CONTRIBUTIONS.

METROPOLITAN CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTER XXX.

New York, Jan. 9th, 1854. The Holidays-Popular Interest-New Year's Day in New York-New Year's Sabbath-Snow and Sleighing-Peculiar custom-New Year's calls-Extent of the obligation-Modus Operandi-Brevity of calls-Refreshments-Number of calls-Carnival in the streets-Sleighs and Sleigh-bells-Runaways and collisions-A subject for Cruikshank's pencil-Winter nights and books-The Priest and the Huguenot-History of British India-The London Illustrated Library-Mr. Bohn's Libraries-Egypt and Ethiopia-Comte's Positive Philosophy-Destruction of the Lafarge Hotel and Metropolitan Hall by fire-A Complaint.

My DEAR POST,-The New Year's carnival in our great metropolis is now over, and the course of life is returning into its wonted channels. To obtain any adequate idea of the interruption to the usual tenor of things occasioned by the holidays, you must have been, like me, an eye-witness. think I told you in a previous letter, that preparations for the holidays occupied every one's thoughts and every one's time. You will not be surprised, therefore, to hear that when at length, the festival time arrived, there was a complete and utter abanthe diverse methods of celebrating and enjoying it. Passing over the Christmas festival with its ecclesiastical and social observances, common to all parts of Christendom-I shall endeavor to give von-some idea of the peculiar festival of New York -New Year's Day-as both Christmas and New Year's fell upon Sunday the subsequent Monday was in both cases observed as the holiday. New Year's Sabbath, therefore, passed as a sort of nulla dies-except with that, I hope, not inconsiderable, part of our community who made it a season of grateful and devout thanksgiving to God for His mercies during the past year.

Monday morning broke upon the metropolis and brought to the whole population the tokens of a real and rare carnival. The whole city was covered with a snowy mantle-and seemed like a bride arrayed for the altar. It was not a light covering either, but the accumulation of two or three successive snow-falls-with the advantage of partial inter-thaws to make the whole compact and solid. For once, the sleighing was unquestionably good enough to suit the most exacting taste or imagination. At the thousands of breakfast tables in the city from the early hour of seven until the aristocratic hour of ten-nothing was talked of but the day's frolic and fun. It is the custom in New York, and I know not that the practice obtains anywhere else, at least, as a law--for the men and boys included !-- to call upon every lady of their acquaintance within the limits of the metropolis and its suburbs. It is equally the law of course, that the ladies of all ages stay at home to recieve these calls. The gentleman who has an extensive acquaintance prepares himself therefore for a formidable duty. His list is made out with care before hand and the names arranged with topographical care, that he may lose as little time as possible is his progress. This list includes every lady with whom himself or his family are upon visiting terms. It matters not that he may have no personal acquaintance with a lady. If she be the wife or the sister of a social or business acquaintance, he must pay his respects to her upon New Year's Day. Not to call is equivalent to a denial of acquaintanceship, or rather to an expression of indifference as to its continuance. I do not say that there is no reparation for an omission to call-but nevertheless it is a thing to be avoided if possible. Now let me give you a glimpse of the routine .-The young men have of course the most numerous calls to make-it may be a hundred, or two hundred, and even three hundred is not an impossiblenumber. These generally "hunt in couples"-perhaps in trios or quartettes, and in either case they ride upon their rounds. On Monday last the merry sleigh-bells made most incessant music from morn till midnight. The earliest calls are generally tame and dull. Every one is upon their propriety. The gentlemen enter the parlor where they find the lady or ladies of the house, who are standing to receive them. As many of the visitors make their New Year's call, the only one in all the year, it is quite common to have the greeting after this fashion: "Why, Mr. Brown! I'm happy to see you. It is an age since I had the pleasure!" "Indeed, Mrs. Smith, I am under infinite obligations to the beneficent law which gives me such a coveted pleasure, in spite of my constant occupations." "Wont you take a glass of wine, Mr. Brown, or

a cup of coffee and some pickled oysters?"

