

A USUALLY well-informed correspondent says that a new biography of Dickens will probably be in the hands of the public before the winter is over. "The writer," it is said, "was intimately associated with Dickens during many years of his life previous to its sudden close at Gad's Hill, and will be able to enter very minutely into some phases of his life which have not hitherto been dealt with in literature." It is so long since anything personal relating to the great novelist was given on a scale commensurate with the importance of the subject that the news will be welcomed by all students and lovers of "Pickwick."

MR. ANDREW CARNEGIE, the enterprising American who has written a couple of fairly successful books and established a "syndicate" of papers in England, has been interviewed with interesting results. His newspaper undertaking, it may be well to premise, is of a semi-political character, and by it he confidently hopes to convince Englishmen how much more pleasant a dwelling-place their country would be if the political and social tenets of Mr. Carnegie were made the law and the gospel of Britain. He holds that the affection Englishmen are supposed to entertain for their existing institutions is a sham. He believes that if a ballot were now taken throughout the United Kingdom, and every respectable citizen of twenty-one were allowed a vote, a majority would be found in favor of electing the chief magistrate at the death of the Queen. He recommends a British Republic as the most promising means of reconciling Irish antipathy to Great Britain, and under those circumstances he thinks England may still have a part in the world's history.

HAD the printer of Junius' letters been a man of no stricter integrity than the compositor who the other day betrayed a Government secret, what an amount of learned discussion the world had lost! It is delightfully refreshing in view of the indignities daily put upon the "fourth estate" by those to whom its honour is entrusted, to remember that William Woodfall, printer of the *Public Advertiser*, went down to his grave holding the key of an enigma which thousands of his contemporaries were burning to solve. The good people of Chelsea are proposing to erect a memorial to Woodfall, the promoters alleging with some show of reason that the man deserves to live in the recollection of posterity who, by a single imprudent word could have let loose upon the head of his mysterious contributor the wrath of an insulted king and embarrassed ministers, and probably have pointed a dozen rapiers at his breast; but who, under every kind of temptation to utter it in self-defence, and exposed to every species of risk by letting it fall incautiously, nevertheless lived and died with that word unspoken.

NOWADAYS we are nothing if not scientific. The latest evolution of social science is the theory that the human frame ought to be clothed in animal tissues and materials. Cotton, linen, and the other fibres so extensively used in the manufacture of clothing absorb poisonous emanations from animals, whilst wool and other animal coverings are intended by nature to assist the evaporation of deleterious matters from the body, and when incorporated in human clothing still subserve the same ends. The revolution of apparel entailed by the new system is complete, extending to all the under garments, and to the linings of the dress. Dr. Jaeger is the founder of the new faith, which is known as a "new Gospel from Germany for the physical regeneration of mankind." It has, we are told, been extensively reduced to practice in Germany and Russia. Dr. Jaeger is not content with caring for our health in the office and the public streets, but pursues us into our bedrooms, where he insists upon banishing linen or cotton sheets, and even covers our mattresses and our pillows with wool or cashmere. Like all enthusiasts, he is an out-and-out believer in his own doctrines, and leaves us not a rag or a thread of vegetable matter to bless ourselves with. But the shock thus given to our habits and prejudices is not to be without its reward. The action of the skin is to be so stimulated that the bad humours will all be purged from the body, corpulence will be reduced, the flesh will become firm and hardened, and the nervous system strengthened. Were Dr. Jaeger the inventor of a new pill or a new ointment he could hardly promise us a more complete emancipation from all fleshy ills than he offers to those who adopt his new sanitary clothing.

THE outline of the English parliamentary autumn session becomes rapidly filled in with parliamentary work of all kinds. It seems to be inevitable that the expenditure for the Egyptian campaign, which is estimated at the exaggerated amount of \$750,000 weekly, should be provided for, and that long discussions should arise over the financial and political situation in Egypt. The Irish members promise to bring their own budget of grievances, and to make the House of Commons ring with their denunciations of Lord Spencer's administration. And it is blandly

suggested that the Premier will propose the vote of a grant for the separate establishment required by Prince Edward of Wales. The latter item of news is not credible. The Premier would need a Ways and Means Bill to provide the funds for such a grant, and it is impossible, one would suppose, that such urgency can exist as would necessitate throwing such an additional burden upon the few weeks to which an autumn session can extend.

CONFEDERATION OR DISMEMBERMENT?

THE conference recently held in London to promote Imperial Confederation affirmed the desirability of a closer political union of the Empire, prudently leaving the means of attaining that object for future consideration. The great journals of England seem unanimously to have endorsed the views and action of the conference, which have since been advocated on the platform by Lord Rosebery and other prominent speakers. A proposed clause, to the effect that a closer union is essential to prevent total dismemberment, was struck out of the resolutions at the desire, it is said, of a prominent Canadian. If this erased clause conveyed a truth, as I believe it did, it is a truth which should not have been suppressed. An early and constant recognition of it would surely help to bring the present agitation to some practical conclusion. Separation is too serious a crisis to drift upon blindly and phlegmatically.

It is likely that England herself would shake off, sooner or later, colonies which accept the protection of her army, navy, and diplomatic service without contributing one dollar to their support, and which refuse to grant her commercial reciprocity. Some of the North American colonies cut adrift from the Mother Country because she taxed them; possibly the Mother Country may cut adrift from the others because they, indirectly, tax her.

But for the larger colonies also, whether it involve their independence or honourable union with neighbouring colonies or states, the dismemberment of the Empire seems preferable to their being subordinate dependencies for ever. If grown-up sons cannot co-operate serviceably in business with each other and their parents, giving and taking a fair *quid pro quo*, better for them to set up for themselves than keep the family together by continuing in infantile dependence on their father. Such important regions as Australia and Canada should be full members in any imperial or republican union. They should politely decline back seats without the privilege of speaking.

At present the issues Canadian statesmen have to deal with are too restricted. They have no school for diplomacy, no foreign policy to frame, no navy, and only a Lilliputian army to manage. The qualities needed to conduct these departments languish in this country and may eventually die out from disuse. In his memorable book, "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," Professor Drummond gives striking instances of the degeneracy attending the non-exercise of certain faculties in various animals. The hermit-crab, for example, having long ago adopted the cheap expedient of occupying vacant shells, "has ceased to exercise itself upon questions of safety and dwells in its little shell as proudly and securely as if its second-hand house were a fortress erected especially for its private use.

"Wherein, then, has the hermit suffered for this cheap but real solution of a practical difficulty? Whether its laziness costs it any moral qualms, or whether its cleverness becomes to it a source of congratulation, we do not know; but judged from the appearance the animal makes under the searching eye of the zoologist, its expedient is certainly not one to be commended. To the eye of science its sin is written in the plainest characters on its very organization. It has suffered in its own anatomical structure just by as much as it has borrowed from an external source. Instead of being a perfect crustacean it has allowed certain important parts of its body to deteriorate, and several vital organs are wholly atrophied.

"As an important item in the day's work, namely, the securing of shelter and safety, was now guaranteed to it, one of the chief inducements to a life of high and vigilant effort was at the same time withdrawn. A number of functions in fact struck work.

"Every normal crustacean has the abdominal region of the body covered by a thick chitinous shell. In the hermits this is represented only by a thin and delicate membrane—of which the sorry figure the creature cuts when drawn from its foreign hiding-place is sufficient evidence. Any one who now examines further this half-naked and woe-begone object will perceive, also, that the fourth and fifth pairs of limbs are either so small and wasted as to be quite useless or altogether rudimentary; and, although certainly the additional development of the