

— *What Literature and Science have lost by the Siege of Paris.*—

Some time must elapse, says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, before we shall be able to estimate with accuracy the losses which the interests of literature and science have sustained through the siege of Paris. Not a few eminent professors and members of the Institute have been serving in the ranks of the National Guards and the Army of Defence, and it is hardly possible that they can all have escaped without injury. Already we learn that the Abbé Moigno, editor of *Les Mondes*, has been wounded by the explosion of a shell; that Mr. Desnoyers, fils, of the Museum Library, has been killed, and that Mr. Thénard is a prisoner in Germany. As to the interruption to study, it is only necessary to bear in mind how very few philosophers have the habit of abstraction attributed to Joseph Scaliger, who is said to have been so engrossed in the study of Homer that he became aware of the massacre of St. Bartholomew and of his own escape only on the day subsequent to the catastrophe.

The damage inflicted on buildings devoted to science is more obvious. The Galleries of Zoology and Mineralogy have both been penetrated by shells; the College de France has not escaped unhurt; and the Meteorological Observatory, lately erected in the Champs de Mars, has been converted into barracks. In the Jardin des Plantes and Jardin d'Acclimation the ruin has been complete, all the animals being slaughtered either for food or by way of precaution, and the rare trees—some of them of priceless value—have been cut down for defensive purposes, or else to make charcoal. In the gardens and nurseries outside the city, the devastation has been equally severe. Chatenay, the chief establishment of M. Croux, formed the headquarters of the Bavarian artillery: the large palm-house was turned into a stable, and the flower-tubs used as cribs. Sheep and cattle have been pastured in the Jardin pour les Etudes Pomologiques, near Aulnay, and everywhere the young trees have furnished stakes for gabions, and branches for faggots. These are a few of the effects of "civilized warfare."

— *What France has done*—What do we not owe to the institutions of learning in France for their practical application of scientific methods of education? Have not the "Ecole Normale" and the "Ecole Polytechnique" been models for all civilized nations? Our physicians of riper years will tell us that in their days medicine could only be studied well in the great metropolis of France. Our light-house board will readily declare that, but for the discoveries of Fresnel, the access to our shores in the darkness of night would not be safe as it is now. Comparative anatomy received its first scientific treatment from French investigators. Palæontology is altogether a French science in its origin. Laplace stands high by the side of Newton and Leibnitz. Modern engineering is the fruit of the great undertakings of the French Republic, and Republican France so fascinated the great German discoverers, George R. Forster and Alexander Humboldt, that both gave to her the best years of their lives. Indeed, Germany owes her present scientific prominence, in great degree, to this period of mental activity in France; England also owes a heavy and most honorable debt of a like kind to her neighbour over the water; and America bears her share of the same obligation.—*Prof. Agassiz, in the Balloon Post.*

— *Wholesale Book Stealing by a Learned Professor.*—Fortunately, stealing books has not yet become a passion of learned men in this country, as we see it practised often in European cities. In a case which is now reported from St. Petersburg, in Russia, Dr. Pichler, a celebrated professor of theology, and the chief librarian, stole not less than six thousand of the most valuable books from the national library, whose literary department was entrusted to him, in the course of about eighteen months. When it was discovered that a large number of valuable books were missing, the director of the library issued an order that nobody, without exception, should be permitted to enter the library rooms with an overcoat or any kind of vestment by which the stealing of books might be concealed. The last winter being very cold, and the immense library room being not sufficiently warmed, Prof. Pichler, who is a very sickly man, applied for permission to keep on his overcoat, and as probably some suspicion was already awakened against him, it was at once granted. From this time he was closely watched. The first few days the professor rushed through the rooms, without scarcely touching a book. But no sooner did he believe himself unobserved, than he concealed a folio under his overcoat and made his retreat. When he arrived at the state-room, the usher covered him with one of those heavy furs, which form a regular part of the clothing of every Russian in winter time, but being in secret understanding with the director and discovering in a certain unusual haste of the old theologian the symptom of something wrong, he grasped him a little close on his body, and at once discovered the folio. Brought before the director, Dr. Pichler, at once made a complete confession. Search was made in his house, and upwards of 6,000

books and manuscripts belonging to the library, and representing a value of about 15,000 roubles of silver, were discovered. Many of the books were packed up in big chests, and evidently ready for shipment. The marks of the library were scratched out or removed by chemical process. The Russian Government treated the passionate book-worm very mildly. He was removed from his chair and professorship and exiled from the country.

