especially links this somewhat effete nobleman to so variegated an assemblage. Besides, he is a personage here: at the Carlton or Reform, for example, he would be a titled nonentity. He is fond of being distinctively listened to, of airing his hobbies, of ventilating social theories, of crotchetering as to philanthropy, and of taking part, with an amiably aristocratic air, in the subdued convivialities of the wilder evenings. To-day being the afternoon of Boxing Day, my Lord Rexter has, according to custom, arrived to take the chair as president at the late luncheon, where, on this jovial occasion of festive reunion, there passes freely the loving-cup, and many healths are pledged for the sake of "old lang syne" and "auld."

Rexter reigns dignifiedly at the head of the table—the table decked with exotics and well beaded with edibles and decanters—deeming himself for the present an ovifauce piece of no small calibre, for there are not knights of a Rexter title, and from the top Rexter can command the first attention of all. Besides which, rank is something more than the mere guinea-stamp at the Symposium.

Heartily moves the meal along, as if life were pleasurably seasoned by all those chatterings on the latest quotations in Consols, the last move in foreign policy, the prospects of a General Election, and what-not, stories, anecdotes, and what there were no such things as eight o'clock dinners and fearful indigestion.

Then when the menials remove themselves, my Lord Rexter, having toyed with a slice of melon and criticised the claret, condescendingly addresses the small assemblage in somewhat military terms to "push about" and "charge." The Royal and loyal toasts are hurriedly but reverently pledged in a spirit which the Sphinx-like countenance can be obtained in the bibulous rendering of "British constitution—glorious institution—loyal institution—British constitution."

The "Meejor" replies for the army by singing begorrah, sorr, Englaaaa, aye and Oireland too, sorr, expects every man to do his duty, sorr, and begorrah they'll do it, sorr, though they've been after tellin' him, sorr, that our soldiers swore terribly in Flanders. And who had a better right, I said?

Sir Joseph for the Navy, the stay-at-home Sir Joseph, is sulah that our gallant flahs will always ah maintain ah the supremacy ah of our mawitime interestsah—in fact of the seah—when called upon to do such whetheh in the Bosphorus or the Straits of Mallacca, will so to speakah—yeah—do sah.

For the Volunteers and Reserve Force Mr. D'Avigdor is proud to stand there that day as an ex-officer of a Metropolitan corps, and that if his readiness still to take the field if necessary; both his grown-up boys are members of the Honourable Artillery of London; and in good high Tory terms, he metaphorically shakes his fist at Russia.

Then some one pledges the Houses of Parliament, and the Earl of Rexter answers for the Lords in an address on the blessings of hereditary legislation—and more so because the Earl says he has yet been able to get the gilded chamber to listen to; whilst a "self-made man" (as he is so fond of calling himself) who sits for a Scottish burgh says it's a rale pesty but fat something inside he does just fur to remedy the awfu' weak o' wer members' time i' the Commons, for they Home Rulers syne fi' the first 'at they begood their obstruction tactics were jist a fair nuisance, and as for Protection or Reciprocity he saw nawthin' in fur, for, as he said, he was for the Free Trade, fat had made and country fat it was syne, for the maintainance o' oor commercial eminance?"

"Our noble selves," otherwise the ancient "pals" of the Symposium, is feelingly honoured, and when the noble President essays to sing about his "old friend John" and "Fifty years ago," he it answered by a resounding chorus in reference to the remote period when "We——e——e were boys, my, auncy boys," and also by a "Hear, hear" and humorous persuasion can elicit from the Major "The wearing of the green" but Sheldon, who is supposed to have his eye on a wealthy Dowager for a second wife, lustily gives the song wherein occurs the line, "Here's to the wearing of the blue."

It is mayhap fate or pre-arrangement that has placed Mr. D'Avigdor, sire of the hopeful Edwin, next to Cornelius Espedair, the opulent parent of Angelina. At any rate, the two chat amicably about their children's probable alliance, the contract is understood between them, and Mr. D'Avigdor is prolific in panegyric on his heir's many admirable qualities, Espedair satisfies himself with the remark that "Angelina is a good girl." Yet when in the smoking-room Mr. D'Avigdor turns to rate his "boy" by letter and notices with pleasure the preliminary gush towards the fair one but goes green over the succeeding familiarity in respect of his haughty partner, he by no means acquits Edwin of blame but thinks he should have cultivated such a model girl as has been made out—when she is so obviously used to placidly hearing her future parents in-law spoken of as "the old lady and the guv'nor."

