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SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics-Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

LITIGATION ARISING FROM SUICIDE.

From the N. Y. Times. A suit has just been settled in our Superior Court of a kind that always deeply interests a community. A widow brought an action against an insurance company to recover \$10,000, the amount of a policy upon the life of her late husband. The company set up for defense that the policy was rendered void by the suicide of the insured. It was shown that he died suddenly, shortly after an examination of his entangled accounts with another company of which he was an officer. The defendant contended that the deceased took strychnine; the plaintiff proved by medical testimony and a post mortem examination that he died of heart disease. Upon the proof, the defense was withdrawn and the case settled by payment of the policy. It is said that a case of actual suicide, that of a man named Belden, who committed the act in Ludlow street jail, will be brought into our courts, as a bank of this city holding a policy on his life as collateral for a debt, purposes bringing an action for recovery against the company that issued the policy.

It is rarely that a company successfully defends itself in a suit of this character. It appears necessary that the defendant should prove not only the fact of suicide, but the intention. Even if the act is not at all accidental, it is probably committed during melancholy or frenzy, when it is questionable whether the mind of the individual is entirely under the control of reason. A company could scarcely expect to prove that the deceased committed the act for the purpose of precipitating the maturity of the policy: yet it must clear up every doubt as to the sanity of the person at the time of the occurrence. For, if the unfortunate man was not a responsible being, the company remains responsible for its obligation. To free the company his suicide should be as deliberate as though he had considered the advantages and disadvantages of his act, and selected it as a judicious mode of winding up his affairs.

It is currently reported that an insurance was paid to the survivors of a lady who is believed to have taken morphine for the purpose of causing death, last year, in Connecticut, and there was no attempt at litigation. An English company, quite recently, where there was no doubt about the suicide of the deceased, is said to have deposited \$10,000, the amount of the policy, with a trust company in this city, to be paid to the successful claimant. The insurance company does not propose to dispute the policy, but awaits the decision of our Supreme Court whether the payment shall be made to the heirs of a deceased wife or a present widow.

In addition to the difficulties of defense, the odium that attaches to any delay in the settlement of an insurance claim is apt to work great injury to a company. If a jury can be persuaded to decide in favor of a soulless corporation and against an interesting widow, the sympathies of the public are also to be considered when the concern intends to do any further business. The risk of such occurrences is, moreover, not an important element in calculating vital contingencies. There are probably not more suicides in the United States than one per annum to every 15,000 of population. In our cities such acts are proportionally more frequent, but the ratio can hardly exceed one in 7500. Among those whose lives are insured, being distinctively the more prudent class, the actual number of suicides must be very small. In fact, the real excuse for retaining the "death by his own hand" clause in life policies, is the fear that its absence may tempt the insured to hanker after felo de se. With many of our companies it is a dead letter; a form, copied from forms in use in England; but almost as much a relic of barbarism as the former English statute under which a person committing suicide had to be buried by the roadside with a stake driven through his body, while his estate became escheated to the Crown. But whatever may be the system of an insurance company, litigation is, in all respects, its worst policy. In flagrant instances a compromise can usually be effected that would be cheaper than a lawsuit. Already, indeed, some companies propose to make the clause inoperative after the policy has run a certain length of time, and it is probable that before long they will "reform it altogether."

JAPANESE HOSPITALITY.

