BRITISH TOPICS.

MR. GLADSTONE ON TURKEY.

A COMPREHENSIVE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE EX-PREMIER ON THE SUBJECT—HOBART PASHA DEFENDS HIS ADOPTED NATION—SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT PRINTS A TIMELY LETTER ON TURKISH OBDURACY—FLOODS, SPIRITUALISTS, AND RITUALISM.

[FROM THE REGULAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

LONDON, Jan. 17.—If you wish to know what is by far the best book on the interior of Turkey, and will take Mr. Gladstone's word for it, it is a book, name at present unknown to me but procurable before the post closes, written by two young English ladies, Miss Muir Mackenzie and the Hon. Miss Irby. Mr. Gladstone says young; there are, however, five ladies who bear the name and title of the Hon. Miss Irby—one two years of age, one six, and one 14; all clearly entitled to be called young, but none presumably the author of a book on the interior of Turkey. The two others were born respectively in 1810 and 1816, and it is one of these, doubtless, who shares with Miss Mackenzie the honor of Mr. Gladstone's eulogium. I regret not to be able to give you as full particulars respecting the Mackenzies as respecting the Irbys. But the truth is that in this country it is always possible to obtain accurate information about anybody who bears the title of Honorable or any other title. It is believed, and truly believed, that the thirst for such knowledge is continual. So keen is it that the yearly publication of a considerable number of volumes exclusively devoted to that interesting branch of the human family which has handles to its names does not quench it; nay, it appears to grow by what it feeds on. The three young Irbys are daughters of Lord Boston; the two who are less young are, I believe, his aunts—at any rate, his kin in some degree. I most carelessly overlooked the name of the Mackenzie-Irby book, which is given at the head of the report which I am using. It is "The Turks, the Greeks, and the Slavs; or, Travels in Turkey and Europe;" but the name of the publisher is not given.

This book, now ten years old, was taken by Mr. Gladstone as the basis of an address or reading which he gave last night in the Boys' Schoolroom at Hawarden; reported this morning by telegraph to the extent of near two columns. I don't think I need make a summary of it, though it is full of information, and I have read it with profit and with—for the thirtieth time—a fresh sense of wonder and admiration for Mr. Gladstone's powers of mental application. It appears that he has deeply lamented the insufficiency of his own information, and has for the last six months toiled "almost incessantly" to supply it. He recognizes the assistance he has received from a press "organized up to the very highest degree," and from the invaluable force of public discussion; still, knowledge about Turkey is defective, and Mr. Gladstone has applied himself first to supply some of the defects in his own case, and then to share with the Boys of Hawarden and the public generally the benefits of his new acquisitions. It is not a political speech at all; not a word does it contain about the Conference; Lord Beaconsfield's name is not mentioned; but it describes the condition of Turkey, how the Government treat the people, and how Servia and Montenegro come to hold their present relations to the Porte. An address, I should say, extremely well calculated to enlighten and inform the English people on such matters of Turkish misrule and hideous oppression as would to the English people seem most intolerable if practiced on themselves.

On this same Turkish question, *The Times* this morning publishes two letters which, by a happy accident, illustrate each the other in a striking way. One is from Hobart Pasha, the English naval officer who commands the Turkish fleet; the other from Sir W. Vernon Harcourt. Hobart Pasha is a very well known man. His rank in the English navy (which he is permitted to retain) and his family connection—he is a younger son of the Earl of Buckinghamshire—and his exploits secure considerable attention to whatever he says. He is a tremendous Turk, of course, and writes openly in the interest of the Turks, and his letter is an expression of one of two things—either what the Turks really think and feel at this moment, or what they wish to have it supposed they think and feel; more probably the latter, if written under Turkish supervision. His letter is in substance a complaint that England has deserted the Turk, that Lord Salisbury's coming was expected as that of a friend, whereas he has taken sides with Turkey's "natural and inveterate enemy," Russia; that nevertheless the Conference might have done something but for the idea that the demands presented were the demands of Russia and not of England—an idea which Hobart Pasha says spread like wildfire among the Mussulmans, though he omits to say who spread it. Now, Turkey thinks herself insulted, the Conference will be a failure, and Turkey and Russia will be left face to face. Then what? Perhaps a war—but "perhaps a checkmate may be given to European diplomacy from a quarter little expected." A most mysterious hint which must be left for time to explain. What Admiral Hobart Pasha specifically appeals for, however, is simply fair play from England. "All the Turkish Government asks for is this. It argues thus: 'We have never had a fair chance of doing right. Corruption, from the Sovereign downward, has been our ruin for many years. Now we are determined, under the auspices of our young, intelligent, and progressive Sovereign, and such men as Midhat Pasha, to start on a right course. Give us a year to show what we can do (removing from our path foreign intrigue); and if, at the end of the year, we have not improved, wipe us out of the map of nations; but if our fresh start is to be hampered by humiliation at the outset, we can do nothing." This letter bears date Constantinople, Jan. 4. Sir William Harcourt's was written yesterday—of course without knowledge of Hobart Pasha's—and is designed to throw some light on the intentions and probable acts of the Turks with reference to promised reforms, judged by their very latest professions. He quotes at some length the statement of Safvet Pasha, read by him to the Plenipotentiaries, on the most burning question of all—that of the Bulgarian atrocities. It is too long for me to requote, but it has been published officially, and is on record, and the substance of it is fairly given by Sir W. Vernon Harcourt: "This, after the lapse of six months, is the final reply of the Porte to Mr. Baring's Report, to the dispatch of Lord Derby, and the mission of Lord Salisbury. It will be seen that it is frank to the point of cynicism, and candid to the extent of impudence. It is an absolute and unflinching avowal that all that was done in Bulgaria was the act of the Government of Turkey. Just so far as the measures of repression went, those were transactions in which the Porte sees nothing to be ashamed of or to regret. It adopts, justifies, and glories in them. There is no penitence for the past, no prospect of amendment for the future. Due notice is served upon Europe that what it has done before—and in its judgment rightly and justly done—it will, if need be, do again."

