

OBITUARY.

Mr. JAMES BACKHOUSE WALKER, F.R.G.S., whose death, after an attack of influenza, occurred on November 4, at Hobart, Tasmania, at the age of 58, had long been recognized as a high authority on the early history of Tasmania, on which subject he published many papers. The latest of them, on the Aborigines of Tasmania, he read before the Royal Society of the colony last October. He was the eldest son of George Washington Walker, who, in conjunction with James Backhouse, between the years 1831 and 1840, carried out the well-known Friends' Mission to Australia, which had no small influence in reforming our convict system. Mr. Walker, who was never a man of robust strength, was widely known for his keen interest in all public work tending to promote the well-being of the colony, although he took no part in political life. As Vice-Principal of the University of Tasmania, he had an active share in advancing higher education, and he devoted much time to philanthropic objects, and especially to promoting the welfare of the working-classes by means of schools, clubs, and other societies. For many years his house was a literary and intellectual centre for visitors to Tasmania. Mr. Walker, who was a native of Hobart, was not married. Since 1876 he had practised in Hobart as a barrister and solicitor.

Our Berlin Correspondent telegraphed last night :— "The veteran German comedian, KARL HELMERDING, died in Berlin this morning in his 78th year. Helmerding, who formally retired from the stage 20 years ago, occupied in the estimation of Berliners a place similar to that which Mr. Toole held in London."

Our Paris Correspondent announces the death, at the age of 75, of M. THÉODORE MERCIER, Deputy for his native town, Nantua, from 1876 to 1885, and since that time Senator for the Ain. He was a Republican all his life, and was no relation to General Mercier.

The same Correspondent reports the death in Brazil of O. M. HENRI COUDREAU, the explorer of Guiana and the Amazon. He had latterly been in the service of Brazil.

With reference to the obituary notice of Mr. JOSEPH NAPIER HIGGINS, Q.C., which appeared in *The Times* of Monday, a correspondent writes :— "It was after the passing of the Companies Act, 1862, when great activity arose in connexion with joint-stock companies, that Mr. Higgins came into prominence, and enjoyed a very large practice as a junior. On being made a Queen's Counsel he attached himself to Vice-Chancellor Malins's Court, where he and the late Mr. Glasse, Q.C., were well-known figures, and generally appeared on opposite sides. Later he was for some years the leading counsel in Mr. Justice North's Court. Among the cases in which he was engaged, some of the best known are "New Sombrero Phosphate Company v. Erlanger," "Badische Anilin and Soda Fabrik v. Levinstein," the cases arising out of the failure of the City of Glasgow Bank in 1879, and "Sturla v. Freccia," the great case as to Mrs. Mangini Brown's next-of-kin. In 1891 he was Treasurer of Lincoln's Inn, and retired from active practice at the end of his year of office, having been for several years the senior Queen's Counsel at the Chancery Bar. He was chairman of the Bar Library Committee, vice-chairman of the Council of Legal Education, a deputy-lieutenant of Bucks, and a justice of the peace for Bucks and for Waterford and Tipperary. He unsuccessfully contested Evesham and Mid Surrey in the Liberal interest, but became a strong Unionist after the introduction of the Home Rule Bill."

IRELAND.

DUBLIN, DEC. 20.

In the case of John Power, a prisoner under sentence of death in Waterford Prison, the Lord Lieutenant has been pleased to commute the sentence to penal servitude