"I speak to Edwin about this—I shall—I shall—I shall," irritably mutters, the indignant stockbroker to himself. Your parvenus are always touchy as to dignity.

"Yet, what about Miss Espedair? And where is she? Can she have—" But the thought of Angelina's accidentally becoming acquainted with his eldest son's financial affairs at this stage is too sickening a one, and D'Avigdor withdraws to nutle-home in his brougham to Boys-ville. There are others, however, who remain, and before the evening is much older the Major not only sings "The wearin' of the green," but hiccoughs sentiments still more revolutionary, for when my lord Rexter, with some few others, leave, they have retired to their homes, he believes in perpetuating a merry Christmastide till past Boxing Night among his "old chums" at the Symposium.

CONCLUSION.—ALL IN F'IT.

The drawing-rooms of the D'Avigdors' mansion are ablaze with brilliancy; light, warmth, colour, pleasant (a good many pretty) faces, and an array of exquisately bewitching costumes, all blend the picture into a gay and happy one. During the dinner at which the Sinbad was persuaded to make full and free confession of his nocturnal frolics, and at which (during dessert) the Boojum turned Queen's evidence against the Jabberwock greatly to the discomfiture of that young gentleman and the delight of everbody else—dinner done, with its festive *mean* of all that is seasonable in Christmastide, its family chatterings and cracker-pullings, its gibbings and its jokes—the D'Avigdors have spent the evening variously in playing waltz after waltz, with sandwiched schottishe and quadrille, spirit the hours by brightly: and flirtatiously.

These tall blonde girls, in the muslins *mistée rose*, or one or other of which is always to be found threading the circle, are the Westerleighs, daughters of a more than millionaire speculator, and in vast request; the couple of brunettes, truly Italian complexioned, and of remarkable beauty, though rather *petite*, are the children of Giovanni Petruccio, the eminent diamond dealer; the score or so of other feminine faces are owned by the comely offspring of people whose social position is indisputable and among whom are fair sprinklings of minor titles; the gathering of male bipeds old and young, is a composition whose elements, call for little remark save that the majority are handsome and all are fleckless as their attire.

If on stoult, with affected carelessness, through the second and third round you find numerous couples engaged in the pleasing diversion of sitting it out;" and under cover of this pretence many are the entrancing *tête-a-têtes* secured during the evening. Here, for example, is Algy D'Avigdor facing (after the manner of youngsters) up to a girl some three or four years older than himself, and one who will probably be a wife and a mother long before he has had even time to sow his wild oats; Hubert Everett, the guardsman, towering above his fellows, has just led his partner, a very pretty Venus, and the Petruccios in fact, from the waltzing circle, and with easy grace they are now settling down on a *settee* to talk nonsense; not far off sits diminutive Charlie Pendlebury with the tallest of the tall blondes Westerleigh, looking like a General Dot beside a feminine Anak. But where is Edwin? That love-sick youth, all unconscious of the *contretemps* he has created—for D'Avigdor, sen., has not been able to broach the matter yet to him, and Angelina Espedair has not till now thought but dance with him and talk society nothings—finds himself with the object of his boyish affections in the cool shade of a verandah which serves also as a conservatory. Hither they have hied after many whirlings, and here they "spoon" in the orthodox style. But the first advantage is to Angelina. With as arch coquetry as she can command—bewitchingly contoured in a dress of white tarletan and lace, looped with silver leaves, her nut-brown hair graced with a spray of stephanotis—she upturns her hazel eyes, full of laughter, to him, and makes the blood of hapless Edwin run cold by mischievously reciting:—

"Gentleman, wishing to your circular, I shall be happy to hear from you on what terms you can negotiate a little."

"Angelina!"

"Little 'loan for me, say, of six ponies."

Here Angelina's merriment is unrestrained: and Edwin is saved.

"Foolish, extravagant, boy!" enjoyably expostulates the maid; "pray what did I tell and friend? I want with six ponies? *would* I *too* be sufficient? Was he going to drive half-a-dozen in-hand over London?"

