

LITERATURE.

ON THE DEATH OF A BELOVED SISTER.

BY G. F. P.

SHE slept in calmest slumber—not a trace
Of suffering upon that pallid face
Betrayed the spoiler near;
The rose, indeed, had faded from her cheek,
And yet at times a flushed and fevered streak
Stole faintly glimmering there,
As though her dreams, still earthward bent,
The parting spirit's "farewell" sent.

Still slept she—and to break that deep repose
None dared. The bitter tear in secret flows,
And hearts in silence pray
For the bereaved mother, as she strives
To bow unto the will of Him who gives
Only to take away,
Who claims his own—but for a season lent,
And frees the soul from its frail tenement.

Still calmly slept the sufferer—and now
Perceptibly her pure and stainless brow
A holy radiance wore,
As though some winged messenger of love
On Mercy's errand sent from realms above,
An instant hovered o'er,
One smile upon those parted lips to cast,
That told "the bitterness of death was past."

"She is not dead, but sleepeth," ne'er again
To wake in world of sorrow and of pain,
The stroke in mercy given,
Then grieve not that her final hour hath come,
God but recalleth to its better home
A spirit ripe for Heaven—
Perchance in love, to minister to those
Who weep her sinless life's untimely close.

THE AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRANT OF 1843.

I saw the mountains wild and high,
And breathed the balmy air,
Rich plains in mild luxuriance lie,
And bless'd a land so fair;
Where many fragrant blossoms wild,
Regal'd the humming bee,
And universal nature smil'd,
No shelter was for me.

I saw the land in idleness,
Which might have been a home;
And wander'd o'er it till distress,
Forbade me more to roam—
Yet not a corner could I find,
Where I might build a nest,
I had a wife and children nine,
An infant at her breast.

Happy, indeed, had been my lot,
(I could both sow and reap.)
Could I have own'd a little cot,
Or had the care of sheep:
But not for me that land so fair,
Put forth her ample breast,
All spoke the language of despair,
We saw no place of rest.

On wife they frown'd, on children more;
"Large family!" so again,
We brav'd the wave, and left the shore,
That bloom'd for us in vain—
For where the slave still digs for gold,
A ship her sails unfurl'd,
That family's fate remains untold,
"It is a damned world!"

• Manfred.

Notes and Recollections of a Professional Life. By WILLIAM FERGUSON, Esq., M.D., Inspector-General of Military Hospitals. Edited by his son, James Fergusson. Longman and Co.

EVERY sound and intelligent contribution to our knowledge of the soldier and his social state is just now of the greatest value. Much time cannot be allowed to pass without specific legislation for the evils that have grown up in relation to it, of a more extended character, and with larger scope and objects, than statesmen have contemplated. Meanwhile let us listen to competent witnesses, wherever they are to be found.

This volume contains the army experience of an intelligent and independent-minded physician from 1794 to 1815: during which period he was almost constantly on active service. His opportunities of operation embraced Holland, the Baltic, the West Indies, and the Peninsula. One half of the book was completed before the author's death; the rest has been supplied from his contributions to medical journals.

Dr. Fergusson's *Notes and Recollections* is really an important contribution to the health statistics of the British Army. It treats of that army's constitution; of the diseases to which it is principally exposed; and of the means that should be taken to guard or cure the soldier. Dr. Fergusson's remarks on the moral and physical qualities of the three races from which the army is recruited, with a view to the foundation of a systematic diagnosis and mode of treatment, are extremely shrewd and graphic. His remarks on fever, ophthalmia, and other more prevalent diseases, while free from anything like wilfulness, are strongly marked by the habit of independent thought. We should describe the characteristic of his mind as that of cautious boldness.

