

closures of the Divorce Court. The other scandal is of a very different cast. One of the most eminent of English judges and of Englishmen, one whose private character stands not less high than his professional reputation, finds himself in the evening of his days dragged with his family into a revolting publicity, and made the subject of prurient and malicious gossip through the strange and deplorable conduct of his daughter, whose temper, it seems, has been publicly displayed since her departure from her father's house in other acts than those which form the matter of this wretched lawsuit. The warning letter of the lady's brother, which was the subject of the libel suit, having been pronounced by the judge confidential, and the case having been decided on that point, the facts on the side of the defence were not brought before the public. There is now an appeal, and until the case has been concluded, comment would be premature. But in the meantime the numerous friends and the late hosts of Lord Coleridge in America may rest assured that his domestic character is stainless; that he was the best of sons and of husbands; that he is the kindest and most affectionate of fathers, and that he never would have opposed the inclinations of a daughter whom it was evident that he tenderly loved had he not felt absolutely convinced that they were leading her to unhappiness.

MR. GEORGE R. SIMS, the eminent playwright and journalist, writes as follows of the degradation of party politics in the Imperial Parliament: "It seems a very dreadful thing to say, but it ought to be said, that the more disastrous the news from abroad the greater is the jubilation of the Tory leaders and their supporters. Shocking as it seems, only those who are wilfully blind can close their eyes to the fact that we have come to evil days when each is for his party and none is for the State. Who that has pluck enough to speak the truth will deny that the Tories were bitterly disappointed when the news of the fall of Khartoum and the capture of Gordon turned out to be miserable inventions of the dastardly gang who manufacture false news for political purposes? It is a very terrible state of affairs this. Patriotism has given way to personal malice. Love of country has yielded to hatred of Chamberlain. 'God save the Queen' is no longer the national anthem of the 'constitutional' party, but rather 'God something else old Gladstone.' The rage of the Conservatives is increased by every fresh defeat they sustain, and their malignity against the members of the Cabinet has now reached such a pitch that they expect all sorts of dreadful things."

MADAME PATTI is no longer a marquise. She has gained her cause against the Marquis de Caux, and is now free to marry with Signor Nicolini. So the match made by the Empress of the French to give a title to a great singer and a fortune to an impoverished Marquis comes to an end. For Patti it has been a disastrous marriage. No one held a higher social position than she when she became Marquise de Caux. Since the famous public quarrel with her husband at St. Petersburg, however, she has not been able to maintain her standing. For a time she did not appear at State Concerts. Perhaps—such is the tone now—when she has married her tenor she will be received back with open arms into the circles which have for some years looked askance on her. More probably, however, she will not go back. She is happier at Craig-y-nos than in the chambers of the great and wealthy.

A SCANDALOUS pamphlet against Miss Terry, it is said, has been printed in America, professing to tell the story of her life, and dealing with it as the life of "Peg Woffington" is treated by the romancers of our own land. The pamphlet is sold everywhere she goes; and the Americans, instead of discouraging it, are buying it. There is some talk of her friends stepping in to have it laid legally under an interdict.

HOWEVER much we may be inclined to sneer, in this unghostly age, at "Spiritualism," it is undeniable that it has an extensive following amongst the "best people," and promises to become quite the fashion with society, ever seeking some new thing to beguile the weary hours. That earnest desire to peep into the future—the longing to know what is to happen next—the wish to guide our own destinies—all form the most powerful incentive in causing weak human nature to eagerly grasp at any means of obtaining the desired end. Without going into the scientific portion of the question, and gravely following the arguments for or against the existence of a "psychic force," or discussing the possibilities or impossibilities of departed spirits revisiting the scenes of their former triumphs, the phenomena produced by the present exponent of psychography are in themselves sufficiently extraordinary to merit the best attention of the scientific world. It is an undoubted fact that men of the highest attain-

ments have investigated the subject under conditions that, apparently, preclude all possibility of fraud, and yet the writing has been obtained. Probably one of the strictest tests was applied by Mr. Cholmondeley-Pennell, the well-known author, pigeon-shot, and fisherman. This gentleman purchased a couple of slates on his way to the medium's house, took them from their wrappers on his arrival there, placed them one above the other on a small table in broad daylight, with a minute piece of pencil between them, and then, in full view of the sitters at the *séance*, the pencil was heard scribbling over the surface, and, when the upper slate was removed, a written message was displayed. Under the conditions accepted by this medium, there is, it is said, no scientific way of accounting for the writing that appears. Mr. Gladstone's recent experiences will, perhaps, induce men of "light and leading" to attempt the solution of the problem.

