

The United States International Copyright Bill, from which so much was expected, has probably received a quietus for the time being. The Senate has adopted a lithographers' amendment that will send it back to the house, there to stick, most likely, until the expiration of Congress.

An expedition to the South Pole is in contemplation by Prof. Nordmek jold. The scientific world is greatly interested in the project, and Baron Oscar Dickson, the well-known patron of polar exploration, has promised to contribute \$25,000 to the new Antarctic expedition. Let us hope that the hardy Scandinavian navigator will have better success than other explorers in this enterprise, and that the mystery of the South Pole will prove not so difficult to solve as that of the north. Whether the results of these costly expeditions are such as to warrant their undertaking we have nothing to do, but it appears to us that the money would be better expended in alleviating the condition of many of the inhabitants of countries that need no exploration. The great frost of this season has claimed many victims, and cold and hunger have been experienced by thousands. It seems, then, that it would be better to warm and feed these people, rather than seek an entrance to a territory which it is reasonably certain is bound in perpetual frost from year's end to year's end.

Not a little dissatisfaction is felt in England over the adoption of a new magazine rifle for the army. Grave faults are found in it, and those who consider the effective arming of English soldiers a matter of importance have been airing the matter in Parliament. On Tuesday, the 3rd inst., a motion was made in the House of Commons to have a Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the merits of the new rifle. This motion was defeated by a majority of 34 votes in a house of 180 members. Mr. Stanhope, Secretary of War, maintained that the rifle was a good rifle, and the more tests to which it was exposed the better it appeared. The *Times* is foremost in denouncing the new arm, contending that a soldier cannot properly clean the mainspring and striker, most important portions of the mechanism, and very liable to be fouled or broken. The services of a professional armourer are necessary to take the rifle to pieces and clean it properly. The rifle may be better than its enemies make it out to be, but the fact is pretty well established that it is costly and complicated. Both these objections are serious, but the latter particularly so. In campaigning the chief requisites in a weapon are simplicity and strength. The plight of a soldier with an out-of-order piece of clock-work as his only defence would be pitiable. At any rate the Government shows but little consideration for the matter, and it is hard to understand why the Royal Commission should not have been appointed. All are equally interested in having only the best weapons supplied to the army, so if the rifle is not up to the mark the Government should feel thankful to know it in time to substitute another, or retain the Martini, before anything calling for their active service occurs. On the other hand, if the rifle is good, the favorable report of a Commission would effectually silence the fault-finders and establish the action of the War Office, or rather the Small Arms Committee, in adopting or recommending the adoption of the weapon, as wise. It would be better to subject the new magazine rifle to every impartial test required than to perhaps find it almost useless when much is expected of it.

The questions at issue between Britain and Portugal as to the settlement of boundary lines in South and East Africa are again under discussion. Mr. Cecil Rhodes, who is visiting England in the joint capacity of Chairman of the South African Company, and Prime Minister of Cape Colony, and Sir Henry Lock, Governor of the Cape, have had lengthy interviews with Lord Knutsford, the Colonial Secretary, and with Lord Salisbury, with a view to forming a definite South African policy. At the time of partitioning Africa among the powers last summer the only difficulty experienced was with Portugal, that bumptious little kingdom presuming upon its shadowy historic claims to refuse the equitable and generous arrangements made by Lord Salisbury, and which Germany and France made no objection to. In this case all that could be done were for the two foreign offices to arrange a *modus vivendi*, by which both powers agreed to respect the boundaries, as prepared in the unratified treaty, and wait until an amicable arrangement could be made. This was done, but Portugal must by this time be able to perceive the folly of her course. The British South African Company, so soon as the proposed agreement was rejected, proceeded to go ahead on its own account, and has since that time drawn a good deal of attention to that portion of Africa covered by its operations. Difficulties of a more or less serious nature occurred, and while there was little danger of Britain taking up arms against Portugal in the interests of the Company which made the trouble, the Portuguese, with their customary quickness, became inflamed against England, and allowed their hatred of Britishers full sway in Lisbon a few months ago. Portugal's foolishness in rejecting the agreement proposed by Lord Salisbury is shown now that attention has been directed to Manica, until recently quite unknown, but now considered of great importance. This district is a part of what Portugal wants, but Britain wants it also, and if British Statesmen care for what British heads and hands have won, Britain will keep it. In all probability if Portugal had agreed to the proposed treaty, this district, on the road to the sea, and hence valuable, would have fallen to her share, but now that events have transpired to show its value Britain will be loath to part with it. The mission of Mr. Rhodes and Sir Henry Lock to England is, no doubt, chiefly to try and establish happy relations between the territories covered by the charter of the South African Company, and the States already under the English flag in that quarter of the world, and their advice and information should be of immense value to Lord Salisbury in future negotiations. The Convention which

Portuguese Statesmen ignored may yet be remodelled on a basis not quite as satisfactory to them as the first one. Of course, if on looking into the matter, Portugal's claims to Manica prove to be well founded, Britain will not take it from her. Although Portuguese navigators discovered the Cape, they did nothing towards taking possession, and this territory, after being in the hands of Holland for a while, became the property of Britain. The claims of the Portuguese to Manica will probably turn out to be no more substantial than that they looked at it first as in the case of the Cape. At any rate the conclusion of a treaty will be looked for with interest.