There could not well be a completer or more decisive answer than this to the appeal of Hobart Pasha for fair play. The man who answers him is not Sir W. Vernon Harcourt but Safvet Pasha. All Sir W. Vernon Harcourt has done is to disengage the answer from the mass of more or less irrelevant matter by which it was surrounded, and lay it naked before the English people.

There is a sensible abatement in the three plagues which have most lately infested the land—floods, spiritualists, and ritualists. January is not to be so bad as December, a month which will go down to posterity with the evil reputation of having brought more rain than any December since 1815. The waters are subsiding, and there are parts of England in which it is possible to go about otherwise than in boats. The spiritualists have come to grief in the person of William Lawrence, a "medium," who yesterday at the Middlesex Sessions was found guilty by a jury of obtaining, or attempting to obtain, money by false pretenses, and sentenced by the judge to three months' imprisonment in the common jail as a second-class misdemeanant. Lawrence is a much lower sort of swindler than Slade, and only cheated for shillings where Slade asked sovereigns. His clients, naturally, were people of much less respectable position. When I say respectable, I use the word in its conventional sense; not at all meaning to imply that I think a person who goes to a medium worthy of respect because he goes. Slade's success was due largely, as Mr. Maskelyne, a much cleverer and incomparably more honest conjurer says, to his impudence in putting so high a price on his tricks. Nor can the credit of impudence be denied to Lawrence. The judge, in passing sentence, told him the jury had done their duty in convicting him; that he was a "fraudulent impostor" who practiced upon people by such impudent and ridiculous pretenses and such palpable and preposterous delusions as ought not to deceive any person of fair understanding. To which Lawrence responded: "My lord, I think you feel that I am innocent; I am nearly certain of it." Possibly some of the least mad among the spiritualists may profit by the rebuke addressed to them. Many of them are, of course, honest and well meaning, but their attempt to sustain such men as Lawrence and Slade only proves them to be as wanting in knowledge of the world as they are abounding in credulity.

As for the ritualists, they have once more tried conclusions with the law, and once more got the worst of it. Mr. Tooth, the incumbent of St. James, Hatcham, who has been setting his parishioners by the ears for weeks past, and whose church has been made the scene of many disgraceful riots, has been ordered to prison by the Dean of Arches, and to prison he will probably go. His fellow ritualists regard him as a martyr, and a large number of them took the trouble to hold a meeting last night to say so. That very militant churchman, Archdeacon Denison, made a speech which was as violent and amusing as his speeches usually are. I don't suppose he is of quite sound mind. The Arches Court, he tells an applauding audience, ought to be called Lord Penzance's Court, and by that name will go down to the odium and execration of posterity. That and the Privy Council the Archdeacon and his friends are resolved to "fight to the death." It is quite certain their death will come before the Privy Council is destroyed, and before England will consent that a parcel of priests who are mad about millinery shall set law and Parliament at defiance.

G. W. S.

ITALIAN TOPICS.

LETTER FROM T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE.

DEATH OF THE EX-QUEEN OF SPAIN—CAUSES OF THE LIBERAL VICTORY AT THE RECENT ELECTIONS—THE KING'S SPEECH FAVORABLY RECEIVED.

[FROM THE REGULAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

ROME, Dec. 10.—Your readers will have heard, of course, of the death of the Duchess of Aosta, the wife of the King's second son, on the 8th ult., at San Remo, on the Riviera. She was only 29, and her death has been a very sad one. No human being has any word to say of her save in her praise. Her husband was devotedly attached to her, and the strictly domestic life which he has led with her and his children since his return from that unhappy and brief kingship in Spain is a proof that no other motive save a sense of duty prompted his acceptance of that thankless and miserable position. And now his reminiscences of that country and of his connection with it are completed by the consciousness that to it he owes the death of his dearly-beloved wife. For there is no doubt, I believe, that but for the terrible hardships endured and the intolerable treatment suffered at the hands of that "chivalrous" p[illegible] whom she was striving by every means in he[illegible] power to serve and benefit, she might now have been alive and making the happiness of her husband and children.