A lost man clutches at a straw.

"Er—yes—yes—precisely Angelina, dear. Oh, fact is, yes, Gus Wycombe and I."

"Dorlt talk to me of Mr. Wycombe, sir; I hear he keeps you and Algy at his chambers to all hours and—it's a shame. But what about these ponies?"

"Well," pentiently resumes the innocent Edwin with a great load lifted from his heart, "Gus and I were going to have a pony four-in-hand this spring and these things require to be arranged a long time in advance—and of course we required your advice and—"

"With personal security of self and friend," continued the persistent Angelina, still repeating the note, which she had carefully studied according to her ingenuous lights, "I don't see any security about this—I don't see any security, Edwin; I speak plainly, I know, and I wish you wouldn't do these dreadful things."

"Well, I won't if you don't wish it," readily responds the pony-in-hand-at-a-fabulous-price-but-such-lucky-stars-he-has-got-so-easily-out-of-this-scrape, but wondering how on earth his lady-love came to know as much as she does.

"Tell me though, Edwin, if you did not require the ponies what the deuce you would say to the matter was pressing and ask them to reply by return of post and why did you not go to better people than these 'Moses and Isaacs,' I don't seem to remember them at all and papa and my brother Tom say they never heard—I hope people called Moses and Isaacs."

"But you did not——?" fearfully anticipates Edwin.

"Oh, no, I did not tell any tales. I merely asked casually at dinner time. And here, sir, is the original note and now I'll thank you for my letter?"

"Your—?" feebly in horror, would ejaculate the young man; but he is choking with chagrin. "I suppose, sir, I must have enclosed your letter to Messrs. Moses and—"

"O, Edwin!"

The beads are standing on his brow, he is blushing fiery cold by turns. He leaves his love seated by the plants and returns through the dancing room. He would seek the "governor:" perhaps *his* note is wrong as well. But the old gentleman is by this time downstairs with some of his cronies at a quiet rubber, and the young guess is vain, and there is no help for it but to return and make the most of the time with his simple-minded maiden.

"Don't worry about my letter, Edwin dear; perhaps these dreadful Moses and Isaacs won't know what it means."

"Oh, won't they though? But now that I come to think of it, I don't much care whether they do or not."

And so from perplexing over a *mal apropos* complication, the candid youth hastes to make violent and pathetic love, the present end of all which is that with many sweet simpers and sighs, and "first she woulds" and "then she wouldn'ts," the proposed-to finally "owns up" that she would ne'er consent—consented," and is taken (a blushing heap of tarletan) to Edwin's faithful arms.

"I feel so happy now, Edwin dearest," she whimpers, not very sure whether to laugh or cry "and you *will* be true to me?"

"You are the only woman I ever loved," assures the vernacious Edwin; "my first and only passion." So with other vulcdictory endearments they pass on among the throng, to somehow or other before that evening is out it is quietly understood throughout the room that "something has taken place."

Edwin is fortunate in finding the author of his bliss at a length disengaged from his whist partners.

"I have a communication to make to you, sir," he humbly commences.

"And I have a communication to make to you, sir!"

"You received a letter from me this afternoon?"

"I did, sir, and a very precious document it is, sir. Look at that."

Horror of horrors! His note to Angelina, full of irreverences! Yet Edwin holds the trump card.

"I am happy to inform you, sir, that I have this evening obtained Miss Espedair's final consent to our engagement and marriage."

"Ah! Indeed, indeed, sir," exclaims the mollified parent, "I can overlook the rest, and God bless you both, Edwin! But never let me hear again of the 'old lady' or 'the guv'nor.'"

"So far as good," reflects Edwin to himself; "but I shall never get them to ponies out of Moses and Isaacs after the exposé I have made of my finances in that letter to the old man which they must have by this time!"

Forthwith the parents of both happy mortals confabulate briefly over cigar and cognac, and there is much mutual satisfaction. The alliance will just suit both sides. D'Avigdor, sen., takes quiet opportunity to "God bless" Angelina, and Espedair *père* entertains Edwin. Their healths are proposed at supper, and the betrothal is public and complete. Universal congratulations.