"I believe I will try the former that I may drink to our more frequent meeting in the new year,"

When the visitor is a familiar friend and caller, the words are different and the scene more social. The visit is a brief one-it may be five minutes, it seldom exceeds fifteen in any case. The visitor stands with his hat in his hand, and if he would. he must not linger, for his list is formidably long. By the time that 20 or 30 calls have been made, and as many sips of wine or punch have been taken-though it is not impolite to refuse the refreshments offered at any place-the visitor is generally inclined to be as social and familiar as his nature prompts; and it is not strange that at the end of a day of such calls, many a young gentleman finds it difficult to get to bed without aid!

The calls of New Year's are not all so brief and ceremonious as these. Some there are, many perhaps, who make only half a dozen or half a score of calls-visits I may term them, but with the majority of callers-the rule is to pass the compliments of the season and hurry off. Many seem to think it essential to their character to have an interminable list and to be in a most desperate hurry. These invariably brag, as they proceed, upon what they have accomplished. They will draw out their watch the second minute of their call, and with affected alarm exclaim:

"Why bless my soul, it is time for me to go, I have yet sixty calls to make!" Every where the visitor finds a table spread with eatables and drinkables, and the ladies, as in duty bound, are all bedecked in their best, and wreathed with courtesies and smiles.

The streets, meanwhile, are full of men, while not a petticoat-or at least a delicate one-is seen to flutter along the pave. Here they go and there

they go, in black coats, black hats and gloves, each consulting a slip of paper, or it may be, a memorandum book, and each appearing to be oppressed with a sense of formidable duties. And really, it is not a trifling task to make fitty or sixty calls in one day, especially if one has to do it on foot. I made thirty-five myself, at the rate of seven to an hour, and was glad that I had no more acquaintances in this great metropolis! Apart from the New Year's calls, the day was a peculiar one .-Broadway and the other great thoroughfares were choked with sleighs, and the rush was incessant. Immense sleighs containing forty, and perhaps fifty persons, were drawn by eight or ten horses all covered with bells. To their music add the hurrahs of the passengers and the answering shouts of the pedestrians upon the pave, and you may have an idea of the ain which prevailed. The excitements of the day were increased by frequent runaways and by occasional collisions with consequent upsets and scatterations. The day was exceedingly fine, and never in the annals of the city of the Knickerbockers was there a more perfect snow carnival held in our midst.

I have done great injustice-consciously-to the New Year's festi al of our metropolis. It would require the pencil of a Cruikshanks to do it up as it deserves to be done. I may possibly have sucone miniversary, and more than this, I could not hope to do. The long winter evenings which now prevail afford me unwented leisure for reading, and I have been of late among the new books.

With a sustained and most absorbing interest have I read from beginning to end, two volumes entitled "The Priest and the Huguenot," translated from the French of M. Bungener, a minister of the Reformed Church of Geneva, a work devoted to the delineation of the religious aspect of France n the period of the weak, but sumptuous Louis XIV. Intensely dramatic in its style, the book fairly fascinates the reader, and fills both the mind and the heart with vivid impressions of the horrors and injustice of the religious persecutions of that unhappy period of history. It is a book of the most startling contrasts-of the most powerful characterization-and, netwithstanding its profound and aggressive antagonism to the Romish Church, of a fine and comprehensive catholicity. The work | language it was difficult for a stranger to underrepublished by Messrs. Gould & Lincoln, of Bos- stand. Thus the days glided by, while our even ton, who previously issued "The Preacher and the King," a work of similar character and merit, by the same author. They deserve to be known and read throughout Christendom.