And now what shall I say to you of our general elections? Of course you know all about the general result of them. But you are much better informed on your side of the water than the majority of the European press has shown itself on this side, if you have rightly apprehended the significance of the immense majority which the party called for want of a better name the "Liberals" have obtained. Of course they are no more Liberals than their opponents, the "Moderates," the only non-liberal party in Italy being the Clerical party. And indeed the party now in power have latterly taken to calling themselves "Progressists." According to the returns as claimed by the supporters of Signor Depretis and his Cabinet, they have in round numbers about 400 votes out of the 508 of which the house consists. The late Chamber gave till a short time before its close a good working majority to the Moderates and the late Ministry. Certainly, therefore, so very marked a change in the sentiment of the country is startling and demands some explanation. A greater portion of the European press has found this explanation in supposing a suddenly-developed desire in the country for an enlarged electoral suffrage. And some countenance is given to the idea by the fact that Italy has a population of over 27,000,000 and only half a million of registered electors. Nevertheless you may rest assured that there is no widespread desire in the nation for an enlarged electoral suffrage and that no such cause has had anything to do with the largeness of the Progressist majority. Of the half million who may go to the polls if they will, nothing can induce above a quarter of a million to do so! And the talk which was got up among Liberal politicians at the time of the change of Ministry was a mere party cry, to which the country made so little response that, although the new Ministers long before the commencement of the election threw overboard all pretense of having any intention of meddling with the suffrage for the next four years, the abandonment of that which was supposed to have been the principal plank in the new Liberal platform had not the smallest effect of lessening the Progressist majority in any single electoral college throughout the kingdom. In fact, the only parties or persons who could, in the present condition of things in Italy, obtain any advantage from any great increase in the number of electors would be the Red Radicals in a very few of the great cities, and to a very far more important degree the priests throughout the whole of the rural districts and more especially in the South. Italy is far from ripe for any advantageous enlargement of the electoral franchise. The present Ministry are as well aware of that fact as their predecessors. There is no real demand for it in the country. The postponement of the measure to the Greek Kalends has caused not the smallest complaint or dissatisfaction in any quarter; and the question had nothing whatever to do with the present enormous ministerial majority. What then has caused that phenomenon? Very briefly, in the first place, the discontent caused by the severity of the taxation rendered necessary by the struggle for the attainment of a balance between the revenues and the expenditure of the State, which, let the present men and their organs say what they will, had been attained by Signor Minghetti, the late Minister of Finance. In the second place, a most reckless, unscrupulous abuse of the power of the Executive in manipulating the constituencies, carried to a far greater extent than had ever been seen before; and, thirdly, that general ill-humor with a government that has held power for a very long time and has had to bear all the unpopularity entailed by the exercise of power, which is sure to fall on the members of it.

The King's speech, drawn up as it is understood by the celebrated lawyer Signor Mancini, the Minister of Justice, the only man of really marked talent in the Cabinet, was very well received. Its only fault is that it promises too much, and very certainly more than the Ministry will be able to perform. Many of the measures of reform promised by it are excellent and most important, more especially that for making all the officers of the Executive responsible before the tribunals for their acts. The passage, however, which elicited the most enthusiastic applause was that in which His Majesty said that the large liberties granted by the State in Italy to the Catholic Church must not be so used as to become an offense to the State or a means of hampering her action in her own legitimate sphere.

T. A. TROLLOPE.

A negro was put on the stand as a witness, and the judge inquired if he understood the nature of an oath. "For certain, boss," said the citizen; "if I swear to a lie I must stick to him!"

LONDON GOSSIP.

NOTES ON LITERARY TOPICS.

A GALLANT EXPLOIT AS TOLD BY KINGLAKE—SINGULAR FORTUNES OF AN INDISCREET BOOK—FASHIONABLE LONDON AMAZED AT ITS DISCLOSURES—VAIN EFFORTS TO KEEP IT SUPPRESSED—A HISTORY OF NAPOLEON III. BY DUVERNOIS PROMISED—THREE NEW FRENCH NOVELS ANNOUNCED.

