

PARIS LETTER.

conservatively, as became his rank and profession, and Serlizer was worse than useless to him, but, by chance, they had magnificent hands. He piled up India in quick marching time, as he hummed "The British Grenadiers," and accompanied it with a drum beat of his right foot on the floor. Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, Indus, Ganges, and Godavery, Himalayas, Ghauts, and Vindhya, lay captured at his right hand. Ben won Ireland from him, but he annexed England, Scotland, and Turkey. Once more Serlizer took Canada, and, owing to Mr. Toner's imperfect shuffling, laid complete books of Egypt, Australia, and Brazil upon the table. The stars fought against Tryphena and Tryphosa, and, in spite of Mr. Maguffin's gallant struggle against fate, the pensioner took the honours. Then Miss Newcome favoured him with a friendly kick under the table, accompanied by the elegant expression: "Bully for you, old man!" Next, the victorious damsel shuffled, allowed Tryphena to cut, and dealt out the cards for the third game. This time the deal was fair, and Mr. Rigby, glancing over his partner's capacious hand, beheld there no prospect of continued good fortune. Tryphena was on her mettle as a geographer, and Maguffin had stowed away in his all-embracing memory the names of half the globe's prominent features in city, river, and mountain. He wrested half India and all Russia from the pensioner, captured the whole of the United States, Canada, Mexico, and various states of South America. Almost the entire continent of Europe succumbed to Tryphena. Tryphosa fought doggedly, and encouraged Ben to continue the unequal contest, but the constable and Serlizer yielded up card after card with the muteness of despair. Mr. Maguffin was transported with joy, when his partner counted up their united books, amounting to more than those of both the other pairs put together.

"I've larned moah joggrify this heah bressid night nor I'd git in six mums or schoolin'. Hit makes me feel kind er smaht all ober, but not smaht enough foh ter ekal you, Miss Trypheny, ner yoh pah. Ain't he jest a smaht man, foolin' me on Typernosties and Gasternickle, words I nevah knowed afoah, yah! yah! yah!"

A new game was in progress, when a tap came to the inside door, and, immediately thereafter, a figure in a dressing gown appeared, partly thrust into the half-opened entrance. "Do you know Tryphena," said a pretty voice, "that it is very late, long past midnight, and you two girls have to be up by six o'clock at the latest? Take Sarah with you, and go to bed. Toner, you know Timotheus' room, and had better get some rest, which I am sure you need." As the four parties addressed somewhat sheepishly departed, Mrs. Carmichael turned to the remaining card-players, who were standing, corporal Rigby at military attention, and said, with a somewhat tremulous accent: "There's a large fire out in the Lake Settlement direction, but I cannot bear to awaken Mr. Carruthers or the other two gentlemen, for he is very tired, and they are much older and require rest also. Perhaps, Maguffin, you will be kind enough to saddle a horse quietly, and find out where it is and see that my father and Mr. Coristine are safe."

"I've only too pleased ter obey yoh commandemens, marm, wif percision an' dispatches," answered the coloured gentleman, hasting stablewards.

"As constable, ma'am, if I may be allowed to speak," said Corporal Rigby, saluting for the second time, "as constable, it is my duty to be present at all township fires, for the purpose of keeping order and directing operations. I shall, therefore, with your permission, ma'am, respectfully take my leave."

"It is a long way, constable, and you and I are not so young as we once were—"

"Pardon an old soldier's interruption, ma'am, but you are as young as ever you were, the youngest married lady I know."

"Thank you, corporal! What I meant to say was that you had better get Maguffin to saddle a horse for you, as the distance is great."

"You are very good, ma'am, but I never served in the cavalry. I belonged to Her Majesty's Foot Guards, ma'am, and could not possibly insult the memory of my old comrades lying in Crimean graves, by putting the legs, that a merciful Providence furnished me to march with, across the back of a horse. Had I even served in the Artillery or in the Engineers, I might have been able to comply with your kind request. Being what I have been, I must proceed without delay to the seat of the conflagration. I have the honour, ma'am, of saluting you. Good night!"

So Maguffin quietly escaped from the stables, and rode rapidly towards the fire, which shed its lurid light far over the clouded sky; and the pensioner trudged after him on foot, with his official baton under his arm, to make that conflagration acquainted with the law.

(To be continued.)

