THE GONCOURT MEMOIRS.

Documents and Judgments About George Sand—The After-dinner Talk of the Famous Wits of the Second French Empire.

PARIS, Nov. 10.—Thanks to the thirst of the modern public for personal gossip about celebrities, and thanks to the readiness of writers to satisfy that desire, we now discount what used to be the privileges of posterity, and know all about everybody almost before the grass has grown over his grave. There is nothing to be said against this new literary fashion, especially when it produces good and interesting books, such as the "Journal des Goncourt," the second volume of which has just been published by M. Edmond de Goncourt. This installment contains the memoirs of the literary life of the two brothers during the years 1862-65, when they were in weekly and almost daily communication with men whose names were Renan, Théophile Gautier, Sainte-Beuve, Taine, Flaubert, Paul de Saint-Victor, and Gavarni, who were all habitués of the famous Diner Magny, which, by the way, exists still, only since the war of 1870 the Restaurant Magny has been abandoned by the Diner Magny, which is now served at Brebant's. It happened that just before reading the "Journal des Goncourt" I had read Prof. Caro's posthumous volume on George Sand, whose name, after a period of oblivion, is once more shining brilliantly in France. Her recently published letters to Flaubert have recalled the author of "Indiana" to public favor, and now Caro's book is causing the critics and the worldlings to break lances in honor of Lelia, for Caro was the idol of half a dozen literary salons in Paris, and, philosopher as he was, he was, above all, a "feminist," a captivator and guide of women's souls. Caro judges George Sand without passion, in discreet and gentlemanly prose, and he sums up her nature in the definition: "a middle-class soul with a Byronian imagination." Barbey d'Aurevilly once characterized her as "mixture of Prudhore and artist," while the more pompous Saint-Victor compared her to a "hieratic cow from the banks of the sacred river, the Ganges."

Now let us hear what Théophile Gautier has to say about her. Sept. 14, 1863, at the Magny dinner, somebody asks Gautier, who has just come back from a visit to Mme. Sand at Nohant, if the house is amusing, and the Goncourts have recorded the poet's reply.

"Amusing? Like a monastery of Moravian Brothers. I arrived in the evening. It is a long way from the railway station. They hid my trunk in a bush. I entered through the farm in the midst of a lot of dogs that frightened me. I dined. The food is good, but there is too much game and chicken. I cannot stand that. Marchal, the painter, was there, and Mme. Calamatta and Dumas the younger."

"And what sort of a life does one lead at Nohant?"

"Breakfast at ten. At the last stroke of the clock everybody sits down at table. Mme. Sand arrives with the air of a somnambulist, and remains half asleep throughout the breakfast. After breakfast you go into the garden and play at bowls. That enlivens her a little. She sits down and talks. At that hour the conversation generally turns upon matters of pronunciation; for instance, on the pronunciation of *d'ailleurs* and *meilleur*. At three o'clock Mme. Sand goes up stairs and writes until six. Then comes dinner, a hasty dinner, in order that Marie Callot may have time to dine. Marie Callot is the servant, a "belle Fadette," whom Mme. Sand found in the neighborhood, to play her pieces at her private theatre. Marie comes into the drawing room in the evening.

"After dinner, Mme. Sand draws horoscopes with cards without uttering a single word until midnight. The second day I began to say that if they did not talk about literature, I should go away. Ah! literature! At the mention of the word they seemed all as if they had just returned from another world! I must tell you, however, that for the moment they have only one idea in their heads, and that is mineralogy. Every one has his hammer. Well, I declared that Rousseau was the worst writer in the French language, and that started a discussion with Mme. Sand which lasted until 1 o'clock in the morning. However, Manceau has arranged Nohant. Women are from the point of view of the production of copy. She cannot sit down in any room in the house but immediately there rise before her pens, blue ink, cigarette papers, Turkish tobacco, and ruled letter paper. And what a lot of paper she uses! For you must know that she works as a rule from midnight until 4 in the morning. You have heard what happened to her once? Something monstrous. She finished a novel at 1 o'clock in the morning and immediately began another! The production of copy on the part of Mme. Sand is a function. One is fairly comfortable in the house. The service is absolutely silent. In the corridor there is a box with two compartments. One is for the reception of letters for the post, the other for letters for the house. In this latter you write what you need, the page's name and the indication of your chamber. I happened to want a comb. I wrote, "M. Gautier, such and such a chamber, a comb." The next morning at 6 o'clock I was offered thirty combs to choose from."

In their journal, under date of March 30, 1862, the Goncourts write as follows:

"Fourth floor, 2 Rue Racine. A little gentleman of ordinary appearance, opens the door and exclaims, smiling, 'Messieurs de Goncourt,' pushes a door, and we find ourselves in a very large room, a sort of a studio. At the end of the room, against the window, through which filters the crepuscular light of 5 o'clock in the afternoon, with her back to the light, sits a gray shadow, a woman who does not rise, who remains motionless in presence of our salutation by word and gesture. This seated shadow, with the sleepy air, is Mme. Sand, and the man who opened the door is the engraver Manceau. Mme. Sand has the aspect of an automaton. She speaks with a monotonous and mechanical voice which neither rises nor falls nor grows animated. In her attitude there is a gravity, a placidity, something of the half-asleepness of a ruminating animal. And her gestures are slow, slow, the gestures, so to speak, of a somnambulist, gestures at the end of which you see incessantly—and always with the same methodical movements—the striking of a wax match for bursting into a little flame while a cigarette glows between the woman's lips.