[FROM THE REGULAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

LONDON, Jan. 13.—A "cabinet" edition—the sixth—of Mr. Kinglake's "History of the Invasion of the Crimea" is announced by Messrs. Blackwood, and the first volume, clearly printed in crown 8vo, has appeared. It is the first in which the text has been revised, Mr. Kinglake having heretofore contented himself with putting into the form of notes such corrections and additions as he thought fit to make upon the issue of each new edition. This course he followed so long as the History was a subject of active controversy; at the end of sixteen years he rightly thinks the text may assume its definitive form. An exception has been made in favor of the famous XIVth chapter. This chapter, to use Mr. Kinglake's words, concerns the action and the character of a sovereign who, although at the hight of his power when the chapter was published, was destined to meet dire reverses, and is now no more. He has therefore judged it right to let what he said of him in 1863 reappear without the change of a word. This volume contains a most interesting Preface, with some remarks on the year 1853 and the year 1876, suggested of course by what is now going on in the East, with the following bit of truthful romance, showing how sentiment once more mingled with political action and a piece of chivalrous devotion set fire to the souls of an imaginative people:

The young Col. Nicholai Kiréff was a noble whose birth and possessions connected him with the districts affected by Moscow's fiery aspirations; and, being by nature a man of enthusiastic disposition, with a romantic example before him in the life of his father, he had accustomed himself to the idea of self-sacrifice. Upon the outbreak of Prince Milan's insurrection he went off to Servia, with the design of acting simply under the banner of the Red Cross, and had already entered upon his humane task when he found himself called upon by Gen. Tchernayeff to accept the command of what we may call a brigade—a force of some 5,000 infantry, consisting of volunteers and militiamen, supported, it seems, by five guns; and before long he not only had to take his brigade into action, but to use it as the means of assailing an intrenched position at Rokowitz. Young Kiréff very well understood that the irregular force intrusted to him was far from being one that could be commanded in the hour of battle by taking a look with a field-glass and uttering a few words to an aid-de-camp; so he determined to carry forward his men by the simple and primitive expedient of personally advancing in front of them. He was a man of great stature, with extraordinary beauty of features, and, whether owing to the midsummer heat or from any wild martyr-like or dare-devil impulse, he chose, as he had done from the first, to be clothed altogether in white. While advancing in front of his troops against the Turkish battery he was struck, first by a shot passing through his left arm, then presently by another one which struck him in the neck, and then again by yet another one which shattered his right hand and forced him to drop his sword; but despite all these wounds he was still continuing his resolute advance, when a fourth shot passed through his lungs and brought him at length to the ground, yet did not prevent him from uttering, although with great effort, the cry of "Forward! Forward." A fifth shot, however, fired low, passed through the fallen chief's heart and quenched his gallant spirit. The brigade he had com[illegible] manded fell back, and his body—vainly asked for soon afterward by Gen. Tchernayeff—remained in the hands of the Turks.

These are the facts, told with that charm of style which is Kinglake's own, but out of them grew with singular rapidity a kind of legend in which the Kiréff's exploit was magnified into the slaughter of hecatombs of Turks, and the story was everywhere told and believed, and everywhere set the Russians to volunteering in aid of Servia. Hence the numbers of Russian recruits who poured in, and hence it came about that the Czar, without having made war, found himself enduring, as it were, the shame of defeat when the Servians were beaten; and hence, finally, the famous ultimatum to Turkey.

A book was published in London some months ago with the rather too suggestive title, "Fashion and Passion, or Life in Mayfair;" the author, the Duke de Medina-Pomar. Whether it had any literary merits I cannot say, but it became known at once as a novel which was not all a novel; as, in fact, a collection of the gossip and scandalous stories which had been whispered in good society during the last year or two. The intrigues, the *liaisons*, the elopements were there; the names so thinly disguised that they were readily known by those who knew the people themselves and the circles in which they moved. The heroes and heroines of the Duke's piquant anecdotes, together with their brothers and cousins, were not pleased with the publicity thus suddenly thrust on them. They may or may not have cared for the talk which had gone on, but they could ill endure that the talk should get into print, and that any world less brilliant than their own should be permitted a glimpse inside the social mysteries of Mayfair. So it happened one day that "Fashion and Passion" was suppressed. Who suppressed it, or who paid for suppressing it, I never heard, but for some time it was quite believed that the book had really been withdrawn. You would find, however, on inquiring at your library, that the copies belonging to it had not been reclaimed by the publishers; they were, you would be told politely, in the hands of customers who had not returned them. It would be intimated to you with equal politeness that many copies were not to be returned at all; that those who chanced to possess them would keep them, and had, in fact, paid for them, sometimes as much as $15 or $20. Hence the difficulty in promising you the book, though the first that came in should surely be reserved for you. If, however, the conversation stopped there, you would find the book was not sent you; it was sent only to those who might care for it enough to agree to keep it at something like the price mentioned. If you asked your bookseller, you would be told, in perfectly good faith, that the market value of the book was really the sum named, and that it was not easily to be had. A good part of the first edition was disposed of in this way, to the great profit of somebody. Then, no more copies or no more purchasers being procurable, a second edition quietly made its appearance; the price, $1 25! The publishers have not thought it worth while to offer any explanation of these curious facts. It may not be the first time such a thing has happened; for ways that are dark and tricks that are vain the Heathen Chinee (?) is peculiar. Pray accept my account as that of an admiring and perfectly impartial observer. I did not buy the first edition, and my copy of the second is borrowed. It looks well enough as you dip into it here and there. Its author, nevertheless, is a real duke, who really was in London last year, and might have been met at many great houses, where he will never again be met. There are things which society does not pardon, even to a duke; telling too much truth being, apparently, one of them. It should none the less be said plainly that the book is, if one-half that is said of it be justified, a violation of the conventionalities and even decencies which make society of any kind, beyond what exists in Polynesia, possible.

