

A CURIOUS TAX UPON EMPLOYERS.—Every domestic servant in Germany now keeps a little book, to which the mistress employing her must contribute every week a five cent stamp provided by the Government for this special purpose. In case of sickness, or when age incapacitates a servant, the Government redeems the stamps contained in the book, the contents of which are really a tax upon one class to assist in the maintenance of another less fortunate class. The scheme is said to be regarded with favour by the employer as well as by the employed.

SECRECY OF THE CONFESSONAL.—The question whether a priest is bound to give evidence in Court based on information obtained under the seal of the confessional, which was answered lately in the affirmative by the judicial authorities in a Norman town, has just been negatived by the Cour de Cassation of Paris. A priest who would not betray secrets learned by him in his ecclesiastical capacity, was fined. He appealed, and the Cour de Cassation has reversed the judgment.

LADIES AND PEERAGES.—There have not been many instances in recent times, says the *Illustrated London News*, of a peerage passing from a mother to a son, for peeresses in their own rights are few. It is a curious fact that peerages in the feudal days were generally conferred to pass to lineal descendant, whether female or male; but in recent and more civilized times it has grown customary to confine the succession to heirs male. When a title is inherited through a female heir, it will almost always be found that the peerage is not of modern but, on the contrary, of very old, creation. If there is any object really gained in keeping up hereditary dignities, peerages should be given to descend in the female line; for there are few of the very old titles in the peerage which have not at some time passed in this manner, and those which do not so pass, rarely survive long. The average duration of a peerage confined to heirs male is only about one hundred years.

BANKRUPTCY RETURNS.—Failures in the Province of Quebec in 1891 numbered 680 against 491 in the previous year.

THE MONTREAL COURT HOUSE.—The alterations in this building are advancing rather slowly. From a recent statement it appears that the amount of the contract was \$194,999. Up to date there have been paid the following sums:—On account of contract \$100,000; for extras \$52,677. According to the architects' certificates there is now due, on the contract \$47,000; and