"Mme. Sand was very amiable and very complimentary, but with a childishness of ideas, a placitude of expressions, a gloomy good nature which chilled us like a block of ice in the middle of a room. Manceau tried to animate the dialogue a little. We talked about her theatre at Nohant, where performances are given for her and her servant maid alone until 4 o'clock in the morning. Then we talked about her prodigious fertility of work, whereupon she said that her work is not meritorious, because she always works with ease. She works every night from 1 to 4 in the morning, then works again in the day time for a couple of hours—and, adds Manceau, who explains her, a little like a showman exhibiting a phenomenon: 'It makes no difference if you disturb her. Suppose you have a tap open in you; somebody comes in; you turn off the tap. Well, that's the way it is with Mme. Sand.' 'Yes,' adds Mme. Sand, 'I do not mind being disturbed by sympathetic persons; for instance, by peasants who come to talk with me.' Here followed a little humanitarian tirade.

"When we took leave of Mme. Sand she rose, gave us her hand, and accompanied us to the door. Then we saw a little of her figure, kind, gentle, and calm. And what a color gone, but the features still delicately chiselled in an amber-toned complexion. Her portraits have all grossened and thickened her visage."

From the Goncourt Journal we will extract a few lines from the entry dated March 11, 1863. It is like the report of a conversation at a Magny dinner to which Gautier and Neftzer, the founder of *Le Temps*, had just been elected. The conversation turned upon Balzac, and Sainte-Beuve took up his parable and attacked:

"Balzac is not true to nature. He is a man of genius, if you like, but he is a monster!"

"We are all monsters," replies Gautier. "Who has painted our time? Where shall we find a picture of our society? In what book, if Balzac has not represented it?"

"In Balzac all is imagination, invention," cries Sainte-Beuve, sharply. "I knew that Rue Langlade; it was not at all like that."

"But in what novels do you find truth and reality? In Mme. Sand's novels?"

"Mon Dieu," remarks Renan. "I find Mme. Sand much truer than Balzac."

"Is it possible? Really?"

"Yes, yes; in her books the passions are general."

"And then Balzac has a style," breaks in Sainte-Beuve. "It seems as if it were twisted. It is a ropy style."

"Messieurs," resumes Renan, "in 300 years from now people will still be reading Mme. Sand."

"Oh! Oh! What next! Mme. Sand will not remain any more than Mme. de Genlis."

"Balzac is already rather antiquated." Saint-Victor ventures to say, "and besides it is too complicated."

"But, Hulot," shouts Neftzer, "Hulot is human, Hulot is superb."

"The beautiful is simple," resumes Saint-Victor, "there is nothing finer than the sentiments of Homer. They are eternally young. Take Andromaque, for instance, she is more interesting than Mme. Marneffe!"

"Not for me," says Edmond de Goncourt.

"How? Not for you?"

"Your Homer depicts only physical sufferings. To paint moral sufferings is not nearly so easy. In my opinion the humblest merely logical novel touches me more than all your Homer. Yes, I read Benjamin Constant's 'Adolphe' with more pleasure that the 'Iliad.'"

"It is enough to make a man jump out of the window to hear things like that!" exclaims Saint-Victor, his eyes starting out of his head. We have been trampling on his idol. He stamps and rages: "It is madness. Is it possible? In the first place the Greeks are beyond discussion. Everything Greek is divine."

General confusion, during which Sainte-Beuve crosses himself piously as he remarks.

"But, messieurs, the dog of Ulysses——" while Gautier interjects, "Homer, a poem of Bitaubé—yes, it is Bitaubé who has made Homer pass. Homer is not that at all. You have only to read the original Greek. It is very wild." Meantime, Jules de Goncourt remarks to his neighbor, "You can deny God, discuss the Pope, call everthing into question—but Homer! What a singular thing, religion in literature."

Finally calm is reestablished, Saint-Victor and Edmond de Goncourt shake hands, and the dinner continues. Unfortunately Renan observes that he is trying to write his book "in the language of the seventeenth century, which is the definitive French language, and a language adequate for rendering all our sentiments." Thereupon Gautier falls foul of Renan:

"You are mistaken; you will never succeed. I will show you in your books 400 words which are not of the seventeenth century. You have new ideas, have you not? Well, new ideas require new words to express them. And Saint Simon, do you think that he wrote the language of his volume, entitled 'Mme. de Sevigné?' And meeting and demolishing the objections of all, Gautier continued: "Yes, perhaps they had enough with the words they possessed, at that time, I will admit. They knew nothing but a little Latin and no Greek. Not a word of art. Did they not call Raphael the Mignard of his time? Not a word of history. Not a word of archæology! I defy you to write the feuilleton I am doing on Baudry with words of the seventeenth century."

