SOME NEW BOOKS.

England Half a Century Ago.

To depict the amazing change which has come over the United Kingdom since the death of William IV., is the serious purpose of the entertaining volume called *Fifty Years Ago*, by WALTER BESANT (Harpers). If we recall the events which followed the downfall of the French *ancien regime*, we shall perceive why the transformation which has taken place in the United Kingdom since 1837 is incomparably deeper, wider, and more multiform than that which France, for instance, has experienced during the same period. Indeed, there is no country on the continent (with the exception of Russia and Turkey) which did not, in 1837, show more signs of serious modifications from the upheaval that followed 1789 than did Great Britain, which, as we know, was scarcely singed with the flame of revolution. It is true that even in England the ideas of the new time had borne fruit in the passage of the first Reform act, but the effects of that measure were as yet but dimly discernible when Queen Victoria began to reign. In all other particulars, or at least in those which would be most likely to strike the eye of an observer, the England of that day was still the England of the eighteenth century. To make this clear to us Mr. Besant has recourse to contemporary pictures, diaries, and newspaper memoranda, collecting and digesting his varied materials in about a score of chapters, of which the most interesting deal with society in the narrow sense of the term, with the middle class community, with educational institutions, with the club, theatre, and tavern, with journals and journalists, with law and justice, and with factories and mines.

Mr. Besant shows us, for example, that fifty years ago English society was a far smaller and more rigidly restricted body than it is now. It was exclusive; "you belonged to society or you did not; there was no overlapping, there were no circles which intersected." Thus, "if you were in society you went to Almack's. If you did not go to Almack's you might be a very interesting, praiseworthy, well-bred creature; but you could not claim to be in society." Naturally, therefore, "everybody ardently desired to be seen at Almack's. This, however, was not in everybody's power. Almack's was much more exclusive than the court. Riff-raff might go to court, but they could not get to Almack's, for at its gates there stood, not one angel with a fiery sword, but six, in the shape of English ladies, terrible in turbans, splendid in diamonds, magnificent in satin, and awful in rank. These ladies formed the dreaded committee. They decided who should be admitted within the circle; all applications had to be made direct to them; no one was allowed to bring friends." Mr. Besant traces the decline and fall of Almack's to the heartburnings, jealousies, and maddening envies caused by excessive exclusiveness. Trade, as he goes on to explain, "even of the grandest and most successful kind, even in the persons of the grandchildren, had no chance whatever—no self-made man was admitted; in fact it was not recognized that a man could make himself; either he belonged to a good family or he did not—genius was not considered at all; admission to Almack's was like admission to the Order of the Garter, because it pretended no nonsense about merit; wives and daughters of simple country 'squires, bishops, generals, admirals, and so forth, knew better than to apply." This at least, however, could be said that admission to Almack's could not be bought. So far the committee were beyond suspicion and beyond reproach; it was whispered, to be sure, that there was favoritism.

Mr. Besant has no doubt that, after all deductions are made for the longevity of scandal and the propensity of chroniclers to pay little heed to lives of flawless and perhaps uninteresting virtue, the morals and manners of English society were materially worse fifty years ago than they are now. "It is," he thinks, "quite certain that there is less of everything that should not be than there used to be—less in proportion, and even less in actual extent. The general tone, in short, the general manners of society have very much improved." He recommends any one inclined to dispute the assertion to "read Lady Blessington's 'Victims of Society.' Though there is an unreal ring about this horrid book, so that one cannot accept it for a moment as a faithful picture of the times, such a book could not now be written at all; it would be impossible." Then, as to manners in the sense of carriage, dress, demeanor, Mr. Besant has something to say on the subject of swagger. "There is still swagger even in these days; cavalry officers in garrison towns are still supposed to swagger. Eton boys swagger in their own little village; undergraduates swagger. The putting on of 'side,' by the way, is a peculiarly modern form of swagger; it is the assumption of certain qualities and powers which are considered as deserving of respect. Swagger, fifty years ago was a coarser kind of thing. Officers swaggered; men of rank swaggered; men of wealth swaggered; gentlemen in military frogs—there are no longer any military frogs—swaggered in taverns, clubs, and in the streets. The adoption of quiet manners; the wearing of rank with unobtrusive dignity; the possession of wealth without ostentation; of wit without the desire to be always showing it—these are points in which we are decidedly in advance of our fathers. There was a great deal of cuff and collar, stock, and breastpin about the young fellows. They were oppressive in their gallantry; in public places they asserted themselves; they were loud in their talk."

Not only were they louder in their manners but in their conversation they were insulting, especially the wits. "Things were said by these gentlemen, even in a duelling age, which would be followed in these days by a violent personal assault. In fact the necessity of fighting a duel if you kicked a man seems to have been the cause why men were constantly allowed to call each other by implication fool, ass, knave and so forth. Consider the things said by Douglas Jerrold, for instance. They are always witty, of course, but they are often mere insults. Yet nobody seems ever to have fallen upon him. And not only this kind of thing was permitted, but things of the grossest taste passed unrebuked." The difference between the society of that day and our own in this particular is thus defined: "We still constantly hear in the modern School for Scandal remarks concerning the honor, the virtue, the cleverness, the ability, the beauty, the accomplishments of our friends. But it is behind their backs. We no longer try to put the truth openly before them. We stab in the back, but we no longer attack in front. One ought not to stab at all; but the back is a portion of the frame which feels nothing. So far the change is a distinct gain."

About the great middle class, which naturally has a chapter to itself, M. Besant's first remark is that fifty years ago "it was far more a class apart than it is at present. In no sense did it belong to society. Men in professions of any kind except the two services, military and naval, could only belong to society by right of birth and family connections; men in trade—bankers were still accounted tradesmen—could not possibly belong to society. That is to say, if they went to live in the country they were not called upon by the county families, and in town they were not admitted by the men into their clubs or by ladies into their houses. Those circles of which there are now so many—artistic, æsthetic, literary—all of them considering themselves to belong to society, were then out of society altogether. The middle class knew its own place, respected itself, made its own society for itself, and cheerfully accorded to rank its reverence due." Then after alluding to the authors and artists who have made the middle class of the early Victorian era so well known to us, Mr. Besant goes on to say that "middle class life, especially in the country, was dull, far, far duller than modern life, even in the quietest country town. The men had their business; the women had the house. Incomes ran small; a great deal was done at home that is now done out of it. There was a weekly washing day when the house steamed with soapsuds, and the lines were out upon the pole—they were painted green and were square—and on the lines hung the family linen. All the jam was made at home; the cakes, the pies, and the puddings by the wife and daughters; the bread was home made; the beer was home brewed. All those garments which are no worn outside were made at home. Everybody dined in the middle of the day. Therefore, in middle-class society dinner parties did not exist. On the other hand, there were sociable evenings, which began with a sit-down tea, with muffins and tea cakes, very delightful, and ended with a hot supper. Tobacco was not admitted in any shape, except that of snuff, into the better kind of middle-class houses; only workingmen smoked vulgar pipes; the Sabbath was respected; the girls had probably never seen a play; every man who respected himself 'laid down' port, but there was little drinking of wine except on Sunday afternoons; no one, not even the ladies, scorned the glass of something warm, with a spoon in it, after supper."

