

English papers are devoting several columns each day to the subject. On one side it is contended that the idea of female choristers is ridiculous; on the other side it is said that they would be a benefit. The idea of forming choirs composed of both men and women seems not yet to have been thought worthy of consideration. A few sentences taken from the many letters addressed to the editors of various papers may not be out of place. One writes: "Mr. Editor, Sir—If we are to have lady choristers, we must as well have lady clergy, lady churchwardens, etc.; the idea is preposterous." Another writes: "Mr. Editor, Sir—From an experience of 40 years as choir-master I distinctly say it will not do. Apart from the musical inefficiency of girls, you must consider the terrible peculiarities of the sex." Still another writes: "Sir, the idea of a female choir appears to offer three objections. First, it is unworkable; second, it is unmusical, and third, it is unscriptural." On the other side there are some who feel disposed to favor the idea of women choirs. For example one writes, "Mr. Editor, Sir—When Paul advised that women should be silent in church, he had no reference to the question of choirs." Another writes: "Sir—As one familiar with cathedral and choral services, I am delighted with the idea of lady choristers. It is reasonable and right to employ in the praise of God that divine and exquisite instrument a woman's voice." Another writes: "A woman singing at public worship is a sight natural, comely and edifying."

About this time of the year London undergoes an invasion of a peculiar character, partaking of young and old men who strongly bear the impress of the *genus* clerical, accompanied by elderly spinsters redolent of cats, tracts, gold spectacles and lavender water. And then does the Strand assume its fullest appearance, and Exeter Hall becomes filled several times daily with enthusiastic audiences, who combine with their visit on religious matters a ramble around the city and its sights, with the result that the mild curate and the portly rector are to be met with, accompanied by their sisters, their cousins and their aunts, in all places of amusement where rectors and curates can safely go. Another deluge is also sweeping over London and seems with each week to increase in volume. Go where one will, the sons and daughters of Columbia are to be met with.

The death of Lord Combermere some time ago and now the death of Lady Combermere snaps a notable link with the last century. Lord Combermere was born in 1772, and consequently was 43 years of age when Napoleon's power was crushed at Waterloo. What a terrible whirl of events has taken place during the life of this one individual. When Lord Combermere was born, Goldsmith was still alive, Burns was writing poetry, Clive and Warren Hastings were still in India, Captain Cook was making his famous voyages; Spain was one of the most extensive em-

pires on the globe, Venice was still a Republic and Poland a kingdom, Louis XVI. sat on the throne of France, and North America was owned by France, England and Spain. Pitt and Fox and Burke were not yet famous and the wonders of steam navigation and railways were not yet known; the powers of electricity were not yet discovered, and labor-saving machinery had scarcely begun to affect society. Judging from the past, what may we not expect in the next one hundred years? Then fifty thousand soldiers constituted a vast army; now the nations are mustering their millions, and terrible machines are invented to destroy human life with unexampled rapidity. In France and Germany, and even in Switzerland, it is not the men only that are obliged to do military duty. Even boys from twelve to sixteen years of age are formed into juvenile regiments of infantry and obliged each month to exercise with firearms. O shame, shame! on the boasted civilization of the nineteenth century, that children should be taken from their homes and trained to the work of death.

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EUROPE, Aug. 26, 1889.

This is the time in Europe for reviews. Not merely military reviews like those of William of Germany and Francis Joseph of Austria and Humbert of Italy have been indulging in. Not merely naval reviews such as the people of England have been witnessing; but likewise reviews of political affairs such as the people of France are now considering. In fact, retrospection seems to be the order of the hour. Farmers, tradesmen, politicians and moralists, all seem inclined to carefully note their successes and failure in the past, and from these experiences learn a lesson for the future. Taking it all in all the season of 1889 has been one of material success. As a rule the farmers of Europe have been blessed with abundant harvests.

The great Exhibition at Paris has brought untold billions of money into circulation, and thousands upon thousands of tourists have, like the Goddess of Fortune, distributed their bounties in every city and town of Europe. It may be safely said that Europe was never so rich as at the present moment. Yet, strange to say, suspense and doubt are written upon the features of millions. Statesmen seem to be planning as though in the most critical period of their nation's history. The ominous speech of Lord Salisbury at the Mansion House in London lately is but a type of the speeches of other statesmen in other portions of Europe. It is not in France alone that agitation is convulsing society to its very depths. Russia and Germany and Austria are still; but it is a compulsory stillness produced by military despotism—in one word, the paralysis of fear. Underneath the still surface of this human tide is the strong undercurrent of socialism seething with hate, corruption and crime. During the busy season of the harvest there

seemed to be a lull, but now that the nights are getting a little longer the socialistic gatherings are commencing, and pamphlets of the most inflammatory character can be found in every village; but where they come from—ah! that is the question. For twenty years Europe has groaned under a load of military armament such as she has never done before. Gradually the people are becoming better informed. Everywhere the people are reading and thinking. Even in Italy the news paper is a necessity, and in every city and town these daily journals are eagerly read by thousands. As a rule the daily journals are largely devoted to political and social questions and the masses of Europe are pondering and discussing these questions, as they have never done before. With increased intelligence to the masses comes increased discontent. Never was suicide so prevalent in Europe as now. One would think that in the golden autumn days when luscious fruits hang from orchard boughs, when the garner of the farmer is full, and labor abundant for the mechanic or laborer, that then men and women would not weary of life. It is evident that this terrible "sickness unto death" must depend upon other causes. It is not the old and infirm, the poor and the blind, who might be supposed to philosophize upon the subject, and conclude that life was no longer useful to them or to others. On the other hand, it is those who are in the very heyday of their earthly term of existence who furnish the greatest number of suicides. The causes, therefore, must be looked for in an entirely different direction. Nor must we attribute these attempts to shorten life merely to habits of dissipation, for dissipation itself is frequently not so much a cause as a result of previous reasoning and an attempt to get relief from sorrow by momentary exhilaration. It would seem that one fact must strike every thoughtful observer, and that is, that most of those who commit suicide have no faith in God or a future existence. Only those who have witnessed life in those great American cities such as New York and Chicago, where a vast turbulent element exists, can have an adequate idea of the irreligious character of continental cities. The extent of infidelity and irreligion that prevails in Central Europe is not to be measured merely by those who spend their Sundays and holidays at the public houses or beer-gardens in boisterous mirth. These indeed furnish but a small proportion. It is a lamentable fact that in thousands of so-called Protestant churches and in scores of theological schools, the teachings of Strauss and Renan are taught to the young under the specious guise of Christianity.

And if men shall be convinced that they are only animals, and that God takes no notice of them, whose property would be safe? Whose life would be sacred? Who would be secure from the unrestrained ravages of every base passion that finds its home in the human heart?