From the N. Y. Tribune. Considerable surprise is expressed in England at the promptness and cordiality with which the Duke of Edinburgh was received by the Mikado of Japan, and no less perplexity and indignation at the refusal of the Majesty of China to grant his Royal Highness an interview. The conduct of the sovereigns is contrasted in a tone that once more shows the determination of English writers to consider these two Oriental empires from the same stand-point. The fact is, that there is not the slightest similarity either in the character of the people or the principles of their Government. The exclusiveness of China is a policy which has existed for hundreds of centuries, while that of Japan is of comparatively recent origin. The natural temper of the Chineseat least of those in authority-is suspicious, reserved, and selfish. That of the Japanese is confiding, open, and generous. reigners have only themselves to blame for their rigorous exclusion during a period of more than two hundred years from these flouishing islands. Their first visits were welcomed with delight, and, under the teachings of Francis Xavier and his followers, the simple inhabitants were rapidly embracing the Christian faith, when the politico-religious intrigues of the Dutch and Portuguese threatened the security of the throne and destroyed the tranquillity of the entire nation. So flagrant were the crimes of the contending colonists that Christianity presently became the synonym, in the apprehension of the native rulers, of every speof disorder, treachery, and cruelty. Their expulsion was simply an act of self-preservation on the part of the Japanese Government.

Subsequent events, from reign to reign, did little to soften the bitterness of this conviction. The occasional visits of English. French, and Russian ships were almost in-variably accompanied by barbarous brutalities, and it was not until the expedition of Commodore Perry, whose attitude towards the islanders was as courteous and considerate as it was dignified and firm, that their hostility to foreigners was in any degree abated. Since that period the Government has consistently displayed its willingness to enter gradually into communication with the outside world. Japan is not free from internal troubles, and the jealousy of certain powerful nobles is still an obstacle to the accomplishment of the desired result. But at no time has there been anything in the behavior of

the leading officials at variance with the hos- | It is a fine remark of Mr. Ruskin, and illustrates

The Springfield Republican finds a violent contrast in the appointment of Mr. George H. Butler as Consul-General to British India, and General Grant's saying that he might have felt insulted by a proposal to reveal pri-vately the financial policy of the administration, "had it come from any other but a person like Fisk. But coming from a man so destitute of moral character, I didn't think it worth noticing." Butler having been an inti-mate friend and follower of Mr. Fisk, the Republican thinks the two must be on a level in respect of moral character, so that if Fisk could not give an insult, Butler ought not to be made a Consul-General. Our Springfield contemporary is apparently not aware that, previous to being appointed a Consul-General Mr. Butler had broken off with Mr. Fisk so far that he had, on Friday, Oct. 22, given evidence very damaging to him in the suit of Orlando W. Joslyn. If, then, Mr. Butler's moral character has suffered in the estimation of the moralists of Springfield, from his intimacy with Mr. Fisk, ought they not to regard it as perfectly restored by his turning against his bosom friend, and doing him such harm as the law allows? And is not Mr. Butler's appointment as Consul-General at Calcutta to be esteemed as the most appropriate means which General Grant could now employ for expressing his condemnation of Mr. Fisk's destitution of moral character, and his approval of Mr. Butler's honest efforts to vindicate his own good reputation by putting Fisk down? We trust that the Springfield philosophers

will now study this subject more deeply and comprehensively. They will thus in time come to understand that the interests of morality have really gained very much by the appointment of Mr. Butler, and that it has added a new laurel to the many previously gained by General Grant since he became President.

FATHER HYACINTHE.

From the N. Y. Herald. The eloquent ex-Carmelite has at length been allowed to enjoy the quiet which he desires, now that the storm of curiosity occasioned by his arrival has abated. He has already been here long enough to disappoint the expectations of Protestants that they might find in him either a proselyte or an instrument for advertising their peculiar modes of belief, and long enough, we may add, to be disabused of any illusion which he may himself have had that he might find allies among the Catholic clergy in the United States, on account of the separation between Church and State in this country. In no other country, perhaps, is what is called in France 'ultramontanism' so univer-Our Catholic clergy out-pope the Pope himself. There are no Romanists at Rome who are more devoted than they are to Papal supremacy. In France the storm with which the famous letter of Father Hyacinthe threatened the Roman Church was very quickly dispelled. M. Gaillardet writes to the Courrier des Etats Unis that not only have the bishops who had been credited with an intention of defending the ex-Carmelite before the Council protested against such "complicity with apostacy," but his programme has been repudiated by the Bishop of Sura himself, whose last book in favor of the Gallican Church has been as harshly treated by the Ultramontanist bishops as the "subversive ideas" of Father Hyacinthe. Meanwhile, in his isolated position, Father Hyacinthe will have ample opportunities, during his American tour, for impartially examining the practical results of some of his theories.

