

NOTE AND COMMENT.

The idea prevails very generally that postal clerks have a life of comparative ease and little responsibility. Such, however, is far from being the case. A recent writer, in discussing the duties of railway mail clerks, gives a very interesting account of the amount of work which they are called upon to do. This particular department, says the writer, now counts 8 000 employees distributed amongst 3 393 cars and apartment. It presupposes and requires quick brains, clear heads and memories of more than ordinarily retentive powers, and safeguards itself against the admission of any not thus qualified by the rigid requirements of the examination candidates must pass. In addition to the ordinary civil service examination which all must pass the candidate for this particular branch must study the particular requirements of the line to which he is assigned—he must know all the railway post offices along it, and name them in their regular order, as well as the other offices that receive their mail from the route but are not directly on it. The candidate must also show his ability to read rapidly the addresses on the mail matter. After he receives his appointment he is required by the department to take further examinations at stated times. These take place in the division superintendents' offices and consist of a trial of the clerk's memory and his knowledge of the post offices in the States through which his run passes and also those for which he asserts the mail. This is done with a case and a lot of cards directed to the various offices, and these the clerk has to distribute, 90 per cent. being the minimum allowed to pass the examination. On a long run the clerks are required to know the location of from 18 000 to 20,000 post offices, and so soon as they pick up a letter they must determine without hesitation the most advantageous and quickest route to send it. With trains running on very fast time and stations only a short distance apart the handler of the mail must keep a cool, clear head to get the pouches ready in time.

The life of the postal clerk is not without danger. For the year ending June 30, 1897, there were 589 casualties, in which 14 clerks lost their lives and 33 were seriously and 75 slightly injured. In one accident alone five clerks met death by the undermining of a trestle and the wrecking of the train.

General Superintendent James F. White, in his last annual report, urged the necessity for a reclassification of the postal employees. "I believe it but simple justice to a careful, hard-working and painstaking class of employees," he said. "At the time the service was last organized, in 1883, there was not a line in the United States upon which more than five men were employed in any one crew upon any train. We now have crews that number from twenty to twenty-five men. We run as high as six postal cars on one train, in which is performed the distribution covering the mail for nearly one-third of the United States. The Postal Service can without exaggeration be said to rank with recognized professions, such as medicine or law. It seems hardly necessary to again refer to the dangerous character of the work these men perform. The record of the casualties of the past year, as shown in this report, speaks more eloquently in their behalf than anything I might write."

The absolute necessity of providing this department with clerks and officials of exceptional and special qualifications may be judged by the fact that there were 6,059,769,680 pieces of first-class mail matter handled last year and 5,311,771,000 pieces of second, third and fourth class matter, making a total of 11,571,540,680 pieces, exclusive of registered matter. Of this class there were handled 14,640,832 packages and cases, 984,093 through registered pouches and 631,738 inner registered sacks, making in all 16,256,662 pieces of registered matter. There were also handled 462,469,640 pieces of city mail.

In ten years the amount of mail handled has increased 77.2 per cent., but the working force has increased only 48.6 per cent. in that time. The length of railway covered by the railway postal service with clerks was last year 154,225.07; of electric or cable lines 308.68 miles; of steamboat lines, 7,459.52 miles, making a total of 161,988.27 miles.

Mail for city distribution receives much attention on the postal cars, as it must be in shape for immediate delivery by carrier on the arrival of the train. For distribution in New York city there were handled by the clerks 3,716,787 packages of mail. Each package averaged forty pieces, making the number of separate pieces going to New York city alone 148,671,480. The largest separation was on the New York and Chicago Railway Post Office, the number of letters being 36,081,120 and the smallest was 6,940 pieces on the Brooklyn and Long Island City route. On

the New York city collection wagons 3 220 000 pieces were handled. On the New York and Pittsburg system there were handled 29,882,120 pieces, and at the Third avenue railway office 27,536,840 pieces.

According to the report on the sea and inland fisheries of Ireland for 1897, just published, there were employed in the industry 24,593 men and 1,125 boys, which shows an increase of 555 over the number reported for the previous year. The number of vessels and boats actually engaged was 6,626 as compared with 6,555 for the previous year, and the total value of the fish (exclusive of salmon) landed in the year was £378,385—£1,891,925, showing an increase of £2,580 or \$47,900 as compared with the returns of 1896. The value of salmon exported to England is estimated at £452,440 or \$2,262,209.

