

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals upon Current Topics—Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

PROPERTY, RENTS, AND PRICES.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

The main causes for the decrease of house rents and store rents at the present letting season are, (1) the large decrease in the price of house-building materials; (2) the fall in the cost of labor employed in house-building; (3) the great increase in the value of currency since the time when its depreciation was put forward as the reason for doubling and trebling the rent rates; (4) the general decline in the wages of all classes of workmen, and in the price of most of the means and necessaries of life; (5) the decrease of profits in business and trade, and the general diminution of incomes; (6) the great amount of house-building carried on in the city and suburbs during the last three years, which has given some relief from our former overcrowded condition; (7) the extensive migration of recent times from the city itself to places adjacent, which has also given relief to the city; (8) the very large number of houses and stores throughout the city that are now to let, and that cannot be rented on the terms demanded by landlords.

The owners of houses and real estate have for some years past enjoyed very profitable and satisfactory returns from their investments. It is doubtless unpleasant to them to see any cessation in the yearly increase of the value of their property and the annual advance of their rents; and it is doubtless even more unpleasant for them to see the value of property at a standstill, and the rate of rents tending downward. But, at the same time, they ought not to remain unconscious of the great evils this city has suffered from the exorbitant rents people have been compelled to pay for some years past—rents which are exorbitant not only as compared with former times, but as compared with those paid in any other great city of America or Europe. The poorer classes have been crowded into foul and pestilence-breeding tenements. Tens of thousands of our most desirable citizens, active and enterprising men of families belonging to the middle classes, have been forced to leave New York and take up their residence in the adjacent towns of New Jersey, Connecticut, and Long Island. Not a few kinds of business heretofore carried on here have been altogether driven from the city—the persons engaged in them being unable to command such profits as would meet the exactions for rent. Branches of manufacturing industry, giving employment to large numbers of people, have in like manner been compelled to leave New York for more favorable localities.

In such ways as these, the prosperity of the city has been greatly retarded, even though it has increased in business and population. Its growth has not been of that sound, wholesome, vigorous, and vitalized kind most favorable to enduring prosperity and the welfare of the great mass of the community. It is our opinion that real estate owners themselves would be as much benefited as any other class by such an adjustment of property values and rent rates as would assist the other interests now operating to give stability to business, assurance to industry, and regulation to general prices.

THE OECUMENICAL COUNCIL AND THE AUTHORIZED VERSION OF THE BIBLE.

From the Pall Mall Gazette.

The correspondence in the columns of the Times on the subject of the authorized version of the Bible comes just in time to show that Protestants fall equally short with Roman Catholics of honestly admitting that religions, if they are to be believed, ought to be true. Lord Shaftesbury holds that certain doctrines are absolutely necessary to eternal salvation, and also holds that these doctrines are set forth in a series of books which form the Bible, just as those books came from their original writers. But he declines to put his two articles of faith together, and for fear that the essential doctrines may not be found to be stated in the original documentary record as clearly as he would like, he does not wish the world at large to be told with any authority what conclusions competent persons who have examined the record have formed concerning its meaning. He has satisfied himself that his creed is contained in a representation of the original documents popularly known as the authorized version, and therefore he desires that uninitiated persons should remain under an impression, known to be a great degree false, that the authorized version is literally correct. This course of thought has the strongest resemblance to the train of ideas which has led the Ultramontane school of Roman Catholics to desire that the Pope should be authoritatively proclaimed infallible. A number of pious opinions have grown up inside the Church which a number of persons not accused of dishonesty or disloyalty nevertheless do not at present believe to be sustained by the sources of authority to which the Church appeals. Certain other opinions have grown up outside the Church, which the Ultramontanes believe to be wicked and mischievous as their ecclesiastical system, but which are nevertheless held by a number of Roman Catholics who cannot at present be authoritatively blamed. They therefore wish that the first class of opinions shall be made true, and the second class of opinions shall be made false; and in order to have this operation of making truth performed, they propose to declare the Pope, who they think will speak as they wish, divinely incapable of committing a mistake. The Pope is to be held to be infallible for a purpose independent of actual truth, just as for a purpose, also independent of actual truth, the authorized version is to be held to be absolutely without error. It would be difficult to show that the resemblance is not confined to the object desired, or to the lines of argument pursued. There is a curious similarity in the language about "our glorious English Bible" to the declaration of the Ultramontanes about giving a visible expression to Catholic unity. Here, however, the Roman Catholics have much the best of it. If rhetoric and metaphor are wanted to disguise the weakness of a priori reasoning, much more of them are at command of those who would defy a man than of those who would defy a book.

