

NEW YORK LETTER.

NEW YORK, July 6, 1891.

For once we are not talking scandal. The people are talking of a hero. Brave Fred Brokau! A sweet, young life was the tribute he laid at the feet of duty. He hazarded his life without a moment's hesitancy to save another's. Thousands had done the same. In his death throes he was offered a saving hand, while she whom he essayed to rescue was still in the water. He refused. Only Sir Philip Sidney and he had done that. The story is simply told: Frederick Brokau was the son of the New York clothier of that name. He had just graduated from Princeton, and was taking a rest at his father's cottage, at Elberon, N.J. Although he had spent the last few years away at school we used to hear of him from time to time for he was the captain and catcher of his college baseball team, and that is the team which carried off the championship honors this year from all the colleges. When he came home loaded down under class honors and field honors, wearing them with the modesty and frankness of a child, he was the hero. Then he went down to the beach, and, on the second evening, sitting on the veranda of his father's cottage, he saw his mother's three female servants go down to the surf to bathe. The sea was very rough and two of them were immediately carried off their feet. Brokau threw off his coat and dashed to their rescue. He reached one of the drowning girls but was prevented by the breakers from taking her ashore, and before help came she dropped from his weakened grasp and floated away. Soon they both sank. A boat going to their rescue reached Brokau first, but he cried to the occupants to save the women. Then he sank and did not rise again. Two of the women were saved, the third was drowned. "Save the women!" he shouted from the coils of the sea that the next moment had strangled and dragged him under.

His body was found and was buried last Sunday at Newark; and half the Princeton students, who had just gone to their homes all over the country, came back to the funeral of their dead comrade and friend. His sad death has cast a perceptible gloom over a large circle, but his heroic deed has ignited the spark in many a breast where, otherwise, heroism had never been born.

The colleges are now closed and myriads of educated young men are turned loose upon the country, and the country stands the shock amazingly well,—better than the young men will start the recoil a little later. If dreams were facts a great many illiterate people, who have been directing affairs temporarily, would now yield their positions to leaders qualified by education. But facts are not dreams; and, to him, no fact is so unlike any dream as the fact that all the young philosopher has learned at college will have to be unlearned, to make way for a practical education. It may soothe him, however, to know that he will then be wiser for having once possessed his book-erudition. That is, it is better for him to have learned and have forgotten than never to have learned at all.

Already the stream of applicants for office positions, down town, swells. The college-bred man is daily turned away, there being no vacancies; and, when some months elapse and he has still failed to secure a field, or even a little garden, for his talents it will begin to look to him as though the world were organized without taking cognizance of him, while all the time he cherished the hope that, if it were not wanting for him, it would, at least, gladly receive the quota that he was garnering up with so much care. To many of this successful class of 1890-91 the business world will bear the appearance of being enclosed within a circular crust, inside of which they hear distinctly the sounds and shouts of busy men; while, with tiresome step, they tread the outside, vainly seeking a weak spot that will yield to force or entreaty. For young men with influential friends, or hereditary possibilities, education will command a position in the city; securing, beyond fear, the means of support. Others will quietly carve out places for themselves with their keen-edged determination. And still some others, perhaps not without determination too, who, when they come to demand the living which they claim the world owes them, will find a close, narrow machine, running in a small compass, filled to its sides with workmen, all its needs, and very resentful of any new intrusion. It is not conceivable that some classmate may then recur with a sigh to Fred Brokau who lived a whole life, died a glorious death and left an immortal name almost the same day he graduated from school.

Herr Cahensly has embarked on the ocean of statistics, and, like many another indifferent sailor in that perilous sea, has lost his bearings. He is in imminent danger of being engulfed if not rescued. Statistics afford unbounded sport, and considerable intellectual enjoyment to the skilled mariner who knows how to sail them, and takes with him a bountiful supply of heterogeneous facts and information, but, nowhere else are found hidden such dangerous shoals, quagmires, and short turns to entrap the unwary adventurer. Aside from the doubtful character of the compliment to Americans, and to their capacity for managing their own affairs, conveyed in his recommendations, the most marked feature of Herr Cahensly's memorial to the Pope, begging the appointment of foreign bishops and priests in America, is that it should proceed from Cahensly at all. If the migration were in the direction of Germany that gentleman's solicitude

