GREAT QUESTIONS AT THE VATICAN.

The Pope's Views on the Social Question and on the Freedom of Women.

ROME, Dec. 10.—In summarizing the net impression produced on my mind by more or less prolonged and confidential interviews with leading spirits at the headquarters of the Roman Church, on the whole, I am well satisfied with the result of my mission. I did not expect much, and I have been agreeably disappointed. I have found good men in high places from which they now exercise useful influence, from which they may in the future be even more useful than they are at present. The Pope, on the two occasions on which I had an opportunity of observing him closely, impressed me very favorably. There is in the actual face nothing of that sly smirk which appears in almost all of his photographs. There is a general benevolence in his countenance and a twinkle of humor in his bright eye. Although he is apt to be bored by the endless string of solemn triflers who are presented on the days when he gives audience, it is a weariness of the mind rather than a weariness of the body. During the celebration of his jubilee he wearied out all the younger men who were in attendance at his court. "The Pope is seventy-nine," said one of them, "but do not deceive yourself by the almanac. He is as vigorous in mind and almost as alert in body as if he were only fifty." This is no doubt an exaggeration, but it represents the honest impression of one who is in a position to contrast the physical endurance of Leo XIII. with that of the younger men who surrounded him. He did not seem to me decrepit or infirm. His old schoolfellow, Monsignor Kirby, Archbishop of Enhesus, who discharges the responsible duties of Rector of the Irish College without any trace of senile infirmity, is ten years the senior of the Pope. Allowance, no doubt, must be made for the superior vitality of the Irish stock; but it would be a mistake to regard Leo XIII. as tottering on the edge of the grave. He has the *mens sana in corpore sano*, and as long as he lives there will not fail to the guidance of the Church the intellect of a statesman and the heart of a saint.

I now proceed to summarize as succinctly as I can the substance of what I was told in the Vatican by these representatives of the policy of the Papacy:

The Social Question.—On this question there is no doubt that the Pope means business. He is of course very far from making common cause with the violent revolutionaries, whether Anarchists or Collectivists, who arrogate to themselves the exclusive right to the title of Socialists. But he is aiming more or less unconsciously at establishing the Holy See as the headquarters of a new International. He is vigorously pushing on the organization of industrial circles, a kind of Catholic trades union, in France, Spain, and Belgium, and all these circles or labor unions are more or less closely affiliated to Rome. If the programmes of the recent Socialist congresses in Paris are compared with the programme of the Pope, there is sufficient resemblance to strike the most casual observer. The Pope is for developing and extending the principle of factory legislation so as to secure for childhood exemption from labor and liberty to learn. The Pope is for securing for the workman one rest day in seven. The Pope is for shortening the hours of labor. I was very curious to know whether the Pope meant to do anything more than emit counsels of perfection on these subjects. I think, if encouraged he will not stop there. He sent Cardinal Lavigerie around Europe to revive the new crusade against the slave trade in Africa. It is quite on the cards that he may send another Cardinal around the world preaching a still more popular crusade against hours of labor which leave the workman no time to live. Take the question of the six days working week. They told me that on this subject the Pope is extremely eager. I asked whether his eagerness would carry him far enough to summon an International Conference on the subject. I was assured that there was no conference the Pope would be more delighted to summon, and if he were well enough he would gladly preside over such an assembly, to which he would eagerly invite representatives of all Protestant sects and atheistic and revolutionary societies, so long as they would agree to coöperate in obtaining the great boon of one day's rest in seven. When that conference meets I hope I may be there. Even the Moderator of the Free Kirk would admit that when he was doing such work the stoutest Presbyterian might well follow the lead of the Pope of Rome. The Pope cannot send delegates to Congresses representing Governments. Difficulties would arise with Italy. But he will watch the proceedings of the Congress at Berne, and, if he sees a chance of striking in to realize the programme which is there arrived at, he will not let the opportunity slip. We may also expect him to encourage his clergy everywhere to favor the adoption of courts of conciliation and of arbitration as a means of settling trade disputes. Upon the wider question of capital, land ownership, and the other issues which go down deep, I can only add that the Pope's devotion to Thomas Aquinas may well encourage the more advanced school to regard the Holy Father as in a hopeful condition. That, however, is not practical for the moment, and it is of more importance to know that if the Holy See can give effect to the volition of its chief, all the mighty army of priests will emulate each in his own sphere the acts of Cardinal Manning.