The parts of the work which possess most immediate general interest, are those which relate to the theory of contagion, and to military punishment. On the subject of flogging, Doctor Fergusson describes a case treated by himself. It was referred to in the debates, but it is well worth reproducing:

After the termination of the expedition to Holland in the year 1799, the 5th Regiment was established at Silver Hall barracks, in Sussex, where a marauding soldier of the light company broke into a neighbouring farm under the cover of night, severely wounded

with his bayonet the woman of the house, when she tried to save some of her property, and perpetrated as much outrage as a single man without accomplices could well inflict. There can be no doubt that such a ruffian should immediately have been given over to the civil power, and hanged or executed before the assembled troops by sentence of a general court-martial; but he was brought before a court-martial of the regiment, and sentenced to receive a thousand lashes. When brought up for punishment, he stripped as if in scorn, and presented as fine a model of compact form, hard muscle, and dark thick skin, as ever I beheld. The drummers were well-grown sturdy lads, who had always performed their duty well, and to them, after the punishment began, he particularly directed his abuse, daring them to do their worst, for they would never extract a single groan from him. Seven hundred and seventy five lashes were most severely inflicted, when perceiving from his countenance alone that nature was giving way, I had him taken down and carried to the hospital. In a few weeks he was reported cured, and the commanding officer declared that the sentence should be inflicted to the utmost lash. He was accordingly brought out again. It was winter, and the snow was on the ground. He was tied up with his back to the wind, and the punishment began. At the first lash the newly organised skin gave way, the blood streamed down his back, and who on the first infliction was all defiance, now writhed and cried out. As the flogging proceeded, the lash became clogged with blood, which at every wave of the drummer's arm was driven in showers by the wind over the snow-covered ground; his cries became actual yells, and the integuments of his newly-cicatrized back were cut literally in pieces. I stopped the punishment when he had received sixty lashes; but his second cure was now a very different affair. Healthy suppuration could not be established after such reiterated injury, and sloughing and deep-seated abscesses were formed amongst the great muscles of the back. When I left the regiment, on promotion, some months afterwards, he was still in the hospital, a poor hectic wretch, utterly broken down from the terrible effect of the second flogging. I never learned whether he ultimately recovered. Any summary form of death that could be inflicted would have been no more than such a ruffian richly deserved, but, in a Christian land, not such a death as appeared impending when I came away. In his published surgical lectures, Mr. Guthrie has recorded the case of a soldier who, in the regiment of which he was surgeon, had received in the course of his service 15,000 lashes! and what was still more shocking, the poor fellow had always been much esteemed in the regiment as a daring gallant soldier, a fellow "of excellent heart, the very beau-ideal of a grenadier, but he could not resist the temptation of spirits, and at any time would go through fire and water to obtain it." With such a subject before them, how hardened must have been the hearts, how seared by the inconsiderate habit of cruelty the mind, that could thus persist in lacerating the flesh of a fellow-creature, while every new infliction was confirming in him the obduracy of crime, as well as the horror and disgust, or contempt, of those upon whom it must have been intended to make a salutary impression! No doubt, when out upon the illicit rove after spirits, or petty plunder, he ought to have been flogged back to his quarters with his coat turned by the provost-martial, and then the jeer of his comrades, instead of their sympathy, might have corrected the habit.

The writer's opinions on the punishment of the lash are thus emphatically summed up:—