Continuing his account of the only class with which Thackeray and George Eliot were thoroughly acquainted—Bulwer's opportunities of observation had been different—Mr. Besant notes that fifty years ago there were no open-air games and sports. "No lawn tennis, Badminton, or anything of that kind in those days; even croquet, which is now so far lost in the mists of antiquity that men of thirty are too young to remember the rage for it, was actually not yet invented. Archery certainly existed, but it belonged to a class rather above that which we are now considering. There was not much sketching and painting. There was no amateur photography; there was no catching of strange creatures in ponds for the aquarium—a fashion now also happily extinct; there was not, in fact, any single pursuit, amusement, or game which would bring young people together in the open air." So far as the middle class dwelling in the country was concerned, there was no travelling; the summer holiday was not yet an institution. "In London, to be sure, everybody went out of town and to the seaside in July or August; but in the country nobody thought of such a thing; not the vicar's daughter, nor the solicitor's wife, nor the family of the general practitioner; the very schoolmaster, who got his four weeks in the summer and his three at Christmas, spent them at home in such joy as accompanies rest from labor. With no outdoor amusements and with no summer holiday how much was life simplified! But the simplicity of life means monotony—*faciunt vitam balnea, vina, Venus*."

One more extract from this description of English middle-class ways, more than one of which will be recognized by American readers of the last generation: "In the winter things were somewhat different. In some towns there was the country ball. At this function one had the pleasure of gazing upon ladies and gentlemen of the highest rank and fashion and of observing that they kept to themselves like a Hindu caste, danced with each other at the upper end of the room, cast disparaging glances at the dresses of the ladies of the lower end, and sniffed at their manner and appearance. This was true joy. There were also occasional dances at home, but these were rare, because people had not learned how to meet and dance without making a fuss over it; taking up carpets, putting candles in tin sconces, keeping late hours, and having a supper, the preparation of which was mainly done by the ladies of the house, and it nearly killed them and drove the servants—the genteel middle-class family often got along with only one—to give notice. I think that the dances which [even as early as 1837] had gone out in London still lingered in the country. There were, for instance, the Caledonians as well as the Lancers; there were country dances without end, the very names of which are now lost. The gentlemen performed the proper steps with grace and agility, while the ladies were careful to preserve an attitude supposed the only one possible for a lady while dancing, in which the figure was bent forward, the face was turned up with the chin stuck out, while the hands were occupied in holding up the dress to the regulation height. The elders meanwhile played long whist at tables lit by candles which wanted snuffing between the deals. When there was no dancing the younger members began with a 'little music.' Their songs—how faded and stale they seem now if one tries to sing them!—turned chiefly on the affections, and the favorite poet was Felicia Hemans. After the little music they sat down to a round game, of which there were a great many, such as commerce, speculation, vingt-et-un, limited loo, or Pope Joan. The last was played with a board." Mr. Besant adds that fifty years ago middle-class people were extremely punctilious on the subject of calls, the payment of a call being "a ceremonial which necessitated a great deal of ritual and make-believe."

Perhaps there is no feature of English life in which more change is noticeable since the death of William IV. than the club system. "Club land," says Mr. Besant, "was a comparatively small country, peopled by a most exclusive race. There were then but twenty-five clubs in all, and, as many men had more than one club, and the average membership was less than 1,000, there were not more than 20,000 men altogether who belonged to clubs. There are now at least 120,000, with nearly 100 clubs, to which almost any man may belong. Besides these, there are now about sixty second-class clubs, together with a great many clubs which exist for special purposes—betting and racing clubs, whist clubs, gambling clubs, press clubs, and so forth. Speaking generally, no city men at all, nor any who were connected in any way with trade, were in those days admitted into the clubs of London. A barrister, a physician, or a clergyman might be elected, and of course all men in the Services; but a merchant, an attorney, a surgeon, an architect, might knock in vain. The club subscription was generally six guineas a year, and, if we may judge by the fact that you could dine off the joint at the Carlton for a shilling, the clubs were much cheaper than they are now. They were also quite as dull. But the new clubs of our day are larger; their members come from a more extended area; there are few young city men who have not their club; and it is not at all necessary to know a man because he is a member of your club. And when one contrasts the cold and silent coffee room of the new great club, where the men glare at each other, with the bright and cheerful tavern [which still survived in 1837], where every man talked with his neighbor and the song went round and the great kettle bubbled on the hearth, one feels that civilization has its losses."

We may touch in another notice on the extraordinary changes in the economical and social condition of the English people, which may be directly attributed either to judicious legislation or to the applications of steam and electricity.

M. W. H.

They Would Help Poor Students.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir*: In your paper of the 12th inst., in an article describing the condition of the Russian refugees, you touched on their aspiration for broad education, mentioning their attendance at the higher institutions of learning and the manifold difficulties these young people have to overcome. The greatest obstacle in their pathway is the payment of the tuition fee, from $100 to $175 annually. Thanks to the generosity of the University of the City of New York, and several other colleges, this amount is in many cases reduced to half. There began last winter a movement among the intelligent Russians to assist these young people, which resulted in the organization of the "Russian Students' Aid Society." The following are the officers: Dr. B. Gordon, President; E. S. Mashbir, law student University of the City of New York, Vice-President; H. Levien, student Medical University of New York, Financial Secretary; E. Hochlerner, A. B., Recording Secretary, and Dr. I. Jufe, Treasurer. The object of the society is to raise money by means of membership dues and donations to enable them to advance to some of the students the tuition fee or cost of text books in shape of a loan, and also to wait on the proper authorities of the respective institutions of learning and to solicit their aid for these young people. Through your columns we solicit the aid of every noble-hearted man and woman. It is a noble cause, and requires some active work, as the college doors will reopen soon for another year, and there are many students who deserve the attention and sympathy of the public.

Any one may become an honorary member of this society by an annual contribution of $5, or by making a single donation of $25. Subscriptions and donations can be addressed to Dr. Gordon, President of the R. S. A. S., 145 East Broadway, or to E. S. Mashbir, 99 Chambers street, office, room 1. BERNARD GORDON, M. D., President.

NEW YORK, Aug. 24.

POEMS WORTH READING.

The Master and the Reapers.

From Harper's Monthly.

The master called to his reapers:
"Make scythe and sickle keen,
And bring me the grain from the uplands
And the grass from the meadows green;
And from off of the mist-clad marshes,
Where the salt waves fret and foam,
Ye shall gather the rustling sedges
To furnish the harvest home."

Then the laborers cried: "Oh, master,
We will bring thee the yellow grain
That waves on the windy hillside,
And the tender grass from the plain;
But that which springs on the marshes
Is dry and harsh and thin,
Unlike the sweet field grasses,
So we will not gather it in."