The Emancipation of Woman.—It was on this point that I had most misgivings, and on this point that I left Rome most reassured. The Pope has certainly not yet declared for woman's suffrage. But many of his best advisers find the demand just and logical. And this on two grounds. First, the obvious fact that woman in Europe is the sole hope of the Church. To enfranchise woman would place the free thinker everywhere in a minority. Secondly, apart from this self-interested view, the Holy See is logically driven to demand the enfranchisement of woman. The Catholic Church has always protested against the intrusion of the State in the question of education. The responsibility rested with the parents, with the mother equally with the father. So it was in other matters, such as child labor, the nursing of the sick, sanitation, poor relief, &c. In all these matters the State has encroached upon the family. The rights usurped by the State were originally exercised by the husband and the wife. They were now solely in the hands of the State, which is monopolized by the male. Hence as a *pis aller*, to restore to the woman her original share in the management of the home and the governance of her children is an obvious duty, upon which I venture to hope the Church will not fail to insist. For morality and religion the woman's vote is all important. The Pope in his address to the French pilgrims spoke of the *faiblesse et la mission toute domestique* of woman, a phrase which may be interpreted as going counter to the aspirations of woman for a free career. The Pope, however, has to speak for all Christendom, and in great parts of Christendom to insist upon the *mission toute domestique* of woman as to point to an ideal which few have realized. The degradation of woman to a beast of burden, who does all the heavy work while man hunts or smokes, or goes on the war trail, is not yet entirely worked out in many parts of Europe. At the same time the reaction against this brutality may easily go too far, and there is always the danger lest in legislating against the honest labor of women, you drive them to means of livelihood infinitely more revolting and degrading.

W. T. STEAD.

Indians Who Buy Costly Coffins.

From the Portland Oregonian.

Mr. C. W. Young, one of the principal merchants of Juneau, Alaska, is in the city. Among other goods, he has ordered a score or so of coffins, assorted sizes and of the most expensive description. He says the Indians in that section can have nothing too rich and elegant in the coffin line. The finest plush for covering and silver handles and studs thick bespangled over the coffin is what they want and will have if they put up their last dollar. Mr. Findley of the Casket Company says the Oregon Indians have the same ideas in regard to coffins, and some of the most costly he has go to Klamath and up to the Umatilla reservation.

SENT TO THE SUNDAY SUN FROM BEYOND THE SEA.

A Swimmer's Dream.

Nov. 4, 1889.
Somno mollior unda.

I.

Dawn is dim on the dark soft water.
Soft and passionate, dark and sweet,
Love's own self was the deep sea's daughter,
Fair and flawless from face to feet.
Hailed of all when the world was golden,
Loved of lovers whose names beholden
Thrill men's eyes as with light of olden
Days more glad than their flight was fleet.

So they sang: but for men that love her,
Souls that hear not her word in vain,
Earth beside her and heaven above her
Seem but shadows that wax and wane.
Softer than sleep's are the sea's caresses,
Kinder than love's that betrays and blesses,
Blither than spring's when her flowerful tresses
Shake forth sunlight and shine with rain.

All the strength of the waves that perish
Swells beneath me and laughs and sighs,
Sighs for love of the life they cherish,
Laughs to know that it lives and dies,
Dies for joy of its life, and lives
Thralled with joy that its brief death gives,
Death whose laugh or whose breath forgives
Change that bids it subside and rise.

II.

Hard and heavy, remote but nearing,
Sunless hangs the severe sky's weight,
Cloud on cloud, though the wind be veering,
Heaped on high to the sundawn's gate.
Dawn and even and noon are one,
Veiled with vapor and void of sun;
Naught in sight or in fancied hearing
Now less mighty than time or fate.

The gray sky gleams and the gray seas glimmer,
Pale and sweet as a dream's delight,
As a dream's where darkness and light seem dimmer,
Touched by dawn or subdued by night.
The dark wind, stern and sublime and sad,
Swings the rollers to westward, clad
With lustrous shadow that lures the swimmer,
Lures and lulls him with dreams of light.

Light, and sleep, and delight, and wonder,
Change, and rest, and a charm of cloud,
Fill the world of the skies whereunder
Heaves and quivers and pants aloud
All the world of the waters, hoary
Now, but clothed with its own live glory,
That mates the lightning and mocks the thunder
With light more living and word more proud.

III.

Far off westward, whither sets the sounding strife,
Strife more sweet than peace, of shoreless waves whose glee
Scorns the shore and loves the wind that leaves them free,
Strange as sleep and pale as death and fair as life,
Shifts the moonlight-colored sunshine on the sea.