No one can doubt, that for infamous crimes there ought to be infamous penalties, and to them let the lash be restricted; not to the greater crimes, but to the meaner and the disgraceful. The mutineer, when his conduct compromises the general safety, must be delivered over to military execution; the incorrigible deserter may be safely committed to penal service in the West Indies, or the coast of Africa; and should the pseudo-philanthropist interfere, with the cant of false humanity, let him be told that the best and bravest of our troops have too often been sent there, as to posts of honor and duty, from which they are hereafter to be saved by the substitution of the criminal and the worthless. The other nations of the continent, who have not these outlets, conduct the discipline of their armies without flogging; and why should not we? They, it may be said, cultivate the *point d'honneur*; and does not the germ of pride and honor reside as well, and better, in the breast of a British soldier, distinguished as he has ever been for fidelity to his colors, obedience to his commanders, pride in his corps, and attachment to its very name? For what but the approbation of his own mind, in which all honor consists, could have led him to endure the lengthened trials of last war? Take the Peninsula, for instance, with its six years of service. Have honors been heaped upon him, or promotion been his reward? To have promoted every soldier of approved gallantry in that army would have left few indeed in the ranks; but a medal, or decoration—no matter how intrinsically valueless, if commemorative of the achievement, was his right, and the advancement of a term of service, as leading ultimately to a pension, ought to be his reward. Who could now think of subjecting these men who conferred such lasting obligations on their country, to the lash for common military irregularities? It almost savours of impiety; for their services to the cause of the country and to that of mankind, in the then state of the world, were inestimable. They were literally the bravest of the brave, and their embattled front, could they have been opposed, would have stemmed that of the Macedonian phalanx. I speak not of the infamous characters that infest all armies, who would, if undeterred, carry rapine, rape, and murder into the dwelling of the peasant, whether friend or foe, in every country. For them, let the gallows and halberds of the provost-martial be ever held up *in terrorem*; for all compassion would be miserably misplaced. The infamy of the punishment would be excellently adapted to the infamy of the crime, and were it restricted to similar delinquencies—to marauding in every shape—these would soon cease to be much practised in the British army. For all other crimes, not compromising the general safety, the minor punishments of confinement—solitary or in irons, penal labour, fines, drills, loss of service, deprivation of indulgences, &c., &c., would surely suffice. The deserter to the enemy, and mutineer, as I said before, must be subjected to the last extremity of martial law; and better far that he should so suffer, than live branded, degraded, by the lash—from whom no good service can ever again be expected—his disgrace being ineffaceable, and his spirit broken for ever.

Great part of this volume was written after the author had attained his seventieth year. It offers the rare example of a man who had mixed much with the world, retaining all the generous freshness and all the energy of youthful sympathies, at that advanced age.—*Examiner*.

ANNOTATIONS ON SOCIAL LEGISLATION.

At this moment is a perceptible intermission in the business fever of existence. The long carnival of the long vocation has set in, and the more anxious toils of the year—whether in arable fields, the closet, bureau, office, or cabinet, if not com-

pleted, have been temporarily suspended. Rest and diversion, or at most desultory application to matters of inferior pitch and magnitude, will fill up the remainder of the year's cycle. Among the labors of the seasons ended, not the least engrossing and toilsome were those of the Imperial Parliament. Exclusive of other grave results from senatorial gestation, one ponderous volume more has been added to the preceding interminable array of the statutes at large; and in the dearth of more notable products of typography, we have been led to turn over the acts of the last session, to see what glimmerings of reason, science, and literature could be described in this new contribution to professional occupation and a nation's perplexities.

The first thing that strikes on opening the new annual is its miscellaneous import. Minor matters, however, and matters of mere routine enactment, we pass over: but even here a question offers not undeserving of consideration. Is it fitting that, yearly impressed as it is, Parliamentary time should be wasted in merely formal legislation! Is it right and reasonable that this large volume should be made larger than needs be by the mere lumber of statute-making? These matters had an object once—a laudable and constitutional object—but that object has ceased. They were meant to guard against the arbitrary power of the Crown, to secure its dependence upon the Commons, and the executive necessity of assembling the people's representatives at least once a-year. Such were the aims of the annual *Mutiny Act*, and of the grant of annual taxes; but constitutional liberties have obtained other and more efficient guarantees against royal encroachments in the supremacy of public opinion, the freedom of the press, and the extension of the elective franchise. Why, then, should this annual supererogation be perpetrated, and the Statute-book be unnecessarily encumbered? Why should not the acts to which we have referred, and many others, as the annual Indemnity Acts, &c., be not made perpetual; or placed on the footing of the other acts, and be passed, to continue till altered or repealed by Parliament?