The one drop of bitterness in the cup is the handing to Edwin, by one of the menials, of a letter which had lain for him in the hall since the evening post. It runs:

Dear Sir,—We beg to return to you a communication received by us to-day but which is obviously not intended for us.—We are, Sir, yours faithfully,

MOSES & ISAACS,
Discount, Deposit, and Loans Office.

"Ah, I shall never get these ponies now," sighs Edwin. I shall have to 'rush' another office for them or throw myself on the guv'nor's mercy. Perhaps he'll 'square' me now that matters are fixed up between Angelina and me."

Light dawns. Many of the guests have gone, but there is still a goodish party assembled in the library to honour the ancient festival of—the dragon. Amongst others, Everett and Pendlebury remain; the girls Westerdale, Petruccio, etc., are still there; but none appear happier than Angelina Espedair and her betrothed, Algy still, how, ever, sticks to his elderly love like a man. They only now await the children who have been promised that they shall be brought down in their sleeping-gowns to see Snapdragon.

"Tousing or no tousing, I shan't have my face washed with *spit!*"

It is the voice of the Boojum on the stairs, in remonstrance to the nurse who (after the fashion of her kind) is trying to stickly enough from the face with the wetted corner of a pocket handkerchief.

THE "AUTOCRATS" SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.

On the 3rd of December the publishers of the *Atlantic Monthly* celebrated by a great breakfast the seventieth birthday of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, "known and beloved by reason of his "Autocrat at the Breakfast-table," throughout the English speaking world. Among the invited guests, says the *New York Times*, were a large number of contributors to that magazine representative literary and professional men in all parts of the country. A noteworthy feature was the presence of women, the invited guests including the lady contributors to the *Atlantic*, as well as those of the other sex. These were not only given places of honour around the tables, but participated in the after dinner exercises, making speeches and reading poems. The guests included, among many others, Harriet Beecher Stowe, John G. Whittier, Helen Hunt, Lucretia T. Fields, Charles Dudley Warner, William D. Howells, Julia Ward Howe, Henry W. Longfellow, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jun., and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, C. Cranch, Edmund Clarence Stedman, Samuel L. Clemens ("Mark Twain"), George Cary Eggleston, John Fiske, and the Rev. Joseph Cook. Holmes replied to the toast of his health, proposed by reading a poem called "The Iron Gate." Poems were read by Whittier, E. C. Stedman, William Winter, and John Trowbridge. Among speeches were one by Mr. Howells and one by Mr. Warner.

The first great man who ever wrote me a letter was our guest—Oliver Wendell Holmes. He was also the first great literary man I ever stole anything from—and that is how I came to know that he was great. When my first book was new, a friend of mine said, "The dedication is very neat." Yes, I said, I thought it was. "Why, it's just like Holmes's, isn't it?" I never saw it in the "Innocents Abroad." I naturally said, "What do you mean? Where did you ever see it before?" "Well, I saw it first some years ago in Mr. Holmes' dedication to his 'Songs in Many Keys.'" Of course, my first impulse was to prepare this verse as dedication for my book, but on reflection I said I would reprieve him for a moment or two and give him a chance to prove his assertion if he could. We stepped into a bookstore, and he did prove it. I had really stolen that dedication, almost word for word. I could not imagine how this curious thing had happened. However, I thought the thing out and solved the mystery. I remembered that I had been laid up a couple of weeks in the Sandwich Islands, and had read and re-read Mr. Holmes' poems until my mental reservoir was filled up with them to the brim. The dedication lay on top and handy, and I must have unconsciously stole it. Well, of course, I wrote Mr. Holmes and told him I hadn't meant to steal, and that I was sorry in the highest way that it was all right and no harm done, and added that I was so sorry that all unconsciously worked over ideas gathered in reading and hearing, imagining they were original with curselves. I also said I afterwards called on him, and told him to make perfectly free with any ideas of mine that struck him as being good protoplasm for poetry. He could see by that there wasn't anything mean about me, so we got along right from that time.

THE AFGHAN WAR.

A Daily News Lahore telegram dated Friday, says:—"On the 18th a force of 500 men with two guns advanced to Peiwar Kotal. They found the enemy covering the hills in great force. They opened fire and the guns replied well. The engagement was resumed yesterday. The villagers at Serobi were found friendly, having cowed the hostile tribes. The party operations in Paivchina defile were fired on. The enemy retreated, and their villages were burned."

