Beecher and Switzerland.

To the Editor of The Press:

SIR: It was the writer's good fortune to spend a somewhat longer period than "three memorable weeks" in the land where, according to Mr. Beecher, "*for mere physical things all good Americans should go,*" and "*where nature is so transcendently* beautiful and men so wretched." Having had the privilege of talking with, as well as of "looking at the people," the impressions he received during a tour of several months in Switzerland were such as to confirm his previously adopted ideas that the Swiss were a brave, industrious, and ingenious nation. In the course of his wanderings, he saw, indeed, several cretins and a few cases of goitre, but to have said on that account that "*of all wretched creatures*" he "never saw any *more so than the Swiss,*" would have been as unjust and unfair as it would be to affirm that, because there are lazzaroni and banditti in Italy, the Italians are a nation of beggars and robbers; or, to base an equally sweeping denunciation of the character of Mr. Beecher's fellow-citizens, upon a glance at the demireps in the casinos and gambling dens of New York. The tourist may have been an indifferently acute observer, and must confess that he did not perceive the "coil," "imprisonment and drudgery," which made the people prematurely decrepit, nor did he notice any "children" that "were born a hundred years old." He visited several universities, and other educational institutions, and a number of manufactories, and also observed what appeared to be rather a remarkable degree of progress in agriculture, for a land little more than two hundred miles in its extreme length, from two-thirds of which the husbandman is forever debarred by mountains, glaciers, barren rocks, lakes, and rivers. He found that those same "wretched creatures" had a literature; that they had sharply defined ideas of liberty and human rights, and was much more strongly inclined to praise than to depreciate a people whose separate nationality had existed for centuries, and who had firmly established a republican government in the midst of despotisms pressing around and against them.

Is it not as painful as it is surprising, that a man of genius and of tact should, in the exordium of his reception address in Plymouth Church, have made such disparaging remarks as those before quoted, of a brave and manly race—that he should press his strictures by varied repetition, and drive them home to the minds of a vast assemblage by startling epithets and striking generalizations?

SIR, this is not a place for Switzerland. The land of Tell, the home of Calvin, the birth-land of Zwingli and Farel, the land which has sent forth men such as Muller and D'Aubigny, diplomatists like Kern, Fornerod, and Fasy, naturalists and geologists such as Agassiz and Guyot, *needs* neither defence nor eulogy. Many a bloody battle-field, where, as at Morgarten and Novara, their enemies bit the dust, attests how well the Swiss can *fight*, and the marble lion Lucerne, commemorating the intrepid guard of an amiable but weak-minded monarch, mutely tells how they can *die!* The existing institutions, not less than the past history of Switzerland, prove that the "men" who inhabit it are *worthy* to dwell among "those ordained mountains on which God has set his hand." They are Republicans—they love Liberty and Progress—they love Mr. Beecher for his championship of a cause dear to their hearts. As might have been expected, their sympathies are with us of the North, and against secession—a feeling which many of them have grappled with and killed on their own soil. No better book has been written upon the subject of our momentous struggle than that of the learned and venerable Gasparin, a Swiss citizen. No *true* friends of the slave can be found in New England, nor even in South Carolina, than in Switzerland.

Why, then, should a progressive Republican belletie, in the estimation of the unreflecting, a people with such tendencies and such sympathies?

A pretence for "the further side of the Simplon pass" is a matter of taste. For ourselves, we prefer a nation who *already have* "education, religion, and liberty," to others who *need only* those essentials "to make them one of the peoples;" just as we esteem an individual who is intelligent, truthful, and honest, to one who *needs only* intelligence, veracity, and honesty to make him a decent man. As to all that, *de gustibus non disputandum.* Praise "rejuvenating Italy" and the Italians "as the most favored nation of their "splendid future;" "thank God for England!" but do not administer a slap in the face to a nation whose friendship for the United States is more warm, and sincere than that of any other in Europe!

And now, sir, having, with no more than the usual audacity of a life-long Abolitionist, taken the liberty of friendly criticism upon what he considers a thoughtless aspersion of a spirited people, the writer would improve the occasion by protesting generally against every incautious use of intellectual power by those who are regarded as oracles by the masses.

So much from one who, if he cannot entirely appreciate Mr. Beecher's impressions of foreign travel, would heartily accord to that gentleman all honor as the friend of the slave and of

FREE SPEECH.

THE CITY.

The Thermometer.

DECEMBER 17, 1862.		DECEMBER 17, 1863.	
6 A. M.	12 M.	3 P. M.	6 A. M.	12 M.	3 P. M.
31	40½	37½	26	38	41½

WIND.

SW by S. WNW.. WNW E..... E..... E by N

SUICIDE.—Enoch Jones, aged 40 years, a prisoner in the Eastern State Penitentiary, committed suicide, on Wednesday evening, by hanging himself in a cell. He had been sentenced to four years imprisonment for assault, and all his time, except four months, had expired. He has been subject to fits for some time past. The coroner held an inquest on the body, and elicited the above facts.