Leaving these preliminaries, we shall come to the more demonstrative acts of the session, those most indicative of philosophical progress in the legislature, or of the state of society. Of the first class is the act on *Religious Disabilities*, which repeals the penalties imposed in the long term from the reign Henry III. to George III., against non-conformity and recusancy—against acknowledging papal supremacy—against absence from the parish church on Sunday—against bringing in bulls, writings, and other superstitious things from the see of Rome—against popish parents who refuse to maintain their Protestant children—against schoolmasters who exercise their calling without license first obtained from the bishop of their diocese. The clause, however, of the act, which is more important than the repeal of a parcel of obsolete statutes, is that intended to equalise the religious condition of the Jews, by placing them on the same level as Protestant Dissenters in respect of their places of worship, schools, and charitable institutions.

The act against the *Removal of the Poor* after a five years' residence is an approximation to a scientific principle. The chief difficulties, chief hardships, and chief litigation in poor-law administration, have arisen from settlement rights, or rather settlement wrongs. An Englishman is an Englishman in whatever part of the kingdom he may dwell; and if in need, and entitled to relief, no solid reason exists against his being made equally eligible in any district of the country in which he may happen to be overtaken by sickness or destitution. This is the broad principle to which Parliament will come at last. It is the tendency of the age, morally and mechanically, which is to fusion, and the abrogation of distinctions—local, religious, and political. Meanwhile the new act is commendable, except so far as it may be obstructive, and tend to defer a more general and salutary measure.

Malicious Injuries belong to the second class of legislative acts, and denotes a state of social turpitude not agreeable to contemplate. It seems to be the fashion of some reckless owners, to save trouble and expense, to blow up their dilapidated houses with gunpowder, without caring whether there is anybody in them or not, or whether they blow down at the same time neighbouring houses. Other desperate characters maliciously set fire to the stacks, steers, or vegetable produce of some kind, of persons from whom they have received real or fancied injury. A more detestable set of wretches are those who, having conceived a dislike to certain persons, send them a letter, or deliver a parcel containing an explosive mixture; or they throw upon their persons or clothes aquafortis, or other corrosive fluid. For most or all of these cowardly and heinous offences—for which hanging seems almost too good—the new act provides a severer punishment. But there is one ingredient of the punishment that may be philosophically objected to as incongruous or contrary to the prevailing sentiment—namely, that of whipping. Whipping, it may be presumed, is synonymous with flogging; and if flogging be unfit for soldiers, it is certainly not less so for civilians. It is to be applied, however, in addition to other parts of their sentence, only to male offenders under eighteen years of age, and not oftener than *thrice*, and in such manner as the court shall direct.

The act for facilitating the recovery of *Small Debts* is the most elaborate act of the session; but, it is probable, tradespeople are under a wrong impression respecting its leading purpose. It is not meant to alter the law between debtor and creditor, but the judicial administration of the law; by improving and extending the jurisdiction of the ancient county courts, and merging in them, under a new district divisions, the courts for small debts acting under local acts of Parliament. If fully carried out, it will add enormously to the legal patronage of the Lord Chancellor in the appointment of the judges and chief clerks; but as the assent of the Privy Council is requisite in each case of adoption, it will be, probably, gradually experimented upon. The debtor laws altogether have rapidly become a most complicated mass of enactments, and upon both the policy of the vast apparatus now projected, and of augmenting the efficiency of the means for the recovery of debts not exceeding twenty pounds, grave doubts may be entertained. Upon the abstract proposition that a creditor has the same right to a compulsory process for enforcing the payment of a small debt as a large one there can be no difference of opinion. But it was not the equal equity of small claims, but practical consequences, that have of late years been in issue among sensible people. The objections to the old law were that the power vested in the creditor, to enforce the pay-

ment of small sums by execution against the person or goods, tended to foster a vicious system of credit—to fill the jails with a class of people who ought not to be there—who ought not to be trusted so as to encourage improvident habits—but who, as their incomes were regular, ought to be made to pay regular, and not suffered by tradesmen to fall into arrear. Upon these views Parliament acted three years ago, and by abolishing executive process for the recovery of small debts, sought to enforce the establishment of a more cautious and wholesome system of credit. The experiment inflicted great pecuniary loss and inconvenience on a numerous and deserving class; but whether, if persevered in, it would not have introduced a sounder system of retail trade, a longer term of trial probably than has been conceded to it alone could have determined.

