

A NEW ENTERPRISE.—*The Anglo African*, is the title of a new monthly magazine, commenced the present month in New York, and devoted to the interests of the African race, free and enslaved. It has a respectable appearance, and with African characteristics, a fair share of ability. There are men of color in this country who are capable of making such an organ strong and efficient, if they will give their force to it heartily. We should be glad to think that this was a movement of significance for the future of our colored population, and of Africa. The peculiar, fervid forces of that race, are yet to have their day.

DREADFUL CATASTROPHE AT THE VICTORIA THEATRE, LONDON.

FIFTEEN KILLED AND NUMEROUS PERSONS INJURED.

One of those terrible events which occasionally strike the public mind with a thrill of horror occurred on Monday afternoon at the Victoria Theatre, in Waterloo-road, involving the death of no less than fifteen young men whose ages varied from sixteen to twenty-four years, and serious injury to many others, besides throwing the whole of the neighbourhood into a state of intense alarm and agitation for several hours.

Monday being "Boxing Day," the proprietors and managers of this theatre, in common with other metropolitan places of amusement, had exerted themselves to furnish their patrons with a more than usually attractive Christmas entertainment; and it was arranged that there should be two performances of the pantomime—one in the day, and one, as usual, in the evening. To a great extent the very precautions taken to prevent accident were the cause of a deplorable loss of life.

The doors were thrown open about one o'clock for the morning performance, and the theatre was, as usual, almost immediately crammed, and everything went well throughout the performance nearly up to the time of its conclusion, when the calamity occurred.

About twenty minutes to five o'clock, while the people were packed together on the gallery stairs. A slight explosion took place on the second or third landing, which was distinctly visible to those crowding that portion of the staircase. Then arose the fearful cry of "Fire! fire! the place is on fire!" and a scene of horror ensued which it may be fairly said baffles all description. The whole mass of people on the upper portion of the stairs, where the explosion took place, in their anxiety to make their escape, precipitated themselves on the ascending crowd below, while those on the stairs leading to the first landing, unconscious of what had occurred, kept ascending. The result was that more than a hundred people became compactly wedged between the two masses. The shrieks, cries, and smothered groans that arose as the crowd swayed about or got dashed against the balustrade, or thrown down and trodden upon, are reported by some of those who were present, and were both eye and ear witnesses of what occurred, to have been awful in the extreme. Some of the people at the top of the stairs fairly threw themselves down the whole flight on to the heads of those below, and then, unable to recover their legs, fell and rose no more, being smothered in the crowd; others threw themselves over the balustrades, a small portion of which was broken away and alighted in safety; while others, wedged in, were unable to move, and being reduced to a state of insensibility, were soon smothered. The alarm was soon carried to the fire brigade in the Waterloo-road, and some of the engines attended, but the explosion being but momentary, we are not aware that any material injury was done, and their services were not required.

When some degree of calm had been restored and the full extent of the calamity was known, it was found that life was extinct in no less than fifteen cases, and that probably twenty or thirty had been injured; but we are happy to say that, in most cases, the injuries, as far as is known at present, were very slight. It is impossible, however, to tell what internal injuries may have been sustained by the sufferers in such a crush as this.

Different explanations were given of the cause of the catastrophe by the persons connected with the theatre, and those who were present, but all agree that there was an escape of gas on the gallery stairs. How the gas became ignited is another question. The theatre authorities aver that it was occasioned by the striking of a lucifer match or a fuse, for the purpose of lighting a cigar; but the general opinion of the police, and others competent to judge, is, that it ignited by coming into contact with the burning gaslights on the staircase.

A later account than the above says:—Sixteen lives were sacrificed. From the manager's account, it would appear that the alarm was first occasioned by the ignition of some fuses in the pocket of a boy who sat in the boxes. This occasioned a rush, and the people pressing upon the gas pipes caused an escape of gas, which exploded and increased the alarm and multiplied the accidents.

FRANCE.

In Paris, the only matter of much political significance has been an election in the department of the Seine for a vacant seat in the Legislative Body. There were three candidates, and it was announced that Government left the choice free in the hands of the electors. Nevertheless, it came out that the favourite candidate with the Government was M. Brochant de Villiers. He polled 8,254 votes and his opponents polled fewer. But de Villiers had not enough of votes, to render his election legal, so the election has to be gone over again.