The Czar's proposal for a general disarmament is not to be attributed, solely, to motives of philanthropy, to a purely unselfish desire to promote peace and good will amongst the peoples of the world. The material interests of the Russian Empire would be more advanced by the policy he favors than those of any other nation, and the reduction of its immense army to the Czar's idea of a peace footing would mean a grand stroke of economy in the public service of the Empire, though it would increase the number of "the great unemployed" to a material if not dangerous extent. In this connection it is interesting to glance at the relative costs at which the armaments of Europe are sustained. Russia, says a correspondent, would certainly have most to gain by universal disarmament, for the annual cost of her Army and Navy is £51,635,270. Great Britain comes next, with an annual outlay of £39,334,000. Taking the total revenue of the two countries, the difference is even more striking, for, while Great Britain's total revenue, roughly speaking, is £106,000,000, Russia's reaches the stupendous sum of £170,000,000. It is only fair, of course, to point out that I am only comparing the total Russian revenue with that of the United Kingdom, not with that of the British Empire. France comes next to Great Britain, with an annual cost of £37,024,064 for her Army and Navy, and a total revenue of £137,561,240. Germany's Army and Navy cost her £10,000,000 less than France, and her total revenue is only £64,258,720. Austria has a total revenue of £99,205,906 and her armaments cost her £18,000,000. Of the five Great Powers it is, therefore, evident that Germany would gain least by general disarmament, while Russia would gain most. Taking Europe as a whole, the total annual cost of her armies and navies amounts to £212,707,639, and the total revenue to £758,863,705.

OUR OBSERVER.

The Quebec Daily Telegraph, in referring to the monument recently unveiled in memory of the intrepid founder of Quebec and of New France, Samuel de Champlain, at the Ancient Capital, recalls an incident in the career of the great Irishman, the late Hon. Thomas D'Arcy McGee. It says: "It is a noteworthy fact that, as far back as can be traced, the suggestion of the propriety of erecting a monument to Champlain first came from a then comparative stranger to this country, that eminent Irishman, the late Hon. Thomas D'Arcy McGee. In 1861, Mr. McGee appears to have been the first to broach the subject in a public way in the course of an able and eloquent address delivered by him before a historical society in the State of Maine, where the fitness of discussing it will be understood when it is recalled that Champlain's sphere of influence extended at one time during his career over much of the territory included in the present State of Maine and which was only severed from Canada after the Ashburton Treaty. In all probability, the idea had occurred to other educated minds previously, but, if so, they either kept it wholly to themselves or all record of their having given publicity to it appears to be missing. Therefore to Mr. McGee must be assigned the honor of first suggesting the public duty in the connection in a public way.

Independently of all published forecasts favoring Prohibition, it is accepted very generally that to-day's voting will result in a majority for the "ayes" and an emphatic pronouncement against the manufacture or sale of intoxicants, in any part of the Dominion. In the several Provincial plebiscites held in recent years the anti-Liquor party has cast an aggregate vote representing a fifty per cent majority of the electorate—and this fact, added to the entire absence of any organized opposition in the present campaign, justifies the belief that Prohibition will score an easy victory, in so far as the voice of the electors is

concerned. While this will undoubtedly be a signal encouragement for the Temperance cause, it does not necessarily imply that Prohibition must become the law of the land. In all previous cases of Temperance legislation, Parliament has given the law, and left it optional with the people to sanction its operation; in this instance the order is reversed, the people sanction the principle and ask Parliament for the law to give it effect; the "to be, or not to be," lies therefore with the Legislature. While the ballots cast to-day may represent a majority vote, as a whole, they may not represent a majority of the individual constituencies, and, independently of other considerations, this alone may materially affect the prospects of the question. A triumph at the polls in the present instance does not necessarily ensure a triumph in the House, where the economic argument invariably used against interference with a great revenue-making interest will certainly operate powerfully with many whose constituents will have Prohibition, leading them to ignore that fact in presence of the financial interest it affects. Whatever the present or ultimate result may be, it will be felt and acknowledged on all sides that the friends of Temperance have made a persistent and consistent stand for the promotion of a good cause, and will merit whatever success may attend their efforts.

The prominence given to the subject of the housing of the very poor 'at the recent Health Congress in Dublin has created a wide spread interest in the question amongst the people of that city; and the columns of the dailies are freely used for its discussion. The Daily Nation with commendable and characteristic enterprise employed a special Commissioner to make an independent examination of the 'slum' districts and to report the exact condition of things, neither exaggerating or qualifying it, but describing things just as he saw them. His report was a full confirmation of all that had been said at the congress.