The Three Presidencies of India, is the title of a handsome octavo volume recently published in London, in the perusal of which I have gained a more thorough insight into the polity and peculiarities of British India, and into the manners, customs and religious doctrines and rites of its heathen millions, than from any other work extant. It is from the pen of Mr. J. Capper, who was for a long time the Editor of the Ceylon Examiner, and whose facilities for writing such a work could hardly be surpassed. He has spoken out without fear or favor, touching the narrow and selfish policy of the British Government towards its Indian colonies, and it is to be hoped that the voice will be potential—as the echo of the public opinion—in effecting desired reforms in the British Indian territory, now of such vast extent. This volume is one of a series called the London Illustrated Library, embracing works of great excellence, handsomely printed and finely illustrated. They are sold at a very small price, and are imported for the trade in this country by Messrs. Bangs, Brother & Co., of New York, who are also, as I have more than once mentioned, the agents for Bohn's admirable libraries. . Of these latter, new volumes are constantly appearing. One upon "Egypt, Ethiopia and the Peninsula of Sinai"-the learned work of Dr. Lepsius, a German savant—is a late addition to the Antiquarian Series, and another volume entitled "An Exposition of the principles of the Cours de Philosophie Positive of Auguste Comte." belongs to the Scientific Library. Both of these works merit the earnest attention of the scholar and thoughtful reader. Mr. Bohn's books are most carefully and judiciously chosen, and should be in

New York has nearly been frightened out of its propriety of late, by two fearful conflagrations, and only vesterday morning, a third terrible fire created a general excitement. It broke out in the Metropolitan Hall, which, together with the new and magnificent Lafarge Hotel, into which the Hall was eventually to be absorbed, is now a mass of smoking reeking ruins! The conflagration happened at midnight, and the work of destruction was soon complete. The Lafarge Hotel was almost ready for the reception of guests. Costly and magnificent furniture had just been put into the house, which was mostly saved, but in a damaged state. The loss is of course very great, but I do not know that any great degree of popular sympathy prevails withthe owner. It is impossible not to deplore the destruction of Christmas hymn, "Don't you hear the arch-y-anour magnificent musical hall, around which so many memories of delight cluster in connection with fore they separ ted, they all kneeled down and rethose queens of song, Jenny Lind, Catherine Haves, Sontag, and Alboni, and more recently with the closing with "Our Father." grand orchestral performances of Jullien's match- It was with sad hearts we said farewell to our less band. The beauty of our splendid promenade is wofully marred by this last conflagration. In place of a palace front, two hundred feet long and seven stories high, of white marble, there is now a vast gap of blackened and unsightly ruins.

Before I close this letter allow me to enter a complaint against somebody or somebody else, through whose neglect I have failed to receive nearly all the late numbers of the Post. One which came to hand a fortnight ago; should have contained my closing letter upon the Crystal Palace, but did not. There would appear to be "a screw loose" somewhere.

As this is the first letter I have written to your readers since the New Year began, I will close it by offering to them all the compliments of the season.

CHRISTMAS IN THE COUNTRY.

CHARLESTON, Dec. 31st, 1853. My DEAR MOTHER: I have returned from a visit of ten days in the country, and hasten to give you my first impressions of plantation life.-It was a bright morning when we left our city home, in the little steamboat that was to carry us within ten miles of our destination. Seated upon deck, with an interesting book, the hours passed swiftly, until we were met by the friend to whose

house we were invited. Then we step steamer to the row-boat and were qui over the waters, and listening to the angs of the I enjoyed boatmen. This was all new to me, and it exceedingly. The melodies were ver in some of the songs, sacred words were strangely intermingled with the welcome they gave the ladies coming to spend Christmas with their "kind Missus." We were told that the negroes on most of the plantations now think it wrong to sing any but "spirituals." After leaving the boat, a ride of five miles through the woods, brought us to the door of one of the loveliest of southern country homes, where we received a cordial welcome. The day after our arrival was rainy, and of course we spent it by the fireside, enjoying its quiet home pleasures. The next day-the Sabbath-the sun shone brightly, and we had a delightful ride of seven miles through the forest of creen pines and magnificent live oaks to the country church. A northerner is much impressed by the sight of these grand old trees, so gracefully draped with the waving, banner like moss. And then, that old church-it has a history. Many, many years ago, upon the same spot the colonists built a church, which du ring the Revolutionary war, was destroyed by British soldiers. Some of the ruins remained, around which the ivy twined, and a hearthant had worshipped there, desired to worship the God of their fathers, upon the same spot, and upon the ancient ruins was erected this church.