From the conversation at another Magny dinner in June, 1863, I extract the following:

SAINTE-BEUVE—Mme. Sand, messieurs, is going to write something about a son of Rousseau during the Revolution. She is full of her subject. She has written me three letters lately. What an admirable organization!"

RENAN—Mme. Sand, the greatest artist of these times and truest talent.

ALL THE TABLE—Oh! Ah! Oh! Ah!

SAINT-VICTOR—How strange it is, she writes on letter paper.

RENAN—By true, I do not mean realism.

SAINTE-BEUVE—Let us drink. I am drinking. Come, Scherer, fill up!

I began these quotations with the intention of calling attention to some new documents concerning the attractive and still incompletely known figure of George Sand, but the mere citation of these documents, even in a cold and imperfect translation, will perhaps give some idea of the extreme and novel interest of the book from which they are taken. "Le Journal des Goncourt." From beginning to end these memoirs are the daily echo of the thoughts and conversation more of the famous men whom the Goncourts meet rather than of the Goncourts themselves. The Journal is more exactly a diary of the literary life of Paris during the second empire, thanks to which we become intimately acquainted with all the prominent figures of the day, and join in their conversation; and, so wonderful is the artistic stenography of the Goncourts that we seem to hear each personage speaking in his own voice and accompanying his words with his characteristic gestures. TH. C.

A VERY GREAT HISTORIAN.

Cesare Cantu and his Most Important Works.

DUBLIN, Nov. 4.—Two semi-monthly numbers just received of the new edition of Cesare Cantù's "Universal History," revised and completed by the venerable author, now in his 86th year, bring to mind a conversation we had with him in Milan in February, 1881. The mention of New York brought the great historian to speak of Count Maroncelli, who, with Silvio Pellico, had been carried off to the fortress of Spielberg by the Austrian Government for the same political offences which made the Austrian police, some years later, cast Cesare Cantù into prison and subject him after twelve months of incarceration, to the most relentless and unceasing persecution.

Mrs. White delighted our illustrious visitor by telling him that on her coming, a bride, to live in New York in the autumn of 1834, she and her husband met Count Maroncelli at the house of the celebrated Dr. MacNevin, who had invitd a select party to meet them. "The Count," she said to me, afterward, "charmed us then, as he did all who had the privilege of hearing him. His vivid narrative of the sufferings endured in prison by Silvio Pellico and himself moved our deepest sympathy and excited our admiration for the sufferers. I remember the mingled dignity and simplicity of the Count's bearing in our republican circles, and what delight he seemed to take in the society of the high-toned New Yorkers of that day. Many must be yet alive who remember those evenings in Dr. MacNevin's home."

Cantù, who has long survived the extinction of Austrian rule in northern Italy, has, by a singular change of fortune, been appointed Prefect of the Archives in Milan, which contain, among so many other documents never intended for publicity, the very secret instructions given to the police to hound, and harass, and hunt him down whithersoever he went, together with the reports on his character, connections, and writings furnished to the Austrian Government by their secret agents.

When his editors asked him, six years ago, to undertake a complete revision of his gigantic work, the "Universal History," he wrote to me to say how little probability there was that he could have strength and life enough to carry it out. He had conceived, while in the solitude of his Austrian prison, the plan of this wonderful history, and had begun to execute it soon after his release, and amid the thousand obstacles which the ever-watchful authorities created for him. He could not find in Lombardy or Venetia a single publisher willing to print his work. He took the first volume to Pomba of Turin, who consented to publish it in monthly parts. It had a marvellous success, and volume after volume was issued and translated into the principal languages of Continental Europe.

"They have discovered prehistoric man since I completed the first edition," he wrote to me. "And now I shall have to supply this deficiency in my work; and I shall have to recast all that relates to ancient history."

I have now followed the parts, or semi-monthly numbers, as they have appeared down to the thirteenth century and the reign of the Emperor Frederick II., and I have been amazed at the learning of the historian, at that unique faculty of analysis and concentration, which has embraced the records of all time, the principles and results of all the arts and sciences, and has given them to us in these pregnant pages in language which a child can understand.

Just, however, as Cantù had brought his vast narrative down to the establishment of Christianity, his frequent indisposition and advanced age made his editors as well as his countless friends fear that he might not be spared to finish his self-imposed task. They requested, therefore, that he should put in proper form that last portion of his historical labors embraced in the two works supplementary to the *Storia Universale*, namely, his *Storia di Cento Anni*, and his *Storia di Trent' Anni*, which narrate the events and various progress of the modern world down to the present year.

