

that all lunatic asylums should be public, and every official paid by the state, are the only remedies which can possibly prevent the abuses which no amount of inspection can ferret out. If, in addition to such a law, it were made impossible to deport such persons from the

country (legislation much required in Canada), the relatives of the insane could have no fear that their patients would be kept under restraint one day longer than is essentially necessary. Altogether we know no more agreeable volume for the summer holidays.

## CURRENT LITERATURE.

A VIGOROUSLY written paper, published anonymously, but attributed to Colonel Chesney, the author of the "Battle of Dorking," and entitled "What could we have done for France or Belgium?" opens the *Fortnightly* for June. The writer shows the fact, which is now evident to all the world, that the so-called "scare" had far too solid a foundation to rest upon. "There has been no justification" says the writer, "for what Germany has lately done towards her two neighbours. The excuses put forward in either case are too flimsy to bear the slightest examination of any one judging them by other eyes than German." Referring then to the prevalent notion that the panic was occasioned by newspaper correspondents, he says, "no one who is the least behind the scenes at Berlin, Paris, or London, much less at St. Petersburg, has the smallest faith in this view. War, instant, aggressive, and to be carried out to the bitterest end, has been actually contemplated by Germans, with a late prostrate and now unoffending rival." The Belgian complication, he contends, was purposely kept up as a means for the occupation of that neutral kingdom. Of the truth of this view we have now irrefragable evidence: and the question remains,—What could England have done for France or Belgium? Without examining the very able comparison of England's position in 1815 and 1875, we may give his conclusion. "In short, if we examine fairly the means at our present disposal, in money, in naval strength, in land forces, we must admit, that if Germany should return suddenly to the policy threatened three weeks since, England could do nothing for France or Belgium." *Per contra*, let us quote Mr. Morley's lucid utterance in "A Day at Sedan"—the last paper in the number: "If England, Italy, Austria, Belgium, and Turkey chose to constitute themselves into a great peace league, and are prepared instantly to back diplomatic reasoning by military sanctions, they may succeed in keeping down the smouldering flames." As an English journal remarks, it comes after all to the old phrase supposed to be obsolete, "the balance of power." *Mutatis mutandis*, it is the old story over again, and severe as the struggle might be, the result would be the same.

Prof. Clifford appears desirous of being considered the hierophant of the new *cultus* in which matter is deity. The work criticised in

his latest paper, "The Unseen Universe," we do not consider a strong one, but little of its argument is answered. The Professor indulges in taunt, sneer, and satire, the most unsatisfactory of logical weapons—and the most unworthy, because whether we be spiritualists or materialists, we are certainly too serious to be made matter of gibe. We have no room for any of the offensive passages we had marked, nor need we characterise them otherwise than as a reproduction of Tom Paine's tactics in a cultured garb. It is amusing to fall upon a writer, who complains in italics of *negative* words—*im*-mortality, *in*-finite, &c., although he uses, to take only one example, "*in*-destructible *a*-toms" on his own side. His notion of immortality is worth studying for its absurdity. He urges, contrary to universal experience, that it is the vigorous who desire another life, because they have a natural shrinking from death, while the infirm and the aged, who are spent in the struggle, care little for life, either here or hereafter. Appeals to the heroism of being able to address our associates as "my brothers" in some general scheme of self-help, with the blessed hope of annihilation as the goal, will injure science not religion. Mr. Leslie Stephen's "Order and Progress," is a review of Mr. Frederic Harrison's collection of essays. Author and critic are both in sympathy, and both are singularly able writers. But they are preachers of a strange evangel, both in religion and politics, followers of an esoteric will-o'-the-wisp. Positivism is doomed to premature death, in proof of which we shall cite one passage: "He (Mr. Harrison) is one of the initiated, and though he is willing to speak to us on equal terms, we feel that his consciousness of superior wisdom is veiled not abandoned. If a difficulty is unanswered, it is not that it is unanswerable (?) but that we are unworthy to have the answer (!). We are babes to be fed with milk, before we can digest the strong meat of pure positivism." *Sic fiat ad finem*. Mr. Sayce's paper on University examinations, is the old and futile plea against all examinations, on the ground of cramming practised in preparation. Mr. Lewis Carroll in "Some Fallacies on Vivisection," makes a laudable attempt to expose the hollowness of the pleas for scientific brutality. Mr. Sanday's paper on "Marcion's Gospel," takes the author of "Supernatural Religion," metaphorically speaking, by the