

the administration of State affairs, and, even if it were disposed to constitute itself a general court of appeal, would hesitate before the amount of fresh work which any such rôle would impose on it. It will probably decide that State courts, whatever their defects may be, are good enough for the general run of murderers, and that State judges of appeal may fairly be left to say what is "due process of law" in their State criminal courts.

What is oddest about the application is, however, that it should be made on behalf of Anarchists, or, in other words, that men who live in a constant state of revolt against all law should be so anxious to get the benefit even of technical defects in criminal procedure; and that men who cultivate so diligently readiness to inflict death on other people, should writhe so terribly when the game goes against them and their own turn to die comes. In other words, we do not seem as yet to have produced or imported a genuine Anarchist—that is, a man ready to dispense with the protection of the law in his own case, and to surrender his own life when caught taking other people's lives. All these Chicago Anarchists have availed themselves to the utmost extent of the legal machinery in order to escape punishment of crime. There is no statute or section of the Constitution under which they are not willing to take shelter. They hire counsel, and set up technical exceptions, and dodge, and parley, and plead, just like petty thieves.

Moreover, they are apparently as much afraid of death as if they never talked about it, and had a deep sense of the sacredness of human life. They have left no stone unturned to postpone being hanged, showing that, in spite of the horrible pictures they draw of the state of society in this country, they would fain continue to live in it and denounce it. There has, in fact, so far as we can hear, been no difference between the Anarchist in the presence of death and any other man. He clings to this world with as much tenacity as any capitalist or nobleman. If one may judge from the behavior of the Chicago band since their conviction, they do not find life in an organized capitalistic society such a very bad thing after all. The charge they bring against the prosecution and the courts is really that they have treated them anarchically. What the prosecution and courts have done, they complain, is to disregard the law of the land in their manner of trying them. But the fundamental anarchical doctrine is that when you get hold of a man you do not like, if you are stronger than he, you may do what you please to him—that is, try him legally, or try him illegally, or kill him without a trial. So that even if everything the Anarchists say of the manner in which they were tried be true, it is irrelevant. The men composing the court and jury and the prosecuting counsel had an unimpeachable *à fortiori* right to try the Anarchists any way they pleased, because they might have destroyed them as soon as they caught them without any trial at all.

The truth is, there is no "grit" about our American variety of the Anarchist. The more austere and determined members of the sect do

not seem to come to this country, or else the climate and surroundings make them chicken-hearted after they get here. We have apparently no such determined cutthroats as the Russian Nihilists, who, when they are caught, instead of whimpering, and whining, and appealing and raising points of law, wait silently and cheerfully for the hangman. When they throw bombs, they know that they stake their own lives on the result, and when they lose, pay the forfeit like men. Spies and Lingg and the rest ought to try to imitate them. Nothing would do more to spread the Anarchical creed and make it respectable in this country than a readiness to die on the part of the chiefs of the school. Nothing does more to discredit Anarchy than any display of a desire on their part to live among the capitalists and their slaves, and witness the daily robbery of the laborer by the employer. A good Anarchist ought to have, in fact, a certain longing for the gallows, as a conspicuous place in which to testify his faith in his own hideous creed.

THEOLOGY AND THE NEWSPAPER.

THE most remarkable thing about the Springfield missionary debate has been little noticed. This was the almost purely theological nature of the discussion and the decision. What we mean is the comparative absence of secondary and involved issues. There was some question, it is true, of ecclesiastical position, and of the control of ecclesiastical funds, but this was wholly subordinate; in the minds of both parties to the dispute the great thing was the decision of the purely theological question as to probation beyond the grave. The practical outcome will be insignificant: one man rather than another will be Home Secretary, the new corporate members of the Board will be conservatives, the half-dozen rejected candidates will not have their cases reconsidered. It was the matter of doctrine that was seen to be the great thing, and the whole debate turned on that.

Doubtless many have been impressed with a vague sense of there being something obsolete and far away in the action of this nineteenth-century council gravely deciding a point in theology, but few, perhaps, have perceived the agency of the newspaper in making the whole proceeding seem such an anachronism. In fact, the theological spirit has no more deadly enemy than the modern reporter, and its weakening is more due to his activity than it suspects. Nothing has done more to discredit the Council of Nicea, for example, than the revelations made, all the years after, of its factious and unseemly temper, of the personal and political elements at work in it, of a real division of opinion despite an appearance of harmony. The result arrived at was published with a round *Nobis placuit et Spiritui Sancto*, and was accepted by the Christian world with a submissiveness which would not have been so general, we may be sure, if the people of the time had known what we now know of the real doings of the Council. But the Springfield Council, if we may so call it, had its corresponding unveiling immediately. The Eusebiuses of the contemporary newspaper were

there taking notes, not for posterity to disinter, but for all the world to read in the next morning's telegraphic despatches.