This enables the historian to give us a comprehensive sketch of the life of our busy humanity, as the concluding portion of his labor, for the last century and a half. The peoples of America, Africa, Asia, and Australia, as well as the countries and nationalities of Europe, are described with a masterly hand. Political and social systems, religious movements, the sciences and arts in their every field of application and theory, all stand forth clearly grouped in their proper relations. Every single phase of this successive march of the human generations through the ages, demonstrates convincingly the author's central idea, that man, under the guidance of Providence, is continually progressing toward what is best.

Americans can have no fault to find with Cantù's account of the rise of the United States and of the prodigious growth of the republic. His innate love of genuine religious and political liberty gives him a ready sympathy for us and our institutions. But his experienced sagacity and his intuitive foresight also enable him to discuss the perils which threaten our polity and our people.

A man who has labored and suffered so much for liberty in his own native country, cannot help feeling for poor Ireland, whose struggles and hopes he watches so with loving eyes. In part 104, which has just reached me, and which describes the end of the Crusades, with the religious and social troubles that followed, my eyes fell (page 127) on the following paragraph:

"The Inquisition during the centuries of its existence did not, I believe, destroy so many lives as England did in eleven years (1641-52) to Protestantize Ireland. Neither the Inquisition nor England succeeded, because that internal flame of the human will blazes forth when repressed, and is kept alive by the effort made to extinguish it."

Ah, well-read as one can discover in the authentic records of the Inquisition any prison treatment more barbarous than that which they are now inflicting on the heroic William O'Brien, and for what it is, at its worst, a political offence, and what I deem a most noble act of civic virtue—I should feel indebted to my teacher. Do not the worst fires of religious and political fanaticism which burned in the breast of Cromwell and that other Balfour still live in the bosoms of Lord Salisbury and his worthy nephew? But—and thank God for it—England in 1887 is beginning to know and to hate with a thorough hatred the atrocious spirit which governed Ireland in 1687, and which Dublin Castle has so skilfully cherished ever since.

But, while famished and maddened landlordism is thus resorting to such fatal extremities, and a well-organized and disciplined people are knit together in closer unity and in invincible resolution by the cruelties inflicted on their leaders, I find that the great work of national education is being pushed on with an ardor that knows of no flagging. Irishmen feel it, for do not the sympathetic voices of Protestant England, Scotland, and Wales tell them so—that home rule cannot now be long deferred, and that there will be careers enough and work enough for their trained sons and daughters? So the schools were never so full, nor doing such admirable work.

And it rejoices the hearts of such men as Cesare Cantù and Gladstone to know that Irish scholarship flourishes in spite of Balfour's inquisition, the most iniquitous and uncalled-for that ever tortured and maddened a sensitive nation.

Strange to say, the most remarkable historical researches now carried on in Ireland are bringing unexpectedly, but providentially, to the light of day documents relating to that fearful period of extermination from 1641 to 1652, as well as to the remaining half of the seventeenth century's chronicles in Ireland.

Mr. Prendergast (a Protestant lawyer, by the way), the author of that most instructive work, "The Cromwellian Settlement in Ireland," has, as your readers are probably aware, just brought out another volume, continuing his thrilling story of incredible wrong-doing.

But more important even than this timely book is the fourth volume of Mr. John T. Gilbert's "Contemporary History," containing never before published documents on the dark doings of that same period in Ireland, 1641-52. More than once, writing from Rome, I expressed to the readers of THE SUN my deep regret that prolonged illness prevented Mr. Gilbert from continuing for Ireland such a labor as had enabled Cantù to produce for Italy his "History of the Italians," and his *Cronistoria* or "History of Italian Independence." Mr. Gilbert has devoted his life to researches carried out, not only in the public archives and private libraries of the three kingdoms, but in those of Continental Europe, and resulting in a mass of unknown historical and authentic manuscripts relating to the reign of the Stuarts, and never yet published.

The volume which he is now getting through the press will startle the public. For the documents it contains will upset more than one inveterate prejudice, more than one historical lie. But I must not say more of it in this letter. The true and authentic history of Ireland remains to be written. Mr. Gilbert is now furnishing the future historian with the needful materials. His patriotic spirit has drawn upon him more than one sort of persecution. But he has succeeded. No Irish scholar is more deserving of the gratitude of his countrymen and the thanks of the world of letters. BERNARD O'REILLY.

NOTES OF RECENT TRAVEL.

Novelties from Africa and Greenland.

It is just thirty years since Livingstone first told English readers of the famous rebel chief Bonga, who for over four decades has defied the Portuguese in his stronghold on the Zambesi. The story that Livingstone began and others continued, has been brought down to the present time by Mr. Durand, who, during his recent travels on the Zambesi, visited the home of this redoubtable African.