DEATH OF A SOLDIER.—The following death was reported yesterday, at the Medical Director's office, Chestnut Hill Hospital, Germantown: William Wilson, private, Company B, 118th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers. Died December 13th, of chronic diarrhœa.

PUBLIC OFFICES.—Now that arrangments are being made to provide new offices for some of the departments, it is a matter of inquiry how all public offices be in the most important to the public. He ought to have an office somewhere in the county town.

CAMP WILLIAM PENN.—The friends of the 6th Regiment United States Cavalry, now at Camp William Penn, purpose giving them a Christmas reference to all *nevertheless* to help the project

THE SUBSCRIPTION AGENT reports the sale of $1,150,750 in five-twenties to-day, the amount being equally divided between the Western and Eastern cities.

THE following are some of the principal articles exported from this port to foreign ports for the week ending December 17, 1863:

ENGLAND.			
Petrol'm, refined, gal.	252,000		
FRENCH POSSESSIONS.			
Pork, bbls.....	100	$1,350	Flour, bbls.... 807
WEST INDIES.			
Beef, bbls.....	60	$1,175	Lard, lbs.... 43,734
Bread, bbls.....	330		Lard oil..... 1,210
Candles, boxes....	1,146		Pork, bbls.... 1,596
Butter, lbs.....	15,481	3,358	Pork, lbs....
Candles, lbs.....	45,500	7,105	Rye meal, bbls	35
Cheese, lbs.....	2,725	268	Shooks.....
Fish, pickled, bbl	25	654	Tobac, leaf, hhd	1
" dried, lbs.	14	1,211	" " bales....	92
Hams, lbs.....	11,011	2,168	Tallow, lbs....	2,168
Ind. meal, bbls	1,228	7,269	Flour, bbls....	3,890
Ind. Corn, bus	1,000	1,567		
CUBA.				
Ale, qrs.....	2,900	$384	Iron Railing..	$346
Beef, bbls.....	23	336	Potatoes, bbls..	170
Bread, cases....	4	159	Potatoes, bu	645
Cables.....		900	Shooks.....	
Iron machin'y		1,455	Tallow, lbs....	36,637
VENEZUELA.				
Bread, boxes....	12	$80	Lumber.....	$421
Butter, lbs.....	5,000	1,150	Petr'm, refd., bls	1,000
Drugs.....		468	Shooks.....	270
Hams, lbs.....	453	61	Stearine, lbs....	4,705
Iron machin'y		1,011	Tallow, lbs....	44,702
Lard, lbs.....	17,361	5,476	Flour, bbls....	375
PORTO RICO.				
Shooks.....				

The following are some of the principal articles imported into this port for the week ending December 17, 1863:

FOR CONSUMPTION			
Almonds, lbs....	310	$387	Linen yarn, bales	567
Bananas, bunches			Opium, cases,	
Beads, cases....	36	653	mons.....	263,600
Brimstone, tons.	70	1945	Olive oil,	
Books, parcels..		61	pipes.....	1591
China, cases....	21	658	Soda ash, cks	199
China clay, cks.	61	330	Salt, tons.....	406
Canary seed,			Steel, cases....	4
bbls.....	20	215	Tin plates, bxs	100
Cocoanut.....	4700	130	Woolen	
Filberts and			cases.....	1
walnuts, bus.	117	245	Oil, castor and	
Iron tires.....	195	4836	furniture.....	
WAREHOUSED.				

Sugar, 26 hhds, 21 bbls.....$2,266

CITY COUNCILS.

The regular stated meeting of both branches of City Councils was held yesterday afternoon

SELECT BRANCH.

President Lovett in the chair.

The reading of the journal was dispensed with.

Petitions, Memorials, &c.

Mr. KING presented a petition from the citizens of the Seventh ward asking Councils to vacate the position of Mr. George Iseman Riché as a member of Select Council, in consequence of his now holding the position of assistant master in the army. He desired that the consideration of it be made the special order of next Thursday, at five o'clock, saying that the Clerk furnished that gentleman a copy of the petition.

The Chair related the motion of Mr. King out of order.

Mr. UHLER moved to refer it to a special committee.

Mr. KING said he thought the City had decided, in the case of Mr. Duffield, that a committee has not the right to try a member, but that right was given to the Chamber. He hoped that no such reference would be made of it.

Mr. FULLER said that Mr. Riché has been amenable to this Chamber for several months past, but at the last second they call it out, and the reason for it is to affect the elections in Councils next year, and defeat the ends of justice.

Mr. KING said he did not understand that the word trial had anything to do with this matter. He thought a committee is what is necessary to examine this.