The acts to *Abolish Deodands* and to *Compensate the Families of Persons killed by Accidents* are co-relative measures, and indications of progress. Deodands, as the act expresses, were "unreasonable and inconvenient," and a remnant of superstition; being, as the term imports, originally intended to be compensatory gifts to God for the untimely death of one of his creatures. By law the horse, carriage, or locomotive, occasioning a violent death, ought to have been sold, and the proceeds of sale distributed among the poor; but it was usual to commute the forfeiture for a pecuniary equivalent, often very capriciously estimated, and applied in a way not generally known. The second act, for compensating families, introduces a more rational practice, and remedies a gross legal inconsistency. Prior to the act an action was maintainable against an offender who, by wilfulness or negligence, injured another; but not if he killed the sufferer outright. This anomaly is corrected, and the same right of action for damages given to the relative of the deceased as the deceased himself would have possessed, had he survived, and only been injured in lieu of slain.

The act to encourage the establishment of *Public Baths and Wash-houses* promises to be a laudable and wholesome effort to improve the condition of the masses. It is, however, an optional and permissive measure, requiring in the first instance an application to the Privy Council for its assent to the introduction of the act in any locality. In municipal towns the power of adopting the act is vested in council of the borough, and the expenses of carrying it into execution charged upon the borough fund. In parishes not within the jurisdiction of a municipal corporation, the act may be introduced by a majority of the rate-payers, and the expenses of its execution be paid out of the poor's rate. In both the fees charged for the use of the baths and washhouses, and the maximum rate of which if fixed by the statute, must be carried to the credit of the undertaking. Town lands and parish lands may be used for sites. The commissioners chosen by the unincorporated parishes for the purposes of the act will form bodies corporate, and two or more parishes may unite for joint management and expenses upon terms mutually agreed upon. It is a judicious and well-conceived scheme, and may prove initiative of a series of popular measures for sanitary and educational improvement.

The Act legalising *Art Unions* may perhaps be allowed to pass free from reprehension, for the sake of the ostensible aims of its promoters. It is, however, a manifest deviation from the laws in force against lotteries, little goes, and the distribution of prizes by chance. Some precautions have been taken to prevent the perversion of Art-Unions to mere private gambling or speculative gain. For their legal existence, either a royal charter of incorporation must be obtained, or the partnership-deed, constituting the association, with its proposed rules, must have been first submitted to the consideration and approval of the Privy Council. Upon any representation made that the lawful purpose of the society—namely, to expend the money raised by subscription in the purchase of paintings, drawings, and works of art, to be distributed by lot to the subscribers—has been departed from, the Privy Council may dissolve the union, by revoking the charter or annulling the deed of partnership.

One act has been passed to correct the "clerical errors" of a former act, and another to explain that a "ropery, ropewalk, or ropework, with machinery," is not a mill or factory. But we pass these *errata* to come to *Wreck and Salvage*, which is a consolidating and amending statute, that was much needed. The laws upon wreck, like the laws upon game, have been rather unsettled in popular estimation; and the right to strays on the sea held to be similar to strays on the land, and to pertain to whoever could seize them. This wild justice of nature is sought to be reformed, and a more orderly procedure introduced than a run and a scramble between the parson and his parishoners, for the fragments of a cast-away vessel, keg of brandy, or barrel of biscuit. Receivers of wreck are to be appointed, to whom all persons on finding or discovering any wreck are required to give notice, or deliver the same, for the benefit of the owners or legal claimants, under pain of being liable to the same punishment as the receivers of stolen goods. The act comprises other punishments and penalties on wrongdoers. It almost promulgates some needful cautions to dealers in marine-stores in the purchase of cables, iron, rails, or old junk, and in a degree assimilates anchors to banknotes, by requiring the makers to inscribe upon them their names, a number, and the weight of metal.