Toward the sunset's goal the sunless waters crowd,
Fast as autumn days toward winter: yet it seems
Here that autumn wanes not, here that woods and streams
Lose not heart and change not likeness, chilled and bowed,
Warped and wrinkled: here the days are fair as dreams.

IV.

O russet-robed November,
What ails thee so to smile?
Chill August, pale September,
Endured a woful while,
And fell as falls an ember
From forth a flameless pile;
But golden-girt November
Bids all she looks on smile.

The lustrous foliage, waning
As wanes the morning moon,
Here falling, here refraining,
Outbraves the pride of June
With statelier semblance, feigning
No fear lest death be soon:
As though the woods thus waning
Should wax to meet the moon.

As though, when fields lie stricken
By gray December's breath,
These lordlier growths that sicken
And die for fear of death
Should feel the sense requicken
That hears what springtide saith
And thrills for love, spring-stricken
And pierced with April's breath.

The keen white-winged north-easter
That stings and spurs thy sea,
Doth yet but feed and feast her
With glowing sense of life;
Calm chaised her, storm released her,
And storm's glad voice was he;
South-wester or north-easter,
Thy winds rejoice the sea.

V.

A dream, a dream is it all: the season,
The sky, the water, the wind, the shore?
A day-born dream of divine unreason,
A marvel moulded of sleep: no more?
For the cloud-like wave, that my limbs while cleaving
Feel as in slumber beneath them heaving,
Soothes the sense as to slumber, leaving
Sense of naught that was known of yore.

A purer passion, a lordlier leisure,
A peace more happy than lives on land,
Fulfils with pulse of diviner pleasure
The dreaming head and the steering hand.
I lean my cheek to the cold gray pillow,
The deep soft swell of the full broad billow,
And close mine eyes for delight past measure,
And wish the wheel of the world would stand.

The wild-winged hour that we fain would capture
Falls as from heaven that its flight feet climb,
So brief, so soft, and full the rapture
Was felt that soothed me with sense of home.
To sleep, to swim, and to dream, forever,
Such joy the vision of man saw never;
For here too soon will a dark day sever
The sea-bird's wing from the sea-wave's foam.

A dream, and more than a dream, and dimmer
At once and brighter than dreams that flee,
The moment's joy of the seaward swimmer
Abides remembered as truth may be.
Not all the joy and not all the glory
Must fade as leaves when the woods wax hoary:
For there the downs and the woodlands glimmer,
And here to south of them swells the sea.

Yours sincerely
A Swinburne

Work of the Harvard Astronomers.

BOSTON, Dec. 21.—The annual report of the astronomers at Harvard College, which has just been presented to the Visiting Committee, among other things says:

"Last summer a gift of $50,000 was received from Miss C. W. Bruce of New York for a large photographic telescope of novel form. The liberal aid given in recent years by Mrs. Draper has been continued, both in work done at Cambridge and in the expedition to Peru, maintained also in part by the Boyden fund. A second expedition to Southern California is supported by the Boyden fund. These expeditions, particularly that to Peru, enabled the investigations begun at Cambridge to be extended to stars in all parts of the sky, and thus to be made more complete than would be possible at a single station. The expenditure necessary to maintain work at all the stations now occupied consumes the entire income."

The report recommends that a fire-proof building be erected for the storage of records and property valued at $100,000. The library of the observatory has been increased during the year by the addition of 484 volumes and 336 pamphlets. The time service has been regularly continued, the average error of the signals at 11 A. M. being less than one-third of a second. The telegraphic distribution of astronomical intelligence has been continued under the direction of Mr. Litchis. Announcement has been made of the discovery of seven asteroids and of six comets, as well as of some other interesting phenomena. The distribution of the intelligence in this country has required 393 telegrams.

Told of Jefferson Davis.

From the Washington Post.

Mr. William Flynn of this city relates the following in relation to Jefferson Davis and ex-Senator Jones of Iowa. They were intimate friends from their college days, and although afterwards located many miles apart, they were close friends. Mr. Jones and Mr. Davis would always be found together as soon as one knew the other was near. On one occasion, in the fifties, Mr. Jones, on calling on Mr. Davis, after the greeting, bluntly said: "Davis, I want $10,000. I have bought some land and wish to make a partnership."

