

The Gothenburg system of retailing liquors has been adopted in several towns of Sweden. An important difference is, however, the use made of the profits of the liquor business, which are not, as in the Gothenburg system proper, applied directly to municipal revenues, and so lessening the general taxation. Instead, the profits are devoted to the founding of almshouses, orphanages, museums, etc. So far the plan has worked admirably.

The City of St. Louis has attained a swifter mail service than is known in any city in the world. A street railway car is fully equipped for collecting, sorting, postmarking and distributing mail matter. The car officials collect mail from all street boxes, and sort and deliver on the way. By this method a letter may be promptly forwarded to its destination. A trial letter was delivered at a distance of five miles from the drop-box within less than half an hour from the time of writing.

The Prison Congress, which has recently been meeting at Baltimore, has arrived at some wise conclusions. The police records in all cities show the prevalence of inherited or chronic crime, and with this fact in view a proposition has been made to the end that hardened criminals shall be forbidden to marry, that their children shall be taken from them and trained to decent lives in public institutions, and that habitual criminals shall be sentenced to imprisonment for life. These methods of curing crime are certainly not superficial, for they strike boldly at the roots of the social evil of the day. With the crime producers safely out of the way, the morality of the coming generation would speedily increase.

We have become quite accustomed to the objections raised by our friends across the border to the immigration of the Chinese, but we have not been prepared to learn that in some countries the English colonists are found to be fully as objectionable—on, however, a very different score. The settlers in British Guiana have been spreading over into Venezuelan territory, where they have too speedily become prosperous farmers and growers. It is now the policy of the Venezuelan Government to check this immigration, and an expedition has been sent out to prevent English settlers from crossing the border. A number of officials are exploring the interior of Venezuela along the Orinoco, searching for suitable farming lands for Venezuelan settlers. No English, however, need apply.

Now that large numbers of immigrants are again landing in Halifax, we should not forget the kindly suggestion of a thoughtful woman who, during the summer wrote to a daily paper, asking that some show of interest and welcome should be made by our people towards the travel-wearied and often homesick peasants who have chosen this continent as their home. One who has seen the arrival of an immigrant ship—the outpouring of the huddled passengers—the curious looks of the men, the half-alarmed glance of the women and the downright joy of the children, as their feet rest once more on the solid earth—receives a lasting impression. We would advise our citizens to watch for the next batch of immigrants, and when the ills and discomforts of the ocean trip and the friendless arrival are realized, we rest assured that no word will be needed from us to secure a hearty welcome for our passing guests.

The moralists who profess to be so horrified at the genuine case of piracy which has lately been before the public need not so diligently affirm that the days of the sea freebooters are to be revived. Now-a-days prating on the high seas is in disrepute, and the pirate even in penny-dreadful literature is getting to be a rare article. The inconveniences and nausea of the red rover's life have disgusted those who formerly followed that profession, and unfortunately snug berths have been found for them on shore, where they manipulate stocks, corrupt corporations and governments, steal railroads occasionally, and unite in gigantic "deals" which the public pays for. The present generation of land pirates are much too secure and happy to embark on the troubled sea of adventure, and there is no probability that any number of them will "sail the Spanish Main in search of" galleons laden with treasure trove.

The Rev. Mr. Herridge, of Ottawa, has recently been considering the serious question of music versus worship in the service of his congregation. Many of our city clergymen will sympathise with the reverend gentleman in his objection to the custom of his flock, who gathered in large numbers when there was fine singing advertised among the attractions of the evening, while on ordinary occasions the church was but half filled. Mr. Herridge came to the conclusion that the church of which he was the pastor was becoming a concert hall, and with a view to stopping the desecration he plainly stated his views to the large congregation which assembled last Sunday night in the expectation of hearing an eminent singer. The singer did not appear, but the pastor did, and made a vigorous protest against the indifference of his people on matters non-musical. While we agree with the clergyman in condemning all non-devotional church music—that is music which is mere lip or hand service, and is not in any way connected with worship—we quite understand the motive of the people in flocking to hear a good singer. In all ages, in the Jewish, as well as in the Christian Church, music has been one of the most important factors in the service of the sanctuary. It is scarcely worth while to dispute over a practice so well established—rather an effort should be made to both seek and hold all music-loving people by means of the beauty of the song service. Many can be reached and lifted to higher levels by the medium of church music, and such persons should be accorded every indulgence by their non-musical brethren.