The 2nd battalion Fusiliers, under orders to embark for India on January 14th, will be made up to its full strength before leaving. It was intended at first to send it out short and transfer about 200 men from the 1st battalion, which was under orders for Malta, but as the 1st battalion has been ordered to remain in India for the present the 2nd battalion will be made up at home.

"December 19th.

"Bright, from Jellalabad, reports Gough has moved out from Jugdallack to engage the enemy; result not known yet. An available force is concentrated and moved forward to him from Gandamak. Telegraph still open to Peiwar."

The Punjaub Princes have expressed to the Indian Government a desire to assist the imperial cause in the present crisis, and place their resources at Lord Lytton's disposal.

Although ten years General Roberts's senior, the Indian Government has ruled that Major-General Bright shall be under the former officer's orders on the junction of their forces at Cabul.

CALCUTTA, Friday.

A despatch from General Roberts, dated the 14th, announces that he is strongly entrenched at Sherpur and able to hold his own.

REINFORCEMENTS FROM ENGLAND.

Five officers and two hundred men of the Royal Artillery left Woolwich on Monday to embark at Portsmouth for India.

The "Central News" states that the troopships leaving India will continue to bring home the troops to be relieved as arranged for some time ago, the outbreak in Afghanistan not having affected the arrangements entered into for that purpose. Reports are current as to various home regiments having been warned to hold themselves in readiness for embarkation to India, but nothing of an authentic character regarding the matter is forthcoming. It is stated the India Office has made no demand for troops, and none are likely to be moved from home. Meanwhile, at the department, the situation in Afghanistan having been discussed by the authorities. The question has also arisen in a general way as to what regiments and forces are available in case of emergency. If needed two or three regiments could be embarked for India at very short notice. The situation in Afghanistan is sure to involve considerable loss before order is again restored. In official circles no doubt is felt as to the ability of General Roberts and Gough. It is believed they will hold their own, and that the latter will shortly reinforce Roberts and enable him to assume the offensive.

THE WAR AT THE CAPE.

CAPTURE OF SEKUKUNI'S STRONGHOLD.

Donald Currie and Co.'s steamer Walmer Castle, which left Cape Town December 2nd, arrived at Southampton on Sunday, all well. Heavy weather impeded communication with the shore for some time. Sir Garnet Wolseley captured Sekukuni's stronghold on November 28th by a brilliant exploit. Colonel Murray commanded the centre. The Swazies attacked the town from the east. The town was captured at ten in the morning, and the whole of the forces remained that place. Captain Macaulay, late of the 12th (Prince of Wales) Royal Lancers, and Captain Lowrell, of the 4th Hussars, were killed. The total British loss was about 25 of all ranks. The enemy's loss was heavy. It is hoped that his Excellency will soon succeed in pacifying all discontent in the Transvaal. The Walmer Castle brings mails from the Mauritius, Natal, and the Cape Colonies. She may be expected at Plymouth early on Friday.

THE BUILDING TRADE.

At a meeting of the building trade operatives, in Warrington, on Friday, it was decided to resist the reduction of one penny per hour and the increase of one hour per week, as a reduction took place only last May.

THE IRISH AGITATION.

The man Dempsey, who was recently evicted at Balla, still remains by the roadside. Nothing new has arisen in regard to his case.

PRINCE WILLIAM.

A Berlin telegram says that the wound received by Prince William consists of a bruise and dislocation of the kneepad. The prince sustained an injury of the same part last year in a fencing-room at Bonn, which seems to have left the knee weak.

SERIOUS ACCIDENT TO THE MARQUIS OF WATERFORD.

The Marquis of Waterford fell off his horse whilst out hunting on Friday, near Kilkenny. The place where the accident occurred is near where the third Duke fell and sustained fatal injuries. His lordship is severely cut, but the full extent of his injuries is yet unknown.

TERMINATION OF A COLLIERS' DISPUTE.

A dispute which has lasted for some months at the Birley Collieries was brought to a satisfactory close through the intervention of Mr. Mundella, M.P., who succeeded in inducing both masters and men to consent to arbitration. The Rt. Hon. Mr. Mundella has agreed to be the arbitrators. A sliding scale on the basis of the arbitration is to afterwards come into force.

THE FAMINE IN SILESIA.

