

draws a very painful picture of the progress of alcoholism in Bretagne, whose maritime population supplies the navy with eighty per cent. of its Boys in Blue, and whose physical force, endurance, and obstinacy, have become proverbial. Within the last twenty years, attests M. Dayot, the character of the population of Bretagne has changed, due to drink, and the taste for the latter is due to the sailors who are employed in the cod fishery at Newfoundland and Iceland, consuming in their hard labour as much as one pint of brandy—all adulterated—per day, in addition to cider and wine.

Then when they return to France they spend their earnings in the rum holes, leaving their wives and children to starve. In one country district of Bretagne there are no less than 600 dram shops; in Paris every corner house appears to be a drinking den. Twenty years ago in Bretagne the finger of scorn was pointed at a drunkard; now that Helot causes no surprise. Why? Everyone, every class, rich and poor, young and old, get inebriated, even those whose duties ought to be proof against the temptation. But all succumb. Now the saddest side of the sad situation is that the women are catching the drink contagion, with this difference, that woman resists for a longer period the toxical effects of alcohol, and is thus enabled to drink more.

The Great Eastern Railway of France and also the Paris and Lyon Railway are experimenting with the new illuminating gas, Acétylène. It is employed every evening for a first-class carriage, and its beautiful white, soft light is most pleasing. In each compartment is placed a lamp of one and one-half carcel power; it replaces the coal gas. Each lamp burns two and one-half gallons of the new gas per hour, and the ordinary reservoir can contain a sufficient supply for seventy-five hours. The trial is now being extended to the omnibuses and tram cars.

In actions for libel in France it is a rule never to grant excessive damages. A few days ago an ex-Senator sued a Paris journal for defamation by printing his name in a list, concocted for unavowable ends, among the Panama corrupted. He demanded 10,000 frs. damages. The libel was as clear as noon day—when no fog reigns—and the jury found the defendant guilty. However, the court only accorded 100 fr. damages. Worse, the plaintiff has to pay all the costs, but with the right to sue the defendant for their recovery—if he be solvent. If there be nothing the king loses his rights.

One of the favourite social amusements at present is the popularising of the Black Art of Magic; or, as M. Jules Bois, who lectures upon these subjects and explains their mechanism, calls them generically, "Satanisme." Had he lived in the middle ages he would undoubtedly be burned for teaching people how to work spells, prepare love philters, call spirits from the vasty deep, or the circumambient air. He explains all the mysteries to his astonished hearers; the majority are incredulous; not a few cynical and indifferent, and several, rich and poor, firm believers in the unnatural. These latter, also, are either stupid or possessed of a share of intelligence, but all undoubtedly have a bee in their bonnet. M. Bois showed it was as easy to study necromancy and was quite as inoffensive as botany or ornithology; indeed, to learn how to speak to Old Nick himself was no more difficult than to learn how to play the flute or scrape a violin. It was a change, too, in the amusements of the Salon, where monologues and singing commence to pall. The late Countess of Caithness claimed to have daily confidential chats with Mary Queen of Scots, but made up in a toilette, exactly and pretty, of the period of the unfortunate queen. The late Doctress Anna Kingsford, in other respects a sensible lady, boasted to have worked a spell on Claude Bernard that caused his death, as a punishment for his vivisection of dogs, guinea-pigs, etc. She attempted the same upon Pasteur, but he proved cabalistic proof, as she died before him.

French Guiana is at loggerheads with Brazil, since, it is said, the reign of Louis XIV., respecting frontiers. There is a large region of no man's ground, as neither country owns it; or rather both own it, which amounts to the same thing. The French call the region Connani, and several companies have, from time to time, been founded in Paris to run the territory as a free Republic, under the protection of France. The Brazilians warned the adventurers off and the French compelled them to leave. Beyond founding an "order" and selling the decorations as a source of revenue,

as some countries do postage stamps, nothing definite was achieved. The disputants ought to settle the matter by arbitration ere Uncle Sam applies the Monroe doctrine. It would help to solve the Venezuela dispute. Z.

Genius.

Some men disdain it, this transmuting power:
Yet genius, like a holy herald, bears
Its deathless glory to the world, and wears
Bravely its laurel and its passion-flower.
Talent is still a rich, yet common, dower,
Marking the many from the few, and fares
With not too eager heart, nor with despair
That sear the soul and make it thrill and cower.
Genius is martyrdom and grief to them
Who feels its tireless and despotic will:
With cruel rage or subtle stratagem
It bids them dream or sing or die or kill:
It bids them live—live as no others live,
Quickest to love, to suffer, to forgive.
—G. F. Montgomery in the February Century.

Montreal Affairs.

THE fears expressed in this column that the triumph of the Civic Reform cause at the municipal elections might be more apparent than real have been verified in a manner simply maddening to those who thought that at last the city had escaped from the clutches of the ring. The first test of strength came in the formation of the committees. The Reformers wanted to place in the Chairmanship of the Finance Committee, Alderman Savignac, who is the senior member of the Committee, in respect to service, and much trusted and esteemed by the citizens. Alderman Rainville, the old chairman, was a candidate for re-election. The Savignac men at one o'clock on the important day numbered fourteen, a clear majority of the council; but three hours later, when the vote was taken they had shrunk to twelve in number, Alderman Ouimet and Wilson having joined the enemy. The means used to seduce them from their allegiance were revealed later on when the other committees came to be formed. Alderman Wilson was made a member of the Finance Committee, and Alderman Ouimet became Chairman of a minor committee—honours rarely given to new members, and which, in this case, were not conferred because of the marked suitableness of the men for these positions. Worse still, the "gang," in order to deliver the goods promised to the traitors had to cut down the English representation on the committees from three as against four French-Canadians under the old understanding to two, leaving five seats to the representatives of the other nationality. St. Antoine Ward and St. Laurence Ward, which between them have more taxes to pay than all the rest of the city put together, have no representation on the two great civic committees—the Finance and the Roads. Alderman Rainville was very saucy about this invasion of the long-recognized privileges of the English minority; and virtually announced that it was in punishment for their audacity in trying to "dominate the council." Their alleged domination consisted in allying themselves solidly with the better class of the French-Canadians to take the control of the city out of the hands of the untrustworthy. It has also been claimed that Alderman Prefontaine and Rainville were defenders of the French-Canadian nationality against the English attacks. As the latter simply wanted to replace Alderman Rainville with Alderman Savignac—one French-Canadian by another—this claim is not worth much; but the national cry, which is used to cover up all sorts of scoundrelism, is invoked constantly upon the slimmest of foundations; and it always appears to succeed.

The indignation of the English is extreme. They pay three-fourths of the taxes; and if they were represented according to population, they would have at least ten out of twenty-six aldermen in place of eight. Yet they are practically deprived of having anything to do with the expenditure of the city's funds. This is a case where the chevalric treatment of the minority, of which we hear a good deal at certain times, does not appear to good advantage. However, the English wield such enormous influence in the city that they only need to combine their forces to make it a dangerous thing to molest them; and it looks as though Alderman Rainville has succeeded in at last arousing them. Certainly