

that if the latter would only deal on a cash or short credit basis people would think more seriously before entering into the obligations engendered by an expensive interment. The undertakers on the other hand, when spoken to on the subject, say the fault is not theirs. They say when relatives come to order a funeral they are almost invariably regardless of expense. One undertaker went so far as to say that there is just as much profit in a \$40 funeral as there is in one which costs \$100. This assertion, however, is more than doubtful and should be taken *cum grano*. Society itself is the chief offender, for it has created the demand which the undertaker but supplies with his gloomy skill.

Here, then, we have the disease and its principal causes. Where is the remedy to be found? As far as the writer's judgment goes, the clergy and the wealthier classes are the ones who can do the most towards stemming this flood of undue waste and expenditure which is daily overwhelming the already limited resources of the needy and the comparatively poor. The clergyman, in virtue of his office, is generally an old and privileged friend of the family; none can know so well as he the circumstances of the bereaved, and the advice which would be bitterly resented in any other is heard with attentive ears when falling from the lips of an honoured pastor. The general example of the wealthy and fashionable is even more powerful than the special influence of the clergy. None may deny that our wealthier class, as a rule, is fully alive to its obligations towards the poor, but in this matter it has been weighed in the balances and found wanting. When the opulent and the leaders of fashion have learned that a simple funeral is more in consonance with good taste, then we shall find that costliness will be more honoured in the breach than in the observance at the funerals of the poor; but not till then.

EUSTACE KIRBY.

### HERE AND THERE.

VISITORS to the Ontario Jockey Club May Meeting on Saturday and Monday last made up in enthusiasm for their lack of numbers. Considering that, apart from a passing thunder shower on the second day, the weather eventually turned out to be all that could be desired, that Woodbine Park is very convenient to the city—seeing, moreover, that these meetings increase in attractiveness year by year—it is surprising that the contests for the Queen's Plate and the Railway Steeplechase did not attract larger gatherings. Those events, and the remaining nine items which were included in the official cards, produced some excellent racing, a remarkable and commendable feature being that the favourites generally justified the support given to them by "punters." It was noted, too, with satisfaction, that there was an entire absence of those rowdy and lawless elements which are concomitants of too many race meetings in England and the States, and which deter ladies from patronizing a sport in itself not only innocent but directly beneficial as tending to encourage the cultivation of thoroughbreds. The Jockey Club is entitled to hearty congratulation on the sportsmanlike efficiency to which they brought their May Meeting, which may justly be termed the Canadian Derby.

TORONTO has within her municipal limits so few public breathing places that all movements having for their object the supplying of such resorts, and all efforts to bring existing ones within easy access of the city, merit hearty encouragement. High Park, the scene of many a pleasant picnic, has not hitherto been accessible from the water by any regular service of boats. The Humber Steamship Company, however, have just constructed an iron pier at that place, and their boats plying between Toronto and the Humber will call there at stated hours during the summer months. The pier is an ingenious construction. Ordinary wooden piles are subject to damage in winter by the action of ice, whilst the usual iron pillar is too expensive to be placed in a wharf so infrequently used. Mr. Hicks devised a plan by which ordinary metal rails, or H iron, could be adapted, and the result is a neat light structure which, whilst offering the minimum of resistance to heavy seas and ice, possesses great strength, being firmly screwed into the "hard-pan." This pier was formally opened last week in the presence of a number of prominent citizens who were the guests of the Humber Company upon the occasion.

ON Queen's birthday the Toronto "Sons of England" celebrated their annual festival and displayed their increasing numbers. The objects of the society, as its chaplain in his eloquent sermon emphatically stated, are purely benevolent and social; from political party it stands aloof. Yet a politician, beholding the long procession might have moralized on what he saw, and have said to himself that it would not be prudent by publicly courting the support of the enemies of England to rouse into activity the English Vote.

THE Montreal *Herald* persists in soliciting THE WEEK to reply to its peculiar effusions. We can only repeat that they admit of no reply. The man who cannot discuss public questions without indulging in venomous personalities must be an ill-tempered snob. This is the only thing we have to say, and it is so obvious as to be scarcely worth saying.