But the master said: "O foolish!
For many a weary day,
Through storm and drought, ye have labored
For the grain and the fragrant hay.
The generous earth is fruitful,
And breezes of summer blow
Where these, in the sun and the dews of heaven,
Have ripened soft and slow.

"But out on the wide, bleak marshland
Hath never a plough been set,
And with rapine and rage of hungry waves
The shivering soil is wet.
There flower the pale green sedges,
And the tides that ebb and flow,
And the stinging breath of the sea wind,
Are the only care they know.

"They have drunken of bitter waters,
Their food hath been sharp sea sand,
And yet they have yielded a harvest
Unto the master's hand.
So shall ye all, O reapers,
Honor them now the more,
And garner in gladness, with songs of praise,
The grass from the desolate shore."

ZOE DANA UNDERHILL.

Unheeded Gifts.

From Good Housekeeping.

They placed rare lilies in her hands,
Poor hands that scarce had touched a flower,
And creamy rosebuds, whose perfume
Embalmed her for her funeral hour.

They wrapped her form in lustrous silk,
And draped soft folds of filmy lace
About the slender pulseless wrists,
And underneath the patient face.

At last she lay in perfect rest;
While voices, late so slow to praise,
Rehearsed her many virtues o'er,
And spoke of all her pleasant ways.

The sleeper heeded not the wealth
Of bloom that lay on either hand;
And not a word of love or loss
Her sealed ears could understand.

Strange, we so often keep the flowers
To lay in folded hands at last;
And little luxuries of life
Withheld, till care for them is past.

Strange that we do not oftener praise
The willing toiler by our side!
Why keep the full-blown flower of love
Until our friend we loved has died!

A Marvellous Girl.

From Texas Siftings.

Miss Clarina Vere-de-Vere
Is graceful, young and pretty,
And leads the belles of fashion here
In wealthy New York city.

And in her conversation, too,
Few ladies can surpass her;
To tell the truth she is a new
Girl graduate from Vassar.

Her knowledge is both vast and rare;
She can, upon the spot,
Explain the whenceness of the where,
The whyness of the what.

But what is greater far than this,
Her many talents crowning,
This highly cultivated Miss
Can see the drift of Browning!

The World Is Very Funny.

From Goodall's Sun.

This world is very funny.
For no matter how much money
Man is earning he will spend it, and be hard up all the time;
To his utmost he is straining
To catch up without attaining,
Till he makes his life a burden when it should be bliss sublime.

He who earns a thousand merely,
Thinks two thousand dollars yearly
Would be just the figures to make happiness complete;
But his income when it doubles
Only multiplies his troubles,
For his outgo then increasing makes his both ends worse to meet.

It is run in debt and borrow,
Flush to-day and broke to-morrow,
Financiering every which way to postpone the day of doom;
Spending money ere he makes it,
And then wondering what takes it,
Till he, giving up the riddle, looks for rest within the tomb.

Oh, this world is very funny
To the average man whose money
Doesn't quite pay for the dancing that he does before he should;
And he kills himself by trying
Just a little higher flying
Than is suited to his pocket and his own eternal good.

Oh! Dem Cleveland Slippers.

From the Atlanta Constitution.

Oh! de ole bloody shirt am laid away
Kase it aint no use on 'lection day;
Fur de red bandannah we's gwine ter wear,
When we go to the polls in the morn.
An' de 'publican racket dat day raised in June
We are gwine ter git changed to a Democrat boom
Dat will sweep dis kentry from sea to sea
When we go to de polls in de morn.

CHORUS.

Oh! dem Cleveland slippers, dem Cleveland slippers,
Dem Cleveland slippers I's bound to wear,
Kase dey look so fine.
Oh, dem Cleveland slippers, dem Cleveland slippers,
Dem Cleveland slippers I's gwine to wear
When we 'lect dat ticket of mine.

Oh! de Democrat club stands by de wall
Kase it ain't been used since 'way las' fall,
But de boys will use it in first-class style
When we go to de polls in de morn.
Dere's de ole cheap sugar an' clothing, too,
Dey'll telephone de news to internal rebenue.
What a glorious victory we'll win dat day
When we go to de polls in de morn.

Now, good-by, boys, I'm bound for to go,
To de place whar 'publican wind don't blow,
An' don't wipe your nose on your kentry's flag
When you go to de polls in de morn;
But a bran' new hat you can surely win
By betting your money 'gainst Chinese Ben,
An' your Cleveland slippers be sure to wear
When you go to de polls in de morn.

W. WALLACE SCOTT.

Little Mack.

From the Chicago Morning News.

This talk about the journalists that run the East is bosh.
We've got a Western editor that's little, but O gosh!
He lives here in Mizzoora where the people are so set
In ante-bellum notions that they vote for Jackson yet;
But the paper he is running makes the rusty fossils swear—
The smartest, likeliest paper that is printed anywhere!
And, best of all, the paragraphs are pointed as a tack,
And that's because they emanate
From little Mack.

In architecture he is what you'd call a chunky man,
As if he'd been constructed on the summer-cottage plan;
He has a nose like Bonaparte, and round his mobile mouth
Lies all the sensuous languor of the children of the South;
His dealings with reporters who affect a weekly bust
Have given to his violet eyes a shadow of distrust;
In glorious abandon his brown hair wanders back
From the grand Websterian forehead
Of little Mack.

No matter what the item is, if there's an item in it,
You bet your life he's on to it and nips it in a minute!
From multifarious nations, countries, monarchies, and lands,
From Afric's sunny fountains and India's coral strands,
From Greenland's icy mountains and Siloam's shady rills
He gathers in his telegrams, and Houser pays the bills;
What though there be a dearth of news, he has a happy knack
Of scraping up a lot of scoops,
Does little Mack.

And learning! Well he knows the folks of every tribe and age
That ever played a part upon this fleeting human stage;
His intellectual system's so extensive and so greedy,
That, when it comes to records, he's a walkin' cyclopedy;
For, havin' studied (and digested) all the books a-goin',
It stands to reason he must know about all worth a-knowin'!
So when a politician with a record 's on the track
We're apt to hear some history
From little Mack.

And when a fellow journalist is broke and needs a twenty,
Who's allus ready to whack up a portion of his plenty?
Who's allus got a wallet that's as full of sordid gain
As his heart is full of kindness and his head is full of brain?
Whose bowels of compassion will in-va-ri-a-bly move
Their owner to those courtesies which plainly, surely prove
That he's the kind of person that never does go back
On the fellow that's in trouble?
Why, little Mack!

I've heard 'em tell of Dana, and of Bonner, and of Reid,
And of a coarse apostate who denies his race and creed;
I don't care what their politics or influence may be,
One metropolitan exchange is quite enough for me!
So keep your Danas, Bonners, Reids, apostates and the rest,
The woods is full of better men all through this woolly West;
For all your sleek, pretentious, Eastern editorial pack
We wouldn't swap the shadow of
Our little Mack!

EUGENE FIELD.

My Ships.

From the Sailors' Magazine.

I.