"You can have it," said Mr. Davis, taking a blank check from his pocketbook and filling it up. This action took Mr. Jones by surprise, as he supposed that Mr. Davis would recommend him to some banker, but he at once filled up a note in favor of Mr. Davis, payable on demand, which he handed Mr. Davis, and in turn received the check. Mr. Davis glanced at it a moment and said: "Mr. Jones something may happen, and this note make you trouble." At the same time Mr. Davis tore the note into small pieces, and added: "If your venture turns out well you can pay it, but don't let it trouble you. You can pay it when you get ready, but don't let it trouble you."

POEMS WORTH READING.

Christmas Carol.

From the Youth's Companion.

The earth has grown old with its burden of care,
But at Christmas it always is young,
The heart of the jewel burns lustrous and fair,
And its soul full of music breaks forth on the air,
When the song of the angels is sung.

It is coming, Old Earth, it is coming to-night!
On the snowflakes which cover thy sod
The feet of the Christ-child fall gentle and white,
And the voice of the Christ-child tells out with delight
That mankind are the children of God.

On the sad and the lonely, the wretched and poor,
That voice of the Christ-child shall fall;
And to every blind wanderer open the door
Of a hope that he dared not to dream of before,
With a sunshine of welcome for all.

The feet of the humblest may walk in the field
Where the feet of the Holiest have trod,
This, this is the marvel to mortals revealed
When the silvery trumpets of Christmas have pealed,
That mankind are the children of God.

1889. PHILLIPS BROOKS.

Dolce.

From Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly.

We came to an isle of flowers,
That lay in a trance of sleep,
In a world forgotten of ours,
Far out on a sapphire deep.

Dwellers were none on the island,
And as far as the eye could see,
From the shore to the central highland,
Was never a bush nor tree.

Long, long had her fields lain fallow,
And the drought had dried her rills;
But the vetch and the record and mallow
Ran riot on all her hills.

The length of her shoreward level,
High bank and terrace and quay
Were red with a scarlet revel
Of poppies down to the sea.

Each bloom pressed close on its fellow,
The marigolds peeped between,
Till the scarlet and the yellow
Had hidden the under-green.

Was it here, that heart of a nation,
That first of the fanes of old!
This garden of desolation,
This ruin of red, of gold?

High up from the rock-cleft hollow,
Roofed over of Titan hands,
The cradle of dead Apollo
Still looks to his silent lands.

The sacred lake lies solemn,
In a havoc of fallen shrines,
Where the shaft of each broken column
Is tangled about with vines.

It lives in the dreams which haunt it,
This isle o' the Sun god's birth,
It lives in the songs which vaunt it
The holiest earth on earth.

But the shrines without note or number
Lie wrecked on a barren shore,
And the dead ideals slumber
Forever and evermore.

So spring in her pride of pity
Had hidden the marble wraith,
And shed on the holy city
The flower and the sleep of death.

BRENNELL ROPE.

In Amsterdam.

From the Chicago News.

Mynheer Hans von der Bloom has got
A magazin in Kalverstraat,
Where one may buy for sordid gold
Wares quaint and curious, new and old.
Here are antiquities galore,
The jewels which Dutch monarchs wore,
Swords, teacups, helmets, pastrys, clocks,
Bright Dresden jars dull Holland clocks,
And all those joys I might rehearse,
That please the eye but wreck the purse.

I most admired an ancient bed
With ornate carvings at its head,
A massive frame of dingy oak,
Whose curious size and mould bespoke
Prodigious age. "How much?" I cried,
"Ein tousand gildens," Hans replied.
And then the honest Dutchman said,
A king once owned that glorious bed,
King Fritz der foorst, of blessed fame,
Had owned and slept within the same!

Then long I stood and mutely gazed,
Bright visions of splendors danced,
And I had bought it right away
Had I the wherewithal to pay,
But lacking of the needed pelf
I thus discoursed within myself:
"O happy Holland! Where's the bliss
That can approximate to this
Possession of the rare antique,
Which mankind hankter for and seek?
My native land is full of stuff
That's good, but is not old enough!
Alas! it has no oaken beds
Wherein have slumbered royal heads,
No relic on whose face we see
The proof of grand antiquity!"

Thus reasoned I a goodly spell,
Until perchance my vision fell
Upon a trade mark at the head
Of Fritz der foorst's old oaken bed:
A rampant wolverine, and round
This strange device these words I found,
"Patent Antique, Bitker & Gay,
Grand Rapids, Michigan, U. S. A."
At present I'm not saying much
About the simple, guileless Dutch;
And as it were a relative spot
I keep away from Kalverstraat,
Determined when I want a bed
Which has slept a royal head
I'll patronize no middleman,
But deal direct with Michigan.

