

we think, with all reverence be it said, that we see wisdom in the denial of such powers unless accompanied by an organization which would, on the other hand, utterly unfit us for the narrow world in which we have our present probationary residence. If the excitements of our limited earth bear with such exhausting power upon our sensitive system, what if a universe should burst upon us with its tremendous realities of weal or woe!

It is in kindness, then, that each world is severed, for the present, from the general intercourse, and that so perfectly that no amount of science can ever be expected to overcome the separation. "He hath set a bound which we can not pass," except in imagination. Even analogical reasoning utterly fails, or only lights us to the conclusion that the diversities of structure, of scenery, and of condition, must be as great, and as numberless as the spaces, and distances, and positions they respectively occupy. The moral sense, however, is not wholly silent. It has a voice "to which we do well to take heed" when the last rays of reason and analogy have gone out in darkness. It can not be, it affirms—it can not be, that the worlds on worlds which the eye and the telescope reveal to us are but endless repetitions of the fallen earth on which we dwell. What a pall would such a thought spread over the universe! How sad would it render the contemplation of the heavens! How full of melancholy the conception that throughout the measureless fields of space there may be the same wretchedness and depravity that have formed the mournful history of our earth, and which we fail to see in its true intensity, because we have become hardened through long and intimate familiarity with its scenes. And yet, for all that natural science merely, and natural theology can prove, it may be so, and even far worse. For all that they can affirm, either as to possibility or probability, a history of woe surpassing any thing that earth has ever exhibited, or inhabitant of earth has ever imagined, may have every where predominated. The highest reasoning of natural theology can only set out for us some cold system of optimism, which may make it perfectly consistent with its heartless intellectuality to regard the sufferings of a universe, and that suffering a million-fold more intense than any thing ever yet experienced, as only a means to some fancied good time coming, and ever coming, for other dispensations and other races, and other types of being in a future incalculably remote. To a right thinking mind nothing can be more gloomy than that view of the universe which is given by science alone, taking the earth as its base line of measurement, and its present condition (assumed to have come from no moral catastrophe, but to be a necessary result of universal physical laws) as the only ground of legitimate induction. But we have a surer guide than this. Besides the moral sense, we have the representations the Bible gives of God and Christ. These form the ground of the belief that our earth is not a fair sample of the universe, that fallen worlds are rare and extraordinary, as requiring extraordinary mediatorial remedies—that blessedness is the rule and not the exception, and that the Divine love and justice have each respect to individual existences, instead of being both absorbed in that *impersonal* attribute which has regard only to being in general, or to worlds and races viewed only in reference to some interminable progress, condemned by its own law of development to eternal imperfection, because never admitting the idea of finish of workmanship, or of finality of purpose, either in relation to the universe or any of its parts.

Editor's Easy Chair.

NEW-YORKERS have a story to tell of the winter just now dying, that will seem, perhaps, to the children of another generation like a pretty bit of Munchausenism. Whoever has seen our Metropolitan City only under the balmy atmosphere of a soft May-day, or under the smoky sultriness of a tropic August—who has known our encompassing rivers only as green arms of sparkling water, laughing under the shadows of the banks, and of shipping—would never have known the Petersburg of a place into which our passing winter has transformed the whole.

Only fancy our green East River, that all the summer comes rocking up from the placid Sound, with a hoarse murmur through the rocks of Hell-Gate, and loitering, like a tranquil poem, under the shade of the willows of Astoria, all bridged with white and glistening ice! And the stanch little coasting-craft, that in summer-time spread their wings in companies, like flocks of swans, within the bays that make the vestibule to the waters of the city, have been caught in their courses, and moored to their places, by a broad anchor of sheeted silver.

The oyster-men, at the beacon of the Saddle-rock, have cut openings in the ice; and the eel-spearers have plied their pronged trade, with no boat save the frozen water.

In town, too, a carnival of sleighs and bells has wakened Broadway into such hilarity as was like to the festivals we read of upon the Neva. And if American character verged ever toward such coquetry of flowers and bon-bons as belongs to the Carnival of Rome, it would have made a pretty occasion for the show, when cheeks looked so tempting, and the streets and house-tops sparkled with smiles.

