

country. Thanks to Mr. B. E. Walker, of the Bank of Commerce, and his self-denying committee, a good deal was accomplished. We read that in Edinburgh Mr. W. Hole, R.S.A., has been commissioned to carry out a scheme of historical pictures for the walls of the dining-hall in the City Chambers. The subjects suggested by Mr. Hole comprise, for the south wall, King Robert the Bruce, presenting the charter to the city of Edinburgh, in 1329, the Coronation of King James II. in the chapel of Holyrood, in 1437, being the first Coronation in Edinburgh; and Randolph Murray breaking the news of the battle of Flodden to the Magistrates, in 1513; on the west wall will be placed a series of three pictures illustrative of the Queen Mary period—the departure of the infant Queen with her four Marys from Dumbarton, in 1548, the State entry of Queen Mary into Edinburgh on her return from France in 1561, and Queen Mary brought captive to Edinburgh after her defeat at Carberry Hill in 1567. A large panel on the north wall will show the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant in Greyfriars' Churchyard in 1638, and a smaller panel, Prince Charles Edward at Holyrood in 1745. The subject of the other pictures has yet to be decided upon. Both cities illustrate the past, but what a different past. Surely something nearer the living present can be found to ornament the romantic town, the pride of Burns, the home of Sir Walter Scott.

Heathen Gods.

That the supposed appearance or even the existence of the gods of the heathen was often suggested by human deformity is the theory of Professor Schatz, a German authority, who has set forth his ideas in a recent address reviewed in the British Medical Journal. The writer says: "There is much to make us think that, so to say, the gods did not create men but men made the gods, in the sense that in early times the occurrence of a monstrous birth suggested to the people of these early times that their gods, or at least their demigods, might have appearances similar to these seen in the deformed products of human reproduction. According to the German professor, the Siren is to be identified with a human monstrosity having both lower extremities united; the Centaur, with a monstrosity having two pairs of legs; the Gorgon head, with a monstrosity whose head is imperfectly developed; Atlas, with a child having an enormous excrescence on the head, etc. The various types of common deformities are not represented in the Pantheon, but Dr. Schatz assures us that this is because the national taste led to the selection of monstrosities which were "not in themselves ugly or inartistic." The reviewer concludes: "It would be a most interesting line of investigation to apply this principle of selection to the mythologies of other nations, and more especially to those of the East, and to the gods worshipped by

primitive peoples. The results might be of unexpected service in clearing up moot points in comparative mythology and racial folklore."

Pewer

Ambitious people look on the attainment of office as something satisfying, but it is not so. If anyone could be able to speak of the result, it would be Mr. Chamberlain, the Secretary of the Colonies, and he said recently: I have heard it said—Lord Melbourne at all events used to say—that the very happiest days in the life of a statesman were the days when he accepted office and the day when he left it. No doubt that is true. What does it mean? It means that after the average life of a Ministry, which in this country I may put at three or four years, the chief desire of every member of it is to get quit of office. It is all very well to talk of the sweets of office, but after six years they pall upon a jaded palate. I am not at all inclined to underestimate the honour of serving the Crown or being a part of the great machinery which, in distress or prosperity, in peace or war, is guiding the policy and controlling to a certain extent the destinies of the country. A Minister of the Crown becomes in a sense public property. It is a serious thing to become public property. From that moment you are supposed to be made of cast-iron and capable of anything; you are expected to answer every kind of question and correspondence upon subjects about which you care nothing and know less. I sympathize with those persons whose fate it is to become public property. From the moment you are a Minister and public property, every action, however simple attains at once a special and esoteric character of its own. A special interpretation is founded upon it, and there are, I believe, gentlemen of the press who have become such skilled physiognomists that they can trace on the fleeting expression of a Cabinet Minister's face all the details of the secrets of State. It is right under the circumstances that you should propose the health of His Majesty's Ministers."

Hymns Ancient and Modern.

A correspondent of Church Bells writes a very good letter from which we extract the following points: It is reported that a new edition of "Hymns Ancient and Modern" (revised and rearranged), is to be issued in the autumn of the present year. If this is true, I hope the publishers will keep in view the following considerations: That lists of the most commonly used hymns in the present edition, together with those—and there are many—which are never used at all, should be invited from all choir masters, and those who have the selection of the hymns under their control, so that a fair judgment may be arrived at as to the best hymns to be included in the new edition. That the editors of all the leading Church Hymn-books be invited to arrive at some agreement as to the version of the words of hymns

in most common use, the original MS. of such hymns being consulted where possible, and strictly adhered to in, say, future editions; but where this is impossible, then a committee of theologians, poets, and musicians should be formed to advise as to an authorized version of such hymns.

Parochial Collections.

It is very hard on the clergy that they have all the time to be calling for money. The average layman is like the young spring poet, who, after declining to die in spring, summer or fall, declared "he would not die at all." So with the collections, under whatever guise they come, we would not give at all. The Rev. William C. De Witt, in "the diocese of Chicago," has considered the subject carefully and decides that "the summer is no time to raise money. The fall doesn't begin in earnest (in Church work), until November. The Christmas extravagances—upon which everyone spends more than he can afford—begin to be anticipated December 1st. Most people are insolvent until February, and then enters Lent. For forty days Church people are in an atmosphere conducive to the consideration of their duty toward God and man in the sphere of religious effort interior and exterior, and favourable to the saving of money. It is a commonsense and therefore religious policy, under the conditions, to make the notes payable after Easter. But it is very hard on the clergy, and seriously interferes with their 'Feast.'"

ASCENSION DAY.

The Festival of our Lord's Ascension, so important in the sequence of Gospel facts, and in the resultant consequences, was for a long time strangely overlooked and neglected, and it is one of the signs of renewed Church life that it takes now its proper place with the greater festivals of the Church, and like them is generally observed. There is not any very early historical notice of Ascension Day, but mention of it is made by St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory of Nyssa. The ritual provision of the Prayer-Book for this day shows plainly that it is regarded in the system of our Church as one of the very highest class of solemn days set apart in honour of our Lord. It could hardly have been otherwise, for the act which is commemorated on this day was one which crowned and consummated the work of the Redeemer's Person, and opened the gate of everlasting life to those whom He had redeemed. The festival concludes the yearly commemoration of our blessed Lord's life and work, which thus leads upward from the cradle at Bethlehem, exhibiting before God and man the various stages of His redeeming work, and following Him step by step until we stand with the disciples gazing up after Him, as He goes within the everlasting doors. The Ascension was necessary as the fulfillment not only of prophecy of old time, but of Jesus Himself. It was the complement of the resurrection,