave men everywhere, and we must not judge the majority by the malcontents. As for me, for the one side I should recommend the perusal of that poem you published, intentionally, I should imagine from its aptness, entitled, "The Ambitious Vine;" and for the other, patience. ADDIE F. VAN K.

Harlem, May 19, 1875.

A QUESTION ABOUT THE GROWTH OF TREES.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: I noticed with much interest some time ago a discussion participated in by Prof. Gray in regard to the question whether the total mass of a tree was elevated at all, as the tree grew in altitude. Prof. Gray's opinion, I believe, is that such elevation does not take place. In passing Grace M. E. Church, in this city, this morning, I noticed a soft maple tree which had had about a year ago, I should think, two of its branches sawed off. The branches were about three inches in diameter, and were about ten feet above ground. The smooth surface of the wood is now surrounded by the cup-shaped bark, the bark being pushed at least an inch beyond the cut surface. The outer edges of the bark are even, just as the saw left them. It does not seem possible that the wood can have shrunk so far beyond the bark; and if not, it seems that the bark, at least, does grow upward in total mass. In this case there is no evidence of growth near the edge of the excision; the bark is not thickened, but appears to be in thickness just what it was when the branch was cut off. If Prof. Gray or some other botanist can explain this phenomenon, I am sure it will interest others beside myself: LEANDER STONE.

No. 57 Washington-st., Chicago, May 18, 1875.

THE VOTING EVIL.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: In the finality of any method of voting there must always be an unprecedented minority. No system can be devised which will obviate this evil, if it is an evil. The difficulty is not in the mode of voting, nor in the majority principle, and hence no modification of these can cure the distemper. There are only two methods of relief:

1. In the selection of public servants on the sole ground of fitness—civil service sincerely executed.

2. In constructing the civil system so that public servants can do no serious harm. Then we may elect and appoint rascals, if we wish, and have little fear of mortal damage.

That such a system can be constructed without destructive changes in the present order I am fully satisfied, and hold myself ready to demonstrate. But will the public accept the system? I have tested this point, and know that nine-tenths of the community will hail it with delight. Under the first proposition the system of voting is of small moment. Integrity and capacity will compensate for defects in the civil code. Under the second—with the virtue in the system and not in the individual—the cumulated virtue of the whole antagonizing the vice of the few—the tendency will be to the selection of the best and the restraint of the bad. And so all will be educated into a higher public morality.

New-York, May 17, 1875. JOHN B. WOLFF.

A REPULSIVE HABIT.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: "L. W.," in to-day's TRIBUNE, has set a most important stone rolling. By much talking, let us see if we cannot eradicate the loathsome habit which the Rev. Newman Hall, when writing about this country, only characterized by a ——. He would not even use the word "spitting." Those of us who live in Brooklyn or on Staten Island perhaps know more about this filthy habit than the New-Yorkers do. The ferryboats are, particularly in Winter, pools of tobacco; so are most of the Brooklyn cars. Do men never think how offensive this is to women? What if one woman had such a dreadful habit, or any habit of person which made us repulsive to men? Men would soon fly from us in disgust. But we are forced everywhere to be offended and nauseated by this tobacco-spitting. Just in front of us, while we are walking, men, gentlemen, will leave tobacco, and force us to turn out of the way of it. Let the people write about this thing, "boiling down" their communications lest THE TRIBUNE be forced to reject them. ***

Brooklyn, May 18, 1875.

A NEWSBOY'S TRICK.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: This morning when the Philadelphia train reached Newark a newsboy entered the cars, from whom I purchased a copy of THE TRIBUNE, but discovered too late that the little rascal had cheated me out of the triple sheet. The conductor to whom I complained thought it rather a good joke, although he should know the peddlers quite well. By the way, why should travelers pay for newspapers from 25 to 50 per cent over and above the publication price? *The London Times* is sold all over England at the regular price. A TRAVELER.

New-York, May 28, 1875.

