

—*Hebrew Literature.*—The *Athenæum* says "It has been proposed to form a "Society for promoting the knowledge of Hebrew Literature," which will undertake to publish translations, with or without original texts, either of entire works or of abstracts and selections from them, according to the nature of their contents. A further object is the organization of lectures, courses for exposition of important Hebrew works, and periodical meetings. The subscription will be one guinea annually. Important names have been already enrolled, and the Provisional Committee will shortly publish a detailed prospectus. It is to be hoped that the gentlemen originating this desirable project will succeed in their laudable scheme. Both Christians and Jews may unite in it, especially as the literature intended to be brought before the English public will be post-Biblical."

—The London correspondent of the *American Publisher and Bookseller*, writing about the inordinate multiplication of cheap magazines, and speaking apparently the opinions of Paternoster-row, whence he dates, gives some statements that will unsettle many preconceived beliefs. Many, he says, it is certain do not pay directly, but it is considered the correct thing for publishers of any importance to have their own magazine, which serves as a good advertising medium. "Take, for instance," he continues, the *Cornhill*, which but lately had a circulation of over 80,000, and is now generally supposed to be 85,000, but in "The Row" it is spoken of as not selling over 18,000 copies; *Macmillan*, supposed circulation 18,000, we in "The Row" say about 7,500; *Belgravia*, edited by Miss Braddon, began with over 36,000, in "The Row" we put it down at 18,500; *London Society* is increasing and sells over 20,000; *Temple Bar*, supposed circulation 20,000, we in "The Row" say not over 13,000; *Blackwood's Magazine* sells about 7,500; *Saint Pauls*, edited by Anthony Trollope, our latest, and most promising in contents, began with 50,000, but does not now sell more than half that number; *Tinsley's Magazine* containing a story by Dr. Russell, of the *Times*, does not sell 10,000 per month," and so on.

### Science.

—*Comets.*—It is needless to dwell here upon the numerous varieties and peculiarities in the lengths and positions of the tails of different comets; it will suffice to say, that in a general way the telescopic aspect is that of a quantity of vapour escaping from the nucleus towards the sun, and then carried directly behind the comet, as if by a repulsive force emanating from the sun, sometimes for a distance of myriads of leagues, thus forming the tail. Hence, in whatever direction the comet is moving, the tail is turned away from him, the furthest end being curved backwards, just as a flexible rod or feather would be if whirled rapidly round one extremity. Now, the great difficulty lies in conceiving the possible constitution of a body which can deport itself in the way we have been describing. We should imagine that it must sweep away planets in its wild gyrations. We hardly regard it as ridiculous that Whiston should have gravely maintained that it was by a whisk of one of these tails that the deluge was brought about, and calculated the particular comet which caused that catastrophe. However, everything goes to prove that these comets are huge impostors—head and tail alike—and are the most vapoury, windy bodies conceivable; so much so, that it is no exaggeration to say that the tail, with all its millions and billions of miles, might, if properly packed up and stowed away, travel by a continental passenger-train, and cost nothing in the way of extra luggage. This has been long known; and Sir John Herschel sees no difficulty in conceiving that the tail of a great comet, as, for instance, that of 1680, with its twenty millions of leagues, might weigh only a few pounds, or even ounces. This tenuity of constitution is proved in many ways: partly by the disturbances and deviations caused in a comet's motion by the approach to any other body; and partly again, by the fact that stars have been seen to shine with undiminished lustre, alike through their heads and tails—stars which would be utterly obscured by a few feet of ordinary terrestrial mist. But, granting any amount of tenuity, it is hard to conceive such an extended mass whirled half round in two hours, and retaining its continuity. Sir John Herschel, therefore, ventured upon a conception involving the total absence of matter altogether—suggesting the hypothesis of a negative shadow; and an original thinker, speculating upon the last big comet of 1858, announced the discovery in the papers that comets were worlds on fire, most probably suffering the punishment of their wickedness; and that the light proceeding from the conflagration was invisible where the sun's rays penetrated, but was seen in the shadow cast by the head, thus producing the tail—an idea involving, among other absurdities, the necessity of all the planets appearing with black tails behind them.—*Chambers' Journal.*