Commenting on the report of its special Commissioner published in its columns the Daily Nation says:—Can it be possible that there are many—or any—more such houses to which his remarks could be applied with equal truth? Surely, in these closing days of the nineteenth century, with its Public Health Committees and Departments, its Sanitary Reform Associations, Health Congresses, and the like, habitations such as the notorious No. 3 Hammond lane must, in Dublin at least, be the exception rather than the rule! It is useless, unfortunately, to argue in this strain in face of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary which abounds on every side in Dublin, and which, on investigation, will reveal the existence of a shocking state of things, almost too horrible to contemplate, and the long continuance of which is nothing short of a crying scandal and an indelible reproach to those responsible for the preservation of the public health of the city. This may seem strong language to use in regard to the controlling powers and responsible officials of so important a branch of the public service as the Public Health Department of our capital. Nevertheless, the time has come when, in the interests not alone of the poorer classes of the community, but of every inhabitant of the metropolis, the plain unvarnished truth must out, and let those on whose shoulders rests the responsibility advance what plea they can in their own justification. It may be, doubtless it is, true that comparatively few of those who form the ranks of the well-to-do inhabitants of Dublin have the most remote conception of the conditions under which life in the Dublin slums is supported by the hundreds of thousands whom the stress of poverty has driven to herd in these unsavoury quarters—these diseased and rotting portions of our social system, the congested districts of every conceivable form of social and moral degradation and what may appeal still more powerfully to the interests of the public in general—the hotbeds of disease in its most loathsome and disgusting forms. Disguise it how we may, the stubborn fact remains, and no amount of glossing over or careless contempt can get it out of the way, that side by side with much that is pleasant, and healthy, and agreeable to contemplate in the aspect of Dublin life as witnessed in the main thoroughfares and chief centres of traffic, there exists a widespread area—or series of areas—which, apart altogether from considerations of the moral aspect of the question, are nothing short of sources of positive danger to the rest of the city, enveloped, as they are, with filth of every kind, clinging tenaciously to almost every storey, from garret to basement, of the countless overcrowded tenement houses in which the poor, the sick, the halt, and the decrepit are huddled together, and reeking with pestilential exhalations so repugnant to the senses that the wonder is that human life can be sustained in these horrible places.

NOTES ON EDUCATION.

The September Monitor contains a communication over the signature of Mr. Thos. Swift, which addresses itself particularly to the status our Catholic young men occupy, more especially in the larger cities of the Dominion. The writer considers this is not what it should and could be, and attributes the fact to a lack of proper ambition. Catholic young men aim too low; they are content with crumbs where they should look for loaves; set too small a value upon themselves and start out upon life's journey without any settled aims or aspirations. He quotes the remarks of a village Protestant clergyman who referred with pride to the rapid success achieved by young fellows who went from the country districts to the city, saying:

'The great majority of your city professional men, your lawyers, your doctors, your teachers, are from the country. It is the country that provides your brains for your cities, and for this reason—your fellows in the country are in the midst of conditions that foster thought and develop brain. They have not the same distractions and allurments during the educative period as youths in the city have. They attend the rural school where they receive just as good an education as can be obtained in the best of city schools. Those who aim at a higher education go to the nearest High School—they are not merely sent, as they frequently are from city homes—to go forth there for a certain purpose, study with a definite object in view, and know not only the value of a dollar, but the inestimable benefits to be derived from a good education. In a word, education means to them progress, possible wealth and position, and the chance of rising to the highest positions in the land. These are the youths who make the men of this Dominion.'

How far all this was consistent with fact, or justifiable, Mr. Swift does not undertake to say, but thinks there may be much in it. He holds that a country like Canada with its vast possibilities offers an inviting field for the most ambitious efforts for its young men. Apart from considerations of material wealth there is much to be gained by attaining to the higher ideals of intellectual and social culture. These, however, are only open to those who make proper use of their educational advantages. The value of school education, says Mr. Smith, lies in the power it gives for further study. No more disastrous mistake can be made by a young man than imagining his education is finished when he leaves school or graduates from a university. Up to either point he has been guided by his teachers and the books he has studied. His mind has been fed on the wisdom, the research, the experience of others. If he is content to be the mere receptacle of the knowledge of the ages, he has missed the grand object of education. He will take his place in the world of men rather as one whose work is done than as one whose work is just beginning.

Yet is not this practically what so many of our young men do? They allow their education narrowly so-called to finish with their school days.