WIRE SIGNS OVER SIDEWALKS.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Your correspondent will indeed be greatly surprised if there is not ere long chronicled through your widely circulated columns some serious accident from the present apparently popular method of erecting heavily framed, showy, wire signs upon the roofs of buildings and allowing them to project at a comparatively great distance over the sidewalks. These signs are intended to be and doubtless are in most cases quite securely fastened, but in the hurry incident to filling the present apparently numerous orders, it is surely not presuming to assert that workmen may leave some weak spot, more particularly in the wire itself, or its fastenings, upon which a Summer gust or Winter's storm will have a telling effect. But, weak spot or no weak spot, I, for one, question whether the wires now used to support those large heavy frameworks, even when of the same size as those stretched from one telegraph pole to another, will any better than the latter withstand the action of sleet or snow and be sufficient to guard against the dangers now apprehended. Respectfully, M. S. J.

New-York, May 15, 1875.

THE CADET IMPOSTURE.

A SENSELESS AND DECEPTIVE SYSTEM.

THE DIRECTORS OF THE PACIFIC MAIL COMPANY MAINLY RESPONSIBLE.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: I have been decidedly interested in reading your accounts of the cadet imposture practiced by the Pacific Mail Company's officials, from the fact that I had perceived how completely senseless and deceptive any system of this kind was, from personal observation, while in the service of that Company eight years ago. When the line from California to China was first put into operation, it was decided to have on each of the vessels employed in that service one or more young men as cadets, or as officers in embryo. On the vessel to which I was attached, the Great Republic, one of these young men was stationed, and it would be difficult to conceive of a more disheartening experience than that through which this boy, for he was not more than 15 years of age, passed. Not that he was abused, for the officers were uniformly kind in their treatment of him; but there was actually nothing for him to do, and no one had the time or the inclination to give him the least instruction. A merchant steamer or ship is widely different from a training-school; the officers are on duty on alternate days either 10 or 14 hours; and it would be asking more than could well be expected to have them take time from their watch below in which to play the rôle of schoolmaster. Nor are they fitted by education or experience for service of this character. With hardly an exception the line officers, then and now in the employ of the Pacific Mail, are men who began life in the forecastle. Their knowledge of the science of navigation is confined to the application of certain known rules to certain published logarithms. To attempt to instruct would merely be to exhibit their own ignorance. Seamanship *per se* cannot be taught, but has to be gained by waiting and watching; and here let me say that as thorough a knowledge of this art could be acquired on a canal-boat as on the steamers of the Pacific Mail, where the little sail carried is only put in use when the wind is fair. The proper school for the life of a sailor is a sailing vessel. The study of marine engineering can best be begun by entering the draughting-room of an establishment like Mr. Roach's, on the Delaware; and thus all that is left for the officers in the Pacific Mail to teach cadets is the method of stowing cargo, polishing brass-work, and coiling rope—very good things in their way, but unsatisfactory when combined with nothing else.

Now, Mr. Editor, I have written this in defense of the officers of the Pacific Mail, whom I think some of your correspondents take to task unjustly. The fault lies with the directors or managers of the line and not with their employés. These latter are paid their wages for sailing, loading and discharging the vessels. By some freak of their employers, seven or eight young men with "full dress uniforms" and "white duck suits" are placed on the various vessels, for whom employment is to be found, and to whom instruction is to be given. To say that these intruders are considered in the light of an intolerable nuisance for which any means of riddance is a good one, is stating the truth mildly. As they have no experience, there is nothing that they can be employed to do, while, as I said above, those in command have neither time, ability nor inclination to instruct them. The cadets are thus allowed either to spend their time in counting sea gulls, or the old familiar sea trick of "roasting them out" is put into operation. That it was successful in the present instance seems only too evident; and while I can sympathize heartily in the disappointment of these youthful aspirants, and can join with you in condemnation of the Board of Directors, I am inclined to think that it is best for all concerned that this farce should have come to so sudden and public an end.

Respectfully, yours, OSBORNE HOWES, JR.

Chester Square, Boston, May 19, 1875.

AN EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE.

THE COLON'S OFFICERS PRAISED BY A FORMER MIDSHIPMAN.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: In your impartial attack upon the Pacific Mail Company for their outrageous treatment of their cadets, I desire in the name of justice that some exceptions be made to this general stigma cast upon the officers of the service by your many correspondents. I, with two others, who still remain in the service—a circumstance which