might have some appearance of timeliness. But the case is the reverse. It is in the direction of America, which the immigrants are going to make their future home. The land that boasts such prelates as Gibbons, Taschereau, Corrigan, Ireland. It is generally conceded, over here at least, that these names represent zeal for the cure of souls. The Church which they have built up, and which they command, is the foundation for this general belief. A more judicious man than Herr Cahensly, before measuring out so voluminous a memorial, and flanking it with such ponderous unconvincing statistics, and carrying it over the venerable heads of the Church in America, would have visited in person the land whose moral condition gave him such concern. A tour in America would have taught him a great deal. He would have learned how the great angel of assimilation presides over the land, and how quickly he does his work. Every generation that grows up here speaks English. It is an *effete* and *erroneous notion that religion dies with the mother tongue*. Mr. Cahensly would have formed, also, every colony of foreigners provided with their own pastors. Instead of making a voyage he found it easier, it seems, to turn over the leaves of a statistical almanac. As it is barely possible that, when their emancipation plans are carried out on the lines laid down by them for remedying defects of the Church in America, there may be no Cahenslys present to direct the details of the arrangements, it might be well for Mr. Cahensly, before he dies, to file written instructions for that purpose in the museum at Berlin.

PIERRE TOUSSAINT.

THE first Catholic of New York city, bishop, priest or layman, whose life appeared in book form, was Pierre Toussaint, born a slave in St. Domingo, who by his virtues and merit acquired the esteem of people in the highest circles of society. In a life nearing three score years and ten we have known and met many, but the memory of Pierre Toussaint is indelibly impressed in the writer's mind. Saying the Rosary with him as leader in old St. Peter's is a cherished memory.

Pierre Toussaint was born about 1766 in St. Domingo, on the plantation of the Berard family, to which the grand father and mother had belonged, winning favour by fidelity and devotedness. When the revolution broke out in St. Domingo, Mr. Berard, like many others, resolved to emigrate to the United States, expecting a speedy end for the troubles in the island. He came with his wife and five of his former slaves, Toussaint and his sister Rosalie among them.

After making his plans for a residence in this country, Mr. Berard returned to settle up his affairs, but found that all was lost except what he actually had taken. Amid these trials he was seized with pleurisy and died. Toussaint had meanwhile learned hair-dressing, and by his skill began to lay up money. Madame Berard's resources were soon exhausted. She gave Toussaint her jewels to raise forty dollars on them. In a few days he handed her two packages, one containing the jewels, the other forty dollars of his own savings. When her hair-dresser presented his bill and asked for a settlement, Toussaint paid it in work. Indeed from this time he regarded all he could earn, except what he needed to live, to belong to his old mistress.

He was naturally gay, cheerful, and fond of amusement within reasonable limits but he denied himself almost everything for the sake of Madame Berard, even after she married again. In later years he said: "I only asked to make her comfortable, and I bless God that she never knew a want."

As she neared her end she comprehended fully the sacrifices of this devoted servant and friend. "She said: 'I cannot reward you, but God will.'" He replied: "O Madame! I have only done my duty." "You have done much more," she said. "There is no earthly remuneration for such services."

After her death, he was by her act freed, and he laboured to purchase the freedom of his sister and see her well married. Then in 1811 he married Juliette Noel. By this time he was the fashionable hair-dresser of New York. The most distinguished ladies in society employed him, and he went from house to house. But he was prudence itself. Nothing could induce him to carry gossip. When a lady tried to extract some information about a certain family from him, he said with dignity, "Madame, Toussaint dresses hair: he is no news journal." When another lady wished him to bear a disagreeable message, he said: "I have no memory."

Accident enabled him to correspond with members of the Berard family, and their letters showed how they appreciated his kindness to his mistress. As he was prospering in business he frequently sent them presents until they remonstrated.

He lived happily, having adopted his sister's child, Euphemia, on his mother's death. Faithful to his religion, hearing Mass daily, charitable, his days glided on in peace. Liberal himself to the orphan asylum, he always, on her birthday, took Euphemia there to present a large basket of cakes to the orphans. His whole affection centred in this child as though it were his own, and he educated her carefully, but she was frail from birth and died piously, attended by the Rev. Dr. John Power. Completely overcome, Toussaint sought consolation in prayer and the sacraments.