The destitution caused by the famine in Upper Silesia has increased, and about 80,000 people are now in extreme poverty. The cattle plague has made great havoc, and disastrous floods, and has been rendered more severe by a hard winter, typhus fever, and usury.

THE FORGERY OF RUSSIAN NOTES.

At the Central Criminal Court on Friday, Vincent Yamkowski, Albert Yamkowski, and Theophilus Dombrowski were found guilty of forgery of Russian rouble notes, eight counts of the indictment being moved against the woman, Maria Seymour, was acquitted.

THE TICHBORNE CASE.

With regard to the writ of error which the Attorney-General has just granted, it is said that the step was taken by Lord Rivers and Mr. Guildford Onslow, under the advice of Mr. Kennedy, Q.C., who moved for a similar writ to Sir Richard Baggallay, in 1874, which was refused. The case will, it is stated, be taken to the House of Lords for final decision, and Dr. Kenealy will exercise his rights as a member of the Irish Bar to appear for his former client before that tribunal.

GREAT FIRE IN LIVERPOOL.

A fire which has resulted in considerable damage broke out on Friday morning at the works of Messrs. Hutchins and Co., the well-known biscuit makers, Bearlane, Liverpool. The fire broke out at very early hour, and notwithstanding the almost immediate presence of the fire brigade, owing to the dense crowd of people who assembled, the flames practically mastered the firemen's efforts for some time. The contents of three floors of the warehouse were destroyed before the fire was got under.

SERIOUS BUILDING ACCIDENT AT SHEFFIELD.

An alarming accident occurred on Saturday at a bank in course of erection in Sheffield for the Midland Company. The cornice along one side, composed of massive stones, suddenly fell a distance of thirty feet with a crash, smashing the ornamental capitals in its fall and knocking down hoarding. Three men, who were working below, were severely injured, one named Oakley beyond all hope of recovery.

DESTRUCTION OF A WHITBY JET MANUFACTORY BY FIRE.

Early on Friday morning a fire broke out in a block of buildings occupied as guano warehouses and jet ornament manufactories, and situate on the new quay, alongside the harbour, at Whitby. The whole of the upper portion of the building were destroyed, together with a large quantity of jet ornaments which had been manufactured during the week and were packed ready for the markets. In the centre storey there were some valuable machinery and fittings, and also some rough jet, which also were destroyed. On the ground floor, occupied as guano warehouses, considerable damage was done, principally by the action of the water. It was not known how the fire originated, but it was supposed to have been accidental.

BRITISH STEAMER ASHORE.

A Gibraltar telegram reports that British steamer W. H. Atkinson, from Alexandria for Newcastle, with wheat, has gone ashore on Pigeon Island, Cairetta Point. She will probably be a total wreck.

THE CABINET.

A Cabinet Council was held on Friday, at which all the members were present except Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who, at the last moment, was unable to come to town. The situation in Afghanistan, it is understood, was discussed, but no action was taken. The Council met from two to half-past five o'clock. Lord Beaconsfield left for Hughenden, and Lord Cranbrook for Hemsted House.

MR. MACDONALD ON COAL.

Mr. Macdonald, M.P., writing to the South Yorkshire miners, defends himself on the question of the restriction of coal output. He says the price of South pig iron rose on the South miners applying for these measures. He challenges disproof, adding that the rise in pig iron amounts to 15s. per ton; and wages to all South underground workmen have been advanced 30 per cent., and in some cases 100.

DISGRACEFUL ORIGIN AFTER A CHRISTMAS EVE OPENING.

An inquest has been held at Blackley. Some shocking disclosures were made relative to the death of a child named Kay. On Sunday the father and mother took the child, which was only five days old, to be christened at the Catholic church in the neighbourhood, and afterwards a pint of rum and a pint of whisky were purchased. After some drinks were given—the quantities, and it was supposed that during the orgies the child was suffocated by the mother. The discovery that it was dead was made by the police, whose attention was directed to the fact that the house was in a great state inside. The mother is only 20 years of age, and the infant was her first child. She remained in ignorance of the death of her child until Saturday night. The coroner, she denied having had more than a share of a quarterm of whisky, and said her husband had been out of work for some time. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death."

MR. GLADSTONE ON VACCINATION.

