

LETTER FROM LONDON.

Weekly Correspondence of the Register.

LONDON, Eng., Jan. 5, 1894.

The great Parliamentary event of the week has been the compromise arrived at between the two rival parties for facilitating the passage of the Parish Councils Bill. It is looked upon as one more grand stroke of policy to the credit of the Old Parliamentary Hand. The Radical as well as the Conservative irreconcilables will, despite their grumblings, accept it. They are sulky that they have been denied their request for a little more Obstruction on the one hand, and a little more "Guillotine" on the other, but they are not openly rebellious. The progress of the Bill since the understanding was arrived at has been, comparatively speaking, lightning-like. Compromise, indeed, seems almost as effective as closure.

A few days ago we were innocently congratulating ourselves on the lenity of the winter of 1893. All through November and December swallows, humming-birds, butterflies and moths, creatures which we naturally associate with Summer have been flying around in almost tropical profusion. Yesterday evening, however, came some snow, and yesterday night a frost of the good old-fashioned type. To-day we have had more snow, and an icy wind such as may make even the most hardy and robust inclined to turn up their coat collars, and to feel indignant at the apparent blunder Nature has made in setting the human ear in such a way that it is exposed to the biting blast. It is really what is called a cold snap, and skating and tobogganing—the latter a recent importation—to the great delight of the student home for his holidays, are being merrily indulged in on all sides.

Like poor forgotten Congreve Mr. Stead's proposed new daily paper, which was simply to direct the destinies of the human race—nothing more—has blazed, the comet of a very short season, and has now found the "meanest of all sepulchres." The conductor of this unique journal—had it ever got beyond its specimen number—proposed to sit in his editorial chair and pull the strings of European and foreign politics. If a Pope was to be selected the editor of the new journal would have to be communicated with and consulted; if the Prime Minister proposed to bring in a big Bill he would have to sound the views of the same omniscient personage. Indeed, pictures have been drawn of an unfortunate Prime Minister waiting submissively in the passage whilst the great man is settling some more important business in his editorial sanctum, which would henceforth be the very centre of gravity, if not that of the universe itself. After all these graphic descriptions of journalism extraordinary, it is a trifle disappointing to learn that the new paper is not to come out at all. The idea has been abandoned, and what money was subscribed is now finding its way back to the pockets whence it came.

A friend admitted to me the other day quite frankly that she had been all the way to Brighton at Christmas for the purpose of seeing Mr. Gladstone. She has not been successful in obtaining a seat in the Ladies' Gallery at the House of Commons when Mr. Gladstone has been present, and has never yet seen him going into Palace yard. Accordingly she repaired to Brighton, where she was told she would be sure to see the Premier on the sea front. I asked if her quest was successful. "Yes," she replied with a little hesitation, "it was in a way. On the last day I was there I saw Mr. Gladstone in Lion Mansions." "You were invited to meet him, then." I inquired. "Not exactly," was the reply. "You see, I observed a small crowd of people looking up at one of the windows. I at once joined the crowd, and saw the back

of Mr. Gladstone's head. The old gentleman was reading, and never stirred. I was able to look at him for quite a long while. The crowd was, like myself, deeply interested.

By the death of Sir Samuel Baker, which took place last Saturday at Sampford Orleigh, his Devonshire seat, the world has been deprived of one of its most noteworthy citizens. Sir Samuel Baker was equally distinguished for his prowess with his rifle and with his pen, as an explorer and as an administrator. Many parts of the world have come under his purview, but Africa was the continent on which he concentrated his best energies. His career was an eventful and a useful one. One cannot but admire the dauntless courage, great organising capacity, and mental activity which characterised the greater part of his life. It was not only Egypt to which he directed his attention. The exploration of the Upper Nile was one of his chief feats, displaying vast endurance as well as a keen love of scientific inquiry. Egypt owes much to Sir Samuel Baker, and so does England, for he penetrated the dark continent at a time when exploration in Central Africa was not the familiar matter, it has since become. His discoveries, great in themselves, paved the way for still further researches by his successors and imitators. He was sustained in his chief effort by the endurance, the encouragement and the companionship of his wife and his literary achievements owe much to her prompting if not to her actual work. Although Sir Samuel was not a Devonshire man by birth, he was so by long residence, and the county has pride in having been made the home of so distinguished an explorer and scientist. Even to the last the mental vigour and literary activity of Sir Samuel has been sustained, for his letters concerning the loss of the *Victoria* and the condition of the navy attracted attention, their authorship their powerful argument and the vein of common sense that pervaded them giving to them special weight. Sir Samuel Baker was both beloved and respected where he was best known. He belonged to a class of men of whom the world has not seen many and possesses few.