As for the country, meantime, our visitors tell us that it has been sleeping for a month and more under a glorious cloak of snow; and that the old days of winter-cheer and fun have stolen back to mock at the anthracite fires, and to woo the world again to the frolic of moonlight rides and to the flashing play of a generous hickory-flame.

BESIDE the weather, which has made the ballast of very much of the salon chat, city people have been measuring opinions of late in their hap-hazard and careless way, about a new and most unfortunate trial of divorce. It is sadly to be regretted that the criminations and recriminations between man and wife should play such part as they do, not only in the gossip, but in the papers of the day. Such reports as mark the progress of the Forrest trial (though we say it out of our Easy Chair) make very poor pabulum for the education of city children. And we throw out, in way of hint, both to legislators and editors, the question how this matter is to be mended.

As for the merits of the case, which have been so widely discussed, we—talking as we do in most kindly fashion of chit-chat—shall venture no opinion. At the same time, we can not forbear intimating our strong regret, that a lady, who by the finding of an impartial jury, was declared intact in character, and who possessed thereby a start-point for winning high estimation in those quiet domestic circles which her talents were fitted to adorn—should peril all this, by a sudden appeal to the sympathies of those who judge of character by scenic effects: and who, by the very necessity of her new position, will measure her worth by the glare of the foot-lights of a theatre!

Mrs. FORREST has preferred admiration to sym-

pathy ; her self-denial is not equal to her love of approbation.

EUROPEAN topic still has its place, and LOUIS NAPOLEON with his adroit but tyrannic manœuvres, fills up a large space of the talk. It would seem, that he was rivaling the keenest times of the Empire, in the zeal of his espionage ; and every mail brings us intelligence of some unfortunately free-talker, who is "advised" to quit "the Republic."

Americans are very naturally in bad odor ; and from private advices we learn that their requisitions to see the lions of the capital city, meet with a growing coolness. Still, however, the gay heart of Paris leaps on, in its fond, foolish heedlessness ; and the operas and theatres win the discontented away from their cares, and bury their lost liberties under the shabby concealment of a laugh.

Report says that the masked balls of the Opera were never more fully attended ; or the gayety of their Carnival pursued with a noisier recklessness.

This, indeed, is natural enough : when men are denied the liberty of thinking, they will relieve themselves by a license of desire ; and when the soul is pinioned by bonds, the senses will cheat the man.

There is no better safeguard for Despotism, whether under cover of a Kingdom or a Republic—than immorality. The brutality of lust is the best extinguisher of thought : and the drunkenness of sensualism will inevitably stifle all the nobler impulses of the mind.

As for political chat at home, it runs now in the channel of President-making ; and the dinner-tables of Washington are lighted up with comparison of chances. Under this, the gayeties proper are at a comparative stand-still. The Assembly balls, as we learn, are less brilliant, and more promiscuous than ever ; and even the select parties of the National Hotel are singularly devoid of attractions. Lent too is approaching, to whip off, with its scourge of custom, the cue of papal diplomats ; and then, the earnestness of the campaign for the Presidency will embue the talk of the whole Metropolis.

While we are thus turning our pen-point Washington-ward, we shall take the liberty of felicitating ourselves, upon the contrast which has belonged to the reception of LOLA MONTES, in New York, and in the metropolis of the nation. Here, she was scarce the mention of a respectable journal ; there, she has been honored by distinguished "callers."

We see in this a better tone of taste in our own city, than in the city of the nation ; and it will justify the opinion, which is not without other support, that the range of honorable delicacy is far lower in the city of our representatives, than in any city of their clients. Representatives leave their proprieties at home ; and many a member would blush at a license within the purloins of his own constituency, which he courts as an honor in the city of our Cæsars ! We wish them joy of their devotion to the Danseuse, whom—though we count as humble as themselves in point of morals—we believe to be superior, mentally, to the bulk of her admirers.