In reply to a communication from Mr. Baker, of Kingscote, barrister, that all public opinions and official documents adverse to vaccination are almost invariably suppressed by the metropolitan journals, Mr. Gladstone writes:—"I think Mr. Baker's allegation is correct, silence on the subject of vaccination which you describe, while I own myself unable to appreciate the frame of mind in which no other subject is deemed worthy of notice by such journals. I do not see any reason for giving his vote, as, on the whole, he may think it best for truth and justice."—Your faithful servant, W. E. GLADSTONE. Dec. 12th, 1879."

A HUSBAND POISONING CLUB.

A horrible discovery has been made in Hungary. Mysterious deaths have been for some time occurring at a place called Szerlahely and the surrounding villages. Within the last six weeks eight married farmers have rather suddenly given up the ghost; but in the wilds of Hungary people are not so minutely looked into as they are in the large towns. However, things came to such a pass that an inquiry had to be instituted, when it was discovered that arsenic, and not fever (as had been supposed) was the cause of all the deaths. Information obtained from a rat-destroying compound, and had been carefully cooked up with the yolcels' "bogascon" and coffee. Their wife had also been tampered with. The discovery of a kind of husband poisoning club caused the "merry wives" of the neighbourhood rewarded the investigating police. It appears that a two-fold object prompted these Hungar matrons, and caused them to harbour such unamiable feelings towards their lords and masters. In the first place, each wished to get rid of a drunken husband, who brought no money home, and was a nuisance to the neighbourhood; and, in the second, the deceased was a remunerative event, inasmuch as it secured a lump sum from the insurance office. The authorities, though doubtless struck with the neat ingenuity of the scheme, will find it needful to put a stop to a practice more remarkable for thoroughness than for legality.

THE UNITED KINGDOM BENEFIT BANK.

MR. NORWOOD, M.P., AND THE SUNDAY CLOSING MOVEMENT.

The annual meeting of the Hull auxiliary of the United Kingdom Alliance was held on Friday at the Corn Exchange Hall, Sykes-street. A public tea preceded the meeting, the latter being presided over by Mr. M. H. Hargreaves. There was a small attendance. Mr. Guy Hall read extracts from the annual report, which gave lengthy details of the progress made during the year. Referring to the representation of Hull, the committee had to congratulate the friends on the fact that it was confidently anticipated that the approaching election would advanced views on the Alliance question would be taken up by the party at the general election.—Mr. T. Priestman, the treasurer, read the balance-sheet which showed the receipts to have been £1 0s. 2d., and after the expenditure had been made a balance in hand of 3s. 2d.—The report was adopted on the motion of the Chairman, seconded by Mr. J. B. Pearson, and supported by Mr. T. W. Russell, of Dublin, who severely criticised the action of Mr. Norwood, M.P., in connection with the Sunday Closing Bill. He asserted that Mr. Norwood did not vote for the bill, as he said he did in his letter read at the meeting of the Hull Sunday Closing Association, at the time the measure was before the Parliament last session. He simply voted "at the first opportunity" on the adjournment of the debate. He thanked Mr. C. Wilson, M.P., for the conservative manner in which he helped the promoters of the Sunday Closing movement in Parliament, and for the great interest he had taken in the temperance cause. He should not, he said, have interfered with local politics had it not been for the letter written by Mr. Norwood, M.P., in which he had stated that he was prepared to defend.—A vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Russell for his address.—Mr. Whitehead, in speaking on the second resolution, said that the last speaker had said the feeling manifested by the Alliance party with reference to his vote on the Sunday Closing Bill would not affect the position of Mr. Norwood. He also maintained that the agitation would more likely endanger the seat of Mr. Wilson than the seat of Mr. Norwood.—Mr. R. P. Cook, jun., seconded the second resolution which was adopted confirming the principles of "local option," and pledging the meeting to secure the return of Mr. Wilson at the forthcoming election, and to give no amendment was not seconded.—Mr. Priestman regretted very deeply that there should be so much animus imparted into the meeting, and deplored the use of some of the some paragraphs which he would rather not have seen in the report. The Chairman, in the course of a lengthy speech, said the temperance party had been divided in mind as to our Mr. Norwood at the next election. —The motion for the adoption of the report was carried. —The officers for the ensuing year were re-elected, and a resolution