The ensuing week passed rapidly. Sometimes we would ride to the cotton fields; sometimes to a neighboring rice plantation, where we saw the flood-gates and other arrangements for "growing rice;" and the stacks of rice, all ready for the threshing floor. Another day, we would walk about the plantation, visiting the different buildings, where we were shown the mysteries of "cotton ginning," and cotton packing. Or, turning our possessed of quick and generous sensibility, united steps to the garden, we would admire the thorny leaves and coral berries of the Holly or the beautiful Laurel, or pluck a December rose. If we extended our walk through the avenue, we could rest | progressed as follows: "I recall my earliest sorrow at the favorite "laurel seat." Sometimes we would pay a visit to two very old Africans who always home, the scene of my joys, my hopes and my engladly welcomed their "Missus," but whose broken ings were enlivened by music, conversation, and quiet games, till Christmas came.

You have never seen a Christmas Tree, nor had I, and although I had often heard them described. I was not prepared to see so beautiful a sight, as greeted my eyes, when the doors of the drawing room were thrown open.

The pine tree with its "golden lamps hid in a night of green" shone like a fairy vision. From its branches hung fruits of great variety-rosy cheeked apples and golden oranges contrasted with gayly dressed dolls, bright colored Cornucopiæ, elegant books, and many other tasteful gifts-some the giver's own work-others brought a great distance displaying the watchful love that had chosen for the husband or child that which was most desired. The tree was too heavily laden with its Christmas fruit to sustain all the varied gifts, but many were placed beneath it. None were forgotten-for every child, there were gifts from each parent, and from each brother and sister, and even the little babe-the darling of them all, who in the arms of her nurse gazed with bewildered delight on the animated scene, not only received them, but in her name many were given. A silver thimble was presented to her nurse, with the words, "little Phebe's Christmas gift to her mamma." It was a scene of happiness, in which all the household participated.

The servants received their "Christmas" upon a different day. We stood upon the piazza, while received from the hand of the latter, with a bow handkerchief, and thence proceeded to the storehouse to receive their Christmas "good things."-As we gazed upon their laughing faces, we thought that they were indeed enjoying a "merry Christ-

ened by the voices of the servants singing their Christmas hymn upon the piazza, and afterward one of their number-a pious man-prayed fervently for their master and mistress. We were deeply interested in the Sunday School that our friend taught in the afternoon of that day. Nearly, thirty boys and girls met upon the piazza, and thrilling play, and the low tone of assumed, if not recited with great correctness the catechism, their mistress had taught them, and repeated several hymns. In their instruction she used large cards upon which were painted Scripture Scenes, and they answered her questions respecting them without hesitation. They appeared deeply interested in her instructions. They joined with great animation in singing several hymns, and methinks, I even now hear their voices echoing the chorus of their gels singing, Glory to the new-born King." Bepeated with their mistress several short prayers,

friends at Winterdale, but we will ever cherish sweet memories of this pleasant Southern home. Your affectionate daughter,

For the Southern Weekly Post. VIRGINIA D---.

BY C. H. BRACKETTE. A voung lady of blue eyes, light hair, and a forenead indicating intellect of a high order, sat alone in the parlor of a select boarding house in the city of B - a brief fourteen months since. It was a dull autumn evening and little without looked inviting to the eye. One acquainted minutely with the science of Gall and Spurziem, would have perceived the organs of ideality, imitation and mirthfulness fully developed, while the sentiments of the higher order were large also.