THE McFARLAND JURY.

From the N. Y. Times.

The right of challenging jurors may be seen exercised on a truly Brobdingnagian scale in this city whenever a trial of unusual importance is coming off. Nearly seven hundred citizens were subpoenaed in order that twelve men might be found of sufficient intelligence and fairness to try McFarland. If things go on at this rate, a small town will not be in a condition to afford the luxury of a jury much longer. Even New York might not be able to stand the burthen, and to business which half-dozens important trials going on at one time would be calculated to produce. The present system does not tend to further the ends of justice so much as to enable the counsel on each side to have a little "sparring" across the court, and waste a good deal of valuable time. They talk at one another about their respective cases, and "chaff" the citizens who have been summoned to the court, to their great inconvenience and loss. Thus, when a dealer in drams was called the other day, it was instantly seen to be an excellent method of greeting him to remark that he was "sounding," that he could not be beaten, and that he would make too much noise. The counsel added to the effect of these exquisite sallies by calling the gentleman "Mr. Drums." Perhaps we cannot have too much of such humor as this, but the Recorder (to say nothing of the prisoner) must have wished that the counsel would "leave their damnable faces and begin." When a man is on trial for his life the best of jokes may be lost upon him.

This abuse of the privilege of challenging jurors is short-sighted in every way. It does not find out the best men for the duty. The counsel, not satisfied with putting the question, "Have you any prejudices in your mind concerning this case?" frequently pressed the juror as to whether he had formed any impression whatever concerning it, and the mere reading of the newspapers seemed in some cases to be taken as sufficient disqualification. A man who does not read a newspaper cannot be a very fit person to sit on any jury; and as for "impressions," whose mind is free from them when a case of this kind is brought before the public? But a jurymen is sworn to render a verdict in accordance with the evidence produced during the trial—his mind is not supposed to be a "sheet of white paper" when he enters the court. It is ordinarily deemed sufficient for the judge to admonish the jury to dismiss from their minds all that they heard previous to the evidence, and juries are a rule intelligent enough to see for themselves the necessity of doing this. The oath surely ought to be strong enough to overcome mere "impressions," but not much importance seems to be attached in legal circles to oaths nowadays.

We do not see to legal to censure counsel for exercising their fair right of challenging jurors—

we would simply remind them that they go the very way to work to frustrate their own objects. People know now that they have only to go into court and say, "I have an opinion with regard to this case," and be excused at once from serving on the jury. They ought to be told—"Never mind your opinion—you will take an oath to decide strictly according to the evidence, and if you break that you go about for the rest of your life a perjured man." Of course, if any suspicion of special prejudice exists, a juror ought to be asked to be sworn, and if necessary, rejected. But this precaution could be taken without having 750 men in readiness to supply ten jurors.

PROGRESS OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION.

From the N. Y. Sun.

We received recently by the Cuban cable advices which had reached Havana from Mexico, St. Domingo, and Venezuela; but on a subject of far more importance, namely, that is going forward in Cuba, an absolute silence is maintained. Inasmuch as news must have reached Havana of many military operations since any accounts whatever have been vouchsafed, it is but natural to infer that the Spaniards who control this American cable have no news which they care about making known. This very natural conclusion is supported by all late telegrams from the island.

