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Somewhat Absurd

It does seem queer that a man of the supposed intelligence of Governor Whitman should take a stand to have the State Constitution amended so as to tie the hands of all state officers in the way of selection of their subordinates and compel them to take all these from a civil service list made up by competitive examination only.

Undoubtedly, there have been some abuses in the way of exempting certain positions from competitive examination because, possibly, the applicant could not pass a written examination although perfectly competent to perform the tasks assigned or expected, but it is a mooted question whether the state suffered or was benefitted. It is not always the man who can pass the better written examination who makes good when set at work.

Take the case of an officer who is under bonds and wishes to have assistants who are absolutely reliable. There may be a man on the civil service list whose distrusts, yet cannot bring forward absolute proof sufficient to have that man's name taken off the list. If that officer were compelled to take such a man into his service he never would feel safe and he would have no pleasure in his official life.

Although he was excoriated for it and driven from the governor's office when he sought re-nomination, former Governor Frank S. Black was on the right road when he proposed that the appointing power be given authority to test out those who applied for positions under him, both by written and by oral tests. When appointing powers are given full authority for their subordinates' selection and then held strictly accountable for the conduct of their offices, there will be far more efficient public service at far less expense, because any man at all familiar with the way public affairs are run to-day, knows full well that if public officers were not compelled to take their subordinates willy-nilly from a civil service list and then forbidden to dismiss or reduce these subordinates once they are upon that list except by tedious and roundabout process, not half as many persons would be needed in the public service. As masters stand to-day, once in a job always in is the rule, at least the job is never abolished permanently.

Take the red-tape and the nonsense out of the civil service, Governor! That is the crying need of the day.

Like Rochester?

Evidently, the editor of the Brooklyn Tablet has been looking into the methods employed in Rochester to hold in line our Catholic boys and young men. Writing in a recent issue, on the relative attractions of pool room and parochial club house, the Tablet editor said:—

"The parish club is the one place above all others where social distinctions should not be made. And

it may be added here that the absence of social distinctions is one of the principal attractions of the pool parlors."

Something must be done, and quickly. Either some central building, like the Y. M. C. A., should be erected and offered for the use of the Catholic youth of Brooklyn as a counter attraction to the many places that now seek and get the patronage of young men, or every parish should have a place where the young men can congregate and associate in full knowledge that they are as welcome as they know they would be in the Y. M. C. A., or the pool "parlor." In rare cases young men will be found who prefer the atmosphere of the pool room to that of the parish club. In most cases however, the choice is made because the young fellow thinks that the members would rather see him stay out than come in. A hearty invitation will remove his bashfulness and make of him a good member of the young men's club of his parish.

However well the parochial club may be, we hope that the day is not far distant when Rochester will have its central Catholic Young Men's Association, just as it now has its Catholic Charity Guild.

Not Encouraging.

Writing about the agitation for a Catholic daily James A. Rooney very pertinently says:—
So far the Catholics of the United States have been satisfied with their ably edited and well-managed weekly and diocesan papers. All of them have not been successful from a business standpoint. From Father Gabriel Richard's first effort in Detroit in 1809 followed by Bishop England's Catholic Miscellany, in Charleston, from 1822 to 1861, to the present day, something like 550 Catholic papers have seen the light and of all of those published during the first half of the nineteenth century, but five now survive. To be sure, the places of those which dropped out of the ranks have been well and nobly filled and the Catholic press of the country, with the constant approval of the hierarchy and clergy, is in a virile and healthy condition, many of them with their own plants and with large and growing circulations. All of which is highly creditable to every one concerned, but none of which can be taken as an augury of the success of a Catholic daily.

Bible Reading.

Senator Greiner, of Buffalo, has introduced in the Legislature a bill making it compulsory for each public school teacher to read ten verses of the Bible "without sectarian comment."

What real need is there for such a bill? What great public good will be served thereby? It is true that Senator Greiner would permit such children as bring excuses from parent or guardian to absent themselves from such Bible reading.

It is noted that Senator Greiner's bill makes no mention whether the verses shall be read from the Old or New Testament or whether the King James or the Douay version shall be used. We wonder what would happen were a Catholic teacher to read from the Douay version, if the bill becomes a law?

We repeat: What crying need is there for such a bill?

Lent will soon be upon us.