Mr. Lyon Playfair, in his article on "Universities and Universities," in *Macmillan* for this month, has given a definition of the distinction between Scotch and English Universities which is likely to last. "The Scotch Universities aim to train students to make a thousand a year by the application of a cultivated intelligence. The English Universities are content to teach men how to spend a thousand a year with that dignity and usefulness which follow a good mental culture." In spite of its epigrammatic form, that is a pretty true statement; modifiable by the fact that a student who really succeeds in an English University has a career opened to him in any profession he likes to choose. Nor does Dr. Playfair undervalue the service done in teaching a man to spend his money well; he only argues that this is not the use to which national endowments ought to be put.

An announcement not without interest to the political student comes from Paris. M. Clément Duvernois is to publish in ten volumes a History of the Second Empire—the *Bas-Empire*, as Frenchmen, not Bonapartists, are wont to call it, adopting a more remote historical title. M. Duvernois was once a journalist of good ability and good repute, but gradually descended till he became a minister under the Emperor he had so long opposed. A little later he was condemned to two years' imprisonment for certain commercial transactions which, said a dry chronicler of facts, might be concisely described as swindling. The two years have not yet expired; this "history," it appears, is the fruit of them; which is what the humorous correspondent of *The Times* means by saying that the work is due to prolonged leisure. M. Duvernois is one of the statesmen who shares with M. Emile Ollivier the glory of the discovery that Imperialism (of the Bonaparte kind) might be reconciled with Liberty—a discovery which landed one of its authors in a "light-hearted" war with Germany, and the other in the "prolonged leisure" above mentioned. And yet M. Duvernois must know a good deal about the inside history of the later years of the Second Empire. He filled the highly responsible and less highly dignified post of chief newspaper lackey to the Emperor, *le Peuple François* having been what is called the personal organ of his master.

The *Revue des Deux Mondes* will publish during the year new novels by Octave Feuillet, Victor Cherbuliez, and André Theuriet. The last, who is less known abroad than the others, is one of three chosen by M. Emile Montegut, in a recent article of the *Revue*, as occupying a special place in modern French literature; M. Gustave Droz and M. Alphonse Daudet being the other two; and their popularity such that the last copy I saw of "Fromont Jeune" was in its twenty-fourth edition; the last of "Monsieur Madame et Bébé" in its seventy-first! M. Octave Feuillet, a writer of far higher powers than either of these, can hardly boast of any such success as that.

M. François Buloz, the founder, and, during its whole existence since 1831, editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, died yesterday, aged 74. He has had a great influence on French literature, but he was not even a Frenchman by birth. No other European review has, on the whole, been such a power. The two great English reviews appear quarterly; the *Revue des Deux Mondes* fortnightly; and while the latter is read all over Europe, the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* are seldom heard of outside of England. M. Buloz was a model editor; singularly cautious and enterprising at the same time, and knew how to secure the services of many of the most renowned writers of France of many different parties—a thing incomparably more difficult to do in France than elsewhere. Of late years the *Revue* has been thought to have fallen off, many old contributors having left it; but it retains its position as the chief critical periodical of Europe. It never disdained to be amusing; if the effort to do so did not always succeed, it was steadily made, no number appearing without a novel or story, narratives of travel being also frequent in its pages, mingled with articles of science, literary criticism, biography, politics, and art. Current politics are discussed in a separate department, and so long as the lamented M. Forçade lived, his was one of the first papers read. Why should not our venerable friend, *The North American*, now that it has taken a fresh departure, profit a little by so brilliant and successful an example? Would Boston tolerate a story in its august and slightly austere pages? Or is it only the Frenchman who can be dignified and amusing at the same time? Bret Harte's stories have more than once been translated for the *Revue*; I don't see why they should be thought unworthy of a periodical which has similar aims in America. But it was not a Frenchman who uttered the best criticism I have heard on the best of Bret Harte's stories, "Mrs. Skagg's Husbands," that it was as real as a dream is while you are dreaming it. That was said by an English woman.

G. W. S.

TREATMENT OF THE INSANE.

GOOD CARE NEEDED.