GRANT AND HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW,

From the N. Y. Herald.

President Grant is reported to have said, in a conversation with Senator Thayer, of Nebraska, on Wednesday, that "while he was on good personal relations with Judge Dent, he nevertheless felt bound by public duty to oppose his election and desire the success of Alcorn." In August last he had addressed Judge Dent a letter advising him not to connect himself with the conservative movement against the party now supporting Alcorn, the former being, he said, the enemies of the administration and Government. Moreover, he had seen a published telegram representing Dent as having said that the President sustained him as a candidate for Governor of Mississippi. This statement he had enclosed to the Judge, asking if the latter had been correctly reported. No reply had as yet been received; but it is manifest that the President is getting tired of brothers-in-law. He cannot let them take his name in vain, either in financial or in political speculations. He feels "bound by public duty," not by private relationship.

TREES.

From the Saturday Review. It has been remarked as curious that flowers form by no means so favorite a subject with painters as trees; and the fact is one which at first sight we should not perhaps altogether expect. Brilliancy of coloring is a quality which a painter, above all men, must be disposed to appreciate; and while trees are clad in a nearly uniform sober green, flowers will farnish examples of all kinds of tenderness and exquisiteness, from the melting hues of the rose to the pure white of the lily of the valley, or the deli-cate purple of the petunia. And indeed most men who take an interest in vegetation of any kind care more for flowers than for trees; they will get much more pleasure of a direct kind from their geraniums and rose-beds than from their shrubberies. But the painter is an exception. He will mark every gradation of light and color on the trunk of a pine far more readily than he will look at the finest garden flower in

the world.

The reason for this fact, which at first appears singular, is in reality very simple. It is that trees as a whole are much more noble objects. more worthy to be known, than flowers as a whole; and the painter, who studies the matter more deeply than ordinary men, is perfectly aware of this fact. Flowers carry nearly all their spleudor on the outside; and this again is in great numbers of instances mainly the creation of man. Few of our garden and hot-house flowers do not owe their most obvious beauty to assiduous care and cultivation. Trees, on the other hand, have an intrinsic grandeur and stability; they do not lean on us, they are not deendent on us; they are in a certain sense our rivals, and in some countries successful rivals that in their vigorous growth extrude man from the field. And since a painter, if he is to be anything of a painter, must likewise be some thing of a poet, and must discern and shadow forth the inner life as well as the outer form of things, a good painter will find that trees are much more to his purpose than flowers. Not that there is not a certain charm in seeing a flower like the rose put off something of its ori-ginal wildness and hardiness, in order, by its increased color and fragrance, to contribute more to the delight of man. But this process must not be carried too far, or else the flower becomes a monstrosity: and even if this point be not reached, it is easy to draw out the sensuons pleasure to such an extent that the poetical and reflective pleasure is annihilated.

pitality just now extended to the English prince.

GEN. GRANT PROMOTING MORALITY.

From the N. Y. Sun.

The Springfield Republican finds a violent

This excellence of a strong independent life, which is the exception among flowers, is the rule among trees. There is no tree which painters delight more in painting than the pine; and why? A pine is not a remarkably beautiful tree: it is somewhat stiff and prim, especially in its younger years: for picturesque-ness of contour it falls far below the oak and the elm. But the pine, more than any other tree, wages a systematic warfare against the adverse forces of nature; it contends against them, not singly, but in serried phalauxes; requiring little nourishment, making little dis-play, it lives, and lives by union. This is what gives the Norwegian forests their power over the imagination; in this they perhaps surpas an Italian landscape as much as the Italian land-scape surpasses them in beauty. Yet when birches are mingled with the pine forests, the two together have real beauty, and a charm belongs to neither separatelythe harmony of strength and grace, of firmness and flexibility. Nowhere have we seen this more perfectly than in the forests that skirt the road from Christiania to Bergen; the rolling masses of foliage descend continuously from the ridges to the valleys, their outline indiscernible and fading into a kind of blue haze. The intermixture of trees is seldom so close as here; but wherever seen it is noticed and remembered instinctively, especially in the early spring, when the emerald green of the birch stands out against the dark masses behind. Next to the Scandinavian countries, Syria and

