

large map, mounted on two poles twelve feet high, like a flag, topples half-way down. Two ladies, and an old gentleman from the country, who have been listening with open mouth, make for the door, in a fright, and let it slam to after them. A member of the committee, who has been (very pardonably) fast asleep, wakes up, and asks, with a severe countenance, to have the last answer read by the short-hand writer. That functionary reads as much as was audible in the hurlyburly, and although out of its connection it conveys no earthly meaning, the honourable gentleman puts on a look of luminous intelligence, and makes a memorandum for his own misguidance.

Let it be permitted to the Muse to repeat an actual occurrence with all the formulized dignity of the "minutes" made out from the notes of the short-hand writer. It is a Gas-bill which is before a committee of the House of Lords. The afternoon is extremely hot, and the investigation is becoming as "tedious as a king." Yet counsel are evidently ready to bestow it all on their worships behind the horse-shoe table. Some long-suffering peer is in the chair—not Lord Lucan, who would soon abridge things. However, the actual chairman says to the examining counsel, "Pray, Mr. Brown, give us some facts; we've had nothing but *opinions* from this witness; it isn't evidence." "Very well, my lord," replies Mr. Brown, "you shall have facts. Now," (turning to the witness) "you called on Mr. Jones, did you?"

A.—Yes.

Q.—What did he say?

Mr. Robinson objects to the question.

Mr. Brown is heard to address their lordships in support of the question.

Mr. Robinson was heard in reply.

The committee-room is cleared.

After a short time the counsel and parties are again called in.

The Chairman states that the committee are of opinion that the question may be put.

Mr. Brown (to the witness).—Well, then, what did Mr. Jones say?

A.—He wasn't at home.

#### LONDON SOCIETY.—JANUARY.

This number of London Society is made up chiefly of Christmas Stories, several of which will well repay perusal. We choose one entitled "*Christmas in the Colonies*," and make an extract for the benefit of our readers.

Tasmania, an island nearly as large as Ireland, situated southward from Australia, possesses, according to some person well qualified to speak of it, one of the finest climates in the world. It has a winter not more severe than that of the south of France, a summer not hotter than that of London, and not so close and dusty; a spring equalling that of Montpellier and an autumn like that of the south and west of England. The temperature is not marked by extremes of heat or cold; it is free from marsh miasmata, neither remittent nor intermittent fevers occur; the cool nights of the summer prevent the heat of the day from being relaxing, and the cold of winter is not such as to prevent agricultural and outdoor operations being carried on. Here are, throughout the colony, homes marked with all the characteristics of an English house. The small, thatched, hutlike house, built of slabs, and covered