READINESS WITH WHICH STORIES ARE BELIEVED—PAINFUL DUTIES OFTEN IMPOSED ON SUPERINTENDENTS AND OTHERS.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Long ago there stood—it is among the visions of my childhood—an old house, hoary and gray, on one of the main streets. It has long since gone the way of all old houses in this country that are not built of something more substantial than wood. There were certain traditions; in that house had lived a godly minister of the Gospel, who long before he was an old man was stricken by a fierce disease, and there he lost his reason. And no other care or provision could there be than to fasten him by a chain at his own fireside, far enough to prevent his falling into the fire. He was not rich; his people did what they could, but of course his stipend was cut off, and his wife, with her children and household duties, was burdened with cares, and think what an accompaniment to her daily life was this ever-present sorrow! Remedial measures were few or none. There the minister sat in his arm-chair, chained at his own fireside, till death kindly took him to his better home.

Later than this there were madhouses where men were chained and shut up, and kept from doing harm to themselves or others till life should wear itself out. And later still came care and intelligent treatment, a recognition of various phases of the disease, insanity, resulting in cures in a large proportion of cases. A certain stigma, a certain superstition is removed, and the disease and the remedies are understood. And yet a certain amount of the old superstition remains, a certain amount of prejudice, and a curious feeling that in some way there is wrong and oppression. The public is ready to sup on horrors, and only too ready to believe wrong, so that when a highly-wrought tale or report comes out it finds only too ready belief, while if one reason on the subject he is gravely told where there is so much smoke there must be some fire. There is a sort of mystery about the revelations which suits some tastes, and the more improbable the tale the more easy it is to swallow.

I would quiet the fears and uneasiness of those who have dear friends in such institutions. They are under the care of wise, able, and, in many cases, Christian men, who conscientiously do their work; and they have a most hard and painful task. All their patients as a rule are restless, uneasy, and want to get out; many of them are hard to manage, are deceitful, cunning, untrue. If they are chained it is cruel, if they are shut up it is cruel—if they attack their attendants it is cruel to hurt them in self-defense. The good and wise superintendent of an asylum was lately stabbed by a patient and died. If in the struggle he had wounded or killed the maniac, what cruelty and brutality! It will do no harm to have trustees and managers vigilant and careful. There can not be too many safeguards around the sick and the afflicted. There should also be more and better trained nurses and attendants. But there should also be faith in good men, and we should not condemn them and call them hypocrites.

VERITAS.

New-York, Jan. 24, 1877.

WOMEN TO CARE FOR THE INSANE.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: The opinion of Charity Commissioner Norris in regard to asylums shows conclusively he knows nothing about what the principles of a good asylum are. He sums up as the chief of excellences that the Flatbush Asylum is conducted more economically than any other in the State, as if economy was the chief and only virtue and covered all abuses. A large asylum is not the best. The nearer the institution approaches the size of a family, the better it is. There is a small village in Switzerland which makes its living by taking care of and curing the insane. Each family takes one or more patients, as its convenience may allow. The most loving and tender care (without being under lock and key), plenty of outdoor exercise, diversions of all kinds, healthful and plenteous diet, cure more cases than any institution in the world. The large asylums in this country are nothing more than the Inquisition revived under modern systems of torture.

When I remonstrated with the superintendent for allowing two attendants to drag a young, frail woman, who had just come off a bed of typhoid fever, down stairs by the arms, her head foremost, he said: "What can you get for $12 a month? I can't be all over this large building at once!" and then added: "The State requires the asylum to be run economically." He let the same time was receiving $12,000, with his house furnished, even to the silver on his table. His table was kept at the expense of the State. The viands of his table were vastly superior to those of his patients. Woman, by her tenderness, is far better suited to conduct an asylum than a man, who vaunts economy as the sum and substance of excellence in the management of asylums.

ONE WHO HAS BEEN BEHIND THE SCENES.

Brooklyn, Jan. 29, 1877.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS.

The following is a comparative recapitulation of the values of imports into and domestic and foreign exports of merchandise from the United States for the month of December:

Merchandise.	Imports.	Domestic ex'pts. Mixed values.	Foreign exports.
Month ending Dec. 31, 1876	$32,369,160	$76,569,688	$1,709,420
Month ending Dec. 31, 1875	31,324,755	64,114,991	1,349,139
Twelve months ending Dec. 31, 1876	426,612,706	637,530,894	14,923,743
Twelve months ending Dec. 31, 1875	534,777,691	567,011,818	13,683,685
Specie and Bullion.			
Month ending Dec. 31, 1876	11,884,286	2,136,301	1,256,551
Month ending Dec. 31, 1875	1,428,808	2,401,325	248,975
Twelve months ending Dec. 31, 1876	34,479,397	47,973,752	8,380,713
Twelve months ending Dec. 31, 1875	24,324,956	70,108,852	9,194,662
Domestic Exports.		Specie values.	
Month ending Dec. 31, 1876	.....	$71,265,775	.....
Month ending Dec. 31, 1875	.....	56,634,719	.....
Twelve months ending Dec. 31, 1876	.....	575,698,040	.....
Twelve months ending Dec. 31, 1875	.....	497,263,737	.....

