

In the British House of Commons recently, Mr. Allison brought up the case of the notorious American forger Austin Bidwell, who was imprisoned for life in 1873 for forgeries on the Bank of England amounting to upwards of £100,000. Mr. Allison asked Home Secretary Matthews to consider the fact that Bidwell was 25 years of age when convicted, that he had now been eighteen years in prison, and that he had a good record throughout. Mr. Matthews replied that he had repeatedly carefully considered memorials in favor of Bidwell, but his sense of public duty forbade him advising the Queen to release the prisoner.

The arrest and prosecution of a firm of dishonest brokers in Manchester throws a lurid light on the way some American enterprises are floated in London. In May last a joint stock company, called the Waterworks and Gasworks Securities Corporation, with a capital of £2,000,000 was floated with apparent success. It proposed to deal with water and gas securities entirely in America, and was projected by Col. L. B. Inman, of Inman Bros. & Low, aqueduct builders and engineers of New York. The board of directors was a very influential one, and included the name of Sir Charles Tupper. Before going to allotment, the sum of £700,000 had been underwritten and approved of. It now turns out that out of this large sum no less than £450,000 had been underwritten by means of forgery of prominent names in Manchester and of Liverpool. It was discovered to be the work of Ernest Powers, manager of the broker firm of Power & Clegg; Power is under arrest. He is charged with forging transfers of £20,000 in shares of the Pearson and Knowles Co. It was thought by his arrest that the forgeries of the underwriter's name would become known. The directors of the Waterworks & Gasworks Company met and determined to return all moneys subscribed by the public, and adding 5 per cent. interest.

If anything were necessary to show the great wealth of the business men of England, evidence enough would be provided in eleven wills reported during the past week in the newspapers. They foot up the handsome total of £3,713,756. The highest is Mr. David Barclay Chapman with £983,676, and then follow Mr. Wright, Castle Park, Cheshire, £674,821; Mr. William A. Guesdon, £393,340; Mr. James Searight, £314,171; William Cliff, Liverpool, £311,066; and so on down to Mr. Robert Morland, colliery owner, £124,955. Two estates with personality exceeding £1,000,000 were reported in the first six months of the year. The number of those admitted to probate during the same period with personality between £100,000 and a million was considerably over the average of the past three years. It has been noticed that the investments made by men leaving these large amounts behind them are rarely in any but good securities, whilst on the other hand those who had to examine the share lists of a large number of the new adventures of the past three years state that the people who have put their money into the worst schemes are almost always those who can least afford to lose it. Save perhaps the United States, there is no other country in the world whose probate courts would be called upon in the course of one week to deal with such immense sums.