On any good map of Africa the name of Bonga is found, indicating his chief settlement on the Zambesi. There for over forty years he has held his ground within twenty-five miles of Tete, the chief settlement of the Portuguese in the interior of East Africa. When Livingstone journeyed down the Zambesi he looked up at the heights crowned by Bonga's big village, and it seemed to him that it was enclosed by a stone wall of great height. He was doubtless mistaken in this idea, but he was correct in his opinion that the place was too strong to be conquered by the cannon with which the Portuguese tried to take it

Bonga's father was a half breed of East Indian African parentage, who in 1840 held a petty office under the Portuguese. One day he was arrested on the charge of stealing cartridges and taken to Mozambique, where he died. This incident was the cause of the long feud that has made Bonga a thorn in the flesh to the Portuguese. As a fled from Zambesi, rallied to his support a body of malcontents and escaped slaves, and has ever since maintained his independence in a large district claimed by his white enemies. Portugal has sent three expeditions against him, and in the last attack Bonga's village was bombarded for three days and nights without breaking down the strong wall of timbers that surround the big town. By that time the Portuguese had found an excellent reason for abandoning the siege, for, while they were all intent upon capturing the stronghold of their enemy, he secretly sent a considerable force up the river, took Tete by surprise, entirely destroyed the settlement, and the Portuguese had work enough to do in reestablishing themselves on the ruins of their town.

The Portuguese have not since attempted to subjugate Bonga, whose power, however, Mr. Durand says, is waning, some of his important villages far south of the Zambesi having recently fallen into the hands of the Portuguese. The traveller was permitted to enter Bonga's stronghold. He says the village is surrounded by large timbers pointed like deer's horns, securely bound together, making a wide wall from twenty-four to thirty feet high. The entrance is still adorned with the heads of the unfortunate Portuguese who were killed in the last assault upon the place. Within are the chief's large and dilapidated residence, huts, and many storehouses and ammunition magazines.

The large party of Belgians who are examining the cataract region of the lower Congo to find the best route for a railroad are sending home some novel information about this illreputed district. One of them says this region does not deserve the abuse travellers have heaped upon it, and it retains its reputation for extreme unhealthfulness and utility simply because all visitors follow the uninviting caravan route up the river. On the uplands away from the river these engineers find a country which they describe as inviting, and which is particularly adapted to tobacco culture. They account for the lack of population by the fact that for nearly three centuries slaves were the only commodity required by the civilized nations from the Congo.

They say that legitimate trade is increasing on the lower Congo because the introduction of the elements of modern commerce has created new needs among the natives. Flannel jackets, cotton trousers, cheap shawls, and other articles of clothing are coming into general use. The whites are also introducing among these lower Congo natives the use of leather sandals, and they are becoming a popular article of trade.

It is thus demonstrated that the savages of Africa are learning to appreciate some of the comforts of civilized life, and the African is showing also that he is willing to work for them. When Stanley began his Congo enterprise it was with great difficulty that obtained the services of fifty natives. The Belgian engineers have now 500 young men hauling the trucks on which they are transporting their steamboat around the cataracts, and one of these Europeans writes that three towns in the cataract region can turn out 3,000 workmen who are glad to work in order to obtain manufactured articles.

At some of the stations on the Congo they have recently discovered a new method of gaining the assent of unwilling chiefs to the demands of the whites upon them. They do not is to threaten with a very serious air to tear down the station, pull up stakes, and leave. The mere prospect of losing the transport trade and all opportunities of procuring articles they want scares them into making almost any concession.

In February last, Lieut. Bloch and Lieut. Ryder of the Danish navy made an interesting journey along the west coast of Greenland. Their ambitious purpose was, if possible, to travel north until they reached the Cape York natives, the most northern inhabitants of the world. If they had succeeded, their journey would have been among the most noteworthy of Arctic undertakings, for they would have been able to trace the coast line of the great Melville Bay, which is almost wholly unknown, as the shore ice at most points prevents vessels from approaching anywhere near the coast. With eight dogsleds they advanced about seventy miles north of Upernavik, almost to the southern shores of Melville Bay, and past the solitary rock known as the Devil's Thumb, which, as seen from ships, has been pictured in many books of Arctic travel. The heavy travelling and severe weather prevented them from going further, and it is now quite certain that the coast of Melville Bay will never be explored in the winter season. The result of this journey justifies the criticism that met the project of a Washington official, who gravely suggested sending a sledge party to take a trip very route in winter, after we had heard of Garlington's failure to reach Greely.

A King who Calls Brandy and Rum Medicines.

From the Pall Mall Gazette.

Dr. Traversi, who was formerly a surgeon in the Italian army, has now been residing for several years in eastern Africa as domestic physician to his Majesty King Menelek II. of Shoa. It is evident that he is not of Dr. B. W. Richardson's school. Possibly he owes his popularity with the swarthy potentate to the fact that he prescribes spirituous liquors to his august patient, instead of prohibiting them, and that he and his King call brandy and rum medicines. Dr. Traversi orders the King's brandy from Florence.

The Florentine distiller, Signor Gualtievolti, is not content with the profit of supplying a King with brandy, but thought that he should also like to enjoy the distinction of advertising himself as the sole purveyor to the court of Shoa. So he asked Dr. Traversi to obtain for him a diploma from his black Majesty. His request was graciously granted, and the distiller has proudly sent the peculiar document to the Italian journals. Here is the translation of it: "We, Menelek the Second, King of Shoa Kaffa, and all the countries, impart by means of this brief to Giuseppe Gualtievolti of Florence, who makes the medicines, the sweet and good liquors, the right to continue making for us the three good medicines; and we also grant to him the right to affix our armorial bearings over the door of the workshop in which the medicines are made. Given in the city of Entotto, on the 11th day of the month of Mariam, 1887. Menelek, Negus of Shoa, who has conquered the Lion of Judah."