— *Literary Labour.*—Mr. Justin McCarthy, the well known journalist and novelist, contracted, not long since, to furnish for the periodicals of Harper and Brother, forty-five short stories, to average four thousand words each, or about four columns of *Harper's Weekly* or *Bazaar*; his compensation for each was to be one hundred dollars. He is said to have written the forty-five stories in forty-five days, at the end of which time he received forty-five hundred dollars. During the time he was engaged upon them he was also employed in writing for the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Jippincot's Magazine*, the *Galaxy*, the *Independent*, and several family papers, besides lecturing constantly, composing a book on America, and reading the newspaper notices of his various articles.—*Boston Gazette.*

— *Mr. Emile Hepp*, the well known pharmaceutical chemist of Strasbourg, is amongst the illustrious men of science that France has lost by the war. While labouring to extinguish the fire caused by the Prussian artillery, on the night of the 25th of August, he received an injury which caused his death, after more than five months' suffering, at the early age of fifty-two. The savants of Strasbourg all assembled around the grave, and several pronounced short sincere addresses over their friend's remains. M. Hirtz has paid a further tribute to his late colleague by the publication of a careful biography, setting forth Emile Hepp's scientific claims.

— *Steel.*—The Atwood-Sherman process for the manufacture of steel has brought great honor to American genius, and at the same time introduces a great public benefit. Dr. Tefft gives an account of it which is published in the *Engineering and Mining Journal*. By the use of certain chemical fluxes, etc., the poorest qualities of iron—such, in fact, as are perfectly useless otherwise—are turned into steel with qualities which surpass those of any other known to manufacturers. This is done at a saving of cost so great that this best of steel can be produced at one-third of the usual cost—in fact, not higher than good iron. One great difficulty has been heretofore encountered in the presence of phosphorus, which if it touches any dampness, even in a mould, will blow everything up. This phosphorus is removed by the use of iodine, and then the metal may be safely run into any mould. The British Government heard so much of the process that Lord Clarendon invited Mr. Sherman to visit England and exhibit it. Every facility was given by the Admiralty, and Mr. Sherman was enabled to demonstrate his claimed improvements with signal success. It appears now that, by this wonderful application of chemical principles, we are to have everything which is usually made of iron replaced with steel.

— *Correction of Mariner's Compass.*—A discovery is claimed to have been made by Mr. Zaliwski and reported to the French Academy of Science at a recent sitting. He asserts that a hollow cylinder, of tin for example, open at the top and sharp-edged at the bottom, properly ballasted and put in a vessel of water, will presently move from west to east. This direction, he states further, never varies, and what is still more curious, the movement becomes readier and more perceptible the oftener the cylinder is used for the purpose. Should Mr. Zaliwski's assertions be borne out by trial, the experiment will afford an easy and accurate method of correcting the aberrations of the compass on iron vessels. This difficulty, it is well known, has long been a serious obstacle in modern navigation, and the means adopted to rectify it have not always proved entirely safe. A regulator so simple, sure, inexpensive, and convenient as that suggested by M. Zaliwski, would be of almost incalculable service to seafarers, and indeed to humanity at large.—*N. Y. Times.*

— *Floral Object.*—In the centre of the great conservatory of the Royal Horticultural Society, London, stands what is most probably the most magnificent floral object that has ever been beheld in Europe. This consists of a plant—or rather a tree, for it is upwards of twenty feet high—of the old *Rhododendron Arboreum*, which is now covered with innumerable traces of deep blood-red flowers, realizing all that the late Dr. Wallick ever wrote of the glorious effect ever produced on the northern slopes of the Himalayas, where vast tracts are entirely covered with them.