One act appears to be a misnomer, if it be not meant for a joke upon its first proposer, Mr. Duncombe, though the honorable member for Finsbury certainly cannot be considered the author of it in its existing condition of impotence. It is entitled an "Act to amend the laws relating to Corresponding Societies, and the licensing of Lecture-rooms." These laws were made in times of great political excitement, and very different from the present—in the times of Republican France, when great dangers were apprehended from the wiles of domestic agitators, and French Jacobins. They are slumbering snares, in which the Dorsetshire labourers were caught, and which require mitigation or expulsion from the Statute-book. But it is ridiculous to say that they have been much amended by the new act. All the alteration they have undergone is the interdiction of any persecution under them for a penalty or forfeiture at the instance of a common informer; reserving that grace for the exclusive use of her Majesty's Attorney-General, or the Lord Advocate of Scotland.

The great political acts of the session for the repeal of the corn laws and the modification of the sugar duties we have purposely omitted to notice, considering them to have been

already amply discussed and elucidated. Their philosophy is now generally apprehended, and it is hoped that their practical benefits will be experienced.

For the last session railways formed the great and most urgent legislative question. The Corn Laws might have stood over another year, or even till a dissolution of Parliament, without serious national detriment by delay; but the iron movement was a current *fi*r for right or wrong, that required immediate attention. A vast network was rapidly spreading over the land that might benefit or entangle every inhabitant of it, just as the principles upon which it was allowed to proceed were sound or the reverse. The wisest course of railway policy, therefore, ought to have been first and exclusively grappled with, thoroughly investigated, and definitely settled. Government was not wholly insensible to the paramount pressure of this crisis; but hesitated between two courses, either to leave it alone, or interfere, and thereby possibly unduly check, or give a foreign direction to a speculative impulse, the fruits of which it was desirable to locate in our own soil. Under these conflicting seductions it is hardly matter of wonder that they followed neither course absolutely, but took the diagonal line that cut between them. Science had only just succeeded in establishing the practical utility of general freedom; it was, indeed, at the very time engaged in its last struggle for mastery, and the moment was peculiarly unfavorable for those who had newly adopted it, to do ought that savoured of defection. But railways were clearly an exceptional case; they had been repeatedly urged as such by unquestionable authorities; and the passive or non-legislation which has left the entire community liable to be bound in its internal intercourse in the grasp of an irresponsible monopoly, may, without much exaggeration, be said to hold out evils of greater magnitude than are likely to be counterbalanced by the active legislation of the year in favor of commercial freedom.

In a preceding session, Parliament had evinced some consciousness of impending perils. Entire freedom of transit for men and goods is among the oldest and most valuable of popular rights. The successful pursuit of industry, as well as the most enviable of personal liberties, is identified with the full enjoyment of this long-contested-for immunity. All at once, to see these franchises placed in jeopardy by the keys of the kingdom being handed over to the new railway baronage, opened a prospect too appalling to pass unnoticed. Accordingly some precautions were attempted to be taken in 1844, both to meet future contingencies and secure present conveniences. As railways were likely to be the only mode of conveyance left to the people, provision was made for them by requiring at least one train daily for their use at a prescribed rate of charge and speed. Next, after twenty-one years, an option was left to the public—if the profits exceeded ten per cent.—of revising the rate of toll, so as to reduce the dividend to that limit; or of even purchasing the fee simple of such railway at twenty-five years' purchase. Unhappily these reversionary safeguards apply only to *future* railways; and even to these available only after the elapse of twenty-one years. Twenty-one years is obviously too long a term to be subjected to the caprice and exaction of monopoly, and which, in the interim, by many obvious subterfuges, may have contrived to render the act itself null and inapplicable.

These, however, are the only securities and equivalents Parliament has vouchsafed the community. Nothing has been added to them by the legislation of last session. The three acts passed, which we shall briefly describe, are all apt enough for their limited purposes, but offer no additional guarantee against the threatened usurpation of the railway lords.