M. MONTALEMBERT.

The *Moniteur* of Tuesday 28th inst. has the following official announcement:—

"The Emperor, renewing his final decision, has remitted to M. de Montalembert the penalties definitely pronounced against him by judgement of the Imperial Court of Paris of December 21st, 1858.

"His Majesty has likewise relieved M. Douai, publisher of the *Correspondent*, from the sentence of imprisonment pronounced upon him by the judgement of the 24th November."

The speech of M. DUFAURE, the great legal pleader, was admirable, and proved, beyond doubt, the necessity of the appeal. That of the aged BERRYER was telling indeed. It was worth all the annoyance of the business to have such a speech made just now in France. Expounding BERRYER'S argument, *The Examiner* says:—

"They found M. Montalembert guilty of attacking universal suffrage by virtue of a law in which universal suffrage was not so much, as named. They pronounced him guilty of attacking the authority of the Emperor on the strength of a statute passed to support the President of the Republic. They construed a penal enactment by analogy! They were constrained to change the very wording of the law, in reciting it in their sentence. They could not say the President. They did not dare to say the Emperor. They coined the expression of 'Chef de l'Etat' to help them out of the difficulty in which either their ignorance or their servility involved them.

"I am seventy years of age," said M. Berryer, who replied to the Procureur-General, 'I have seen no less than seventeen changes of Government in France; and it entirely passes my understanding to conceive how a law made to enforce respect to certain political institutions can be made use of to punish a man for regretting that these very institutions no longer exist.'

"How inimitably this is expressed, with what admirable point and force, exhausting argument and ridicule in a sentence. The epigram is a trumpet in a Berryer's hands, as the sonnet was in Milton's. How powerful, too, was the following, and, we need scarcely add, how galling!

"The notion that the law existed which his client had been convicted of breaking was preposterous. Where was the constitution which the Act of 1849 was meant to defend? What had become of it? Who broke it to pieces? Who trod it under foot?"

Such of the political prisoners transported to Algeria after the *coup d'etat* as have asked for a remission of their sentence are to be permitted to return to France on the occasion of the new year.

INDIA.

Calcutta newspapers of the 23rd November give a favourable impression of the consequences of the Indian Proclamation and the General Amnesty. They state that the respectable classes belonging to the native population are disposed to yield obedience and to regard the establishment of the Queen's direct authority with pleasure.

CHINA.

All that we hear of the Earl of Elgin's negotiations by the papers that have arrived is that he continued to remain at Shanghai, and was understood to have nearly completed his arrangements with the Chinese about the tariff. That his lordship proposes a trip up the Yangtze-kiang as far as Hankow, the most westward of the ports promised to us under the new treaty. Trade at Canton was certainly beginning to be resumed.

ASSAULT ON THE MANAGER OF "THE TIMES."—The charge of assault preferred by Mr. Mowbray Morris, manager of *The Times* newspaper, against Mr. Capron, was tried at the Middlesex Sessions on Thursday. The parties were old friends and fellow-students in the Temple. The assault took place on the 5th November, as Mr. Morris was getting out of his carriage at the door of the house where he was going to be married on the following day. It appeared from the evidence that in bygone years Mr. Morris had taken part with Mrs. Capron when seeking for a separation from her husband on account of his habitual cruelty. This had led to disagreement, and even to a former assault by Mr. Capron, in Paris. The jury returned a verdict of *Guilty*. The sentence was, that the defendant be imprisoned for twenty-one days, that he be fined 50*l.* and enter into his own recognisance of 1,000*l.* with two sureties of 250*l.* each, to keep the peace and be of good behaviour for two years.

ARREST OF A LADY ON A CHARGE OF WRITING SEDITIOUS LETTERS.—A young lady-like and extremely delicate girl, named Ann Walton, was committed to jail in Clonmel on charge of having written several seditious letters—one in particular—which we understand, constitutes the head and front of her offending—written on the 20th inst., and calling on her Majesty's forces "to rebel and mutiny," as the language of the committal expressed it. Rumours touching her sanity have freely obtained circulation. Her conduct during the preliminary investigation previous to her committal, and her demeanour in the jail since, are not, we understand, calculated to sustain the imputation.—*Tipperary Examiner*.

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LECTURE before the Protestant Alliance of Nova Scotia, by the Rev. ANDREW KING, A. M. For sale at the Wesleyan Book Rooms, and at the Stores of Messrs. A & W MacKinlay and Jas Gossip. Jan. 12.

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