

It seems that Spain is experiencing a literary revival. Rollo Ogden in the *Cosmopolitan* for June gives a number of names of writers of unusual merit in their respective departments, whose fame has already grown to be co-extensive with the Spanish language, and is beginning to overleap the barriers of foreign tongues.

An interesting experiment in the interests of the public health is now being tried in Carlisle, Scotland. The idea is to utilize factory chimneys as sewer ventilators, and twenty-nine are now being used for this purpose. The velocity of the rising air has been measured and found to be 1,291 feet per minute. The owners of the factories make no objection to the use of the chimneys in this way, and the practice seems to meet with general approval.

A scheme is to be laid before the United States Congress for the establishing of an ocean patrol. The proposition is to divide the steamer routes into eight squares, each patrolled continually by a vessel, which would form a perpetual floating station, ready to render assistance in case of disaster. Old war ships might be utilized, and would be admirable training ships for officers and men. England and the United States could contribute two vessels apiece, Italy, France, Germany and Sweden completing the number. In view of the many disasters to ocean greyhounds recently this scheme appears very commendable.

The religion of Buddha is said to be winning many adherents in Europe, especially in Paris. Many people flock to hear the lectures of Leon de Rosny, who teaches Buddhism—not, indeed, religious, but scientific Buddhism, yet the public has transformed the science into a religion, and treats the lectures as sermons that must be heard in a devout spirit. The lecturer states that prominent persons call on him every day and profess to be converted to Buddhism, and that the number of Buddhists in Paris alone is said to be 30,000. Leon de Rosny states that the purpose of his lectures is a purely scientific one, but that his hearers will not be content with simple instruction, they desire to penetrate the secrets of the Indian religion, because they hope to find there something supernatural. Like the Athenians of old, they are too superstitious, and to tell or to hear some new thing seems to be the chief object of life.

In connection with the question of criminal responsibility is the serious one of making criminals of those who are sent to jail for slight offences by the contamination received from hardened criminals. Here in Halifax we have our industrial school, an institution whose value can scarcely be estimated when we consider that it certainly prevents many boys from going to the bad, and makes good citizens of them. All the wisest countries are now sifting the damaged wheat from the chaff—the man, youth or child just beginning a course of crime, from the habitual criminal. Another thing needed is to eradicate the morbid state of the public mind, which is eager for details, haunts places where crime has been committed, writes letters sympathizing with murderers and sends flowers to hardened criminals. The best way to effect this reform is to stop the supply of horrors and give instead a wholesome mental diet to the public.

Emperor William of Germany wants to have a hand in everything that is going on. He is now going to summon a conference of scholars to Berlin in order to revise and fix a uniform orthography for the German language, a reform much needed. The present confusion in German spelling is due in part to reforms introduced in the Prussian schools ten years ago. This spelling, which has still to be learned by all Prussians who study at universities and enter the Imperial service, was, nevertheless, actually forbidden to be used in that service by an order of Prince Bismarck's, which is still in force. Many states in Germany have special orthographies of their own, so that things are pretty well mixed up. Those who remember Mark Twain's amusing sketch of the German fish wife who was of the masculine gender and the tom cat who was "she," will think that other besides spelling reforms would aid in simplifying the German language. The Emperor is on the right track, however, and if he succeeds in reforming the spelling probably other reforms will follow. Delegates from Austria and the German Cantons of Switzerland are to be invited to be present.

A steel fire boat, appropriately called the *New Yorker*, has just been made for the City of New York, to protect the shipping and wharf property in New York harbor against loss by fire. The new boat is one of exceptional power both as regards her pumping and steaming qualities. She is provided with a set of triple expansion engines for propelling power, and is expected to reach a speed of nineteen knots per hour. Her pumps, of which she has four pairs, are also of great power, and will throw at one time four 4 inch streams or two 5 inch streams, and it is expected that with the power of all the pumps concentrated on one five inch nozzle a stream of water can be thrown through a distance of 500 feet, and powerful enough at short range to bore its way through any brick wall on the harbor front of New York, and in this way be of the greatest service in cases where the very best of ordinary fire engines are of little or no use, for the reason that brick walls, iron shutters, etc., prevent the water from such engines reaching the flames at all. The total cost of the *New Yorker* will be about \$100,000 when ready for service, but the money is believed to be well invested, for had she been in commission at the time of the burning of the Hudson River elevators, piers, etc., probably a million dollars worth of property would have been saved. The boat is 125 feet long, 27 feet beam, draws 10 feet of water, and her displacement is 351 tons at load water line. She is expected to be the most effective engine for the extinguishment of fire now in existence.