The young lady had scarcely seen twenty summers, and yet was an orphan in the world. She was seriously meditating, and at times gaz-

ing at a pile of letters which were scattered over a parlor table before her. At times the eye was lit up by pleasant, mirth-

ful thoughts. How the eye too of woman in her hours of pensive memories expresses intellect sentiment and passion.

The one to whom this sketch refers would in an instant.

from the assembly where fashion, beauty, and intellectual dy gliding characters are found, have been singled out of hundreds, not only as a peculiarly lovely and graceful being, but more as having a soul noble in every sense of the word.

Hours passed swiftly away, and still Virginia D-did not permit forgetfulness of her avocation for the time to overcome her.

She was answering, or seeking to do so, the letter of a recent correspondent whose half dozen letters were before her. Of the gentleman whom she was corresponding with, she knew little, they having never met, and their acquaintance being therefore of course limited.

Answering an advertisement in one of the daily journals of the city, she had commenced a correspondence which threatened to be extended if not interesting, and was writing to a stranger.

Charles Harley, whose circle seemed to be enlarging into an acquaintance on PAPER, with Virginia D-, was a gentleman of about thirtythree years of age, of fair genius and address, with an exceedingly plain person. A scholar and a traveller he had tact and perception, which he evinced in his letters to Miss D----. Early thrown upon the resources of his mind, he

was self relying, earnest and true in character, and if he sometimes grieved over the past, he came back with renewed energy to mes stern, nare rea tures. A true friend and a decided foe, he was felt wherever chance placed him. Ambition, and that too of, no ordinary kind, had early imbued his mind with an upward tendency. He had pursued his course of life, meeting as he best could, its disappointments and sorrows. Thus much of the stranger to whose letters the young lady was giv-There is in every heart an earnest desire for sym-

pathy! It is a necessity of our common nature, to a greater or less extent. Virginia Dwith a glowing fancy, commenced her letter by thanking the gentleman for a small volume which that day had been received from him, and then now. It was when I bade agieu first to my forest dearments, for school in this city.

"I never dreamed of a sorrow greater than that "Previously, to my happy heart all was sunshine

"Time has borne that time far, far away. Yet I love to think of those hours of my purest de-

The young lady closed by requesting "Confidence for confidence."

The sweet harp which you hold your breath sometimes reader to hear, never vet caused such joyous feelings as the letter, an extract of which is given, did when it was perused by Charles Har-

It was a gleam of sunshine in a dreary dark day

He loved the unknown writer. His vanity was not touched, but the sentiments

of the man were aroused. A month elapsed, and he was seen at one of the notels of the city of Virginia D------*s residence.

He called to see the fair young lady who had aroused him to thoughts of the loveliness of one more than all others. Her letters had woven flowers around his path!

His very being was improved. But how was it with Virginia D-?

"To love and be loved again," was surely a longing-earnest feeling of her's-but who is there who has carefully read the working of the tender passion, that does not know that pride most strengthens affection? Harley, plain, and common each in turn came to their master and mistress and in appearance, did not prepossess the mind of our young lady! To say that she did not feel some and a "thank you missus" a warm cap or gay interest in him, would be stating untruly-still it was not sufficient to induce a continuance of the

At first she could not persuade herself that the cold, pale-faced gentleman whose appearance showed much of sadness and disappointment at his re-Early Christmas morning the family were awak- | ception, was really the writer of the letters she had received, so full of all that charms and wins woman. He left the city, bidding Virginia D- adieu forever.

She drooped not tho' at his departure. Society, amusement, everything that gaiety and life could offer was before her. Music, the waltz, the real affection, were for her.

Wit, noble bearing, wealth and high position each, all flattered her with devoted attention in

One day too she will wed some noble spirit from the throng, and the memory of Charles Harley will pass away forever, like the bubble on the swift stream. With him, tho' it will be far different .-His way of life is to be peculiar. The far off shores of the Pacific are to furnish him with a home and

His interest in the pursuits of life is increased. but he seeks a new and far off land as most congenial to one who cannot feel again as he has felt in the past. Such is life. January, 1854.

