

deed, the cheeriest of practical philosophers.—*The Publishers Circular*.

MR. BESANT ON THE LORDS.—The House of Lords, if all were to attend, would contain about 600, mostly elderly, gentlemen of blameless private record; very much interested in agricultural matters; containing a fair number of scholars, some men of science, a good many lawyers of the greatest eminence, and of divines the best that we can show. As a rule, about twenty peers assemble every day; their speeches are for the most part, admirable in tone and temper; they get through their business with despatch. There are certain young Lords, it is true, who "carry on"—how many are they? What proportion do they represent out of the whole? To begin with, very few Lords inherit their titles in early manhood. But some of the eldest sons—those who are heirs—lead the Life Deplorable. Perhaps. How many out of all? *The Critic* speaks about "incompetent millionaires,"

"their foolishness and their sensuality." Here are a few names of peers recently deceased. It would be difficult to find men to beat them among the Commons. The Duke of Devonshire, who began with the best degree a man can take at Cambridge; Lord Shaftesbury; Lord Derby, both the last and the last but one; Lord Lytton; Lord Granville; Lord Russell; Lord Iddlesleigh; Lord Carnarvon; Lord Cairns; Lord Ossington; Lord Ampt-hill; Lord Brougham—why, there are dozens of dead peers who have done great service to the country in the last generation; while there are dozens of living peers who are actually doing good service in their own—this—generation. Against them we have to set the names of half a dozen young fellows of disreputable life. All this, of course, has nothing to do with the question of continuing or abolishing the House of Lords, which is certainly an arguable point. Only, if the House is to be attacked with any effect, it must be on grounds which are true and not to be denied.—*The Queen*.

GEOGRAPHY.

THE METHOD BY WHICH A DEPTH OF FIVE MILES IS REACHED.—A ship regularly engaged in deep-sea sounding has the sounding machine mounted at the after-end, and when about to sound is brought to a standstill, with the stern to the sea. The stray line, with the sounding-rod and sinker attached, is passed over the guide pulley and carefully lowered to the water's edge, the register is set to zero, and the deep-sea thermometer is clamped to the sounding line; a seaman is stationed at the friction line, which controls the velocity with which the wire is unreeled, another at the brake, and a third on

the grating outside to handle the sinker and instruments, and to guide the wire as it passes overboard; a machinist is at the hoisting engine, and the recorder takes a position for reading the register. When the sinker is let go the vessel is manœuvred so as to keep the wire vertical, and the friction line is adjusted so as to allow it to descend from seventy to one hundred fathoms per minute.

The instant the sinker strikes the bottom, which is unmistakably indicated by the sudden release of the wire from strain, the reel is stopped by the friction line and brake; the record-