In the last number of the *Week* the deplorable condition of the poor, in sharp contrast with the growing luxury of the rich, is commented upon both editorially and by a contributor, "Fidelis." This brings to mind a sketch given in a New York paper recently. In a luxurious easy chair, a richly attired woman was seated with her head thrown back in an affluence of idleness, while on her lap lay an half-read novel. All about were signs of riches. Against this picture was another of a different type. A shivering, half clothed woman, seated on a rickety chair, held in her arms her starving child, and with gaunt face and hungry eyes gazed with despair out of the window. Underneath the two was written—"One half the world does not know how the other half lives. Does it care?" That is the question. The neglect of the poor by those "who profess and call themselves Christians" is bringing grave reproaches on the churches. General Booth, whether "Darkest England and the Way Out," was written by him or not, deserves the credit for coming squarely out to fight this condition of affairs. He believes in the possibility of a cure, and is setting to work to try it. If he succeeds in demonstrating this possibility to the world, so that extreme want and poverty will become a thing of the past, General Booth will have given the world something worth more than any other remedy ever seen. Truly, the blame for poverty lies with the churches in a great measure. The law of "brotherhood" seems to have been forgotten; the rich attend their exclusive churches and forget their duties to the poor. A suggestion was recently made that in England during the severe weather the churches should be thrown open and the pews provided with mattresses, so that the homeless in the large cities could come in and find shelter. Of course it has not been done, or we would have heard of it. "Fidelis," in the *Week*, speaks of the voices coming from the extreme wings of the Christian church (Father Huntington and General Booth) as well as here and there all along the line, enforcing in no doubtful tone that great principle of brotherhood which, faithfully carried out, would regenerate Society. This is certainly the key note of the reform so desperately needed.

"That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once. This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er reaches; and now my lady Worm's; chapless and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade." These lines from Hamlet are forcibly brought to mind by the disputation of the Viennese phrenological savants over a skull. The skull in question is supposed to be that of Mozart. It is generally agreed that the bones supposed to be those of the greatest musician of his age were rescued from the common ditch of Saint Marxer Cemetery, where they were laid just one hundred years ago. The history of the skull is this:—"On the 6th of December, 1791, a poor funeral hearse, attended by no mourner of any distinction, arrived at the gate of St. Marx, with orders for a third class funeral." The body was accordingly placed in the common grave, and, as it was then full, the coffin of the last arrival lay uppermost. The sexton was a musician, and when a boy, had listened with wonder to a mass which he was told had been composed by a lad no older than himself—he therefore carefully noted the position of the coffin in a calendar with the intention of informing himself later whether the Mozart in the grave was identical with the composer. Ten years passed, and this grave was re dug. The digger, remembering the composer Mozart, and the exact place in which he had put his coffin, took the uppermost skull, wrapped it in linen, and kept it in a cupboard at his home, showing it only to his most intimate friends. The finding of the skull was recorded in the calendar, and when the grave digger died his successor found both the skull and the calendar where they had been deposited. The new grave digger being an enthusiastic musician, kept them with scrupulous care. The cemetery was frequently visited by the engraver, Hyrtl, owing to its containing his mother's remains. One evening, being overtaken by a terrific storm, he was invited by the grave-digger into his dwelling, where he was shown the skull, which was subsequently presented to him (Hyrtl), he, in his turn, handed it to his brother, the celebrated anatomist, now in his eightieth year. In his possession, after some vicissitudes, it has remained ever since, and by request, will in time pass to the Salzburg Mozarteum. This tale seems likely enough. For there are only four persons concerned in it—the two grave-diggers and the two Hyrtls, and the narratives which connect the cranium with Mozart are as credible as history can ever be expected to be. But here the initial difficulty begins—the sexton might have been mistaken. Then the Vienna craniologists say that the skull in question is sadly deficient in the enlargements which are supposed to denote special devotion to harmony. But then it must be remembered that neither do the skulls of Beethoven, Haydn, George Buchanan, Swedenborg, Cromwell, nor Hampden, exhibit in any great degree the "bumps" which they ought to possess. However, to the disgrace of the Viennese magnates of 1791, and of the musicians, who could not even bury their spite in his grave, there is no hope of honor ever being paid to any undoubted fragment of Mozart's remains. Sad comment on the vanity of human life—he who had been petted by princes, and as a child had promised to marry Mary Antoinette (perhaps unfortunately for herself the Archduchess preferred Louis XVI) "when he was big," was lain in a pauper's grave at the cost of eleven florins and fifty-six kreuzers, "the widow being absolutely destitute,"