Ah, years ago, no matter where,
Beneath what roof or sky,
I dreamed of days, perhaps remote,
When ships of mine that were afloat
Should in the harbor lie;
And all the costly freights they bore
Enrich me both in mind and store.

What dreams they were of argosies,
Laden in many a clime;
So stoutly built, so bravely manned,
No fear but they would come to land
At their appointed time;
And I should see them, one by one,
Close furl their sails in summer's sun.

And then, while men in wonder stood,
My ships I would unlade;
My treasures vast they should behold,
And to my learning or my gold,
What honors would be paid!
And though the years might come and go,
I could but wiser, richer grow.

II.

In later years, no matter where,
Beneath what roof or sky,
I saw the dreams of days remote
Fade out, and ships that were afloat,
As drifting wrecks go by;
And all the many freights they bore
Lay fathoms deep, or strewed the shore!

While ships of which I never thought
Were sailing o'er the sea;
And, one by one, with costlier load,
In safety all the voyage rode,
And brought their freights to me;
Then what I lost a trifle seemed,
And I was richer than I dreamed.

No wondering crowd, with envious eye,
Looked on my treasures rare;
Yet they were weightier far than gold;
They still increase, though I grow old,
And age beyond compare;
Would all the restless hearts I see
Had ships like these that came to me!

A. D. F. RANDOLPH.

FRANCE IN NO DANGER.

The Red Flag of Anarchy Must Yield to the Tricolor.

PARIS, Aug. 10.—Doubtless in New York, as in London, in Berlin, in St. Petersburg, and every European capital, the news-reading public has been anxiously inquiring all through the present week if the republican Government of France would have power and energy enough to repress the riotous demonstrations of the mobs which terrorized Paris and Amiens, or if the red flag of the Communists and Socialists was to float in triumph over every city and hamlet throughout the land.

It is certain that in the violent scenes just enacted in Amiens, as well as here, the authorities have detected more than one agent sent hither by the Socialists and Anarchists of Belgium and Germany. At Amiens, in particular, the foremost among the incendiaries were found to be foreigners. Of course these emissaries, having no local interests or affections to restrain them, would naturally be the leaders in every work of destruction and bloodshed. The men who, in New York or Chicago, plot murder and arson, and the overthrow of all social order, are not Americans, brought up to cherish and reverence our free institutions, and attached, heart and soul, to the Constitution and laws inherited from their fathers.

Unhappily, as during the Commune of 1871, so now, it is easy to see that the wildest demagogues in the socialistic gatherings bear names denoting a Teutonic or Slavonic origin.

At any rate, I am happy to say that the present Government, after displaying for months in succession unpardonable weakness in coquetting with the Communists and Socialists of the Paris Municipal Council, and in playing into the hands of the Radical Representatives in the Legislature, have acted with decision and promptitude in repulsing both in Paris and in Amiens the first serious outbreaks of revolutionary violence.

All the old elements of revolt which so often triumphed behind the street barricades were out in formidable force on Wednesday last, the 8th inst., around the funeral car of the notorious Communist, "*General*" Eudes. They overdid the thing this time, however, by flaunting in the eyes of the Parisians the red flag, which they would fain substitute to the *tricolore*. The red flag of the Commune and the social republic is the chosen symbol of blood, wholesale massacre, and blind destruction. The *tricolore* is the glorious battle flag which has floated over the hosts of France on the hundred and one fields immortalized by the valor of her sons during the last hundred years.

The students of the Polytechnic School and the School of Medicine, who were the leaders of the people in the street fights which ended in driving from Paris and from France both Charles X. and Louis Philippe, are not prepared to go into the street and head a mob of Communists and Anarchists fighting under the red flag. The red, white, and blue of the *tricolore* are identified with the dearest military glories of modern France. It is the national ensign which has waved in triumph on every land from Amsterdam to Moscow to Pekin, from Berlin, Vienna, Rome, and Madrid to Mexico. Frenchmen themselves may blame the rulers who planned these distant expeditions. But they will not allow you or me to question the glory won by their soldiers and sailors in both hemispheres.

The Count de Chambord (or Henri Cinq) committed a fatal and irreparable blunder in 1878, when he refused to be King of France unless he could substitute the old white flag and the lilies of the Bourbons for the glorious three-colored banner which had led to victory the armies of the first Napoleon.

The Frenchmen of to-day, no matter how "advanced" their ideas may be, are not prepared, in street fight or on battlefield, to rally around the flag of the Commune and fire on the *tricolore* of their fathers.

Last Wednesday, as the Parisian police rushed, sabre in hand, on the men who bore defiantly the red flag of the Commune, there were found among the bystanders on the sidewalks men who seized whatever weapon they could find and fell upon the *sergents de ville*. But it was because these were thought or said to maltreat women and children; not because they had captured and torn the flag of anarchy. The police had no flag, and the military did not show themselves at all in the fray.

Had the regular troops, with the *tricolore* displayed, appeared to disperse the Communards, and tear down their ensign, not a blow would have been struck against them.

As it was, the police and the mounted gendarmes had soon routed the "Reds."

Up here in this peaceful, distant, and beautiful quarter of Paris, not the faintest rumor of the commotion reached us. No one knew or heard of what had taken place till the evening papers at 5 o'clock came to tell us that the street scrimmage, miles away, had passed as rapidly away as one of the many summer showers which we see falling on Montmartre or Courbevoie, while we have been basking in sunshine.

No; there is no danger—no immediate danger, at least—of any successful outbreak of popular violence upsetting the present Government or Constitution. The men who are now in power are the real, the avowed, and acknowledged representatives of the Jacobins of 1788. Their presence at the head of affairs plainly tells the civilized world that the revolutionary party in France have things their own way. This party have declared their "determination to" carry out the "principles of 1789" to their last practical consequences. Besides, it is their interest and the interest of France that the approaching centenary should be peacefully and successfully celebrated. They want all nations to take an active part in their International Exposition, which they have resolved to make the wonder of the nineteenth century.

As you know, radicals and revolutionists, once in power, are apt to become exceedingly conservative. I believe that MM. Floquet and Carnot, having attained the summit of their ambition, are determined to maintain order, to repress riotousness, to keep down—though at the eleventh hour and with extreme energy if need be—any attempt of Communists, Socialists, or Anarchists to disturb the public peace or the established order of things.

This is my conviction, for this is the only course counselled by good policy, by common sense, and the best interests of France.

As to any danger to be apprehended from the Boulangists and the Monarchists, it is merely imaginary. In a country like France, where ridicule kills more surely and swiftly than sword thrust, bullet, or dynamite, the Floquet-Boulanger duel gave the severest blow to the General's prospects and to the hopes of his party. They are now trotting out the poor fallen General, as the Spaniards formerly led out to battle against the Moors the war horse of the Cid Campeador bearing the dead body of the warrior clad in full panoply.

People in France won't fight behind a dead man whom his partisans may galvanize into a semblance of life and energy.

And—for this generation at least, if not for the next as well—you may say the same of the monarchist parties, no matter what may be the personal merits of the men who lead them or are led by them.