IN THE HOSPITALS OF PARIS.

The Work of the Bureaux de Bienfaisance and the System of Outdoor Relief—The Religious Hospitals—Their Good Works.

III.

LONDON, Nov. 8.—The third firm under which the Assistance Publique undertakes to help the sick and the poor is through the institution of outdoor relief. After the hospitals, homes, and almshouses come the Bureaux de Bienfaisance—Offices of Benevolence.

The first in existence dates as far back as Francis I., when it was called "Great Office of the Poor," and placed under the direction of a Procureur-General of the Parliament. In 1793 it was superseded by forty-eight committees numbered after the municipal divisions of Paris. In 1816 the so-called Offices of Charity were reduced to twelve, following the new divisions into arrondissements; in 1830 the word charity being deemed obnoxious to free citizens who had just shaken off the yoke of royalty, it was replaced by the term "Benevolence," and, furthermore, in 1860, when the outlying suburbs of Paris were included in the municipality of the city, the number of the bureaux rose again to twenty, at which it now stands.

Each bureau is under the presidency of the Prefect; his coadjutors preside in his absence. It is composed of twelve administrators appointed by the Prefect, who undertake the distribution of the funds in the district of each office; their services are purely gratuitous, as well as those they render in the supervision of charitable institutions; of an indefinite number of commissaries and ladies appointed by the office, who visit the poor in their homes, carry the allotted help, report on their wants, notify the changes of domicile, examine petitions, and give the committees all the necessary information; of a secretary-treasurer having charge of the sale and stores, who receives a salary and is subject to all the obligations imposed on those having the care of public moneys; of about twelve doctors and four surgeons, who give free consultations and care to the poor of the arrondissement, and vaccinate the children, and finally of midwives sent from the bureau to assist women requiring their ministrations.

Each bureau has its seat at the Mairie of its district. The committee is bound to meet at least twice a month, but does so much more frequently. It disposes of two species of funds, those derived from donations and the income therefrom, collections, subscriptions, and special gifts, and those provided by the general bureau and additional contributions of the Assistance Publique. Outdoor relief provided by these funds consists of clothing, bedding, linen, bread, meat, broth, firing, removal of the sick to the hospitals, money, nursing at home, rent, help to the aged, the blind, and the paralyzed, extra payment at the homes, convalescent houses, and soup kitchens. The outdoor relief is of two kinds—either annual or temporary. The recipients of the former are the paupers of over 64 years of age, the absolutely infirm and helpless, in fact, the same who if they could not be cared for in a family would be entitled to admission into a hospice. The latter is granted to fathers having three infant children, to widowers and widows having one child, to those suffering from serious or incurable disease, to the poor creatures abandoned by their legitimate or illegitimate partners, who, having a child under 14, are again expecting a baby, to orphans, forsaken children, the wounded, and the sick.

In every arrondissement houses of help annexed to the Bureau de Bienfaisance are established. There can be found the list of the doctors and surgeons pertaining to the office, the name and address of the administrators and commissaries, and the days on which they give audiences. One doctor, one administrator, and a couple of commisaries are constantly in attendance; and in cases of necessity, when the first immediate help is insufficient, they are empowered to visit the domicile of the patient and investigate the case.

In order to be entitled to outdoor relief a French citizen must have lived in Paris at least one year and be registered on the books of the bureau; for foreigners the minimum of residence is ten years. Moreover, to be inscribed on the register it is necessary to produce a certificate of birth and civil papers, to wait first for the audience of the administrator who presents the petition, and then for the meeting of the committee which has to decide on its validity. These delays and formalities fail heavily on the workmen suddenly deprived of their work or struck down by accident and illness. The incompleteness and failure of the system were made painfully evident at the time of the conflagration of the Opera Comique and the panic which followed and caused so many theatres to close. A number of machinists, supernumeraries, box openers, musicians, and ballet girls were abruptly informed at 6 o'clock in the evening, when they came to fill their parts, that they would be without work for an uncertain time. Many families were in consequence utterly destitute, but not being at the time registered at the Bureau de Bienfaisance they remained literally without bread. The organization as it exists is undoubtedly wise and admirable in many respects, but it does not provide sufficiently for the casual, or, so to speak, accidental sufferer, while it cares with paternal solicitude for the chronic pauper, who knows too well how to take advantage of it. Another objection raised against the Bureaux de Bienfaisance is that their resources vary according to the district to which they belong—some are rich, others are not; so that in certain arrondissements the average annual relief given to a pauper is estimated at seventy francs, while in others it only reaches twenty or twenty-five francs. The disproportion was so large that a special commission has been quite lately appointed to level it as much as possible by a general division of the allowances granted to each bureau. The expenses of the bureau relief, practised with a discerning and intelligent supervision, cannot be overrated: it remains far superior to the admission into hospice or hospital, asylum or home, for it leaves to the recipient a degree of responsibility, independence, and self-reliance which it is essential to foster. These feelings are in almost every case dulled by a prolonged sojourn in a charitable institution. The inmates, having no cares or anxieties for the morrow, give themselves up entirely, body and soul, to the management of superiors and administrations, and suffer a due to their incapacity the care taken of them.

