

afflict the purchaser. I can understand how these, and the vendors of various brands of soaps and washing compounds, should fill the papers with their big type and their wood-cuts—some comical and some repulsive—and their hideous "portraits" of their patrons. It is all very nauseous, it is true, and mars the enjoyment of one's daily reading; but it is all right, no doubt, in the way of business; it is an unavoidable factor in the "struggle for existence." I can understand how the competition among railroad managers should force them to cut rates, and to print maps, each showing that its own particular line is the shortest possible line between the two points A and B. I can understand the manager of a theatre letting a piece run for so many nights, and then substituting another piece for it, as soon as it "failed to draw." All this is of the earth, earthy; but should the Church of Christ be run on the same lines?

In the legal and medical professions, in spite of the fierce competition of the day, there still lingers some portion of that spirit of honour and professional etiquette, which we old-fashioned folks used to think belonged to all the learned professions, and not least the clerical. But I am afraid it is dying out; the competition of "denominationalism" is killing it.

Some few preachers in the States get enormous salaries, equal to those of "my lords" bishops among the "bloated aristocracies" of the old country; and I often see accounts of the "magnetic powers" of such preachers. Certainly they "draw." Have these three Canadian preachers lost their "magnetism?" Alas! for all pastors henceforth who, in their declining years, "fail to draw!"

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## PARIS LETTER.

Opinion begins to occupy itself with the health of M. Carnot. The President is not picking himself up; he looked anything but well at the running for the Grand Prix. He has a three-doctor illness, that being the number of medicine men called in; the most serious symptom about his illness is the inability to keep up his strength; this is not a good sign for an invalid who has rarely been sick, and who has led the most regular and abstemious of lives. Politically, what would his prolonged illness imply? Resignation, and the moment is anything but favourable for that crisis, parties are so unhinged. But the illness has demonstrated the necessity for the creation of a vice-president, as in the United States; that would necessitate the convocation of a congress to revise the constitution. Once the congress would be embarked on that unknown sea, no one could predict the result, as nearly every deputy has his own idea about the revision question. Gambetta was asked: supposing the case of a congress, where the majority decided to remain permanently sitting, what would you do? "Dissolve them by force," responded the great patriot. That put the seal on Gambetta's downfall. If a new president were sought for, perhaps Challamel-Lacour would have the best chance; his only drawback for the post is that of being a bachelor.

The French people know as little about the Siam question as the Siamese themselves, or the English Government that has a voice in the complications awaiting settlement. Since no electoral capital can be made out of Siam or Egypt, speculative politicians are lying very low. But the Governor-General of Tonkin, etc., M. Lanessan, continues to be a puzzle; very serious journals say no time is to be lost in examining his colonial work, and taking stock. M. Lanessan himself asserts that all under his sway moves as beautifully as even Dr. Pangloss could desire. But those who have let Indo-China, all the big functionaries who could not get along with the Governor-General, relate a different tale, and hint at an impending collapse. M. Lanessan retorts, that the country has largely benefited by the withdrawal of the discontented officials.

If any Frenchman merited a statue, it was certainly Francois Arago—scientist and politician. He has left footprints on the sands of time. It was the first Napoleon who introduced him to public life, by nominating him to a professorship at the Polytechnic School, where he held forth on Astronomy. His scientific career will be identified with measuring the arc of the meridian, that forms the base of the metric system of measurement. That gigantic work, so full of moving accidents by flood and field, reads like a romance; he was captured as a spy in Spain, and escaping was next taken by an Algerian corsair. The statue stands at the entry of the main alley to the Observatory, and that alley marks astronomically the First Meridian of Paris. The French, though not a maritime power of the greatness of England, not the less deny to peripete Albion the right to make Greenwich the First Meridian for the universe; only the late Emperor of Brazil seconded France in that rather modest claim. The dissent of the other powers is the best reply to the pretensions of France. The survey of the French meridian was Arago's scientific life-work.

His political role was also well filled; he was from youth up identified with the abolition of abuses, clearing away the fag ends of privileges that the 1789 Revolution left incomplete. In politics he recalled Thiers a good deal. Arago accused the ministers of Charles X; the Polignac reactionists, with their breach of constitutional contract, and when the July, 1830, Revolution broke out, that swept away the remnant of divine right, Arago, in protecting the unpopular and bolting ministers whom he had denounced, from the fury of the insurgents, received a severe wound in the thigh. When the 1848 Revolution broke out—how history has yet to explain—astronomer Arago was appointed Minister of War and of the Marine. Perhaps it was as a commander in the National Guard, that he was deemed fit for the first post; for the second, every astronomer is naturally ranked as a sailor. It was as Minister of War, as Commander of a regiment of the National Guard, that Arago took a sanguinary part in suppressing the June, 1848, insurrection, known as the "outburst of the empty stomachs." The proletariat has ever since kept up a dislike for his memory; just as do the communists to-day for Thiers. This explains why, though the statue of Arago has been finished for

five years, the Municipal Council have refused till now a site for it—as they persist similarly towards a statue to Thiers. Arago, while a member of the 1848 Government, identified his name with the abolition of slavery in the French colonies, and the abolition of flogging in the French navy—reforms only 45 years old, and that ought to plead indulgence for the slowness of human progress in other lands. Arago was the only Frenchman who decided Napoleon III; he declined, as Director of the Observatory, to take the oath of allegiance to the Second Empire, and menaced the man of the Coup d'Etat with a protest from all the scientists of the universe were he dismissed. Napoleon yielded; but the 2nd December broke Arago's heart.

The French, perhaps, are not simpler in the matter of planking down their money to secure voluminous interest, or levianthann annuities, than other people. But they will henceforth be protected even despite themselves. The reign of 10 per cent. per month, or 120 per cent. per annum, scheme has disappeared—with the disappearance of the founders. The "promoting" of financial bonanzas, is not yet quite "dead off." The tendency now is to establish tontine societies, or friendly societies where, for a monthly payment of one franc, an annuity will be paid at the end of fifteen years of 2,000 fr.—that is, for a total of 180 fr. you have 2,000 fr. pension; or 10,00 fr., if the monthly payment be 5 fr. That's squaring the circle at last, only the demonstration must be made before the Council of State; or, better still, before the newly appointed Commission, permanently sitting, at the Ministry of Commerce. When a flash society advertises through the papers or by circular its Golconda, the police will first ascertain all particulars as to the antecedents of the officers, or "flappers," then the chairman will be invited by the Commission to walk into their parlor, and explain his little Eureka. If he fail to explain, he will be advised to put up shutters on the office, the police preceding him, by impounding all books and monies. It is better to thus nip all bubble societies in the bud, before they can execute their destructive work. And all will be subject to inspection by official experts, even if allowed to open. Many branches of foreign financial societies must "submit or quit"—the Paphos circle in which Gambetta once enclosed poor old MacMahon—who at least in the case of the presidency of the Republic could not apply his legend-motto, "I'm here, and I'll stop."

Unable up to the present to separate the Church from the State, some reformers are advocating the severance of the gilt cock from the top of the church spires. That's something at least against the Syllabus. It appears young France regards the cock as the symbol of royalty, or perhaps, of Orleansism, since the Duc d'Orleans, and his circle of juvenile henchmen, have selected the bird as a rallying ensign for scarf pins and seals. The cock, from the time of Bacchus, down to umbrella Louis Philippe, has been chosen to represent divers meanings. On the church steeple it is said to perform a double function: to remind worshippers to attend church, and the clergy not to sleep at their post. It protected the vine, and hence was sacred to that jolly toper Bac-