The principles of 1789 are now triumphant in France, peacefully, if not permanently, seated in the Elysée and at Fontainebleau. The Ministers charged with carrying them out may, indeed, persecute with impunity religious associations and monastic orders, restrict or abolish public worship, repeal the Concordat, or what remains of it. In all this they will have the hearty applause and active support of Socialists and Communists.

It may well be that MM. Carnot and Floquet, now that they feel secure of a good long lease of power, will stop of a sudden in the path of religious persecution entered on by their predecessors, and so heartily pursued by themselves. They may see, especially in case of France's being entangled in some great war, that it is no less than madness to neglect, cast aside, or array in secret or open hostility against themselves the millions in France who are thoroughly religious.

This I firmly trust they will soon see and act accordingly.

But as to any near prospect of a monarchist restoration, it is not to be thought of.

So the reign of the new Jacobinism is not only likely to hold on its course, but sure to sway the fortunes of France for some long time to come.

By the way, some of the most influential papers here have had not a good word to say for Gen. Sheridan. The advice which he is reported to have given to Bismarck, while the German armies were still beleaguering Paris, was such—if really given—as to deserve not only the undying hatred of Frenchmen, but the severe animadversion of all true men and true Americans. As I should like to see it contradicted by some unquestionable authority, I translate it literally for your readers:

"Strike," he is reported to have said, "Strike the enemy's soldiers with the most terrible blows you can deliver; then inflict on the inhabitants of the country every possible form of suffering, so that they yearn for peace and compel the Government to ask for it. You must leave the population only eyes to see and to weep over the war."

For the sake of our country, our army, and one of its most heroic leaders, as well as for the sake of the brave old Irish race from whom Sheridan was sprung, I beseech Americans to disprove the authenticity of the above inhuman words.

BERNARD O'REILLY.

The Nativity of Our Soldiers.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir*: I noticed in THE SUN a few weeks ago a question by a correspondent as to the nativity of the men comprising the army during the rebellion. The following figures were compiled from the muster rolls of the different organizations raised from 1861 to 1865.

		Per cent.
Native American	1,523,500	75.48
British-American	53,500	2.65
English	45,500	2.26
Irish	144,200	7.14
German	176,800	8.76
Other foreigners	48,400	2.38
Foreign nativity unknown	26,500	1.33
Total	2,018,200	100

BROOKLYN, Aug. 20. C. A. S.

A ROMANCE IN ROYALTY.

Princess Letitia to Marry Her Uncle, the Duc D'Aoste.

LONDON, Aug. 11.—The marriage of the Duc d'Aoste with his niece, the daughter of Prince Napoleon and Princess Clotilde of Savoy, will take place early in September, in the same month of the year in which eighteen years ago the revolution drove the young girl and her family from the Palais Royal and from France. The fiancée of to-day was only 4 years old when she went into exile with her mother, and she has spent her youth partly at Prangins in Switzerland and partly at Moncalieri, a royal residence belonging to the house of Savoy, situated at no great distance from Turin, and to which the first Piedmontese railway was constructed.

In the reverses which politics had brought it had been decided that Princess Clotilde should keep her daughter with her and watch over her education in Italy, while her two sons, Victor and Louis, remained in France to share the fortunes of their father and prepare themselves for any emergency. All the members of the family were to meet only during the holidays. Little Princess Letitia grieved bitterly at being separated from her brothers. Her mother tried in every possible way to cheer and amuse her, to get her reconciled to her life in Piedmont while fostering a sincere affection for her fatherland, France, a country to which she, however, has never yet returned. The young girl gradually became very fond of Moncalieri, a large castellated building standing on an eminence surrounded by the Alps, and overlooking the rapid windings of the River Po. There Princess Clotilde herself, with her brothers, King Umberto and the Duc d'Aoste, and her sister, Maria Pia, the Queen of Portugal, had spent their childhood, together with the last and delicate son of Victor Emanuel, the Prince of Monseirat, who died quite young. Victor Emanuel had made a present of this palace to his daughter when she was banished from France, and walking with Princess Letitia through the long picture gallery, she would point out to the child all her glorious ancestors, from Humbert *Blanches Maeris* down to Charles Albert. One wing of the castle was transformed by her into a sort of hospital or home for the old and infirm servants of the house of Savoy, where she taught the child to tend them with her own hands.

Although the habits and tastes of Princess Clotilde are simple to austerity and her piety almost monastic, yet she has never attempted to submit others to the mode of life she prefers. Her own private apartments are plainly and unpretendingly furnished, but those of her lady in waiting, Baroness Barbier, are replete with every Parisian elegance and luxury, and Princess Letitia, born at the Palais Royal, has grown to womanhood with all the courtly refinements which became a girl who might one day be called upon to occupy a throne.

There are two distinct and complex natures in Princess Clotilde. She is at once the noble daughter of a royal house and the humble and pious sister of mercy. When the inhabitants of Turin and Moncalieri see a sombre-clad figure go by, followed by a single footman, they know that *Nostra Santa* is bent on an errand of charity to some hospital or stricken bedside; when two elegant and dashing horsewomen, mounted on splendid thoroughbreds, pass swiftly through the valleys and mountain gorges, the villagers exclaim: *Ecco nostra Principessa!* and bare their heads before Princess Clotilde and Princess Letitia. The mother, who rides as well and fearlessly as the daughter, always accompanies the latter in her rambles, even when her two sons join them and venture on more distant excursions.

Maternal example and maternal teachings have trained Princess Letitia into an accomplished woman; she is a good linguist, paints well, and is fond of music; she is tolerant, charitable, amiable, and extremely sincere; tall and strong, she has the features of the Bonapartes with the peculiarly sensitive mouth of the house of Savoy; she recalls the two different types of beauty of Queen Adelaide, her Austrian grandmother, and of the mother of the First Consul, whose name she bears. She has realized her mother's wish by her affection for France, and she joins Princess Clotilde in sending yearly a sum of money to the poor of the parish of St. Roch in Paris, for as the Princess wrote to the venerable Abbé Millault, "There are duties of which revolutions do not affranchise us."

Prince Napoleon has always been on the best terms with his brother-in-law, the Duke d'Aoste, and is entirely satisfied with the approaching union. As soon as he had ascertained the real state of his daughter's feelings toward her suitor, he gave his gratified and cordial consent; he even told a friend at Prangins quite lately that this marriage would prove the consolation of his old age. The ties which bind him to the house of Savoy date from a long time back, when, in the same city of Turin, where the nuptials are to be celebrated, the cousin of Napoleon III. issued the proclamation, as head of the Fifth Army Corps, which heralded the independence of Italy.