Geology In the Making.

A curious piece of contemporary geology is being worked out in New Jersey. The whole coast has been long sinking, and the process is still going on. A curious industry is carried on in the southern part of the State—the mining for cedar. Some of these noble trees exhumed from their swampy burial, exceed three feet in diameter, with the timber perfectly sound. The "lay" of these uprooted trees, according to the American naturalist, indicates the devastation, probably of extraordinary cyclones, occurring at immense intervals of time, thus leveling one forest upon another that had been thrown down long before. The cedars growing there to-day send their roots among their long buried ancestors. The rings upon some of the exhumed trunks show a growth of 1,500, or possibly 2,000 years, and the existence of at least two buried forests below the present growth is indisputable.

It is probably not the coldest weather you ever knew in your life; but that is how you feel just now, because past sufferings are soon forgotten, and because your blood needs the enriching, invigorating influence of Ayer's Sarsaparilla—the Superior Medicine.

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Benziger's Catholic Home Annual, 1894.

We have just received a supply of this very popular annual. It contains the usual good things in the shape of stories, poems, historical and biographical sketches, and plenty of pretty, interesting pictures. Price by mail 25cts. in stamps or scrip. Address, CATHOLIC REGISTER Publishing Co., Ltd., Toronto, Ont.

Pope Leo XIII.

When Leo XIII. goes to pass the day at the tower he is accompanied by his cameriere participante—gentleman (prelate) in waiting—an officer and two Noble Guards. He is carried from his apartment in a sedan chair through the loggia of Raphael and the museums to the entrance to the Vatican gardens, where his carriage awaits him. The prelate in waiting seats himself opposite his Holiness, and the Noble Guards mount their horses, and escort the carriage. After two or three turns round the garden he alights at the door of the tower, dismisses his cameriere and guards, who return to the Vatican with the carriage, having received orders to come for him at four or five o'clock.

At the tower, ready to attend to his personal wants, he finds his groom of the chambers, Signor Contra—an important personage in the Papal household—and three other servants. An amusing occurrence, to which the Pope submits with more or less patience, is the inevitable presence of the head gardener, a clean-shaven shrivelled little man in a frock coat and tall hat, who meets him every morning at the door to offer a stiff, old-fashioned nose-gay, and remains kneeling while his Holiness inquires about his olives and his grapevines. Then the door is closed, and the Pope retires to his room, where he remains alone from 9 o'clock till noon, when his dinner is brought to him. It does not take much food to preserve in life the diaphanous frame of the elderly Pontiff and, in fact, he seems to consider eating a troublesome superfluity. The simplest kind of food and the least expensive is what he prefers. A light soup, the wing of a chicken, rice cooked in broth, and a light entree of some sort, constitutes his midday meal, which lasts about 20 minutes. Sometimes during his dinner he has a little chat with his servant, Contra, who waits on him. Then he lies down upon his little couch for an hour to rest. It is in the tower that he receives the Cardinal Secretary of State, but the daily audience rarely lasts over an hour, and no one else is allowed to disturb his solitude.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

An Irish Soldier Becomes a Monk.

On the first of November last, the feast of All Saints, Mr. Samuel Allman, native of Cork, and late private in her Majesty's 60th Regiment of Foot (Welsh regiment) at present stationed in Malta, received the habit of the Augustinian Order as lay brother at St. Augustine's Novitiate, Oita Vecchia. Brother Allman served seven years and six months with his regiment and was stationed in Dublin at the time, and was one of the guard of honor detailed for Lord Aberdeen on the memorable day when that nobleman left Dublin in 1886. The ceremony of reception was witnessed by a large number of Irish, Maltese and English friends, who were afterwards entertained in a very hospitable manner by the good fathers of the Order. Brother Allman's name in religion is Patrick Augustine.

A Curious Bird Legend.

January 30th and 31st and February 1st are famous at Constantinople, Brescia and along the Danube and the Rhine as the "Blackbird Days." A curious legend says that originally all species of grackles (blackbirds), were white, and that they became black because, during one year in the middle ages, the three days mentioned above were so cold that all the birds in Europe took refuge in the chimneys. At Brescia, Mr. Swainson says, the three days are celebrated with a feast called "I giorni della merla," or "the feast of the transformation of the bird."

Bread crumbs cleanse silk gowns. There is nothing mean before God, unless it be a base soul under high titles.—*Lytton*.

Athletes.
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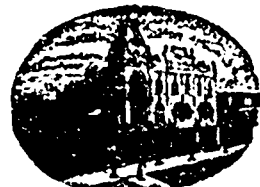
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