Mr. UHLER said this seemed to him a curious motive. They have got the white pocket handkerchief to cry at the right moment.

Mr. KING said he desired this question to be left to better judges, and this Chamber was the body to decide it. If the investigation take place, the Committee will make it will know that the petition shows the truth. He regretted that the petition would be treated respectfully.

Mr. KING said he wanted to hear the statement of facts, and therefore it would be best to refer it.

Mr. ARMSTRONG moved that the motion of Mr. Uhler, to refer the matter to a committee, be laid on the table, which was disagreed to—yeas 6, nays 15.

The motion to refer was agreed to—yeas 18, nays 3.

Mr. UHLER then moved that the special committee consist of five, which was agreed to.

Mr. ARMSTRONG moved that the committee be requested to report at the stated meeting after the next, which motion, on vote, fell.

Mr. KING presented a petition from the citizens of Mechanicsville, asking for a lot on which to build a school-house. Referred.

A communication was received from the residents of Cottage street in the First ward, asking for a lamp. Referred.

A communication was received from the president of the Cooper-shop Soldiers' Home, inviting Councils to be present at the dedication of the Home, which will take place at 11 o'clock A. M., on the 22d. Agreed to.

Reports of Committees.

The Committee on Girard Estates presented an ordinance making an appropriation of $91,000 for the support of Girard College during the year 1864; and also, to admit one hundred additional pupils.

Mr. DAVIS moved to postpone, and print the bill. The motion was lost.

The Chamber then went into a committee of the whole, to consider the several items. Mr. Armstrong in the chair.

Mr. DAVIS moved to strike out the item giving the matron a salary of six hundred dollars, and insert five hundred dollars.

His motion was not agreed to.

He then moved to make the salary seven hundred dollars, which is the amount the Board of Directors recommended. Disagreed to.

He also moved to strike out the item giving the president a salary of $2,700, and insert $2,000. Lost.

The other items were then agreed to, and the ordinance passed.

The Committee on Printing and Supplies presented an ordinance appropriating $3,220 to pay the clerks of Councils for printing and binding journals, &c., for the year 1863.

On motion, an amendment was added appropriating one hundred dollars to the page for services during the year.

After a short debate, the bill passed.

The Committee on Water Works presented a resolution authorizing the Chief Engineer of the Water Works to lay water-pipe in North street, between Fifteenth and Sixteenth streets. Passed.

The same committee also presented a resolution authorizing the appropriation of $1,735.17 to the department for supplying the city with water, to pay expenses of labor, &c., in fitting up offices. Agreed to.

The Committee on Schools presented a resolution authorizing the appropriation of $1,055.50 to the Board of School Controllers, for the purpose of paying for furniture and two new heaters in the Madison school-house. Agreed to.

The special committee which was appointed to ascertain whether any association was in existence to recover the Girard estate from the city, reported that no association existed which had that for its purpose.

Mr. MILLER moved that the Chamber proceed to the election of three managers to the Wills Hospital. Agreed to.

Messrs. Ed. C. Dougherty, Wm. Ellis, and Stephen Parrish were unanimously elected.

Mr. BUNN read in place a bill authorizing the Chief Commissioner of Highways to advertise for the purchase of all bricks, tramway stones, and gravels used by that department; also, to advertise for paving and repairing all streets, the contract to be awarded to the lowest bidder, and no contract to be awarded to any one who has not been a regular paver for at least five years; no street to be repaired or paved except by direction of the Commissioner of Highways; all repairing to be done according to specifications of the Chief Commissioner and Surveyor; the same to be paid monthly; fifteen per cent of each payment to be retained until the contract is finished; that the laying of tramway stones shall be done by the supervisor. The bill passed unanimously.

The ordinance for the extension of a sewer on Market street, from Eleventh to Twelfth, which was postponed at the last meeting, was taken up and passed.

On motion of Mr. UHLER, the bill postponed at a previous meeting, relating to a loan for the extension of the water works, was taken up, but not receiving a two-third vote, the bill fell.

The bill authorizing the repaving of Baker street, between Seventh and Eighth, was taken up and passed.

The orders of the day being postponed, Mr. WETHERILL moved that the Chamber proceed to reconsider the motion made to indefinitely postpone the bill fixing the tax rate for the year 1864. Agreed to.

Mr. WETHERILL moved to strike out sec. 4 of the bill, and insert the following: "That there shall be the following allowances made to the payers of taxes and penalties added for their non-payment by the Receiver of Taxes, to wit: At the rate of 12 per cent. per annum from the date of payment until the first day of January, if paid before the first day of September; if paid after the first day of September, and on or before the first day of October, an addition of one per cent., and if not paid until after the first day of October, then an addition of two per cent; shall be added to and payable on the same, and if not paid until after the first day of December, then an addition of three per cent. shall be added to and payable on the same."