The career of the Duke d'Aoste is perhaps as remarkable as any recorded in the history of this century, and there is in his nature and character enough of chivalry and romance to justify the love of a young girl. In 1870 the second son of Victor Emmanuel was a tall, soldierly-looking man, with brilliant eyes, short-cropped hair, and the long moustache of the Carignans. Erect in his martial figure, he was far handsomer than father and brother, and when Spain in quest of a ruler, disappointed in her hopes of the Prince of Hohenzollern, offered him the sceptre, he seemed a fitting subject for such an honor. His father had just annexed Rome, and, conscious that Catholic Spain might at any time resent this act, he was not unwilling to see his son master of her destinies. On the 28th of December, 1870, the Duke started for Madrid. On reaching Carthagena he learned that Gen. Prim, his stanch supporter, had been brutally murdered in broad daylight in the streets of the capital as he was leaving the Cortes. This assassination cast a gloom over his reception and proved a fatal omen for King Amadeus—omen promptly justified by the opposition of the press, the hostile attitude of Parliament and of the people; and when, later on, the Carlist faction entered the lists against him, the last hopes of the pacification of the Peninsula through his accession to the throne fell to the ground.

Society was even more antagonistic. When the King appeared at the opera it was the signal for all the boxes to become empty. In 1871 his wife, Queen Maria, daughter of the Prince de la Cisterna, joined her husband, but the gentle charm of her manner was powerless to win the sympathy of the nation, and the royal couple felt that their abdication was henceforth only a matter of time. For two years they offered a brave and fearless front to the ceaseless persecutions of which they were the object. Even their lives were attempted. Then, finding conciliation and voluntary blindness equally impotent, on the 11th of February, 1873, King Amadeus sent a message to the Cortes renouncing the crown of Spain for himself and his descendants. On the following day he left Madrid for Lisbon, taking with him the Queen, who, barely recovered from her confinement, was ill able to travel. After a short stay with his sister, the Queen of Portugal, he returned to his country, resuming his rights of Italian citizen, his duties as a Senator, and his civil list of 400,000 francs. In 1876 he lost his wife, and for a long time mourned her loss in almost absolute retirement; but years, as they rolled on, softened his grief, and he was persuaded by King Umberto, to whom he is sincerely attached, to return to the world and to have a household suitable to his rank and to his wealth, for he is rich by the fortune of his first wife, and has, moreover, the appointment of general inspectors of the Italian cavalry. The King approves of the marriage of his brother; he has helped to smooth all obstacles; he returns his love to the full, and looks upon his three sons as insuring the succession of the Italian throne should any eventually befall his sole heir, the Prince of Naples. He sees no discrepancy in the union of his young niece with her uncle, for he knows that she loves him deeply; that she would not consent to a mere *union de convenance*, and that she has given proofs of knowing her own mind, when last year she refused to wed her cousin, Prince Roland Bonaparte.

The house of Savoy has had two saints among its members—St. Umberto III. and the beatified Amadeus IX. It has had warriors and statesmen, but not a truer and more loyal gentleman than the Duke d'Aoste.

The Church places obstacles in the way of marriages where close ties of consanguinity exist between the contracting parties, but as it is principally on ethical grounds they are not insurmountable. In the second quarter of this year the Pope has granted forty-two dispensations to marriages between uncles and nieces, and 376 for marriages between brothers and sisters in law.

M. DE S.

Elusive Gems.

From the Chicago News.

Every trade has peculiarities about it that are inexplicable. A noticeable instance of this is the strange manner in which diamonds and other precious stones disappear when accidentally dropped by a dealer while handling them.

"It really seems," said a jeweller to a reporter, "that these valuable stones have the power of motion. A diamond dropped at one end of a room has been found in the dust at the further end of the apartment.

"On another occasion I saw a stone that was dropped to the floor from a loose setting, and, after hours of fruitless search, this same stone was found in the show window six feet from where it fell.

"A friend of mine and a customer of his spent two hours in looking for a diamond that flew from the tweezers in which it was held for inspection, and when they had given up the search in despair it was found nestling cosily in the thick black beard of the customer.

"Other precious stones seem to have the same faculty for disappearing. A short time ago a dealer allowed a fine topaz to slip from his hand. The spot on the floor where it fell, and in fact every part of the office, was thoroughly searched, but the stone was never recovered."

A NIGHT'S REVEL IN LONDON.

A Glimpse of the Coarse and Heavy Vulgarity which is Called Naughtiness in London—New York Has No Such Fun.

Mud, fog, misery, and gloom pervaded Jermyn street one day, not long ago, when the Honorable Percy Thorpe went to the windows of his chambers and looked abroad. He had risen and bathed and a voluminous robe of Turkish towelling enveloped his gaunt figure. His eyes were bloodshot, his throat was parched.

"I feel," he said, as he sat regarding me from a roomy chair near the fire, "like the man whom the ancients prate about."

"Who?"

"A London man. I speak of the ancients because the story is, I believe, rather old, though the theme is ever new. The hero was a *viveur*, a hard liver, a heavy drinker—in a word, a London man in the hilarious sense of the word."

Here the Hon. Percy Thorpe fell into a violent fit of coughing, from which he rescued himself with a flushed face and streaming eyes by a corking drink of raw brandy. It made me shudder to look at it—and I've been in Chicago.

"A friend knocked," continued Thorpe, "and his servant opened the door."

"'Is your master up?' asked the caller.

"'Up, sir? Well, really, sir 'e got up, sir, drank his bawth and went to bed again, sir.'"

I laughed at the story. It was habit. I had laughed at it so often in England that it was really no effort. The Hon. Thorpe, as his servant called him colloquially, then proceeded to point the moral of his little anecdote after the fashion of Englishmen all over the world.

"And so," he said, "I feel as though I could drink my bath."

To emphasize it, he took another appalling swig of brandy, and shoved the decanter toward me with a "Dip in."

"Thanks," I said, "it's too early."

"I thought Americans were heavy drinkers?"

"They have the name, but I think they seldom take raw spirits before dinner. In fact, I have never seen such heavy drinking at home as in England."

"That," said my host, with conventional British polish, "is partly because the Americans are still crude, but mainly on account of the murderous character of your liquors."

He then fell into a solemn consultation with his servant concerning his boots, fifteen pairs of which were ranged along the wall of his dressing room. Many of them were on trees, and they were all varnished brightly.

He was a typical London man, a member of a dozen clubs, knew everybody, including a lot of Americans, went everywhere, but never saw anything worth admiring outside of the limits of his town.

It was about noon, and he had just risen. In the narrow street without were beggars, tramps, and mendicants without number. The fog was thick, yellow, pasty and unpleasant. Before the door stood a big mail cart with a boy holding a team of bays. Mr. Thorpe, whom I had met on the occasion of his visit in New York, had written me very politely the day before explaining that there would be a lot of coaches in Hyde Park the following day, and that he would drive me out there and show me something of London afterward. Accordingly I called at his chambers as I was stopping with a friend out in St. John's Wood—rather a long drive from his place. Presently we went out and climbed into the mail cart. The Hon. Percy Thorpe took the reins and the horses started for Hyde Park.