Another Terrible Conflagration in New YORK .- New York, Jan. 8 .- The Metropolitan Hall and Lafarge Hotel were destroyed by fire at an early hour this morning. The loss is said to be immense. The Lafarge Hotel was just finished and furnished, but not yet occupied. It was in all probability, the most costly house in the city. Several other buildings were damaged.

Nothing but the walls of the Lafarge House were left, and they were levelled by the firemen this morning.

The Hotel was leased by Charles Wright, who and culpable curiosity. had just furnished it throughout in the most gorgeous style. It was to have been opened in a few days. Nearly all the furniture was either burnt or otherwise destroyed.

The fire occurred in the Metropolitan Hall, where Jullien was preparing for a grand dress ball .- Pet.

John W. Rand, the Portsmouth bank robber, late arrested in Boston, has been taken back to

Mrs. Martha J. Waggaman, a sister of ex-President Tyler, died in Georgetown, D. C., on the 3d

Southern Meekly Post.

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BATTLE OF THE BOOKS.

to describe another battle of books. The contest now going on is upon a different theatre, and between other belligerents than those whom that great satirist marshalled to the conflict; but the principle at stake is very nearly the same, although the relative position of the combatants is somewhat reversed, and we they ought to pursue. A little seasonable salvies may be allowed to say that the issue is far more important to the interests of mankind. Time has wrought great changes in the world of authorship, since the witty annalist of that period descended with tribute much to revive among our people an appeter his grotesque genius and disappointed ambition, to the grave. His "Moderns" are now the ancient classics, and his own productions are justly numbered among the most venerable remains of an era long known as the "Augustan Age" of English literature.

The conflict now in progress is waged by an innumerable rabble of ephemeral and comparatively worth less publications, against the great classics of our language. Wherever that language is known, the teeming press is annually pouring forth its myriads of compilations, imitations, memoirs, novels, travels, and books of a thousand false pretensions, which seriously threaten, by their numbers and the insidious arts with which they are introduced, to supplant, overthrow, and bury in oblivion the great authors of an earlier day, whose works have hitherto been the pride and wonder of the world.

Every observer of the times must have noticed the fact that the great writers of the eighteenth century have gone out of vogue, and that a literature of a very different stamp has gradually taken their place. do not mean to say that Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Pope, Addison, Swift, Johnson, Burke, and others belonging to that brilliant galaxy of names which illustrated the brightest period of English literature, are absolutely neglected by polite scholars, or have ceased to be mentioned with that veneration which custom has long accorded to them. All educated persons acknowledge their merits, and few would willingly confess that they have no acquaintance with them. But they have nevertheless receded gradually from the public eye, and are no longer the familiar and favorite companions of a book-loving people. Shrined in the sanctity of their own genius, they have been raised to an obscure elevation above the heads and hearts of the present generation, and condemned to the mockery of a pretended homage which it is difficult to distinguish from absolute contempt. What evidence have we that these great authors are now appreciated? Their names are sometimes mentioned with an air of veneration, but how many of our youth ever think of laying aside the nouvelettes and magazines of the day, to study their works with that interest and lively curiosity which are so apt to be exhibited when they are

There is a great deal of reverence still felt for whatever is venerable and appears to us clothed in the awful garb of a distant antiquity. But this reverence is unfortunately more superstitious than rational. We look back upon the great productions of the ancient mind, just as we gaze upon the monuments of ancient art. We regard them as objects of curiosity, and as memorials of a state of society which has passed away never to return, but we are too much in the habit of considering their principles, doctrines, and opinions and tastes, as parts of exploded or obsolete systems, too puerile to be studied, and too erroneous to be imitated. Living in an age of great discoveries and inventions, and of the most astonishing progress of the arts, we are prone to imagine that our philosophy and literature are also far advanced beyond the highest limits ever before attained by the human mind, that it would be a waste of time to trouble ourselves with the views and opinions, the creations and fancies, of the old English authors. Such is the prevailing spirit of our times, and the fruit of this spirit is the general abandonment of those great instructors of mankind, whose works have descended to us rich with the in tellectual treasures of a thinking age, and whose farseeing intelligence and wisdom gave a greater impulse to modern civilization than all the material improvements of a later day.