The amendment was agreed to, and the bill passed.

The bill making an appropriation to pay the expenses of the entertainment given to the committee from Boston while on a visit to this city, and which was vetoed by the mayor, was taken up and passed, notwithstanding his objections.

The bill authorizing the grading of Huntingdon street, in the Twelfth ward, was taken up and passed.

The bill from Common Council appropriating three hundred dollars to pay the expenses of the joint committee appointed to tender the hospitalities of the city to the officers of the Russian fleet was agreed to. Adjourned.

COMMON BRANCH.

An invitation to be present at the dedication of the Cooper Shop Soldiers' Home was accepted.

Mr. BAIRD, of the Finance Committee, introduced ordinances making the following annual appropriations:

For the Survey Department.....$20,570
Pilsons.....101,790

The ordinance offered last week prohibiting skating on the Schuylkill until the ice is three inches in thickness was called up and passed.

The Mayor vetoed the bill making an appropriation to pay the expenses of the committee on the reception of the Cocoade of the city of Boston, and said, "Believing that the expenditure of money for the city treasury for the entertainment of visitors from other places is contrary to the spirit of the act of consolidation, unless such visitors come as specially accredited representatives of other municipalities or governments for objects of common public interest."

On the question, "Shall the bill pass notwithstanding the objections of the Mayor? there was but two nays—Messrs. Creswell and Hodgdon.

The bill creating a new election division in the Nineteenth ward was postponed.

The ordinance from Select Council granting bounties to the Grays and Blue Reserves for services during the raid was concurred in.

Mr. LOVERING offered a resolution providing for the removal of the deer at Penn Square to Hunting Park, preparatory to their being sold. Agreed to.

Also, a resolution that Councils hold an adjourned meeting on Monday to consider the appropriation bills.

Mr. HARPER, chairman of the special committee on the Russian reception, offered an ordinance making an appropriation to pay expenses already incurred. Agreed to.

The ordinance making the appropriation of 1864, to the law department was taken up. The whole amount is $17,250. An advance of $500 is given to the City Solicitor's assistants, and $300 advance to the clerk.

It was explained that the advance was deserved, not only because of the high price of all materials, but on account of the ability of those who are to profit by the advance. The ordinance was agreed to.

Mr. WOLBERT, from the Highway Committee, offered a resolution, providing for the covering with coal ashes of north side of Ridge street, from Columbia avenue to Master lane, to make it convenient for travel. Agreed to.

The ordinance making appropriations $1,649 9 for the payment of bills contracted in the construction and repairing of bridges. Agreed to.

Mr. BARGER called up the bill making the annual appropriation of $80,100.50 to the Department of City Property, which was agreed to.

Also the ordinance making an appropriation of $16,604 17 to the Department of Market Houses.

Also, $1,262 50 to the City Commissioners, which was agreed to.

Mr. CRESWELL moved to strike out items 62, 63, 64, 65½, and 65¾, making appropriations of $1,000 to the Western Home, Union School, St. Vincent's Home, and Northern Home, Union School, St. Vincent's Home, and $500 each to the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, $500 each to the Society of St. Joseph, and the Western Provident Home, which was not agreed to. The bill passed.

The ordinance appropriating $13,100 to the trustees of the City Loan-book, was taken up and passed.

The annual appropriation to the Department for Lighting the City ordinance is $97,191. Not passed.

The ordinance for the annual appropriation to the Fire Department, amounting to $97,290, was passed. Adjourned.

THE POLICE.

How Heavy Robberies are Done.

The absence of important cases before the magistracy of Philadelphia allows a little room in this day's *Press*, which may be appropriated to a brief chapter on the subject of robberies. by which the community now be placed on guard against any similar attempts the future. Within the past three years more than $25,000 have mysteriously disappeared from a number of houses. These robberies, it is thought, were perpetrated by one set of men. They are the same parties who visited Washington, D. C., for several winters past, and it is the belief that various amounts of money were missing from dwellings in that city, as well as in Philadelphia.

It is believed these men operate only in the two cities named. They may have taken a few "tricks" in Baltimore. The robberies of which we speak contain a remarkable degree of care and shrewdness. Sometimes it requires several months before one is accomplished at other times a trick is taken within forty-eight hours. The gang, or gangs, as a general thing, are three in number—the principal thief, the other two are called "stalls," whose chief business is to divert attention while the principal thief is going on.

For instance, a party having a design to rob a house generally select one that has a store attached, such as a confectionery, liquor store, a lager saloon, or large tavern or hotel. The place chosen is generally in sparsely populated districts, or if in the city, in streets where so much the better. The store or saloon is entered by a couple of the thieves; they call for something to drink; place themselves in reasonably easy positions, and if circumstances are propitious, a party is made up, and games of cards are proposed, or general topics, of a social character are discussed. The "stall" is made up, and games of "poker"