Now, a debate on theology, especially on some abstruse point of theology, cannot but suffer from this sort of intrusion and publicity. The short-hand reporter and the theological debater are not congenial. The special correspondent and the interviewer work havoc with speculative theology. The newspaper makes such a full disclosure of all the balancing of opinion and mixed motives entering into the decision of an ecclesiastical court, that the decision is at once robbed of half its force and nearly all of its impressiveness. The more recondite matters of theology seem to demand an atmosphere of mystery. They undoubtedly gain much if they can be surrounded with the secrecy and awe attaching to the early councils of the Church. But the newspaper will have none of that. Its realistic treatment dispels all the glamour; it makes a pitiless exposure of divided sentiment, gives the antecedents of debaters, records the strength of opposing factions. Then, too, the fully published reports of the debate bring about a disparagement of theological authority; for they show theologian pitted against theologian, professor against professor. In other words, the decision is practically taken away from the theologians and referred to the public. The reason of the case is alone looked for, and the theologian is called down from the pedestal which he is accustomed to mount when he addresses laymen. Worst of all, in the hands of some of the most widely read newspapers of the day, the whole awful doctrine at issue is degraded into a topic of the time, to be discussed as flippantly as any other. Theology cannot stand sensational journalism. Few, we imagine, realize how the treatment of the finer things of religion in the style which, we regret to say, is adopted by the great mass of modern newspapers, tends to take the fibre out of all that is sacred in the minds of their readers.

A remoter effect of the newspaper upon the action of the Board at Springfield will be to impair, if not wholly to nullify, the value of its decision in those very parts of the earth for which it was chiefly intended. That is to say, there are newspapers and newspaper readers in China and Japan and India. It is certain that pretty full accounts of the doings of the American Board will reach the people of those countries. They will understand, accordingly, that, whatever the missionaries may think or say, in loyalty to the instructions given them by the Board in this country, the question of the fate of dead heathen is an open one. Within the year the *Christian Union* published a letter from Japanese Christians, setting forth their great interest in the matters discussed by the Congregationalist denomination in this land, and intimating a hope that the decision would turn in favor of the liberal view. It will be known to such foreign observers that the liberal view has a great body of adherents here, has a considerable following in the Board itself; and they will be apt to think that what is not a heresy in the United States cannot be a deadly error in their own country.

INTERNATIONAL RAILROAD CONFERENCES.

PROBLEMS of international traffic in Europe are becoming almost as important as those of inter-State traffic in America. They present much greater difficulties, owing to the absence of any controlling power to which the different parties can appeal. But in spite of this, fundamental trouble, and in spite of the many hindrances due to difference of language and character, much progress has already been made towards uniformity. There is every reason to expect that this progress will continue, and that railroad traffic will be the first department of private business activity to be subjected to a really effective and well-settled code of international law.

The more important questions of railroad liability have nearly reached this stage. An agreement was made a year ago by representatives of France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Russia, and nearly all the minor European States, by which the conditions of such liability, and the mode of procedure for enforcing it, were accurately defined. This code was not the work of a moment. As early as 1874 the Swiss Government took steps to call a conference of representatives of different nations for this purpose. The plan was carried out in 1878. The delegates resolved to attempt the formation of a general agreement with supplementary provisions for its execution; but they had not sufficient powers to enable them to enter upon details, which were reserved for a second conference that met in 1881. This body succeeded in agreeing upon a plan, which was submitted to the different Governments for approval. Unfortunately, the delegates had not been given sufficient authority to make their action binding on the States which they represented. The result was that while each Government approved the general plan, and was willing to accept most of the details, almost every one insisted on some slight modification which was peculiarly objectionable to some other State. Germany was the chief sinner in this respect. Nothing positive could be accomplished until the meeting of a third conference in 1886, at which the delegates had fuller powers as well as added experience. The agreement adopted in 1886 has not yet been ratified by all the States interested, but there seems to be no doubt of its ultimate adoption. It determines the manner of shipment, the details of the bill of lading, the rights and responsibilities of the different parties interested, both under the normal operation of the contract and where exceptional circumstances intervene. It also defines the right of action of the various parties in the case of failure to comply with the conditions of the contract, determining which courts have jurisdiction and how their decrees are to be enforced.

It need hardly be said that this agreement does not provide for international regulation of rates. The representatives of the different States had all declared that purely personal discrimination was unlawful within their borders, and therefore many articles of the agreement were framed with that fact in view, and imply the existence of such a prohibition. Further than this it was impossible to fetter the action of the separate States. Nor does the

agreement deal with the details of railroad operation except such as are directly concerned with the safety of the goods shipped and the determination of liability for damage.