After some wholesome remarks on the amount of time given up to recreation and pleasure, too often of a profitless character, he concludes by saying:—

"The majority of the Separate School boys leave school too soon. Even if they complete the school course, they can do so by the time they are fourteen years of age. It is only the few whose parents can afford to send to our Catholic Colleges, while it is generally recognized that the Collegiate Institutes in cities, on account of the considerable tuition fees, are not higher schools for the workingman's children. It is during these precious years, while the youth is maturing into manhood, the educative period, that all education properly so called is allowed to remain practically at a standstill. At an age when guidance is most essential, he is left largely to his own devices; the world is his school, and experience, not infrequently the saddest of guides, his only teacher. Too old to be considered a child and not old enough to be ranked as a man, though a wage-earner—that is his position, and one that calls for special consideration on the part of pastor, parents and society, if all education is not to cease for him as soon as he has bidden adieu to the school. Every possible inducement should be offered, every effort made, every assistance given to lead him into systematic self culture along the lines of intellect, society and aestheticism."

The sixty-fourth report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland is published. In December last there were 9,057 schools on the roll, of which 8,631 were in operation. Of these 7,718 were vested schools—2,677 in trustees, and only 1,041 in the Commissioners. The grant towards the erection of vested schools, whether vested in trustees or vested in the Commissioners, is two-thirds of the estimated cost. The remainder, 5,339, were non-vested schools, erected from funds locally provided, or from loans available under the Act of 1884, or schools formerly vested, the leases of which have expired. The loans are repayable at 5 per cent per annum (principal and interest included) in 35 years. The amount subscribed in the year 1897 from local sources towards the erection of new buildings, additions to school premises, etc., was £84,728; and for repairs, improvements of houses and furniture, the amount was £38,215. The total average number of pupils on the

rolls on the last day of the results year, of the schools severally examined within the year 1897, was 396,001. The total average daily attendance of pupils was 521,141. The percentage of the average daily attendance of pupils for the year to the average number on the roll was 63.9.

The religious denominations of the pupils were 606,121 Roman Catholics, 21,967 of the Late Established Church, 36,782 Presbyterians, 3,540 Methodists, 5,662 of other denominations. Of the number of pupils on the rolls—viz., 37.3 per cent., or 238,219, were in schools attended by Roman Catholic and Protestant pupils, and 62.7 per cent., or 499,991, in schools attended solely by Roman Catholics, or solely by Protestants. There are now 120 places to which the compulsory attendance provisions of the Irish Education Act of 1892 apply. But in only 72 of these were School Attendance Committees appointed, and in only 52 of the latter were the provisions of the Act carried into effect by the Committees during the year.

The Parliamentary school grant for 1897-8, under the Act of 1892, was at the rate of 10s per pupil in average daily attendance, and was expended on increases to the salaries of principal and assistant teachers, and increases to the grants to schools already paid by capitation; bonuses to assistants of five years' standing, who rank higher than third class; third class salaries (instead of capitation) to small schools with an average attendance of not less than 20 but under 30 scholars; and the residue paid as a general capitation grant in proportion to the average daily attendance of pupils. This residue amounted in 1897 to 5s 6d per pupil. The total amount paid in the year was £249,485 11s 11d. The number of pupils passed in reading, writing and arithmetic was 453,213, out of 560,187 examined.

CHILD TRAINING, by the Froebel System, is discussed by an authority in the Woman's Home Journal.

'Manual training sharpens the senses and makes eyes that see and ears that hear and a touch that is fine and true. It gives proper balance of values, not only to the physical and intellectual activities of the individual, but to the intercourse of pupil with pupil, for frequently the seeming dullard turns out to be the skilful worker, and vice versa, and mutual respect and harmony result. So the varying yet equal worth of men is taught without sign or sound. Pupils, too, are encouraged to mutually aid each other in construction and in handling and use of tools, and the valuable quantity of social helpfulness grows like the flower from the swelling bud. It is a method of positive creative activity as against passive receptivity or destructive restlessness—in short, it is education, not instruction. It forms the mind instead of furnishing it. It creates right habits and so molds character. It makes careful, thinking, true men. We make it our constant aim to let the acquisition of knowledge, the apprehension of truth, grow out of the experience of the children themselves,' says Prof. Bamberger. It is the constructive method and against that of cramming with rules and definitions the children do not understand, and facts they do not assimilate. First come actual acquaintance and repeated experiment, out of which the definition, rule or truth naturally grows and thus becomes the lasting possession of the child.'

WHEN their boys have reached an age of advancement that ushers them outside the domain of the parochial school, too many Catholic parents, says the Colorado Catholic, fall into a sad inconsistency, and one that too often is the result of a deliberate surrender to that little weakness which in the plain vernacular is termed snobishness. During the child's early years they realized the importance of educate him where he might best imbibe a knowledge of the essentials of his faith; and then in the selection of a college where he is to finish the work of his education they display an astonishing change of heart, abandoning colleges professedly Catholic to send their sons to some anti-Catholic institution that disguises its dangerous tendencies under the term 'non-sectarian.'