Bishop Hickey's eulogy of the late Bishop Burke was an eloquent tribute to a saintly prelate.

The Catholic Journal extends hearty congratulations to Rev. Dr. A. B. Meehan upon his deserved elevation to the purple. May he live many years to enjoy his new honors!

A Catholic paper is needed in every family in these days of bigotry.

SWISS MILITARY SYSTEM.

With No Standing Army Every Citizen is a Trained Soldier.

The republic of Switzerland furnishes an example in the way of military preparedness well worth study. It has no standing army, and yet every man is a trained soldier and can at any time be called upon to defend his country.

Military training in Switzerland begins at the age of eight years. From the ages of seventeen to forty-nine service is compulsory at the call of the state. All males not incapacitated serve thirteen years in the aufzug, twelve years in the landwehr and six years in the landsturm. From eight years to seventeen the boys receive military instruction in the public schools, and when they enter the aufzug they are prepared for actual training in arms. In the first year of their service they spend from sixty-seven to ninety-two days in camp or maneuvers, depending upon whether they belong to cavalry, infantry, artillery or engineers. In each subsequent year they serve thirteen days.

The total service for the thirteen years is 141 days for infantry, 140 for engineers, 160 for cavalry and 168 for artillery. This makes a total of less than six months for the thirteen years, but the training is that of actual warfare and the product is trained and seasoned soldiers.

This Swiss force can only be called for defense against invasion. For an offensive campaign a new army must be raised by volunteering.—Newark News.

SPAIN'S WOMAN WARRIOR.

The Maid of Saragossa and How She Saved Her City.

The Spaniards have erected a monument to the memory of Angelina Zaragoza, whose bravery during the peninsular war saved her city.

In July, 1808, the French were pressing hard upon Saragossa. The hardest fighting occurred at Portillo gate, where the assaulting batteries more than once reached the dilapidated earthworks. The guns of the Spanish battery were shot down one after another, the survivors falling before they could discharge the last loaded gun.

The infantry flinched, and the French were closing in when a young woman betrothed to a young sergeant of artillery who had just fallen rushed in, snatched the lighted match from her dying lover's hand and fired the undischarged twenty-four pounder by the head of the advancing column. The enemy was thrown back. The citizens with a cheer rushed forward, recaptured the battery and the assault was checked.

Angelina Zaragoza received from her government a commission as sub-lieutenant of the artillery and a life pension. A few years later she was seen by an English traveler serving with her battery in Andalusia. She wore a blue artillery tunic, on the sleeve of which was a shield of honor—Washington Star.

How to Know Hemlock.

The occasional reports in the papers of children or animals being poisoned by eating some unambitious plant emphasize the importance of being able to distinguish the dangerous ones. In the case of hemlock itself, the most poisonous of all, this is not difficult. Notice first the dark green, much cut and divided leaves and the peculiar odor which botanists call fetid. But perhaps the most obvious thing and that which most easily distinguishes the hemlock from all other umbelliferous plants is the stem. This is smooth, polished, slightly furrowed and of a green color blotched and spotted with purple. No other member of the order has a stem in the least like it.—London Globe.

His Own Medicine.

A certain barrister named Jones who practiced in Lord Brougham's time was in the habit of commencing the examination of a witness with these words: "Now, sir, I am going to put a question to you, and I don't care which way you answer it."
Brougham, like many others, was growing tired of the monotonous formula, and one morning meeting Jones near the temple, he addressed him thus: "Now, Jones, I am going to put a question to you, and I don't care which way you answer it. How are you?"—London Express.

But Do They?

Mrs. Bacon—I see it is stated that the average length of life rose from twenty and one-quarter years in the sixteenth century to forty and one-half years in the nineteenth century.

Mr. Bacon—I suppose the latter time was when the women began telling the truth about their ages.—Yonkers Statesman.

Use In Beauty.

Strike out all the beautiful from the world, leave us only the useful—the manifestly useful and we should lose all elasticity out of our lives, all strength out of our purpose, all energy out of our arms. It is the thousand-fold beauty, meeting our eyes at every turn, that saves us.—Charles Force Deems.

At Our Boarding House.

The Star Boarder—What is this thread in the steak? The Waitress—You asked for a steak two inches thick, and we had to sew three regular steaks together. sir.—Philadelphia Ledger.

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