THE Montreal *Herald* is considerate enough to take care that those whom it maligns shall not be put to much trouble in pointing out the real

character of their maligner. The Montreal *Witness*, it seems, has failed sufficiently to puff the region through which runs the line and in which are situate the lands of the Pacific Railway Company, and has even represented a passenger as being snowed up upon the road. For this the *Herald* assails it in an article headed "Montreal Lying Witness," calls it "an industrious and most persistent perverter of the truth," and says that "its lying is malicious, clumsy and transparent, deceiving only those who have not found out its hypocrisy." It is needless to say that the journal thus bespattered is one of the most reputable in the Dominion.

THE popularity of roller-skating appears to be on the wane in the States—notably in New York, where, a correspondent says: "If anyone wants evidence of this let him make a round of the rinks in this city and see the gloom which prevails. No more high-priced orchestral music or brass bands. The carnivals are of the things past. The lack of interest manifested at the six-day contest at Madison Square Garden is another instance, and there is no doubt the death of the two winners at the last contest has caused a reaction in the community in its admiration of athletic sports. It was a mushroom ebullition among the young people." However this may be, roller-skating has lost none of its attraction for Torontonians. Not only do its votaries continue to gyrate at the Adelaide Street Rink, but a much larger rink has been constructed in the west of the city, and a small one is in course of erection at the Humber.

THERE seems to be some ground for suspicion that the gang of thieves who attempted to "operate" the Canadian banks were generalised by a man known best to the police by the name of Wilkes, a clever and most dangerous "smasher." Under various aliases this man has made a tour of two continents. In company with two others Wilkes was taken red-handed in Milan four years ago, and was then sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. But in return for a full and elaborate confession the Italian police liberated him, and he retired to New York. A copy of his confession was given to the American press. Originally Wilkes was an employé of the Erie Railroad Company, but became afterwards a gambling-house keeper in New York. He was arrested for forgery in 1870, but was discharged for want of evidence. He then entered a "brandy ring," the object of which was to cheat the Customs. After several other American forgeries, he did business in Central America, not without profit. Then he returned to New England, and afterwards came to Canada. Whilst in America he and his confederates spent much time and some money in learning the various *minutiae* of the banking business, and acquiring secrets connected with international transactions. When their education was complete they set off for a European tour in the "bond business"—that is to say, in the sale of forged railway bonds; but the police got wind of their errand, and they had to make a rush back to America. After this affair had blown over, the whole company entered into partnership with another gang of forgers in England. Several years of successful work followed, when they commenced operations on the Continent, where they were joined by a "baron." France, Belgium, Germany and Italy were worked, and enormous profits were netted, till they were obliged to settle accounts with the Italian police. In all its striking details this career of villainy is probably without a parallel, and the versatility and various accomplishments of this daring gang are certified by their success in swindling bankers and experienced business men in almost every town in Europe and the United States.

THERE were twenty-six failures in Canada reported to Bradstreet's during the past week, against twenty-two in the preceding week, and twenty, twenty-four and five in the corresponding weeks of 1884, 1883 and 1882, respectively. In the United States there were 185 failures during the week as compared with 164 in the preceding week, and with 183, 155 and 124 respectively, in the corresponding weeks of 1884, 1883 and 1882. About eighty-four per cent. were those of small traders whose capital was less than \$5,000.

THE display of bunting in Canada on Queen's birthday would astonish some of our friends in England. There the celebration of that anniversary is so changed about from date to date that the event is lost sight of by the generality of people.

THE well-known saying "As happy as a king" would almost appear to be an ironical expression, and a paraphrase of the words "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," if we are to judge by the fact that one monarch out of every three, comes to grief in some way or other. From the investigation of a French statistician, it appears that up to the present time 2,540 emperors and kings have ruled over sixty-four nations. Of this number of crowned heads, 300 have been driven from their thrones, sixty-four have abdicated, twenty-four have committed suicide, twelve have become insane, one hundred have been killed in battle, 123 made prisoners, twenty-five died as martyrs, 151 have been assassinated, and 108 legally condemned and executed. These figures certainly convey the idea that sovereignty is about the most risky business in which any one can engage, and ordinary mortals should be thankful that they have not been born in the purple. It would also be interesting to know how many millions of their fellow creatures these 2,540 potentates have slain to gratify their licentious desires, or their thirst for power and conquest. It is very certain that the world could have done without any one of them, and in that case very likely it would have been a more pleasant place in which to dwell.