My host was dressed exactly as the upper hundred thousand clubmen are this year at all hours of the day. He wore a frock coat, rather roomy trousers, a beaver hat, varnished boots, and drab gaiters. His gloves were brick colored, and there was a big white carnation in the lapel of his coat. Incidentally, I may mention, that, like most London men, he had sixteen or twenty frock suits, which he wore on succeeding days. They were nearly all of the same pattern. London men now wear no other style of coat, for fear they will be confounded with business men and clerks, who wear sacks and jackets.

The fog lifted by the time we arrived at the park, and, just as we got through the gate, a short line of coaches swept along in front of us. There was a tremendous crush of vehicles of all sorts. There were many drags. Our own coaches in New York are every bit as well appointed as those of the famous London whips.

The people stared at the Prince of Wales, who sat on the same coach with the Earl of Fife. Occasionally the Prince raised his hat. He looked a dumpy, thick-set man of 55. Heavy streaks of gray were visible along the under side of his beard. He was round-shouldered and seemed rather seedy. Lord Charles Beresford and Lord Randolph Churchill drove coaches. Lord Beresford held a team of fiery bays with one hand, well down, while he amused himself by cutting 8's in the air with his whip. At the tail of the procession, the Princess of Wales drove by, looking like a girl of 18 at a distance, but so bunglingly and roughly made up when her landau passed us, that I was startled at the crudity of it all. William K. Vanderbilt, with a suit of loose-fitting clothes, stood with his hands in his pockets near a tree, gazing at the throng, and that most placid, serene, and equitable of New Yorkers, Mr. Al. Claggett, formed a picture of tranquillity and quiet observation on the opposite side of the drive. I suddenly discovered that we were in an ocean of vehicles, and, for two hours thereafter we moved at a snail's pace around the drive, staring at rather bony-looking women and conventionally attired men.

Mr. Percy Thorpe's manner had not changed since he arose in the morning. In fact, in the course of a somewhat extended acquaintance with him, I found that such a thing as a change in his manner was an impossibility. He viewed life, London, and everything appertaining to the two with profound, natural, and unpretentious indifference. He seldom smiled, and was always equitable, if a bit pompous. He drove me home, and at 7:30 we went to his club for dinner.

The dining room was long and low. The table service would have graced the palace of a prince, and the waiters were admirable. Perhaps ten men were dining there, but nearly all dined alone. They bowed to one another, but nothing was heard but the occasional clash of a dish as the waiters moved about.

The gloom of all London was intensified by the dismal and heavy air of the club dining room. A man of fine physique with a perfectly bald pate strolled up to our table when we were half through dinner, stuck his glass in his eye, and looked steadfastly at my host. I thought at first that he was going to run a knife into the Honorable Percy Thorpe's throat and leave it there; but just before things arrived at this stage the newcomer dropped his glass from his eye and said:

"How do, Pers?"

"Stale," was the answer.

"Seen the mater?"

"No. You?"

"Not since she came from Leicestershire."

A long pause.

"Mucky, isn't it?" said the Hon. Percy.

"Ghastly," said the other.

Then, with a slight wave of his hand and a formal bow of apology to me, apparently for the interruption, he wandered over, sank into a chair on the opposite side of the room, and drank half a goblet of iced absinthe at a gulp.

"That's the heir," said the Hon. Percy, jerking his head toward the conversationalist. Then I knew that I had been listening to a live lord, and the son of a famous earl into the bargain—"Pers's" brother.

And, by the way, I was amazed to find in England that the real swells, the men of title and position, speak without a trace of what is known as the English accent. I saw a lot of them at the Smith-Kilrain and other prize fights, and at similar society events, and found them to be the most amiable, good-natured, and approachable of men, and, above all, astonishingly free of the accent that we invariably attribute to Englishmen of title. I could name a dozen or twenty men with elaborate handles to their names to whom I talked, and who spoke in every respect as well-bred Americans do. The men who say "cawn't," "shawn't," and "deah old chappie," and all that, are bad actors, or the second-class imitators of the real type of the genus swell.

From the club we went to the Gaiety Theatre, but it was slow, and half an hour later the Hon. Percy Thorpe took me to the Empire—perhaps as gorgeous a place of amusement as can be found in the world. On the stage was a variety show, including a number of people whom I had seen in America. In the boxes, women of more or less respectability sat behind the curtains and gazed abroad. In the balconies and in the lobbies paraded endless streams of women, painted and powdered clumsily and thickly. In the slang of the town, they are "Totties," and London makes the worst exhibit of them of any city in the world. Among this horde of hundreds and hundreds of women walked the young snobs, who supposed they were seeing life because they chattered and joked in a heavy British way with the women of the town. It was about as amusing to me as a chunk of mud, and as the Hon. Percy Thorpe was similarly bored we went to the Continental Hotel to supper.

It is the night place of London. Actresses and women who claim to be such as a mask to another calling, sat about the different tables with charms liberally revealed by the lowest of dresses and the shortest of sleeves. They were accompanied by a vast number of heavy and dissipated looking club men, who drank brandy and whiskey, while the women took champagne. There were a great many American actresses of a certain stamp, and among them several New York men. The air was stifling and hot, and at 12 o'clock the proprietors began to put the people out.

In leaving the place we met Nat Goodwin and Arthur Roberts—the latter is the cleverest comedian in England—on the sidewalk, and they lugged us off to a club known as the Bohee. There is not a lord in London, by the way, who does not feel flattered if he can win his way into the presence of a crack comedian.

Thorpe smiled for the first time that day, as we went to a distinctively all-night London resort. The fog had settled into a dreary drizzle long before this. The heat of the theatres and the Continental had dragged me down, so that I felt in anything but a jolly frame of mind, and the interminable heaviness of everything English weighed on me as it always does on an American for the first week or so in London. No one smiles, everything is stupid, top-weighted and stolid from the air of the streets to the talk of the brightest of the men.

The Bohee consisted of small tables, easy chairs, pallid men, interminable drinks, cigarette and cigar smoke, music, shady actresses, noise, disorder, and riot. Goodwin had just agreed to play for Roberts's benefit the following week, and they began to rehearse then and there. They decided to come out dressed up as American Indians, and play an act from the "Corsican Brothers." They were to meet in the middle of the stage, shake hands, and then Roberts was to exclaim with intense force:

"Who are you?"

"Nat Goodwin."

"Where from?"

"New York."

"Can you act?"

"Of Cors-i-can."

Upon this they were both to fall backward upon the stage, then rise, and, without a word, retire in different directions from the view.

What a roar this pun provoked in the Bohee!

The two men went on from this beginning and developed what would have been a capital comedy within the next hour. Their cleverness brought everybody in the club around them. Roberts was startlingly like Goodwin, and when he was accused of it, he said:

"I do imitate him, I admit it. I've been loaded to the guards ever since he came to town."

The Hon. Percy Thorpe sat and listened to them with terrific enjoyment, and at 4 o'clock in the morning we went home.

"You've had a typical London night, my boy," he said, as we parted, "and I hope we may enjoy many more of them. There's no such fun as this in New York, is there?"

He spoke the truth, and I endorsed it, and thanked the stars, too, for what with the fog, drizzle, paint, powder, stupidity, muck, and drink it had been the heaviest night of my life.