One of the minor hardships inflicted on Hindoo widows has been the shaving off of their hair. The practice, though certainly not one of the worst trials of an Indian widow, must be sufficiently distressing, as the Hindoo barbers recently assembled to the number of 1000 and decided to wash their hands of the business and no longer perform the heinous work of depriving the poor women of their black locks. The resolution is confined, however, to the case of widows to be disfigured for the first time, but even this is something to be thankful for, and shows that in India, where the position of women is most degraded, some light is breaking in. Fear of oppression from the Kulkarnis, who are Brahmins in the British districts, was expressed by some of the barbers, but they were told that such things could not be practiced with impunity under the supremacy of the Queen Empress, with three cheers for whom the meeting broke up. It is to be hoped the barbers, if they encounter trouble in carrying out their righteous resolve, will receive help and sympathy from the enlightened and educated men of the higher castes.

While there is little doubt but that reciprocity with the United States would prove beneficial to the Maritime Provinces, the virtual passing of the McKinlay tariff bill by the Congress is a pretty good indication that we need not look for any favorable action in that direction for some years to come, as the Republican majority has increased instead of having diminished the tariff restrictions. Certain interests here may for the time being be injuriously affected by the increased tariff, but in the long run it will be found that no permanent damage has been done, but that on the contrary great good has resulted in the enforced building up of inter provincial trade. As to the effect on the potato trade that will as heretofore depend more on the crops in the States than on the tariff regulations. With an average crop the prices would rule so low that there would be little profit in the trade were the tariff removed, but in case of a short crop and consequent high prices the States would have to take our potatoes, and the consumers instead of the shippers would have the privilege of paying the duty. The same rule will be found to apply to almost every article, and we therefore see no good reason to fear disastrous results from the discrimination in the McKinlay bill against Canadian products.

The barriers in the way of newspaper work in Russia are many. No work goes to press without being previously revised and approved by the Censor, and as many important cities do not have a Censor's bureau of their own, but have to send their "copy" for revision to another place, the drawbacks to literary development may be imagined. Notwithstanding this and many other inconveniences there has been a notable increase in the number of printing offices. Forty years ago there was but one printing office in Odessa; at present there are thirty five such establishments there, twenty of which have been opened during the last ten years. In this regard the city on the Black Sea almost equals the capital of the Empire, for it has a printing office for every 10,000 of its inhabitants, while St. Petersburg has one for every 9,000. St. Petersburg also produces ten per cent. of all the books and pamphlets printed in the Empire. Next to Odessa, the city of Kazan is becoming a centre of publication. Hitherto Moscow held the monopoly of "cheap editions" of works read by the masses; at present the provincial press vies with her in the printing and selling of popular works. As to the publication of books addressed to a higher order of intelligence, the press of the large provincial cities almost supercedes that of the two capitals of the Empire.

The question of criminal responsibility is becoming a very complicated one. The law at present recognizes only the innocent, the guilty and the lunatic, but the fourth class, the morally insane, is now coming in for a large share of discussion. We quote from the *Week's Paris letter*:—"The coming trial of Eyraud, for the murder of the usurer bailiff, Gouffier, will be a landmark in the history of criminal proceedings. Eyraud's decoy-duck and associate is the now rather celebrated Gabriella Bompard, aged 22, the daughter of an ironmonger at Lille, whose antecedents, eccentricities and caprices fix public attention more than any other event. The girl asserts that for her share in the commission of the crime, she acted as Eyraud ordered her, having no power to refuse, and possessing a will capable to execute what she was told, or suggested to do. Drs. Brouardel, Ballet and Mottet, the most eminent 'medico-legists' in France, have been ordered by the legal authorities to report on the mental conformation of the female accused. These gentlemen have practised suggestive hypnotism on Gabrielle Bompard, in the end to test her ability to resist crime. The results are said to have been extraordinary, and revealed extreme nervous phenomena. Her counsel, M. Robert, is at Nancy conferring with Dr. Bernheim on the moral condition of his client, and he will demand for defence purposes that that scientist and Prof. Charcot hypnotize Gabrielle Bompard and so test her irresponsibility. Hence the trial will raise the question of nerves, plastic to criminal suggestions, as responsible causes for violations of the Decalogue." There are many other things besides nerves to be considered in this matter of moral imbecility. Early influences, environment, the tendency of crime, the power of heredity against the criminal even before birth, and habit, which fastens itself on its victim until all power of self control seems to be lost. Prevention is better than cure, and education must begin with the child. Good influences may overcome even hereditary inclination to wrong doing. The trouble is, however, that it is difficult to bestow this education at the right time and on the right person. If it comes to pass that criminals are to be judged by their ability or disability to resist temptation it will necessitate a great change in methods of punishment or correction, and the process of law will become more complicated than ever. Moral reformatories will take the place of penitentiaries and jails, and some new methods will have to be discovered by which moral incapables can be made strong and healthy.