THE PEOPLE ON CITY TOPICS

REDUCING CITY BURDENS.

HOW RAPID TRANSIT WILL LIGHTEN THE WEIGHT OF TAXATION—200,000 FAMILIES SENT AWAY.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: I was present on Jan. 23 as an interested witness at the conference of prominent citizens with the Mayor and Controller upon the subject of the city debt. Many wise things were said, and many valuable suggestions made, but it seems to me that the real point which lay at the bottom of what the conference had in view was not touched. One suggested honesty and capacity in officials, another a reduction of salaries and cutting off of sinecures, and a third indulged in talk about conducting the business of the city on business principles, and the like, and then the meeting adjourned. Certainly cutting off sinecures, reducing excessive salaries, and doing business in a business way, are objects greatly to be desired, but after we have done all we can do in this direction, and stopped every leak, and not a city official can be found who does not fully earn his salary, we shall not have reduced our rate of taxation in that way by one-fifth of one per cent, and so the Mayor and Controller plainly intimated. Our police, fire department, education, and charities must still be maintained, and the interest upon our city debt must still be paid. With all our economy we can scarcely hope again, until our debt is paid, to get our annual city expenses below $30,000,000. What then is to be done? Did the sixty leading citizens at that meeting need to be told that we were trying to raise that $30,000,000 out of a city only half peopled, and half built up, and that *that* was the cause of our heavy burdens? If New-York had continued to increase in population in the 25 years since 1850 in the ratio of the 50 years before, we should to-day have had a population exceeding 2,000,000. We have little over half that number. In the race of competition with other cities, we have fallen behind every one of them. Thus, while New-York has increased her population since 1860 thirty-six per cent, Boston has increased 38 per cent, Philadelphia 39, Baltimore 41, Cincinnati 61, Brooklyn 81, Providence 100, and Chicago 262. Why is this? Simply because, unlike any other city in the world probably, New-York has been kept, and is still kept inaccessible to her own people.

The effect is readily seen in the growth of surrounding towns, for in the same period, since 1850, in which New-York has been gaining 80 per cent, Brooklyn has gained 130 and Hudson County, N. J., 477 per cent. We have sent away more than 200,000 families that should have built their houses and paid their taxes here, and would have constituted the very best and most thrifty population of our city. The true method of reducing taxes is by increasing the taxable property which pays them. If a vacant lot pays $30 taxes into the city treasury, a good house built upon it will cause it to pay $300, and the city is a gainer by $270. Now there are 70,000 such vacant lots south of the Harlem River, and a policy that shall stimulate the covering of these lots with dwellings and stores and factories will double the taxable property of the city, producing $60,000,000 taxes at the same rate as now, or what is more to the purpose of that meeting, enabling us to raise the present amount of revenue with one-half the present rate of taxation.

The true object of our city officials and of these meetings of leading citizens should be to stimulate, by every reasonable means, the building up and improvement of the unoccupied portion of the city. Rapid transit gives the means to this end. This subject the meeting did not touch. It is the vital point of improvement in our city affairs. Our parks and boulevards are now, in the main, constructed; a comparatively insignificant sum only is required to complete them. It is these that have caused, for the most part, the large increase in our city debt. In 36 miles of completed boulevards and public drives in her parks and public places, made and being made, New-York has laid the foundations of a city of future magnificence and wealth unequalled—certainly on this continent, and probably in the world. And while this has been going on she has acquired in fee a park property of more than 1,000 acres, worth to-day more than $100,000,000—a perfect security for the whole real city debt. Do not let us get too gloomy. Our money has not been thrown into the sea. We have been laying foundations costly, I admit, but broad, deep, and durable. The question now is, Shall we make them accessible by means of rapid transit, so that our people, reinforced by the 200,000 families we have sent away, and drawing to us by the attractions we offer the wealth, culture, and taste of the whole land, may build upon them in a manner becoming the foundations we have laid?

S. E. CHURCH.

New-York, Jan. 26, 1877.

WASTE WATER METERS.

THE LIVERPOOL SYSTEM—COMMISSIONER CAMPBELL'S STATEMENTS—VALUE OF THE DEACON METERS.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: A gentleman, who is familiar with the waste water meter system in Liverpool, remarks in reference to the statements of Mr. Campbell, Chief Engineer of the Department of Public Works, in THE TRIBUNE of Feb. 1, that instead of Liverpool having been first provided with an intermittent water supply it had in the first place, and for a long period, a constant supply extending over 60 square miles, which from wastage was reduced to an intermittent supply of 12 hours per day, and then fell to 7 hours per day. The application of the Deacon system restored a constant service at a pressure of about 50 pounds to the square inch. The Deacon meters are costly, but as district after district is brought under control each meter will ultimately serve for about 3,000 people.