The purpose of the visit of the Captain-General to Puerto Principe was stated to be the inauguration of a campaign from that city which should fully wipe out the insurgents. This at least was the plan which was promulgated abroad; the truth, however, has been different from what it now is, but the existing doctrines have been held too long and too firmly to be materially changed by the recasting of the authorities at this date. The persons who, with Lord Shaftesbury, apprehend a great loosening of belief, are either persons who are in the habit of going through a bead-roll of texts which they cannot bear to have changed, or they are persons who, dimly discerning and acutely disliking the more searching processes of inquiry which lie beyond the application of mere scholarship, are determined to resist the first encroachments of that dangerous instrument the intellect. For all immediate purposes, we are not sure that a much greater revision of popular opinions on theological subjects would not be effected if a Bible without numbered and divided texts were to come into exclusive use than would be brought about by the most stringent revision of the authorized version. So long as theological doctrines are supposed to be proved by isolated texts, just as legal doctrines are established by citations from a code—the method, indeed, having been borrowed originally in all probability by the theologians from the lawyers—there will always be room enough for dispute whether a particular doctrine is proved, and in such a controversy the received doctrinal view will always have the advantage. There is so little chance practically of any considerable change of religious opinions resulting merely from a new translation, that one wonders that even a clergyman should be brought by fear of it to tolerate the scandals of the present version. If we say that much which is given in the Old Testament as a representation of the meaning of the minor prophets is sheer unmitigated nonsense, we probably only express the mature opinion of so respectable a person as Dr. Pusey.

At the time of this meeting De Rodas had just arrived at Puerto Principe. He went there to endeavor to gain over to his side not the Cuban patriots, but the pet of the rebellious Havana volunteers, Count Valmaseda. De Rodas was sent to Cuba after these same Rebels had driven out his predecessor, General Dulce, chiefly for the purpose of subduing what Mr. Hamilton Fish has obstinately refused to understand, that the island was lost to the Government unless these volunteers were brought into subjection. They selected De Rodas for the iron will and relentless cruelty which he had just displayed at Seville and Cadiz. But their hopes have been frustrated. De Rodas, in lieu of subjecting the volunteers, has been from his very advent subject to them, and Valmaseda has been his stumbling block. The Captain-General has abandoned the command of the home Government the recall of his rival, but Prim and Serrano are about as impotent in Spain as De Rodas is in Cuba. And now, as a last resort, as Valmaseda would not come to Havana, the Captain-General has gone to Puerto Principe trusting that the Count will meet him there. Respecting their interview, if it has taken place, no accounts have reached us; but it must have been of such a nature that its publication would damage the Spanish cause.

Meanwhile the admission of the cable that the Spaniards have a "small party" on the Key West railroad—a line which from the early days of the insurrection has been guarded by some three thousand Spanish troops—is ominous, when viewed with the magnifying glass indispensable for the deciphering of all accounts of Spanish losses that are allowed to reach us. Again, nothing has been heard of Goyeneche for some time. Rumors were afloat in Havana, at the sailing of the last steamer, that he had surrendered at discretion to General Jordan. Of Valmaseda's loss on the Canto no evidence has been received except the wounded Spanish soldiers at Manzanillo. Of course, at this important moment, any Spanish victory would instantly have been forwarded for use in Washington. The wonder is that the urgent need of one has not evoked it.

THE ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES' BOAT RACE—CAMBRIDGE VICTORIOUS.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The Oxford and Cambridge University eight-oared boat race contest came off on the river Thames on Wednesday. The struggle commenced at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. It was made on the usual course, from Putney to Mortlake, a distance of about four and a quarter English miles. The trial was short, sharp, and decisive. The Cambridge crew winning by one length in twenty minutes and thirty seconds. The Oxford were favorites at odds in the morning. Cambridge, however, reversed the popular anticipation and dissipated the outside calculations by a victory, the first which her sons have achieved over the boys of the light blue in ten years.

The scene on the banks of the river, and on the water itself, under the police rules and guidance of the Thames Conservancy, was brilliant and animated as in former years. London was "out" in holiday attire. The royalty, aristocracy, and democracy of Great Britain were side by side for the congratulatory and legislative gulf which has hitherto separated them having been narrowed considerably within a few years past, and being still in process of obliteration, or becoming at least more shallow hourly, like as to the condition of the river on the fringes of which they had congregated. If permitted to indulge in speculation in matters of science, we should say here that the temporary reversal of the fame and glory of Oxford may be attributed, to a certain extent, to the working of the measures of university reform which have been applied gradually of late by the English Parliament to the different seats of learning in that country. The colleges have received a new blood. They have more nearly the character of the organism or fibre of humanity in the classes, and hence the new, as it were, and more powerful sweep of the oar, the closer approach to an equality of power, the quick time, and the "jeetle ahead" only of the result. The shortest time previously made over the same course in the past ten years was made in the year 1868—a year of university reform—when the Oxford won in twenty minutes exactly.