The secret reasoning by which many persons justify to themselves their neglect of the older writers, is a source of palp ble self-deception; for it is equally obvious that the same perverted taste has tempted the present generation to consign to the same neglect the great authors of their own times. In our own country especially, it is lamentably true that writers of the first class enjoy a very small share of that popular favor which is lavished so liberally and impulsively upon the Stowes, the Abbotts, the Headleys, and the Fanny Ferns of the passing hour. Wherever we turn at, we are sure to find abundant evidence of popular admiration for writers of this inferior class, whilst the names of Irving, Prescott, Bancroft, Bryant, and others of a higher stamp of our own day, are mentioned its only by the learned or by foreigners. It is clear that antiquity is not the only reason why the productions of British literature at its most flourishing period is not now appreciated. The difficulty lies in the prevailing taste of our people for a lighter and less substantial literature-for the florid, the eulogistic, the quizzical in style-for that which amuses without instructing the mind, or for such as leads it along the awful brink of unbelief, and seduces it to scenes of doubt or despair, through the influence of a morbid On motion of Mr. Orr, the resolution was laid on the

The issues of the press are so abundant and rapid, that it is no longer possible for even a man of leisure to keep pace with it. The main question is what shall we select from the immense mass of publications spread before us. The great majority cannot even be persuaded to ponder this question, but seize with greedy avidity upon whatever comes first, or happens, by means of a taking title to make an impression upon the imagination. The maxim of Lord Bacon that some books are only to be tasted, whilst others are to be studied and digested, is entirely forgotten or disregarded, in a day when its application has become far more necessary than in his own. It is too obvious indeed that such as only deserve a passing taste, are now the very books to be generally seized and devour-

ed by fancy readers, whilst the great productions to human wisdom are passed by without any indicate of desire to ascertain the character of their contents

Reading is now done, very much as we travel. W. prefer to pass headlong over the landscape, taking a brief and indistinct view of its features, arriving a our journey's end without having learned anything by the way. The rattling car conveys its heedless has senger to some distant point, the cheap novel amuses him as he goes, and he soon leaves them both with a head as empty as ever. The book and the coach are remembered only as the means of his transportation and entertainment, and add nothing to his stock of

The view we have taken of the growing habits of the reading part of our people is rather discouraging but we hope there is a limit to the evil which it come not pass. The excess and unsatisfactory character of our cheap, ephemeral literature must necessary iro. duce hereafter a corresponding degree of disgnet The people will get tired at last of the endless nontion of the same old thing which characterizes the class of books. They will discover in the end that there is more interesting and instructive matter in page of the old standard authors than whole volume of catch-penny productions of the present day, and wa hope to see a wholesome reaction in favor of works established merit succeed the present preference. Had we the genius of Swift, we might be tempted the popular taste for the trashy libraries now manual

> We may be allowed to suggest that teachers. schools and colleges have it in their power to ence the minds of our youth much mara the generally do, in regard to the course of reading encouragement on this subject, from such a source would have a happy effect in reforming the taste and stimulating the inquiries of the young, and might cor. for elevated and instructive reading.

SPECULATION.