Tyrol are the parts of Europe most renowned for their pine forests. They are, however, relacountries, on account of the greater prominence of the other features of the land-scape; and we believe, also, their timber is not reckoned so good. Yet even Norway yields to Canada, whose interminable forests are the great reservoir from which timber is imported to England. The pines of Europe are seldom of any great size; but it is said that there are, or were lately, some in Thuringia that attained the marvellous height of three hundred feet, an altitude (if true) almost rivalling the Wellingto-nians of California. In England we have long ceased to have any large forests, whether o pine or other trees, to boast of. And though Dartmoor Forest, the Peak Forest, and other such places are popularly supposed to have been once what the name at present indicates, this appears to be a misapprehension; the word forest, like the word wood, meant originally nothing more than a tract of wild untilled country. Certainly it is difficult to imagine any large growth of trees of any kind on the barren lime stone upland to which the name of the Peak Forest is given. Yet there can be no doubt that the trees have been very much thinned all over England in the last two or three centuries. example, it is a tradition of the older inhabitants that the valley of Troutbeck in Westmoreland, now comparatively bare, was once a continuous

It is, however, the same assiduous cultivation which has prevented us from having in England any woods comparable in size even to those of Germany, that has rendered our individual trees as a rule so much larger in growth than those of the Continent. There are few parts of England that have not some park conspicuous for the magnitude of its oaks, its elms, or its beeches. Of oaks we have measured one near Albury, in Surrey, which at five feet from the ground measured nearly twenty-nine feet in circumference. In Windsor Park is a beech of yet larger dimensions; and we remember one on the Barle in Somersetshire from whose massive trunk sprang four separate branches, each equal in size to an ordinary tree. This last, unless we are mis taken, grew in a farmyard. It is, however, neither oaks, nor elms, nor beeches, that have the largest girth of any English tree, but yews. Yews like that at Aberedw in Radnorshire, or that at Darley in Derbyshire, when once seen, will never be forgotten, from their nuge size, their picturesque, battered, venerable There is no tree that has more attracted the attention of poets. There are few to whom the description in Rokeby of that weird and gloomy grove on the Greta will not occur; nor are Wordsworth's lines less celebrated on

"that fraternal four of Borrowdale loined in one solemn and capacious grove Hinge trunks! and each particular trunk the growth Of intertwisted fibres serpentine, I peoiling and inveterately convolved, or uninformed with phantasy, and looks

That threaten the profane." We hear of yews in Scotland upwards of fiftysix feet in circumference. The yew is perhaps the only tree that up to extreme old age grows constantly and incontestably more striking in appearance: for though there is no tree that does not improve as it grows to maturity, while there are many to which a certain appearance of anti quity is becoming, yet a decrepit oak or elm has lost more by the decay and fall of its branches than it has gained by the venerable-ness of its trunk. With a yew the reverse is the

The part of the Continent that, of all within our knowledge, has the most stately deciduous trees, is Holstein. This comes from a circumstance which has no doubt partly caused the fine growth of trees in England-namely, the per-sistent raininess of the climate. By the numerous lakes of Holstein, and sloping down to the sea, are beech groves superior to any in the whole of Germany. It is curious, by the way, why the beech is so rare a tree in Norway. We cannot call to mind a single specimen of it, though planes and other not hardy trees are by no means rare near Christiania.