The first was the *Dissolution Act*, kindly meant for an escape to those absorbed in the whirl of railway ventures. It had, however, a more defensible purpose than that of protecting people from the ordinary retributions of folly or cupidity; it supplied a positive defect in the law, by opening a practical course for the winding-up and abandonment of rash schemes. It was framed for a temporary exigency, and very creditable to the business sagacity of Lord Dalhousie. But as the act is applicable only to scrip issued prior to March, 1846, and as all the companies have probably availed themselves of it that will, it may be said to have already descended into the "tomb of the Capulets," and requires no further remark.

The act regulating the *Gauge of Railways* has settled perhaps all that can be settled on the subject. It is full of exceptional clauses. Railways southward of the Great Western are excepted, and in the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, or Somerset; also sundry railways in Wales and the counties of Oxford and Warwick. Any future railway act may contain a special enactment adopting a gauge different from the general ones of the statute—namely, of four feet eight inches and a-half for Britain, and four feet three inches for Ireland. The discrepancy of gauge allowed in Britain and Ireland proves that uniformity of breadth is a chimera, almost as great as it would be in the roads of the kingdom or in the streets and lanes of a city. The gauge of a railway, as the gauge of a common road, is a question of power that ought to be proportioned to the work to be done—to the population, wealth, and traffic of a line. Poor and thinly-peopled districts, without mineral or manufacturing riches, or great industrial activity, obviously do not require the same breadth of thoroughfare as those differently circumstanced. An immutable and irreversible gauge might in consequence be an obstacle to railway development by imposing in stunted localities a superfluous expenditure of construction, with corresponding excess of outlay in the size of engines, carriages, and the other appliances of conveyance and management.

The superior course of other states is often adduced, but this may be said in extenuation of the inertness of the British Government, in respect of railway administration, that it has been placed in a position different from those of the continent. At the commencement of railway substitution, it had become partly identified with the competitive in place of the exclusive policy, and it was not equally free, with those who adhered to monopoly, to adopt the principle of centralisation. Beside, who could foresee the headlong career of railways? They were doubtful experiments only a few years past—advanced hesitatingly for a lengthened period—and only recently have suddenly expanded from an insurrection into a revolution in the roads of the empire. They have certainly now ceased to be a question of individual speculation—individual gain—and individual management. They have become a great state question, and of which the state alone can, perhaps, be safely

intrusted with the conservation and direction. Nobody can justly pride themselves in having foreseen this rapid transition in its full extent; but now that the necessity is palpable, there can hardly be any difference of opinion as to the expediency of the act for constituting a *Separate Railway Department*. The commissioners will exercise the powers previously exercised by the Board of Trade, with an enlarged and better defined range of administrative duties, and, consequently, of responsibility. They will have a separate office, official seal, a numerous corps of subordinates, with a wide margin of discretionary powers—all which will tend to give importance, competence, and effect to their proceedings. Moreover, it will not only be a great gain to the community to have a public department exclusively devoted to railway investigations, reports, and general supervision, with a view to the common interest, but also to have conjoined therewith, an efficient representation of railway affairs in Parliament. Both direct responsibility and a needful telegraphic communication with the broad public have thus been secured. But as the proof of the excellence of the confection is in the eating, so the proof of the excellence of the working of the new department will depend on the judicious selection of its executive instrumentality. Of this last, we shall offer no conjecture—indeed, it would be premature to do so—and, in fact, does not fall within the scope of these annotations, which are directed to legislative principles, not to persons.