PROBABLY there is not even a Scott Act advocate so foolish as to suppose that Prohibition would be tolerated in the Old Country, persistently as it is advocated by Sir Wilfred Lawson, and other intemperate hydropots. The much easier justified Sunday Closing of liquor-shops is a failure in the districts where it has been tried, especially in parts of Scotland and Wales. News from Flint tells us how, on a Sunday recently, "three officers, after counting twenty-five men enter the house of a labourer during the space of three hours, made a dash on the premises, capturing no less than eight men indulging in illicit drinking." These festive Welshmen were found to be busily engaged in emptying sundry gallon jars of beer, locally known as "John Robertses," in honour, we are told, of the member for Flintboroughs, who was a pronounced supporter of the Welsh Sunday-Closing Bill! The unfortunate "labourer named Bradley" was mulcted by the virtuous magistrate to the tune of \$50 and costs, while the eight drinkers were also made aware that to partake of "John Robertses" on the Sabbath is an expensive luxury.

"Down Fleet-street," George Augusta Sala is lovingly known as "the prince of journalists"—and by not a few sworn by as the "king of modern after-dinner speakers." At any rate he has travelled far and wide and is a true citizen of the world, cosmopolite in feeling as well as in tongue, and "G. A. S." has enlightened the readers of both hemispheres. It is, then, satisfactory to know that what Sir William Harcourt would term a "scion" of the house of Sala is one of our very excellent allies in a place where we need as many as possible—the Soudan—for we read that Sheik Sala, son of Hussein Pasha Khalifa, has written a letter to the Robatat tribe, offering them peace if they will come in. One thing is assured—if Sheik Sala only writes half as persuasively as George Augustus Sala, the Robatat tribe are certain to yield to the Sheik's eloquence and power of language. May the shadow of the Sheik never grow less.

THE *Athenaeum* speaks of Mr. Hall Caine's story, appearing in the *Liverpool Weekly Mercury*, as founded on that piece of old English jurisprudence "*peine forte et dure*." One wonders how many readers have heard of this curious punishment. Yet it is, as the literary journal says, quite one of the most remarkable in English criminal law. Old Blackstone is very eloquent upon it, and constitutional lawyers are yet to be found who speak of it as a beautiful thing—i.e., beautiful in the sense in which the merry old gentleman in Dickens' story found the Dodger's love of his "profession" beautiful. It is certainly terrible, if it fails of beauty. It is this: According to old English law, a felon's goods and chattels were confiscated on conviction for a capital offence. But if a murderer or traitor, not a regicide, delivered himself up to justice and stood mute on indictment, he saved his estates to his heirs. But the penalty was a dreadful death without trial. It is easy to see that this is a tremendous situation for a novelist. But of course everything depends on how it is worked up.

"SURELY," says a contemporary, "it shows that there is something rotten in the state of Denmark when offences against property are punished with ruthless severity, whilst those against the person are passed with a lenity that would be absurd were it not indecent." A perusal of the daily press shows the justice of this protest. A wife-beater, a brute who kicks a woman, beats her with a hot poker, dances on her prostrate body, defaces her features out of recognition, so long as he stops outside the line, and leaves some life in the tortured body, is safe with a short spell of prison. Let him steal the value of five dollars, and he runs a good chance, if he uses violence, of penal servitude. The cat cured garotting in England; let it, wielded by stalwart prison warders, be tried on the "tough" and the wife-beater.