As a token of French life and morals, we make out this sad little bit of romance from a recent paper :

A few days since, some boatmen upon the Seine saw what appeared to be a pair of human feet floating down the stream ; manning their barge, they hastened to the spot, and succeeded in drawing from the water the body of a young woman, apparently about twenty-five years of age, and elegantly dressed ;

a heavy stone was attached to her neck by a cord. Within a small tin box, in the pocket of her dress, carefully sealed, was found the following note :

"My parents I have never known ; up to the age of seven years, I was brought up by a good woman of a little village of the Department of the Seine and Marne ; and from that time, to the age of eighteen I was placed in a boarding-house of Paris. Nothing but was provided for my education. My parents were without doubt rich, for nothing was neglected that could supply me with rich toilet, and my bills were regularly paid by an unknown hand.

"One day I received a letter ; it was signed, 'Your mother.' Then I was happy !

"'Your birth,' she wrote me, 'would destroy the repose of our entire family ; one day, however, you shall know me : honorable blood flows in your veins. my daughter—do not doubt it. Your future is made sure. But for the present, it is necessary that you accept a place provided for you in the establishment of M—— ; and when once you have made yourself familiar with the duties of the place, you shall be placed at the head of an even larger establishment.'

"A few days after, I found myself in the new position. Years passed by. Then came the Revolution of February. From that fatal time I have heard nothing of my family. Alone in the world, believing myself deserted, maddened by my situation, I yielded, in an evil hour, to the oaths of one who professed to love me. He deceived me ; there is nothing now to live for ; suicide is my only refuge. I only pray that those who find this poor body, will tell my story to the world ; and, please God, it may soften the heart of those who desert their children !"

The story may be true or not, in fact ; it is certainly true to the life, and the religion of Paris : and while such life, and such sense of duty remains, it is not strange that a Napoleon can ride into rule ; and that the French Republic should be firmest under the prick of bayonets.

It appears that a Madame de la Ribossière has deceased lately in Paris, leaving a very large fortune—to the city of Paris—much to the ire, not only of her family, but of sundry friends, literary and others, who had contributed very greatly to her amusement.

A French writer comments on the matter in a strain which, considering our duties as Editor, we shall not think it worth while to gainsay.

Madame de la Ribossière was a lady of refined tastes, who derived a large part of her enjoyment of life from the accomplishments of artistic and literary gentlemen ; how then, does it happen that she should not have given proof of the pleasure she had received by a few princely legacies ?

In the good old times (may they come again !) authors had different treatment. Thus Pliny, the younger, in writing to Tacitus, says, "I have received the past year some twenty-five thousand *sestercies* more than yourself—in the way of legacies—but don't be jealous !"

The truth is, that a rich man rarely died in Rome, without leaving some token to the author who had beguiled the hours of solitude—enlarged his ideas, or consoled him in affliction. Cicero speaks of a large inheritance, which he possessed, of statues and beautiful objects. In short, Roman literature and the history of antiquity grow out of these princely endowments, which independence and strength of opinion did not fail to secure.

But nowadays, says the French author, a writer is paid like a starveling ; and picks up such crumbs of charity as fall only from the tables of the publishers.

And he goes on pleasantly, to suggest a change in this matter; which, if it gain footing on the other side of the water, we shall take the liberty of welcoming very kindly in America. When the custom of leaving legacies to writers is in vogue, we shall take the liberty of suggesting, in our own behalf, such objects of art as would be agreeable to us; and such stocks as we should prefer as a permanent investment.

Meantime, we suck our quill in our Easy Chair, with as much forbearance as we can readily command.

Editor's Drawer.

THAT was a dignified and graceful entertainment which recently took place in the gay capital of France. Some two hundred of the "nobility and gentry," including a sprinkling of English aristocracy, assembled in a prominent hall of the city, to see a *Rat and Owl Fight!* And while they were getting ready the combatants, which went by sundry fancy or favorite names, they had a poet in leash, who "improvised a *strophe*" for the occasion! Think of a "poet" apostrophizing, in studied measures, twelve rats and four old owls! But that's "the way they do things in France."

They have another very sensible and dramatic amusement there, which they call the "*Mat de Cocagne*." This is a long pole, of about eighteen inches diameter at the base, well polished and greased from top to bottom, with soft soap, tallow, and other slippery ingredients. To climb up this pole to the top is an eminent exploit, which crowns the victorious adventurer with a rich prize, and gains him the acclamations of ten thousand spectators. The "pretenders" strip off their upper gear altogether, and roll up their trowsers mid-thigh, and thus accoutred, present themselves at the bottom of the mast. Now just listen to a description of the operation, and reflections thereupon, and tell us whether you ever read any thing more "perfectly French."