The unstable nature of the French Republic has been well demonstrated by the effect of the Panama disclosures on the people. Instantly a cry was made that there were no honest men in the Government, and for a trifling matter the cabinet of a year's standing was overthrown. The Bourbons, the Orleanists and Bonapartists are all hopeful that their parties will again hold the reins of government, and as there is no really great French statesman living the game will be fought out by the lesser but more garrulous politicians. The mass of the people are wildly indignant at the trickery which has been practiced on them, and they will probably flock to the party whose orators condemn most loudly the action of the present Government. Oratory and pageantry have "fixed" France many times before, and as a social revolution may occur at any day, it is probable that many fine speeches are being prepared for the occasion. It would be passing strange if this generation should witness the re-establishment of the old regime in the fickle European Republic.

It is not many years ago since the mere mention of the name of "Whitechapel" sent a thrill of terror through the hearts of many. Philanthropists busied themselves with the needs of the ill-famed districts, and schools, missions and libraries were erected and popularized. Still, to the majority of Londoners the unsavory district was an unknown ground, and they had no desire whatever to become more familiar with it. A clever young stage-writer, however, conceived the idea of catching the public by writing up the humorous side of Whitechapel life. "The Coster's Serenade," and "Knocked 'Em in the Old Kent Road," are now sung everywhere throughout London. The taking melodies and rousing choruses have been most successful in arousing the frequenters of the concert halls to a lively interest in their poorer neighbors—and even those who hold the music halls in abhorrence admit that in their case they have been the means of bringing about a change in public opinion which has greatly benefited the neglected region of Whitechapel.

At a conference of Social Reformers held in Montreal lately, some exciting discussions arose. The causes of various forms of social evils were closely investigated and widely disagreed upon. To some speakers the competitive system was the demoralizer of the working classes. Others found the trouble to be involved in the currency system, while still others gave such diverse opinions as to the cause as are indicated by the captions of the speakers, "the weakness of religious sentiment, the land system, the liquor traffic, criminal heredity, the growth of population, or the lack of organization among workingmen." The discussion must have been as interesting as the historic one at the disbanding of the laborers at the building of the Tower of Babel. Each speaker was so wrapped in his own subject that he failed to comprehend his neighbor's point of view, and instead of some broad platform being laid down upon which all might work together, the result of the conference has been the narrowing of the views of each member. While we do not doubt that the majority of the delegates were honest and sincere in their professions, we regret exceedingly that the results of the conference have been so far from satisfactory.

For many years past vigorous objections have been made by the people living below the Chaudiere Falls on the Ottawa River to the practice of the mill-owners at Ottawa, who have floated their waste sawdust down the stream. Such quantities of sawdust have been thrown out that in many places the width of the river has been lessened by the great sawdust banks which have been found in its curves. An unhealthy gas has been generated by the sawdust, which has rendered the river water unfit for drinking purposes, and which has also succeeded in destroying all the fish-life in the river. The explosions which in winters past have suddenly shattered whole acres of ice, destroying the river roads and crossings, are now known to have been caused by the action of the gas generated in the sawdust. These claims having been brought before the Supreme Court of Canada a decision has been given which is of great importance to mill-owners in all parts of the Dominion. Oddly enough, the mill-owners are defeated on a very minor objection of the plaintiffs, namely, that the dumping of sawdust into the river interfered with navigation. Now that the vexed question is at last settled, legislation will have to be enacted in order to compel the mill-owners to consume their own sawdust.

The late French Cabinet was not a happy body—the sword of Damocles was too evidently swaying above their devoted heads—and the death blow was painful as well as fatal. The new Ministry take their seats with trepidation, mixed with a certainty that they have not come to stay for long. The new or Ribot Cabinet is substantially a resurrection of the late Loubet Cabinet. Some titles have been transferred. Ribot replaces Loubet as Premier, and assigns to the late leader the Ministry of the Interior, and around these two men a number of nonentities, or supposed nonentities, are grouped. The new Cabinet has come into existence at an unpropitious moment. Its chief men are unpopular, and are not in possession of the confidence of the Chamber. A difficult question is now awaiting settlement, and the people are laboring under an excitement not unlike that induced by inebriation. It is to be hoped for the welfare of the Republic that no foreign dispute will occur until the civil strife is calmed. Germany is but too willing to take advantage of the disunion of the people of the Republic, and history has taught well the lesson that the nation warring within itself is weakening for the enemy. Cool heads, strong nerves, patience and pluck, will all be needed ere the present crisis of the Ministry is safely tided over.

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