Speculation is the ruling passion of the day. Spe. culation in cotton, stocks, minerals, lands, tolera politics, letters, philosophy, morals, and even in these gy, engages the attention and occupies the thoughts of a large portion of the American people. In mort and theological speculation, the great Beecher family seem to be particularly active. Mrs. Stowe has coined a fortune out of her moral tale. "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and is now proposing, we understond, to get another out of the public by publishing a journal of her visit to Europe. Henry Ward Beecher, her bro ther is driving a lucrative business in clerical, or rath er unclerical efforts at wit, by which he succeeds very well in tickling the vulgar. It seems to be the height f Henry's ambition to excite a popular grin at the expense of his own little dignity, and his frequent lectures afford him abundant opportunities of witnessing the fulfilment of his aspirations. The chief objection we have to his witticisms is that, unlike those of his famous prototype Dean Swift, they are evidently stu-

The leading Beecherism of the day, however, is a new book by the elder brother, the Rev. Dr, Edward Beecher, styled, "The Conflict of Ages," in which that gentleman probably pushes speculation farther than any modern philosopher. We have not seen his production, but have learned enough of it to justify the opinion that it is a master-piece of speculative presumption. The theory of this ingenious gentleman is nothing less than this, that all mankind have been in existence previous to coming into this world and although there is no evidence of it whatever, in nature, revelation, or consciousness, he deduces it as a necessary inference from his own theological views. According to himself, those views imply injustice on the part of the deity towards man, unless the theory he now advances is true. "I thus relieve God." says the reverend, [we cannot say reverent] gentleman, from the imputation of injustice to man, in placing him already depraved in a probationary state." W do not quote the exact words, but we use the precise idea and form of expression employed by him in a recently published letter in regard to his book

CONGRESSIONAL SYNOPSIS.

SENATE. January 3d .- Mr. Seward called up the case of Senator Phelps, of Vermont, who held his seat by virtue of an appointment of the Governor in a recess of the egislature. The legislature had subsequently met and adjourned without acting upon his appointment, and some now doubted his right to a seat in the Senate. Mr.'S. offered a resolution affirming that right, and on motion of Mr. Badger it was laid over. On motion of Mr. Chase, the bill dividing Ohio into two udicial circuits was taken up, which elicited some discussion, and was finally referred to the Judiciary Com-

A message was received from the President communicating certain correspondence relating to the Clayton Bulwer treaty. After some animated conversation between Senators Cass and Clayton, the papers were ordered to be printed, and the Senate adjourn-

January 4th - Mr. Seward's resolution, in regard to Mr. Phelps, was referred to the judiciary committee. Mr. Shields reported back the House resolution, voting thanks and a sword to Gen. Wool, which was passed. Mr. Douglass reported a bill organizing the territory of Nebraska, Among other provisions, it extends the operation of the fugitive slave law to that

January 5th -Mr. Cass moved that the message of the President of the other day, relating to the Clay ton and Bulwer treaty, be referred, and that that motion be postponed and made the order of the day for Tuesday next, on which day he would ask to be lear

January 10th .- The death of the Hon. enburg, of Pennsylvania, was announced logy upon the character of the deceased wi by Mr. Brodhead. No important business

January 3d .- Mr. Bissell reported a joint resolution voting thanks and a sword to Gen. Wool, for gallant services at Buen i Vista, which, after some of position from Mr. Giddings, was under the previous question passed. Bennett's land bill was taken up and some discussion had upon it. It was finally b ferred to the committee on public lands. Mr. Catting offered a resolution calling upon the secretary of the Treasury for the Bronson Correspondence. Objection being made, it was laid over.

January 4th .-- Mr. Cutting called up his resolution and a debate ensued between him and Mr. Clingman table by a vote of 104 to 66. The resolution conferring the rank of Lieutegant-General on Gen. See was then taken up, and after debate referred to ! committee on military affairs.

January 5th,-Mr. Dean, from the committee on foreign affairs, reported a resolution of thanks, and providing for a medal to be presented to commande Ingraham, for his conduct in the Kozsta affair. A long and animated debate took place in regard to itand the House adjourned without action.

January 6th .- After some desultory and uninteresting conversation on a report from the committee on ways and means, the House took up the private ca-

January 10th .- The death of the Hon Mr. Muhlenburg, of Pennsylvania, was announced, and nothing was done in the way of business.