The oak, the eim, and the beech are the un-questioned monarchs of all English vegetation. he yew in a way stands by itself, as being so much rarer and so much more singular a tree. These trees alone have individual grandeur, and a grandeur which is not antagonistic to, but rather contains, beauty. We have never been able to understand the dietum of Mr. Rus kin, that the oak is the least graceful of trees. The curves in the boughs of a well-grown oak are no doubt separately less beautiful than those of an ash or beech; but they have a harmony which more than redeems their individual defeet; they suit well with one another. The only ugly trees in England (and those not by their own fault) are pollard willows. The step from caks and beeches to the finest of our common garden-trees, such as sycamores and acaclas, is a step downwards; it is the step from the grandeur of nature to the symmetry of art; and yet we may make the change not without a sense of pleasure. Cer-tainly there will be some to whom a ingle yew rooted in the rock, a single oak bearng on its bark the records of ten centuries, will be worth twenty acadas or a hundred planes. But yet what an exquisite tree is, for instance, the sycamore. It is the most architectural of trees; the boughs spread in horizontal layers, the leaves are like the fretting on some lofty column of a cathedral, the bark is like chased silver. There are some in the grounds of St. John's, Cambridge, with which, in the spring, before their leaves are eaten away and marred no single fault could be found. And so here and there we may see an old acada in which the contrast between the small delicate leaves and the black rugged bark is as striking as any-thing in vegetation. Then there is one fruit tree, the pear, in which the graceful curve of

the laden boughs is not always as much noticed as it might be. It is an amusing employment to detect the differences between different kinds of trees in winter and early spring, before the leaves are out. The contour of the branches is then most visible, and in some trees—the ash particularly—this is no small advantage. Without its leaves and at a distance even with its leaves, a large ash is sometimes curiously like an oak. Again the long black bads of the beech, the round red ones of the lime, the flowery roughness of those of the elm, and the fuzzy balls that hang from the plane—the tree so ill-used by London smoke and fog-are all characteristic. Interesting, too it is to examine the law by which the bads spring out along the twig of any particular tree. In some each bud is precisely at the opposite side of the twig from the last bud; in some it

goes a third of the way round, so that every third bud is on the same side of the twig; in some each bud goes two-fifths of the way round, so that every fifth bud is on the same side of the twig; in some, three-eighths of the way round; and in some, five-thirteenths. These fractions are connected by a curious mathematical rela-tion, which will easily be seen; every fraction is formed from the two preceding fractions by adding, separately, their numerators and denominators. As an Illustration of our meaning, if the bads on a twig of the current tree were connected by a spiral line running round the twig, it would be found that every eighth bad would be on precisely the same side of the twig, and that be-tween two such buds there would be three coils

Lastly, to the poet or philosopher there are interesting inquiries suggested by trees-unan-swerable, it is true, and therefore poetic or philosophic. They have what the Germans call menschliche verhallnisse-human relations. They sleep, for unquestionably their leafless state is asleep; and it is connected with our nightly sleep through the link of the hibernating animals. They have sexual functions; have they also feeling? The pollen that floats through the air may be a means of communication between them. They can discern from a distance, for a tree will push its roots across a ditch when the soil on the other side of the ditch is better for it than its own And, to connect all these facts; it is known that animals and vegetables are at their outset identical. There are minute living organisms which at different periods of their existence belong now to the animal, now to the vegetable, order They are animalcules with pink eyespots thrown off by the plant; then again they reunite with themselves, and with the plant of which they are a portion. But this would lead us into provinces in which now we cannot intrude further.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

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L OST CERTIFICATES.—NOTICE IS HERE-the given that application has been made to the City Treasurer for the issue of duplicates of the following de-acribed certificates of the Six per Cent. Loan of the Oity of Philadelphia (free of taxes)— No. 4:5, 8:500, dated October 5, 1884. 4:50, 8:500, " 25, 1884. 4:50, 8:500, " 25, 1884. 6:71, 8:500, " November 30, 1864.

\$800, in name of JOHN H. B. LATROBE, in AUSTIN & OBERGE.
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