Almost the entire session was consumed in social legislation. There was only one public act directly pertaining to external interests, and that had a very limited object—namely, the establishment of international copyright with Prussia. All the rest were directed to home affairs. The only one, however, that remains for special remark is the *Labor Rate Act* for Ireland, and which seemingly comprises two leading objects—first, to mitigate the evils of impending famine from the failure of the staple food of the people; and, second, to render the means employed for the purpose subservient to the permanent improvement of the productive powers of the country. Both objects are laudable, and the means intended to be resorted to not liable to serious objection. Government interference there will be; but then it will not be interference for the benefit of individuals, but to save an entire community from starvation. Interferences of this kind are undoubtedly legitimate—they are the chief ends for which governments have been instituted. No doubt the landlords of Ireland will benefit by the application of unemployed labor through the aid of the Government advances to the improvement of land, by new roads, embankments, draining, reclamation, and other reproductive works; but for these benefits they will be liable to an equivalent assessment on their estates. If they reap the profit they will have to bear the charge. Their gain is, however, not the object, but an accident of the measure. It is not meant to enrich Ireland, and still less Irish landlords; but to save the multitude, and elevate their social condition, by enabling them to produce a more stable sustenance than the precarious root on which they have heretofore depended, and which, by one of Nature's mysterious laws, would almost seem destined to extinction.—*Atlas*.

Punch.

THE SNOBS OF ENGLAND. BY ONE OF THEMSELVES.

Now that September has come, and all our parliamentary duties are over, perhaps no class of Snobs are in such high feather as the Continental Snobs. I watch these daily as they commence their migrations from the beach at Folkestone. I see shoals of them depart (not, perhaps, without an innate longing, too, to quit the island along with those happy Snobs). Farewell, dear friends, I say, you little know that the individual who regards you from the beach is your friend and historiographer and brother. I went today to see our excellent friend Snooks, on board the "Queen of the French"; many scores of Snobs were there, on the deck of that fine ship, marching forth in their pride and bravery. They will be at Ostend in four hours; they will inundate the continent next week; they will carry into far lands the famous image of the British Snob. I shall not see them—but am with them in spirit; and indeed there is hardly a country in the known and civilised world in which these eyes have not beheld them. I have seen Snobs, in pink coats and hunting boots, scouring over the Campagna of Rome; and have heard their oaths and their well known slang in the galleries of the Vatican, and under the shadowy arches of the Colosseum. I have met a Snob on a dromedary in the desert, and pic-nic-ing under the pyramid of Cheops. I like to think how many gallant British Snobs there are, at this minute of writing, pushing their heads out of every window in the court yard of Meurice's, in the Rue de Rivoli; or roaring out "Garson, du pang," "Garson, du vang;" or swaggering down the Toledo at Naples; or even how many will be on the look out for Snooks on Ostend pier—for Snooks and the rest of the Snobs on board the "Queen of the French." Look at the Marquis of Carabas and his two carriages. My Lady Marchioness comes on board, looks round with that happy air of mingled terror and impertinence which distinguishes her ladyship, and rushes to her carriage, for it is impossible that she should mingle with the other Snobs on deck. There she sits, and will be ill in private. The strawberry leaves on her chariot panels are engraved on her ladyship's heart. If she were going to Heaven instead of to Ostend, I rather think she would expect to have "des places réservés" for her, and would send to order the best rooms. A courier, with his money bag of office round his shoulders—a huge scowling footman, whose dark pepper and salt livery glistens with the heraldic insignia of the Carabases—a brazen looking tawdry French "femme de chambre" (none but a female pen can do justice to that wonderful tawdry toilette of the lady's maid "en voyage")—and a miserable "dame de Compagnie," are ministering to the wants of her ladyship and her King Charles's spaniel. They are rushing to and fro with Eau de Cologne, pocket handkerchiefs which are all fringe and cypher, and popping mysterious cushions behind and before, and in every available corner of the carriage. The little Marquis, her husband, is walking about the deck in a bewildered manner, with a lean daughter on each arm; the carrot-tufted hope of the family is already smoking on the fore-deck in a travelling costume checked all over, and in little lacker-tipped jean boots, and a shirt embroidered with pink boa-constrictors. What is it that gives travelling Snobs such a marvellous propensity to rush into a costume? Why should a man not travel in a coat, &c.? but think proper to dress himself like a harlequin in mourning? See, even young Aldermanbury, the tallow merchant, who has just stepped on board, has got a travelling dress gaping all over with pockets; and little Tom Tapeworm, the lawyer's clerk out of the City, who has but three weeks' leave, turns out in gaiters and a bran new shooting jacket,