The impulse towards international uniformity in railroad operation comes from another quarter—from those persons who are practically concerned in railroad management, and who see the difficulties and dangers which arise without it. The first step in this direction was taken as long ago as 1847, when Germany was split up into a number of independent States by the establishment of the German Railroad Union (*Verein Deutscher Eisenbahn-Verwaltungen*). This soon came to include not merely the roads of Prussia, Bavaria, Hanover, Saxony, etc., but those of Austria and other States outside of the limits of Germany proper. As far as its influence reached, the Association had anticipated most of the provisions of the proposed international agreement.

The growth of national feeling, not to say national hatreds, at the time of the wars of 1866, 1870, and 1878, tended to check the impulse towards unity of management. But this check could not last long. As international traffic grew in volume, the necessity for handling it safely and economically grew too strong to be retarded by any mere sentiment. Two years ago an international railroad conference was called at Brussels, in the hope that it might pave the way for uniform action in many matters of railroad administration.

Although the Brussels Conference was largely attended, its results were not very satisfactory. It had tried to do too much. Many questions were discussed from many points of view, but few definite results were reached. One all-important thing, however, was accomplished. The Brussels Conference did not teach people much about managing railroads, but it taught them a great deal about managing conferences. A second meeting of the same kind, which was held at Milan last month, was better arranged in its plan and more fruitful in its results. Instead of roaming at random all over the field of railroad management, its promoters laid out certain specific questions for discussion, on which there was some prospect of reaching an agreement. Instead of issuing their invitations indiscriminately, they took special care to secure the attendance of exactly the kind of men whose views would be worth something. The attendance was by no means confined to Europe. All quarters of the globe sent delegates. Of American roads, we understand that the Pennsylvania Railroad system was particularly well represented.

Comparatively few of the matters discussed are of much popular interest in America. The question of rates was not dealt with, because it was impossible to take any international action upon it for the present. Many of the topics will be of little importance outside of continental Europe. Others, like the use of metal instead of wood for ties, have a future rather than a present interest for Americans. Still others are of immediate importance on both sides of the Atlantic, but are too purely technical to interest the general reader. Such are the questions concerning the use of steel in bridges, or concerning the advisability of allow-

ing different engineers to run the same locomotive. But no one, however slight his knowledge of the technical points, will fail to appreciate the significance of having them discussed in international conferences—discussed not as matters of purely scientific interest, but as subjects of practical arrangement and compromise. The design is to secure a common understanding, on matters of international importance, between the representatives of different nations. The Conference of Milan has accomplished much in this direction, and it is confidently believed that the next meeting, which is to be held at Paris two years hence, will do a great deal more.

THE PARLIAMENTARY INTERIM.

LONDON, October 11, 1887.

THIS year there has been no repose for politicians. The Parliamentary session had hardly closed when the autumn campaign in the provinces began. Mr. Morley, Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Rosebery, and Sir William Harcourt have all made important speeches at different places. The leaders of the Tory party are still enjoying a short and hard-earned holiday, but there has been no lack of Conservative oratory from the lesser lights of the Government. Lord Salisbury is to speak at Oxford, Mr. Gladstone at Nottingham, and Lord Hartington at some other town. The deliberate verdict of Great Britain in the great Irish controversy is yet to be delivered, and each party is straining every nerve to win it. The present object of public attention and the theme of political speeches is the development in Ireland of the policy of the Government. They have obtained from Parliament extraordinary powers, which they declared to be necessary for and calculated to insure the maintenance of order, and which the Opposition denounced as unnecessary, dangerous to liberty, provocative of disturbance. Under these powers they have decreed the suppression of the National League. How far will the hopes of the Government be realized? Newspaper columns are now filled with the fatal affray at Mitchelstown, the prosecution of the Lord-Mayor of Dublin and Mr. O'Brien, and the murder of Head-Constable Whebelan. Any one of these events would be enough to produce a profound sensation if it happened in this country; and though the British elector has long been accustomed to regard unhappy Ireland as the natural home of disorder, the causes of which were practically beyond his ken, he now feels constrained to examine such occurrences with nicer observation.

It would be going too far to assume that the Government have been anxious to provoke collision. That, indeed, is most unlikely. But if it were said that the incident at Mitchelstown is a symptom of the spirit of the new régime—a sign that the army of constabulary and other limbs of the law who keep order in Ireland, will be inclined to regard the Nationalists as enemies over whom they have at last got the upper hand—the inference would be more difficult to gainsay. On the other hand, the Loyalist party in Ireland, as it is called, are for the moment no better pleased. They see that the intervention of the police, resulting in a panic and the death of three innocent persons, is not an act of firmness which can bring any credit. They complain of the blundering in the Sullivan prosecution, and of the impunity of Mr. O'Brien and others who continue to defy the law. They accuse the Government of irresolution.

There is probably some truth and some error in the charge. There are not wanting signs in