THE Austrian State railroads introduced their low zone tariff in June, 1890, and a greatly reduced freight tariff last year. The report for 1891 shows a gain of 1½ per cent. in gross earnings over those of 1890, but a decrease of 13½ per cent. in net earnings. The larger part of the increase in gross earnings was from passenger traffic, and the increase in freight earnings was trifling; but a decrease of \$1,600,000 had been estimated as the result of the decrease of freight rates in this the first year of their working. The net earnings were equal to 2.39 per cent. on the cost of the State railroads.—*New York Railroad Gazette.*

ON Sunday last I "interviewed" the several alleged cholera suburbs. I never encountered populous districts so clean, inhabitants more merry, or air more pure. On two occasions I experienced an un-eau-de-Cologne puff from the sewers, but not more than can be met with any day in Paris, or other large city, after a long spell of drought. Besides, scientists tell us, the atmosphere in the sewers of Paris is not toxic, and the sewer-labourers are as renowned for their longevity as grave-diggers, who, like annuitants, never die. The only suggestion of yellow flag was that tint of the tram-cars at Aubervilliers; in the plain of St. Owen, peopled by ragmen and anarchists, the wooden shanties, in the midst of their small gardens cropped with potatoes, salads, tomatoes, string beans, cabbages, etc., in full bloom, suggested that from the contentment of the occupiers, the Arcadian age had been attained—that of each man dwelling under his own vine and fig tree.

I conversed with several of the local inland revenue officers between Aubervilliers and Gennevilliers, the firesides of cholera-morbus, respecting the plague; they knew nothing about it, but viewed the affair as a sort of reasonable practical joke; the mad-dog question occupied them more. I took a run through the vast abattoirs; no signs of malady among the slaughtermen or their camp followers, save that the weather being hot, they drank more "milk" and coffee, very little wine and less stimulants. The new Pantin cemetery received many funerals—all of the poorer classes, to judge by the respectable but humble hearses. The hand biers for infants were numerous. I promenaded through the open air rag fair, where the chiffonniers vend, after sorting, their best night finds; close by is the market for the lower category of second-hand clothing, articles all displayed on the ground in most admired disorder. Purchasers were numerous, and no disinfectants resorted to. To this impunity from contagion, as well as the like exemptions from the second-hand clothing sold in the "Temple"—not called after Solomon's, though the home of the old clo' battlions-market; the public auction mart for bedding and left off wearing-apparel in the Rue Druot, and the hydraulic lift at Marly that sends the concentrated Seine sewage water from thence to Versailles, the latter being the healthiest city in France; how diseases are not propagated from these unpurified dépôts is, as Lord Dundreary would say, "what no fellow can understand."

Talking over this subject with some French medical friends, they avowed that the Seine water piped to the inhabitants is the promoting cause of malignant cholera, baptize the scourge as may be. And if the suburbs persist to refuse the daily street detritus of Paris to be shot down in their neighborhood, then a serious endemic must ensue. There is no reason why that detritus ought not to be transported by barges to the provincial waste lands. It is officially contradicted that the immense quantities of dead barbel, a fish peculiar to the Seine, floating down the river, is due to the insalubrity of the water. The pipes distributing the Seine water are reported to be foul, but how cleanse them? The Grand Hotel has a special cellar fitted up with 50 of the *bougie* filters, where all the water of the establishment, 2,300 gallons, is daily filtered. The hand-cleansing of these filters was very troublesome, but now an ingenious machine has been invented that brushes and cleans the filters with ease and efficiency.

The "guillotine" is the dominant actuality; the Minister of Beaux-Arts has ordered from a sculptor the bust of Dr. Guillotine, who did not invent, but gave his name to the "national razor." That bust will be placed in the Art Gallery of Versailles reserved "*A toutes les gloires de la France!*" When will be similarly honoured the inventor of the cord and the drop, the garotte, and kindred facilities for expediting the shuffling off of the mortal coil? Why should a nation leave to a Tussaud the monopoly of Chamber of Horrors? Dr. Guillotine was a physician and a philanthropist; the machine he eulogized is the associated invention of Dr. Louis and a German, Schmidt, a mechanic. The principle of the instrument, which in France dates from 1792, had been utilized long before in Italy, and even Auld Reekie claims that window-sash plan of decapitation as she does the cutty stool of repentance. Caligula instructed his executioners to so "strike that the victim would feel death." The misfortune of Guillotine was, that in a fit of enthusiasm, after witnessing the rapidity into which a head was chopped off, he recommended the convention to adopt that mode of executing criminals; the operation was accomplished "in the twinkling of an eye and without pain." The Parisians seized upon that phrase, and worked it up in epigrams and songs, and called the machine after the doctor. That baptism broke the good man's heart; the thought of going down to posterity with the machine associated with his name was too much for him. It is a popular error to conclude that he was executed by his own invention during the Reign of Terror. Strange that he never applied for leave to change his name. When a family in France is disgraced by the infamous criminality of one of its members, their first care is to obtain a legal permission to adopt an unbranded name.