"The first who attempt the ascent look for no honor; their office is to prepare the way, and put things in train for their successors: they rub off the grease from the bottom, the least practicable part of the pole. In every thing the first steps are the most difficult, although seldom the most glorious; and scarcely ever does the same person commence an enterprise, and reap the fruit of its accomplishment. They ascend higher by degrees, and the expert climbers now come forth, the heroes of the list: they who have been accustomed to gain prizes, whose prowess is known, and whose fame is established since many seasons. They do not expend their strength in the beginning; they climb up gently, and patiently, and modestly, and repose from time to time; and they carry, as is permitted, a little sack at their girdle, filled with ashes to neutralize the grease and render it less slippery.

"All efforts, however, for a long time prove ineffectual. There seems to be an ultimate point, which no one can scan, the measure and term of human strength; and to overreach it is at last deemed impossible. Now and then a pretender essays his awkward limbs, and reaching scarce half way even to this point, falls back clumsily amidst the hisses and laughter of the spectators; so in the world empirical pretension comes out into notoriety for a moment only to return with ridicule and scorn to its original obscurity.

"But the charm is at length broken: a victorious climber has transcended the point at which his predecessors were arrested. Every one now does the same: such are men; they want but a precedent: as soon as it is proved that a thing is possible, it is no longer difficult. Our climber continues his success: farther and farther still; he is a few feet only from the summit, but he is wearied, he relents. Alas! is the prize, almost in his grasp, to escape from him! He makes another effort, but it is of no avail. He does not, however, lose ground: he reposes. In the mean time, exclamations are heard, of doubt, of success, of encouragement.

"After a lapse of two or three minutes, which is itself a fatigue, he essays again. It is in vain! He begins even to shrink: he has slipped downward a few inches, and recovers his loss by an obstinate struggle ('*applause!*'—'*sensation!*'), but it is a supernatural effort, and—his last. Soon after a murmur is heard from the crowd below, half raillery and half compassion, and the poor adventurer slides down, mortified and exhausted, upon the earth!

"So a courtier, having planned from his youth his career of ambition, struggles up the ladder, lubric and precipitous, to the top—to the very consummation of his hopes, and then falls back into the rubbish from which he has issued; and they who envied his fortune, now rejoice in his fall. What lessons of philosophy in a greasy pole! What moral reflections in a spectacle so empty to the common world! What wholesome sermons are here upon the vanity of human hopes, the disappointments of ambition, and the difficulties of success in the slippery paths of fortune and human greatness! But the very defeat of the last adventurer has shown the possibility of success, and prepared the way for his successor, who mounts up and perches on the summit of the mast, bears off the crown, and descends amidst the shouts and applause of the multitude. It is *Americus Vespucius* who bears away from Columbus the recompense of his toils!"

So much for climbing a greased pole in reflective, philosophical Paris!

INQUISITIVENESS has been well described as "an itch for prying into other people's affairs, to the neglect of our own; an ignorant hankering after all such knowledge as is not worth knowing; a curiosity to learn things that are not at all curious." People of this stamp would rather be "put to the question" than not to ask questions. Silence is torture to them. A genuine *quidnunc* prefers even false news to no news; he prides himself upon having the first information of things that never happened. Yankees are supposed to have attained the greatest art in parrying inquisitiveness, but there is a story extant of a "Londoner" on his travels in the provinces, who rather eclipses the cunning "Yankee Peddler." In traveling post, says the narrator, he was obliged to stop at a village to replace a shoe which his horse had lost; when the "Paul Pry" of the place bustled up to the carriage-window, and without waiting for the ceremony of an introduction, said:

"Good-morning, sir. Horse cast a shoe I see. I suppose, sir, you are going to—?"

Here he paused, expecting the name of the place to be supplied; but the gentleman answered:

"You are quite right; I generally go there at this season."

"Ay—ahem!—do you? And no doubt you are now come from—?"

"Right again, sir; I live there."