

music, both vocal and instrumental, as a means of innocent recreation, singing being taught in all the primary schools. There is hardly a village which does not possess one or more choral societies, and in many cases a brass band. The rural districts of the Canton of Lucerne may be cited as an example of the general taste for music, the beneficial effects of which cannot be too highly appreciated. In this little strip of territory there are no less than sixteen principal choral societies, seventeen musical societies, thirteen theatrical societies, and twenty-five brass bands. Lenzberg, a town of 2,000 inhabitants, could already, some years back, boast of possessing 200 pianoes. In obscure villages, dramatic performances are sometimes given by the peasants themselves. In some parts of Switzerland pageants are periodically got up at considerable expense to commemorate some event of extraordinary interest in the local annals. Rifle matches and athletic sports are common throughout the country. All classes without distinction take part in these pastimes. Such being the case, the question naturally arises how it is that the working classes can dispose of so much leisure time. The answer is already at hand. Besides the evenings when their work is generally over, they can here turn to good account the Sundays and holydays (the latter are of course much more numerous in the Catholic Cantons than in the Protestant), instead of being driven, as often happens elsewhere, by the want of rational amusements, to ramble about listlessly, making an occasional halt at a public-house, or to sit at home decorously drunk.

In Antolia and many other parts it is intimated that while the British artisan would not thrive alone, as one of a colony he would have a very good chance. This is a subject worth considering. But on the whole it is to the vast continent of America that the emigrant must turn; in Europe or Asia or Africa he seems to have but a poor chance of getting on. Everywhere there is the pressure of a superabundant population, but even there there are signs of a glut. At Buffalo, for instance, thanks to the constant influx of Germans and Irish, the supply of unskilled labour has reached the point of saturation, and in California there seems to be no end of Chinese.

DROUGHT AND FIRE IN THE NORTHWEST.

Our correspondents in the Northwestern States send us distressing details of the effects of the two months' drought throughout the most of that region, and of the terrible fires which have, in a great measure, resulted therefrom. The earth is dried to such a depth that it acts as a conductor, and living trees are falling

from the action of the fire which undermines them. Streams and wells are unprecedentedly low, or entirely dry; vegetation is dried up; fields are so parched that there is little succulent food for stock. The fire-fiend has followed with appalling fury, causing fearful destruction of life and property. For several weeks great fires have been raging in the woods, in the dried marshes, and along the lines of railways, consuming buildings, fences, crops, and destroying live stock, desolating hundreds of square miles, and rendering homeless and without food or employment thousands of men, women, and children, just at the opening of winter. The loss of life is of frightful magnitude, and rarely in the history of the world have these fires been equalled in the destruction of human life and of property, and in the desolation of whole communities. Towns and villages have been swept out of existence in the space of a few hours, and thousands of human beings have been burned, drowned or have fallen victims to other violent forms of death. Not less than fifty villages, in the States of Wisconsin and Michigan, have been wholly or in part destroyed. The town of Peshtigo, Wisconsin, with a population of 1,500 to 2,000, has been entirely consumed, not a vestige of its habitations remaining, and those only of its population escaped who threw themselves into the water and reached the opposite shore. Hundreds were burned, suffocated, and drowned. This fire, driven by the high winds, swept over an area of eight miles square, destroying houses, barns, fences, etc., and the loss of life will number over a thousand. The Belgian settlement of Brussels was almost entirely consumed, many persons are missing, and the survivors are left destitute amid the ashes of their ruined homes. The whole coast, from Green Bay to Menomonee, has been devastated, many villages consumed and their population made houseless wanderers, dependent upon charity for the necessities of life. On the east shore of Green Bay the loss of life is placed as high as at Peshtigo, and the destruction of buildings, fences, stock, &c., is complete. More than a dozen towns along the eastern shore of Michigan have been swept away, and many hundreds of people left without food or shelter. A large district, including several towns, has been devastated on the western coast. The town of Manistee, with a population of 4,000, has suffered severely by the flames, and the loss of property is stated at not less than one million of dollars. In the counties of Huron and Saville, with a total population of 24,000, ten thousand must commence life anew, having lost everything but their lives. Besides the frightful loss of life reported, hundreds have been disabled, many partially roasted, causing additional suffering and destitution through-

out the region devastated. Detroit, Port Huron, Milwaukee, and other cities have converted all available space into hospitals, and the citizens have become nurses.

Dest. active fires are also raging in the forests and on the prairies of Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, Ohio, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Dakota, and in Ontario, Canada, involving immense losses of property, of live stock, and of human life. In Minnesota the fire swept over the prairie into the forests of Glencoe, Le Sueur, Mankato, and New Ulm. The fire is said to have reached nearly as far south as the Iowa border, and east to the Minnesota River. Many small towns have been completely destroyed, and the farms in the track of the flames have been almost invariably swept of buildings, fences, crops, &c. Northern Minnesota is also the field of similar disasters. Nemaha and other counties in Kansas have suffered from these prairie fires; also various sections of Missouri and the other States named. In California fires are said to be raging in the mountains the whole length of the State. Copious rains in the regions of the Northwest, which have been the most fearfully scourged, have diminished the ravages, and may soon exhaust the destructive power of the flames; but the devastation already accomplished is sickening to contemplate, and the sufferings of the people must be great the ensuing winter, and the agricultural interests of the burned districts will be crippled for some time to come.—*Commissioner of Agriculture, U. S. A.*

DIRECTIONS FOR THE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF THE FLAX CROP.

COMPILED BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE GROWTH OF FLAX IN IRELAND.

The following directions have been carefully arranged from the mass of information obtained by the Society, and their agriculturists, during their four years' experience, in the improved system of management. By this system, Irish flax has been produced, which brought, in some cases, the high prices of £90 to £140 per ton:

SOIL AND ROTATION.

By attention and careful cultivation, good flax may be grown on various soils; but some are much better adapted for it than others. The best is a sound, dry, deep loam, with a clay subsoil. It is very desirable that the land should be properly drained, and subsoiled; as, when it is saturated with either underground or surface water, good flax cannot be expected.