Outside the pale of the Assistance Publique there exist in Paris two religious hospitals depending neither on the Government or the city, and entirely supported by private charity—St. Joseph and Notre Dame of Perpetual Succor. The former, possessing only fifty-two beds at present, will soon number 400, and has in one year received 400 patients and given 1,200 free consultations to the poor of the neighborhood. It is under the special patronage of the Queen of Spain, who visited it in May, 1887, and was founded to become a medical school for the students of the free faculties; hence its enormous proportions and cost. When completed with all the architectural and sanatory improvements, it will vie in size and importance with La Charité and Beaujon, but the priest and the Sister of Mercy will never be driven from its gates.

Notre Dame du Perpetuel Secours is situated within a few yards of the fortifications in the midst of the ancient park of Neuilly. On passing through the iron gates the visitor might fancy himself suddenly transported into some quaint old Flemish Beguinage. He sees a series of small one-story buildings in red bricks and timbers, pierced by large sunny windows. In the centre rises the chapel. At each side of the altar, which is visible, glazed partitions separate the choir from two wards, whence the patients unable to leave their beds can see mass celebrated, and follow the movements of the officiating priest. Close to the wards are the lavatories and baths, amply provided with brushes, sponges, soap, and towels. The numerous rectectories are furnished with tables covered with oil-cloth, and surrounded by dressers and presses. Each ward has its own garden, gay with flowers, shady with trees, and peopled with singing birds. The large windows admit not only sun and air, but the perfume of the flowers and the aroma of the woods, and isolated rooms are set apart for contagious diseases. Behind the altar is the convent of the nuns belonging to the Dominican order and congregation of St. Catherine of Sienna, who also possess several hospitals in the provinces. The cloistered nuns, and, having bidden an eternal farewell to the outer world, devote themselves entirely to meditation, prayer, and the tending of the sick.

The patients speak enthusiastically of the internal arrangements, and it is evident that every attention has been paid not only to essentials but to comfort. There are only a few and well-spaced beds in each dormitory, the cleanliness is almost miraculous, and it is considered a great improvement that the food, instead of being brought up in rations from frequently distant kitchens, should be served hot in the different refectories attached to each ward, which enables the patients well enough to leave their bed to enjoy it there and the others to be served at once out of an apartment adjoining the one in which they lie. Mme. de Montessuil, her father, Baron Mackau, and Mme. de Guinsonas founded the house, and those two ladies are its most constant visitors and supporters, sharing with the Sisters the sometimes repugnant duties, reading to the patients, talking to them, seemingly as much at home among the scenes of suffering and misery as in their own elegant and aristocratic residences, and emulating the tender abnegation of the Dominican nuns. Michlet has said that "sacrifice is the culminating point of human life, and that one always looks back with emotion on those hours where devotion has been without reserve and sacrifice without measure." Private charity has at times risen to those heights even in the midst of an epoch of selfish indulgence and unbridled license.

It would be almost impossible to enumerate the various institutions for the protection of children, the regeneration of young, homeless vagabonds, the reclaiming from vice and death of a rising generation seemingly condemned to crime and misery, such as Citeaux, once a house of correction, now a free colony, with four branch houses, and many other foundations due to individual initiative and public charity; but it is impossible not to recall that there is one church in Paris, Notre Dame des Victoires, where every day throughout every year a collection is made for one or the other of all these charitable foundations in Paris and France. The three exits of the building are constantly guarded from 6 A. M. to 9 in the evening by pious women who solicit the alms of all who pass, and who, noble or simple, gladly undergo the hardship of two hours' kneeling at a church door, with a plate in their hand, if their soft-reiterated formula of "Pour les pauvres s'il vous plait," can win a coin, however small. Forty-five of them are on duty each day, and the names of the institutions for which they beg fill a volume of five hundred pages. M. DE S.

DIAMOND CUTTING IN LONDON.

The Enormous Amount Paid for Diamonds by Americans.

From the London Times.

The public are probably not aware of the extent to which diamond cutting has been revived in London. Nearly 200 years ago Englishmen were the finest diamond cutters in the world, the trade being nearly all carried on in London, and at the present time old English-cut diamonds will always fetch a very high price, as the cutting is still much prized.

Through religious persecution the cutters migrated to Amsterdam, where they have since remained. At the time when the African diamond fields were discovered there was only one diamond cutter in London. Butchmen were accordingly engaged to work in London from Monday morning till Friday sunset, and they were to receive £10 a week each man. They struck several times successfully for higher wages, but when they demanded £18 per week each man they were discharged, and English gem cutters were not at the work.