CHURCH CHOIR NOTES.

Professor J. A. Fowler to Open His Musical Theory and Sight-Singing Classes.

The course of musical theory and sight-singing (solfege) that Professor Fowler has been giving for the past four years to young men desiring to cultivate music will reopen this year on Monday, October the third, in the practice room of St. Patrick's choir. The course is as thorough as those given in the musical conservatories of Europe, and is a great advantage for those who wish a good foundation to a musical education. The lessons are given free of charge, the only condition is to become a faithful member of St. Patrick's choir. These classes have been very beneficial to St. Patrick's choir, and to the young men who have attended them. The good obtained has encouraged Professor Fowler to keep up a few years more this work for the benefit of his choir and of the young men of the parish. No one under eighteen years of age is admitted. For particulars and admission, apply to Professor J. A. Fowler, 4 Phillip's Place.

THEIR NAMES.

In reply to numerous enquiries as to the name and address of the photographers from whom we secured the photograph of His Grace Archbishop Broche, which appeared in the issue of last week, in connection with the ceremony of laying the corner stone of the new Catholic High School, we may say that the firm consists of Messrs. Lapres & Lavergne, 360 St. Denis street, both gentlemen being artists in their profession.

BRIEF NOTES OF NEWS.

Spain, says an American journal, is in the money market once more. This time she has worked herself into the good graces of the London Rothschilds, who have consented to loan her \$25,000,000, with a string attached to it. The Almaden quicksilver mines are to be the security, and the condition, the signing of the Peace Treaty with the United States. The pressure of necessity, in this matter, is a better guarantee for that conclusion than all the promises of Sagasta and his associates.

Dr. Laberge, the medical Superintendent of the Health department, has published a comparative statement showing the number of cases of typhoid fever. In 1897, from January to August, both inclusive, there were 111 cases reported, out of which there were 34 deaths. During the same period this year there were 127 cases reported and 25 deaths.

A dispatch says:—M. C. Cameron, Lieut. Governor of the North-west Territories, died at London, Ont., on Sept. 26. Mr. Cameron was born in '32, and had for many years been identified with the politics of the Dominion. He was appointed Lieut. Governor less than a year ago. Pneumonia was the cause of his death.

Mr. Henry Austin Adams, M.A., the well known lecturer, will deliver a course of lectures at Philadelphia. The first of the course will take place on October 3. Some of the subjects selected are: Newman, Middle Ages, Napoleon, Gladstone, The Theatre, Chivalry.

Miss Mary Josephine Onahan, daughter of the Hon. Wm. J. Onahan of Chicago, and well known in Catholic literary circles, was united in marriage to Mr. D. V. Gallery, of the Chicago Bar, recently.

The Prison Mirror, Stillwater, Minn., says:—There are weeks when over \$1,000 are taken in for visitors' fees at the Ohio Penitentiary at Columbus.

It is said that President Kruger, in order to mark his esteem for His Illness, has sent him a large diamond of priceless worth.

The Victoria Legislature has rejected the Bill conferring the franchise on women by 19 to 15 votes.

Superstition is natural to men, and takes refuge, when we imagine that we have routed it out, in the strangest nooks and corners, from which it issues at once, when it thinks itself in any way secure.—Goethe.



Pleasant Dreams.

It does not lie in the painter's fancy to imagine a prettier picture than that of a young girl, with lips luscious with the promise of love, half parted in the smiles of happy dreamland. The mind of happy maidenhood is a clear and polished mirror, when, when the wits gawandering into the ghostland of dreams, reflects the impressions of waking hours. If those impressions are pleasant and painless and happy, she will smile in her sleep. If the impressions are those of a suffering woman, tortured with the special ailments to which the feminine organism is liable, the picture is spoiled by the lines of suffering and despondency. Maladies of this nature unfit a woman for joyous maidenhood and for capable motherhood. They incapacitate her to bear the burdens of life in any sphere of action. Household, marital and social duties alike are a burden to the woman who is constantly suffering from headaches, backaches, dragging sensations and weakening drains. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription positively, completely, unfailingly cures troubles of this nature. It imparts health, strength, vigor to the distinctly womanly organs. It fits for carefree, healthy maidenhood, happy wifehood and capable motherhood. "I have a little step-daughter who had St. Vitus's Dance, which your medicine cured," writes Mrs. T. P. Rose, of Ford, Dinwiddie Co., Va. "I spent about twenty dollars for doctor's bills and medicine, and it did not do the child one cent's worth of good. We commenced giving Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription and Golden Medical Discovery, and used three bottles of each, which cost only six dollars. Now the child is running around every where and is just as healthy as ever."

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