

for children. In fact M. Sardou is the greatest manufacturer of stage works that ever existed; he is coining; he has his palace at Marly, from cellar to attic, full of unrepresented plays. He composes dramas, as poor Victor Hugo kept grinding poetry—the divine afflatus ever resting on a money basis!

Poor Balzac! He was born in Tours, and a statue has just been erected to the great novelist—the composer of the "Human Comedy." But Tours is also celebrated for a potted meat—*Rillettes*, dear to *gourmets*, and invented by a pork butcher of the name of Balzac. The populace and peasants accept the monument as that to the hero of the comestibles. What is fame?

M. de Brazza, acting on the counsel of his once chief, Stanley, has stopped in Algeria, to acclimatise himself to a less torrid climate before coming to Paris. The Frenchified Italian has definitely quit the governorship of the Congo. He will be the first big pensioner on the newly-formed Colonial Office list. It is his intention to write a volume on the commercial wants and the industrial resources of the French and Belgian Congos. But, better still, he intends to negotiate for capital to found a trading company that will handle exactly what imports are needed, and the most efficient way to utilize the out-puts.

Pending the year 1894, the number of arrests by the police in Paris was 74,188, or nearly nine per hour. It is an increase of 7,280, as compared with 1893. There are a few striking circumstances so signal: 28,336 of the arrested belonged to the female sex; there were 3,311 lunatics—Dr. La Salle asserted that every one person in ten encountered in the streets of Paris was qualified for the lunatic asylums—and there were 225 deserters. The latter is a surprise, for desertion is generally regarded as very exceptional in France. The law is not only severe on the culprit, but society is more so; it is viewed as disgrace to the family, as if a crime of a heinous nature. Then the Code reserves no slight penalties for those who connive at the hiding of a deserter, or who, having a knowledge of the place of concealment, gives no information to the authorities. There has been a notable decrease in the arrests for mendicancy. The chief crime in the case of girls is theft. The Prefect of police bears strong evidence to the beneficial results, for the public health, attending the application of the augmented powers given to him for the suppression of clandestine prostitution. Z.

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Glimpses at Things.

THE following is from a curious New York weekly which criticises the morbid tastes of the Gothamites, and panders to them:

"To a vitiated and feverish population like that of New York the desire for reform is merely a desire for the sensations that accompany the exposure of the abuses to be reformed. The moment the sensation flags, the interest flags, and the public relapses into its normal condition of indifference, from which it can be aroused only by a new sensation, and the effect of the new one will be as fleeting and as fruitless as that of the old. There is a perfect analogy between the life of a reform movement here and the life of a newspaper sensation. A newspaper discovers a great murder, a great embezzlement, or a great scandal. The first day the story may be good for a page. The next day it may be worth four or five columns. The third day it has lost its place of pre-eminence on the first page. In a week the great event that shook the nerves of the town and furnished every boarding-house breakfast-table with a fascinating theme of conversation has dribbled into a measly little paragraph, and fresher sensations possess the place of honour. So is it with the cause of reform. The public revelled in the testimony given before the Lexow Committee just as it revels in the unsavory discoveries or inventions of the *World* and the *Herald*. But the Lexow novel of crime has ended—ended stupidly and in an anti-climax. Mr. Lexow says that he does not want to have it continued unless there is a very strong public demand for it. It is doubtful if there will be any such public demand. The public is tired, always tired. It has lost the power, if it ever possessed any, of concentration and attention. Its poor little intellects have to be stimulated every day by sub-cerebral injections of salacious tittle-tattle. It cannot stick to any plan. It is incapable of any prolonged effort. It contains hardly the germs of civic

virtue. It is its fate to continue to be buffeted and kicked and fleeced, to shake off one pack of scoundrels only to fall into the clutches of another, to be a fool and a dupe perpetually, and never to find it out, and always firmly to believe that it is wise and able and admirable. I do not know why any man or set of men should take the trouble to attempt to insure a more honest and economical government for New York than it has. The city government has never been as bad as the New Yorkers deserved and deserve; and, as for hoping and labouring to make New York a more attractive and a more civilized place of residence, such hopes and such labors are a folly that almost amounts to a crime. New York is a good city for sharpers to make money in, and for fools to spend money in. Its population is mostly ignorant and vulgar. It is hopelessly sunk in the most degraded sort of money-making and the standards of its business are practically the same as those of the police officials about whom there was so much virtuous indignation a week or two ago."

I think this worth quoting because there are many self-complacent communities that require disillusioning as much as the Empire City. But, this smart pessimist notwithstanding, disenchantment should *not* be followed by despair.

While reading your articles on the Canadian copyright controversy with interest, I must confess that I have no special sympathy with Canadian publishers as a class. The issuing of slovenly printed and edited books, the sweating of their needy hacks, and sponging upon patriotic sentiments, are peccadilloes not unknown among them. We all are familiar with dictionaries of subscribing autobiographers and other volumes made only to sell, in both senses of the term. We have, of course, honourable publishers who never stoop to palming deceitful literature upon the public, but even some of these are prone to painful breaches of taste. On the cover, for instance, of a volume of poetry (real poetry) issued by a most respectable Canadian firm, there is a page advertisement of somebody's "coraline corsets." Now, "coraline" is a pretty word, whatever it means, but it cannot romanticize a corset. Corsets are stiff and repellent, while Swinburne's verse allures to love. And there is an idea of restriction about stays that does not harmonize with the untrammelled beauties of this erotic poet.

Speaking of publishers reminds me that in *The North American Review* for August, 1883, Mr. Goldwin Smith argued that a kindly feeling towards Great Britain was becoming more common in the United States, and attributed this improvement chiefly to the circulation of British literature: "While the American has been nursing ancestral hatred of England he has been undergoing the influence of the English authors upon his table." Providence may have been using queer instruments to re-unite a race possibly destined to mould the world into a "pan Britannic peace." The pirate publishers of British books may have been the unconscious benefactors of mankind. Their dime editions may have been hastening the millennium. In some cases "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform," as the poet Cowper puts it. F. BLAKE CROFTON.

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Letters to the Editor.

A PARSON'S PONDERINGS.

To the Editor of The Week:

Sir,—I always read with pleasurable sympathy Parson Low's ponderings, notwithstanding the fact that the Churchman so manifestly appears through all; for the Churchman is so thoroughly human, so catholic, that one could wish—were there not ecclesiastical barriers, ah!—that the species Churchman might rise to the dignity of genus. I am with him, however, on Prof. Drummond's works, and share his wonder that the drift of "Natural Law in the Spiritual world" was not more generally appreciated, though it may be well for general advancement that the Professor's fascinating style covered for a season his iconoclasm. My friend (none the less so that *in propria persona* we have never met) will, however, bear with me if I break a lance with him on what he is pleased to call, without offence, the Puritan ideal as contrasted with the Catholic. That the two types he distinguishes exist, is a fact, the individualism which finds expres-