Deibler, the executioner, has had the honour of a cartoon sketch, by Gilbert Martin, who in a way does Leech and Teniel duty for France. He represents Deibler on the occasion of his 220th execution, walking with the

celebrated coffin basket under his arm, into which the trunks of the guillotined are rolled, with the figures "220" inscribed on the side, in blood-red letters. Of course Deibler will be supplied with a copy of Dr. Guillotine's bust, as the doctor will now more than ever be regarded as the patron saint of the machine. The cartoon possesses this originality: it is the only living likeness of the headsman existing outside the records of the Government, where every civil servant has his photo archived with his nomination documents. The likeness is a remarkable resemblance to Mr. Wilson, son-in-law of the late President Grèvy, and whose enemies take advantage of the pictorial windfall. M. Deibler has now only one child, his son, aged 26, who is his second assistant, and who is as gay and sociable as his father is silent and retiring. Deibler's wife suffers from the cranky notion that plots exist to take away her good man's life; hence she keeps no servant, so avoids his food being poisoned; answers the door, that her husband is out, for all enquirers. She accompanies him every Sunday to church, and also when he takes his constitutional, or when he goes to the Home Office to receive his monthly salary of 400 frs. His first assistant is the only visitor he receives, who may be said to have his chair placed every day at the dinner table. During the residence of a condemned in the cell, Deibler can obtain a peep at the occupant, and thus study his character. On the eve of an execution the four aids meet at Deibler's residence, and, after supper, proceed about two o'clock in the morning to make the preparations for the execution.

Several French writers went over to England and Ireland to witness the elections; they congratulate France that the rough electoral manners they saw were unknown to her; but forgot to add that France does not enjoy the untrammelled liberty of public meetings. The visitors cared very little about the programmes of the several parties, save from the standpoints of the evacuation of Egypt and abstention from protecting Tangiers. But as neither Gladstonians nor Salisburyites occupied themselves with these questions, nor expressed their readiness to adopt the French rather than the British view of such interests, the verdict of the visitors is: "A plague o' both your houses."

The fête of the fourteenth of July still further illustrated that in proportion as the Republic strikes its roots more profoundly in the country, the less necessity for indulging in enthusiasm over its development. The fourteenth is simply becoming a big holiday for the working classes and third-class country cousin excursionists. The very young stratum of the population, of course, delight in a free fun day; being gratuitous it is popular; the local mayorities instituted "municipal cotillions," when the pupils of the schools, chained on each side of the longest street, Cornucopia, rewarding their merriment accordingly. It was not only a tri colour, but a Russian flag day; Rouyet de Lisle and Glinka were the heroes; the Marseillaise and the Russian hymn were tempered with "*Parava-boom-drré.*" The fireworks might have been better. The military parade in the Bois was a success and a relished pleasure. Private illuminations may be said to have become extinguished, and decorating windows with flags is certainly on the decline; neither will die out, however, so long as public houses exist—establishments which keep alive the street dancings and dray-cart orchestras. The free-thinkers objected to the Montmartre Cathedral of the Sacré Cœur illuminating, and above all displaying an electric light fiery cross. The objection to the latter in point of art was, it was too insignificant for the building, or rather the milieu. Politically republicans ought to rejoice at the whole compliment, as the sacred edifice receives no subsidy like the city churches to defray the cost of gas jets. It was a fitting P. S. to the Pope's adherence to republicanism, and must have given fits to many an old dowager in the Faubourg St. Germain.

Madame Adam in her *Nouvelle Revue* states that in her life she had two originalities: she never wore crinoline and never believed in Bismarck. For the first, I cannot vouch; respecting the second, she is right, and may thank her stars she never visited Vaterland when the Prince was monarch of all he surveyed; he vowed to lock her up for life for her attacks on the imperial family. Z.

THE CRITIC.

A PART from Mrs. E. M. Field's recently published work, "The Child and His Book"—which, by the way, has already reached a second edition, a proof, if any were necessary, of the need and popularity of a pronouncement on the subject—it is difficult to recall any serious or important endeavour to form an opinion upon the best existing reading matter for children. Books on the mind of the child (like Preyer's), books on the education of the child (like Froebel's, and Pestalozzi's, and the Baroness Marenholz von Bülow's, and Rousseau's, and Richter's) abound; indeed the eminent authority, Mr. G. Stanley Hall, in collaboration with Mr. J. M. Mansfield, has issued a very elaborate and very useful "Bibliography of Education." But bibliographies are skeletons, and in the whole of Mr. Hall's long "Index of Subjects" there is no hint of an excursus on the subject of what amongst adults is called "general reading." Curiously enough also, in Mr. Swan Sonnenschein's ambitious and voluminous second edition of "The Best Books," there is no section devoted to this topic. And even Mr. Acland, despite his active interest