BLAKELY HALL.

DANGERS IN THE THAMES.

The Great River Polluted by the Sewage of London.

LONDON, Aug. 11.—Authorities, of course, will disagree, so a few maintain that the Churnet, which rises three miles from Cheltenham, is the source of the Thames, while the majority only recognize the Thames Head, in the parish of Cotes, in Gloucestershire, as the birthplace of the "king of inland rivers." John Stow, the great English chronicler, whose merit and services to his country James I. rewarded by granting him when he was 79 letters patent authorizing him to become a mendicant and "to collect among our loving subjects their voluntary contributions and kind gratuities," has settled it. He says: "The most excellent and goodly river beginneth in Coteswold, about a mile from Titory and as much from the hieway called Fosse."

However, if at its spring the godly river rises in crystal bubbles and has acquired a well-deserved fame for the fine historical banks through which it wanders, and on whose "fields beloved" there settled at various times so many powerful barons, mighty abbots, and great men who "penned" or "uttered wisdom" as it is for meditation apt, it is simply now an open sewer in and about London, and it threatens to become quite as much a curse as it was once a blessing.

At Kingston, whilom "the metropolis of the Anglo-Saxon kings," ten miles from London, the stream is still considered sufficiently pure to supply the Surrey side of the capital with water. Yet lately consumers have become suspicious of its quality. No doubt this water, carefully pumped into amplitudinous reservoirs, is passed on to filters, bedded with sand, gravel, and shell, through which it runs at the rate of about 6¼ gallons per square foot per hour before it is delivered for use, but analysis has proved that even this well-meant process does not any longer free it from offensive organic matters. And gradually and rapidly as you row down the stream it becomes more turbid and filthier. What would Evelyn, Pepys, Addison, and Sir Roger de Coverly think now of the charm of going by water to Vauxhall, sometimes called Spring Garden, of which Addison speaks thus: "When I considered the fragrancy of the walks and bowers, with the choirs of birds that sang upon the trees, and the loose tribe of people that walked under their shade, I could not but look upon the place as a kind of Mohammedan paradise. Sir Roger told me it put him in mind of a little coppice by his house in the country which his chaplain used to call an aviary of nightingales." Nightingales, fragrancy, and Mohammedan paradise have vanished, and even Homer's infernal Acheron was not as black as the king of inland rivers appears from this very spot down to the sea.

Leaving aside the picturesque and poetical side of the question, I shall only refer to-day to its dangerous aspect. I have fortunately in my hands some official reports and figures to which the English taxpayer and journalist has not yet had access. It appears from these documents that up to the present time the only cure that has been attempted has for its sole object to get rid of the evil odor arising from the state of the river.

The Thames is polluted by various causes, the two principal ones being the use made of it by all the vessels, small and big, which navigate it, and by the admixture of the London sewage at Barking and Crossness with the water of the river. All vessels at anchor and in the docks are forbidden to cast anything offensive over or under board, and efficient means are taken to have the prohibition obeyed; but, of course, the same prohibition does not apply to moving ships. As to the throwing of the sewage of the metropolis into the river at a distance where it was miscalculated that it could not pollute the stream in its course through and about London, experience has long condemned it, but nothing has been done beyond making unexecuted suggestions.

Meanwhile the grand river, described by an early lover as "tho' deep yet clear," flows now up to Putney and Richmond unspeakable abominations, and hourly enriches its bed with so much filth that before another thousand years it is likely to be metamorphosed into the highest hill of guano the world has ever seen.

It is indeed assumed by Sir Henry Roscoe, F. R. S., M. P., in his private reports to Lord Magheramorne, Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, that no amount of chemicals which can with any show of reason be added, will be sufficient to convert the whole of the fœcal matter which the river contains where the sewage mixes with its water, into harmless forms. Hence the use of chemicals is only recommended for the purpose of simply getting rid of the bad smell.

Up to date the interesting experiments of Sir Henry have applied both to the deodorization of the metropolitan sewage at the outfalls, where it reaches the river, and to the deodorization of the emanations from the sewers in various parts of the metropolis.

Although it must be granted that the experiments have not been entirely unsatisfactory and that the complaints as to evil smells have diminished by considerably more than half, it is equally indisputable that the Metropolitan Board of Works has not yet hit on a method commensurate to the mischief it has to suppress and the perils it has to ward off. Hence, probably, its reluctance to take the public into the confidence of its inadequate efforts. To begin with, in order to deal successfully with the substances through chemicals, it would be necessary that the latter should be in proportion to the exact strength of the former, and that no atmospheric or other accidents should influence their action. Now, of course, these conditions do not exist in the method of purification so far applied to the Thames, as it is equally impossible to accurately estimate the quantity of sewage it hourly or daily contains, its proportion to rain or other water, and to know precisely the indeterminable variations in the tides, wind, and rain.

Two deodorants have been tried by Sir Henry, the bleaching powder and the manganate of soda acidified with sulphuric acid. The relative oxidizing power of these two chemicals is that three grains of bleaching powder are equal to five grains of manganate. The average daily quantity used, at the rate of three grains per gallon, reckoned on the average volume of dry weather sewage at 156,800,000 gallons would be at Barking about 17 tons, and at Crossness about 13 tons of bleaching powder. This chemical has proved a fair deodorant, but Sir Henry states that it is difficult to come to a satisfactory conclusion as regards its effect on the general character of the river. Both the manganate and the bleaching powder are destroyed by sewage—the former immediately, the latter slowly. However, as bleaching powder acts as poison on useful living organisms which are not affected by manganate, Sir Henry opines that, apart from the consideration of cost, the latter is to be preferred as a deodorant in the present case. The average annual cost of manganate required at the outfalls he estimates to be about £40,000.

Sir Henry is naturally led to enquire whether some more satisfactory or less costly means could not be devised for effecting the end in view, viz., the prevention of the sewage nuisance. He thinks that the only other feasible plan is that of aeration. Free oxygen, he sensibly says, is to be had for nothing, and the cost of pumping air need not be considerable. He feels sure that at all events it is a matter well deserving of further inquiry, as he has himself observed in his laboratory experiments, the rapid purifying effects of aeration on the sewage.

Meanwhile a Frenchman proposes to destroy the sewage nuisance by electricity.

However, Sir Henry, in his conclusion, looking at the broad question of the permanent disposal of the metropolitan sewage, is convinced that sooner or later, whether previously clarified or not, the sewage must either be filtered through land or discharged into the estuary at a point not higher than Sea Reach.

New and richer blood will have to be instilled into the Metropolitan Board of Works before this plan, the only reasonable one, which was first suggested by Lord Bramwell's commission, will have the shadow of a chance of being carried into execution. Then only will the criminal process stop of converting the "mighty Thamesis Fluvius" into a huge sewer, as happened with its old tributary, the Fleet, thus versified by Pope:

Where Fleet ditch, with its disemboguing streams
Rolls the large tribute of dead dogs to Thames.