The young men of Oxford and Cambridge universities have now contended in this manly aquatic sport twenty-seven times. In the year 1846 the first race was pulled over the course four and a half miles then—in our eighth, and the distance made in twenty-one minutes and five seconds. Of the whole number of contests Oxford has now won sixteen and Cambridge eleven. In addition to the regular struggles just mentioned, the universities men have contended together five times at the Henley regatta in the same heat for the grand challenge cup.

Of these races—to the year 1865—Oxford won three and Cambridge two. At the Thames National Regatta, June 22, 1844, Oxford beat Cambridge in a smart, exciting race. We sympathize with the young men of Britain in their steady pursuit and patronage of a civilizing, healthy sport. Its yearly progress marks the refining advance of a nation. Manly as free-born men, cosmopolitan and generous in spirit, and with a happy comminglement of the best blood and most healthy material of the Old World lands in their veins, hands in aquatic sports, as if America have taken in the earliest dawn of the history of the country. Broad and expansive in their views as is the land of their birth in territory and resource, they multiplied rowing clubs rapidly, the history of these American organizations filling a good sized portly manual to-day. Joys on the rivers, many of them have taken to the "wide, wide sea." They have "gone down" to the ocean in fleet yachts, under canvas and by steam, and crossing over the Atlantic, have surprised—we cannot say intimidated to Englishmen—the present stock by the exhibition of their personal elasticity, skill, and courage, as is known by the history of the yacht America victory to the present moment. John Bull has stared considerably; he has even growled; but we must recollect that John ia, for the most part, more a practical than an educated personage, and one who can fight a battle or run a race without troubling himself in the slightest degree about either the balances or retributions of humanity. Oxford and Cambridge have done well on the river. America will coax their men to the ocean. Here they may do better. It will be a vast change. Orsin Pinnini, "the keeper of her Majesty's bear gardens," memorialized Queen Elizabeth against "one idle Will Shakespeare" as demoralizing the "manly sports of bull-baiting." Yet the bull-fight has disappeared as an English sport. The logic of progress is inevitable, as the science medal men of both Oxford and Cambridge know. As proof we need only mention that the universities race commenced on Wednesday at five o'clock in the evening, London time, but the result was reported at the Herald building at two o'clock in the afternoon, New York time. Electricity and the prophecy of Puck.

THE MILLINERS' MUDDLE.

From the N. Y. Times.

A truly tragic announcement comes to us from Paris. Contemporaneously with the statement that the Emperor yearns to restore constitutional government to France, and that M. Ollivier is the political head of the nation, we have intelligence that the wife of that minister has intruded into the imperial prerogative of fashion, and has usurped the function of dictating to female France where-withal it shall be clothed. She has issued a notification that she will henceforth wear her "corsage" high, and that she expects her visitors to do the like. Whether her visitors will fulfil her modest expectation, and whether, if they do, they will be able to permeate Paris to secrete their shoulders under the imperceptible veil of sterner stuff than the transparent and illusive devices at present in vogue, ostensibly intended to conceal the upper dorsal and pectoral conformation of the female figure, but really resulting in a mere device, so to speak, to "advertise mystery and invite speculation," are altogether subordinate questions. The appalling fact is that the empire of fashion is no longer undisputed, and that there is no longer any single fountain of honor and of dominion in which female devotees can be able to permeate Paris to secrete their shoulders under the imperceptible veil of sterner stuff than the transparent and illusive devices at present in vogue, ostensibly intended to conceal the upper dorsal and pectoral conformation of the female figure, but really resulting in a mere device, so to speak, to "advertise mystery and invite speculation," are altogether subordinate questions. 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