It is instructive to remember that the Yarrow Valley near Rivington was turned into a reservoir at a cost of £200,000 in the vain hope of averting the impending intermittent supply in Liverpool. The new reservoir gave an additional 200,000,000 gallons of water per annum to the city. The Deacon system while, of course, supplying no new water, actually saved a wastage of over 1,000,000,000 gallons per annum, and at one-tenth of the cost of the Yarrow reservoir gave Liverpool more than three times the water for use. From 1863 to 1873 the most careful and systematic house-to-house inspections were made in Liverpool to prevent the waste of water, but they entirely failed, as all such plans must do from their nature, besides entailing heavy expense on the city.

As to the Deacon meter, it is not true that there is any system of leverage about it; the pressure of water due to any certain velocity is received on a disk and automatically recorded on a diagram, which distinguishes between water used and water wasted, and records the times of inspectors' visits, the acts they have performed, and the exact saving of water resulting therefrom, also the entire amount of water used and wasted in any district. It abolishes the use for private residences of integrating meters, and does away with the needless, irritating and annoying method of house-to-house inspection.

It is true that outside stopcocks are required for the Deacon system. These, however, should be supplied in any event, and in Liverpool their entire cost, including fitting, was 20 shillings—say $4 50 per house. Their supply will form the greatest part of the cost of applying the Deacon system. The cost of inspection under it is trifling, for inspections are only made in the districts shown by the meter diagrams to require it, and no house visits are made until after a night inspection, which, with the aid of the meter, exactly locates the faulty houses.

Whatever the expense, however, it is clear that some plan must be devised to stop the waste of water. If waste is to continue, building new reservoirs will merely bankrupt the city and slightly postpone the evil day of an intermittent water supply with all its inconveniences and all its dangers to health. The present waste is frightful. Mains or fittings in the porous soil of the lower part of New-York may easily leak a hundred gallons per minute from a single fault, without giving the faintest evidence of it under the present system, while in the upper part of New-York rock fissures may and do receive the flow and keep it in saucer-like receptacles underground to generate diphtheria and rheumatic fevers. The Deacon system is acknowledged by engineers abroad to be the only applicable one which will discover and locate all these faults so that they may be remedied. Glasgow presented many of the difficulties of application which Mr. Campbell speaks of as existing in New-York, and many other difficulties besides. Its chief engineer reported that he could not adopt the system, but Mr. Campbell will find that 80,000 inhabitants in Glasgow are to-day under the Deacon water system with most satisfactory results. The same thing might be said of other towns in Great Britain, and it is asserted that a thorough examination will show the adaptability of the system in New-York by the exercise of professional skill which Mr. Campbell is too good an engineer not to be able to display.

B. S.

New-York, Feb. 1, 1877.

WHARVES AND BRIDGES OF STONE.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Apropos of two interesting paragraphs in Tuesday's TRIBUNE referring to the causes of the Ashtabula bridge disaster, and to the recent report of a committee of merchants and others in opposition to the further construction by the city of masonry wharves and bulkheads, on account of their assumed excessive cost and the difficulty of obtaining a suitable foundation for them along the water front, the following facts deserve public attention, viz:

(1.) By a new engineering method, which has received eminent professional approval, indestructible wharves and stone bulkheads may now be built upon piers of solid masonry reaching to the bed rock and firmly anchored therein, at an expense but little, if any, exceeding that of the best timber construction, and far more permanent and durable.

(2.) By means of the same method of pier construction a series of short span bridges may be generally used in place of the long single spans which cost much more, proportionally, and in case of failure are obviously more dangerous, from the greater length and number of parts involved.

In the method of construction referred to, the quantity of masonry employed is comparatively slight, and its weight or gravity forms only a small element in the calculation of stability. A strong, vertical shaft of steel or iron within the pier is made, by proper tension, to form a continuous bond and anchorage of the whole structure to the foundation, and serves to bring the masonry into compressive resistance to lateral strains to a degree which secures enormous stability with remarkable economy of space and material. When it is remembered that the tensile strength of iron and steel is from 30 to 80 tons per square inch of section, and the compressive resistance of granite is not less than 800 tons per square foot of area, while its weight per cubic foot (the chief element of stability in the best ordinary masonry) is only 180 pounds above water and 65 pounds less than this when submerged, the comparative value of this new method of masonry construction will become apparent.

R. H. W.

New-York, Jan. 31, 1877.

CONGREGATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.

MR. BEECHER AND THE NEW ONE—WHY IT WAS FORMED—NECESSITY FOR IT—WHAT IT HAS TO DO WITH PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: The recent organization of a new association of Congregational ministers in New-York has become known to the public by a simple and fair notice of the fact in your paper and several others. But one of the New-York papers contained various comments which are calculated to do harm by deceiving the uninformed. The obvious design was to make the public believe that the only motive which led to the formation of the new association was an unwillingness to have any friendly connection with Mr. Beec