

The Civil Service.

The Civil Service of Canada, with its seven or eight thousand clerks and other employes, holds out many inducements for honorable occupation to the boys and girls in our schools. Formerly these positions were gained in great measure through political favour; now they are awarded on the results of competitive examinations held twice each year in the months of May and November. For the preliminary or general examination any boy or girl of the age of fifteen years is eligible; and the examination paper set is of quite a simple character, embracing copying, spelling and arithmetic, which pupils of grade eight should be quite competent to write successfully and pass with a creditable mark. Those who pass this preliminary examination are eligible to the position of messengers, porters or other employments of the lower grades, the initial salary for which is \$500, increasing by amounts not exceeding \$50 a year.

At eighteen years of age the candidate for civil service promotion is eligible for his qualifying examination which admits him to the lowest of the three divisions of the civil service. The first qualifying examination may be taken at the same time as the preliminary examination if the candidate is of suitable age, namely eighteen.

In the three divisions of the Civil Service, the promotion is by competitive examinations which increase in difficulty as the higher grades of the service are attempted. But of course with the increased responsibility and the greater difficulty of attainment, the salaries also increase, ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 and \$4,000 with proportionate annual increases until the maximum is attained.

It will thus be seen that the rewards in the Civil Service are fairly adequate for young men who are content with a moderate initial salary and who are content to work their way up by merit and industrious application. At present, however, there is a small number of adequately equipped male candidates for clerkships in the third or lowest division. Young women are looking forward to clerkships in this division in which there are many positions that can be filled quite as well by women as by men.

The lack of scholarship in candidates seeking promotion has been quite evident in recent examinations, but whether this has been due to

the difficulty of the examination or other causes the REVIEW will not here attempt to answer.

The April Skies.

The April skies, if clear, will have much interest for observers. Chiefly Halley's comet, which has been long expected, will be worth looking for in the early hours of the morning toward the last of the month. It rose half an hour before the sun on April 1st, but of course could not be seen in the greater brilliancy of that luminary. Since that time it has been gradually drawing out from the sun and approaching the earth, and on the 30th inst. it will rise three hours before the sun, and then can be seen in the morning sky, a bright and striking little object, which will gradually increase in brightness during the early part of May. On the 19th of that month it will re-appear in the evening sky and become an object of great interest to all beholders. Teachers should encourage their scholars to look for this rare visitor, which will be a great event in their lifetime—something to arouse their wonder and admiration but not their fear. Those who were alive when the last great comet visited us spent a couple of hours in its tail and no one was any the worse for it.

The bright little planet Mercury, which is generally in a better position to be seen in the spring than at any other time, will be unusually well placed this year for observation about the last of this month and first of next. The planet will then be so far north of the sun that it will not set for an hour and a half after sunset, and can be easily picked out in the twilight glow, a little dot of silver which the glow of the western sky turns to a golden hue. Mercury is less than twenty times the volume of our earth.

Jupiter, the brightest object in the evening sky, maintains its brilliancy throughout the month. If the observer will watch the sky where Jupiter has risen and move his gaze toward the north-east to the bright star Vega in the constellation Lyra, he should see in the early part of the evening from April 20 to 22, a number of small swiftly-moving bluish shooting stars, darting out in all directions from the bright star Vega. Other groups of shooting stars may be seen during the month. These as a rule follow the path or orbit of some comet.