At first the Englishmen were only able after a deal of trouble to cut a class of diamond in one month which they could now cut in about four days. As soon as it was clearly proved that Englishmen had once more gained the art, the Worshipful Company of Turners decided to give English cutters every encouragement, and have, with the valuable assistance of the Baroness and Mr. Burdett-Coutts, offered money awards in competition against the Dutch for the best-cut diamonds. After several contests the Englishmen gained the first prize and most of the others.

Up to the end of 1885 out of four of the principal mines of South Africa—namely, Kimberley, De Beers, Bultfontein, and Du Toit's Pan, no less than 33 million carats of diamonds (or more than six and a half tons weight) have been extracted, realizing about £40,000,000. The diamonds now discovered are nearly all found in British possessions—namely, Africa and India. Yet the vast majority of the stones are still sent to foreign countries to be cut and polished, which every Englishman should consider ought not to be. As one of the greatest secrets connected with the trade consists in the one word patience, there is an immense field for the employment of women. As a nation, the Americans are the finest judges of diamonds in the world, and it is to London that America goes for her finest-cut diamonds. The last official report published was that America took about £3,000,000 worth of cut diamonds annually from England.

SHOOTING ENGLISH HARES.

Sportsmen Trying to Thin Out the Nimble Immigrants of Fisher's Island.

NEW LONDON, Nov. 19.—The New Jersey Kennel Club, six or seven members, with trained dogs and fancy shotguns, have come to Fisher's Island to hunt its long-legged English hares, with which they stocked the island a year or two ago. The hares thrived wonderfully on the bleak, treeless highlands, and in the lonely hollows, where there are almost impenetrable thickets of knotted scrub oak. The salt air gave them such an appetite that finally they broke into the cultivated fields of the three great farms on the island and gobbled up the crops. Then the man who farms the island sent word to the Kennel Club to come over from New Jersey and help him shoot the "critters." They came. The hounds were let loose, and the club discovered that English hares can jump fifteen feet at one skip, and describe a parabolic curve as beautiful as a skyrocket, and about as difficult to shoot at.

The island is narrow and most of it "open" shooting, and the club had great sport. The dogs kept the trail in the hares, and, by jove! how bounding, and for three days the sportsmen kept shooting. Not less than twenty-five pounds of shot flew off into Fisher's Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean, but now and then a hare skipped athwart a hunter's aim, and the club came away with a cartload of game.

Each year late in the fall the Kennel Club spend a few days on the island and try to thin out the swarming, agile-footed beasts. Connecticut sportsmen, who have heard of the reputation of the English hares on Fisher's Island, are beginning to clamor for the club to introduce a few on the mainland to furnish sport next year. The scheme is not likely to meet the approval of farmers. The only large hares that inhabit Connecticut are the Alpine hares, which are found in dense swamps east of this city and Newport, and Rhode Island. They run as swiftly and leap as far as their English cousins, but they are scarce. They are gray in color in summer and snow white in winter.

A Recent Interview with Verdi.

From the London Daily News.

A visit was recently paid to Verdi by Giuseppe Gineosa. "I asked Mme. Verdi," he says, "whether the maestro was thinking any new work." The good and distinguished lady, who is really the guardian angel of her husband, replied: "For mercy's sake, let him rest; don't you think he has worked enough?" I remember that at Milan, on the evening of "Otello," while the crowd applauded madly below, he said to me, fixing his deep and shining eyes on my face: "If I were forty years younger I would begin to work again tomorrow." I am convinced that, under the stimulus of some new idea, he would actually grow younger by forty years. The warm passion, the masculine anguish that palpitates in every note of "Otello" proves it. A really old man does not love and suffer so. This immense dramatic force cannot be only the fruit of knowledge. To pray like *Desdemona*, to weep and complain and go mad like *Othello*, the fire of the composer's soul must be covered with very few ashes and ready to burst into flame. After the first performance of "Otello" I dined with the maestro and his wife.

Of course we spoke of the opera and the great success it had made. Suddenly, at once the maestro, who, while we were talking, had gradually become thoughtful, exclaimed, "How sad it is to have finished it. How solitary I feel. Till now, as soon as I woke I took up all the love, the rage, the jealousy, the despair of the characters of my drama, myself. To-day I must write that scene; and if I did not come to my mind I armed myself for a struggle, certain of victory, and then, when my task was finished, there remained the rehearsals, the doubts, the study to clearly explain my thought to the actors, to make them act in my way; the scenic inventions, which the representative reality suggested to me, and I returned home still agitated by the splendid theatrical life, glad when my intentions were realized, meditating on what I proposed to arrive at on the morrow, so that I felt no fatigue, and was not conscious of my age. But now! Now that 'Otello' belongs to the public, it ceases to be mine, it separates itself from me entirely, and the place it held within me was so large that I feel an enormous vacancy, and think that I can never again fill it up."