—*The Liver and its Diseases.*—The liver is subject to several diseases in common with other parts of the body, as for instance, inflammation, cancer, and abscess, but the results are modified by the peculiar structure of the organ. It is subject also to particular affections which are due to the operation of special causes. There are two things which happen in most such affections—either the organ enlarges, sometimes to an enormous degree beyond its proper size, or it contracts below it. No cause is so productive of chronic enlargement of the liver as heat. The hot climate of India is so frequent a cause of this disorder, that to come home with a big liver and a heavy purse was a current joke in the palmy days of money-making in that country. By the slow influence of climate the organ becomes engorged with blood and its functions sluggishly performed. The result is seen in the muddy or even lemon tint of skin so characteristic of Indian residents, which is due to the imperfect elimination of the bile from the system. There is a certain preparation of liver (*pâte de foie gras*) well known to epicures. But it may not be equally well known that this delicacy is really the product of disease. At Strasbourg, where it is chiefly made, the geese from which the livers are obtained are subjected to the prolonged action of heat. It is alleged, on good authority, that these unhappy birds are nailed by the feet to boards, so as to insure the proper amount of exposure during this inhuman process. But if the pleasures of the palate are the means of so much heedless suffering to unoffending creatures, they are not altogether unavenged. It is evident that diseased livers are far from being wholesome food. The small or contracted liver is usually the result of intemperance. The surface of the liver is covered by a stout membrane, called its capsule, and from this certain fine bands, or *septa*, pass through it between the lobules, so as to preserve the form and consistency of the organ. The effect of alcohol, absorbed from the stomach, upon these fine membranes is to induce in them a slowly-acting inflammation, by which contraction is induced. It results from this that the secreting cells of the liver are compressed and spoiled, and its surface, instead of being smooth and regular, becomes elevated into nodules, not inaptly compared to "hob nails" in appearance. This is also well known to anatomists as the "gin-drinker's liver." In order to make it clear how it is that spirit-drinking is so injurious to the liver, it will be well to explain here the peculiarity of the circulation through the liver. Instead of being supplied with arterial blood, like other parts of the body, the blood which goes to the liver is collected from certain abdominal viscera, namely, the stomach, the intestines, and the spleen, into a large trunk, called the portal vein, by which it is conveyed to the liver, and then disseminated through it by means of the small vessels already spoken of. After having supplied the liver cells with the elements to form bile, the blood is again collected by the minute branches of the hepatic veins, which go to form two large trunks—the *venæ cavæ*—by which the blood is returned into the general circulation. Now, when fluids are taken into the stomach, they are absorbed directly through their coats by the veins which are so freely distributed over the inner surface of the organ. In this way the alcohol passes into the liver, and it is for this reason that the free use of stimulants, when the stomach is empty of food, is so pernicious. It is a matter of common observation that drinking, even in excess, after dinner is less injurious than drinking before dinner. Alcohol mixed with food becomes in great part blended with and carried by it into the intestines. It thus becomes diverted into other channels, and having been taken up by the absorbents, if only present in moderate quantities, becomes completely digested and subservient to the support of the heat, and the nutrition of the body.—*People's Magazine.*

### Art.

*Sculpture.*—The first of six lectures, an introduction to the course, by Mr. Weekes, R. A. Professor of Sculpture in the Royal Academy, was delivered on Monday evening, 14th ult. There was a large audience, including several of the leading Academicians, with many Artists and lovers of Art, besides the students of both sexes. The lecturer, in a very interesting manner, dwelt on the position of the art of Sculpture in England at this time compared with that which it held in ancient Greece. He defined the relations between this and the sister art of painting; and showed very clearly how sculpture was the more likely of the two, to suffer deterioration from any mistaken attempt to produce the effects peculiar to the other method of representation. Within its proper range and scope, the expression of ideas by means of form, sculpture ought to keep to the beautiful and graceful, rejecting whatever is fantastic, quaint or grotesque, eccentric, vulgar or mean. For the observance of this rule, he commended especially the study of Grecian Art in the fifteenth and sixteenth