AMSTERDAM, Nov. 6. EUGENE FIELD.

My Gun.

From the Chicago Herald.

With perfect lines from butt to sight,
Damascus barrels, twelve in gauge,
That shine within like mirrors bright,
A trigger of this size of age,
Gnarled walnut wood the solid stock
And smoother than your finger nail,
Extension rib, rebounding lock,
And balanced like a truthful scale.

No fine engraving tracery shown
On locks or barrels, for the vain;
A weapon for its worth alone
A beauty, yet severely plain;
Top snap the action, as you see,
And corrugated buckhorn tip;
As finished as an arm should be
From muzzle through to pistol grip.

A trusty comrade, this old gun,
And certain, if you hold it right,
To drop the jacksnipe one by one,
On the wheeling flight,
To bring to earth the woodcock where
In swampy covert up he springs,
Or send far up in crispy air
The death hail, where the wild goose wings.

Let folly's votaries fill her train,
And chirping poets feebly rhyme;
In dingy holes, for worldly gain
Let stooping gray beards weep their prime;
Let heavy students delve for knowledge
And bookworms in dry volumes delve;
Give me the rivers, lakes, and woods,
My freedom and the "number twelve."

ERNEST MCGAFFEY.

The Old-Fashioned Coffee Mill.

From the Courier-Journal.

When you're jest 'bout half awake,
An' the roller poundin' steak
Makes a noise 'at almost drowns
All them other kitchen sounds,
One o' 'em, 'at's my fav'rite,
Beats psalm tunes a plaguey sight.
'Tain't no old melodeon,
"Days of Absence," "Bonny Doon,"
Nor them other tunes we sung
Long ago when we wuz young;
But it's that more sweeter sound,
When the coffee's parched and browned,
Mother's grindin' it to order
From the old-time coffee mill.

When you're jest 'bout half asleep,
While the early robins peep,
An' your soul a-sailin' goes
In a sort o' dreamy doze,
Floatin' round, an' round, an' round
On that palpitatin' sound,
Dreams of butterflies in flocks,
Sippin' lilies an' hollyhocks,
Takes you back to that sweet time
When your life was like a rhyme,
An' you didn't have to do
Only what you wanted to:
Then your thoughts 'ill flutter still
Round that old-time coffee mill.

Seems like that low rumblin' noise,
Way down stairs, 'at waked us boys,
Set us all to thinkin' things,
Like old songs 'at right at rings
Thro' your head, an' won't be still;
"A boy's will is the wind's will,"
"An' his thoughts is long, long thoughts,"
An' we talked of lots an' lots
Of grand things we s'posed we'd do,
An' kept wishin' they'd come true.
Oh, him 'at's never used a kit
How Time's mashed 'em with his heel,
Like the broken grains 'at fill
That old-fashioned coffee mill.

Them wuz jolly times we had,
An' it makes me feel right bad
When I look around an' see
None o' them old boys but me;
An' I'm sittin' on, I s'pose,
Jest like all the others does,
Fer there's none o' us you see,
Measured up to our idea.
Fer Time's hopper holds us all,
An' he grinds things mighty small,
So's 'at he who gits thro' it
Has to hev a sight o' grit,
Like the grists we used to spill
In that old-time coffee mill.

The Hunter and His Life.

From the Columbus Dispatch.

The jolly hunting days have come,
The neatest of the year,
When would-be Nimrods go with their guns,
And dogs, in fields appear.

The hunter tramps through many a field,
Through meadow and through bog;
He sees at last a little bird,
But kills, instead, his dog.

The weary hunter homeward turns,
And vows with humor grim;
"I've got no game; the dog is dead;
I'll blame it all on him."

The bird lives on, the dog is dead,
The hunter frames his lie,
Till a rail fence fires the shotgun off,
You'll meet him by and by.

A Psalm of Life.

From the Somerville Journal.

Eschew terciversation
And avoid concatenation
Of atrabilious, inchoate interminate discords,
Bulbucinating corbels,
Like tinkling, tinniest door bells,
Imply crustacean, mytelogic valances and voids.

II.

Trichroism, traumatic,
Spasmodic, acrobatic,
Never sibilates resilient when occult megrims come,
Thaumaturgical negation
And amorphous objectation
Only unto supramundane sinucosities succumb.

III.

Cymophanous depliation
Delectory coeitation
Together lancinate and thrill like sonants cleaving surds,
So abstain from jimperception,
Coarctation, and decription,
And, no matter what you have to say, don't use big words

THE PRACTICE FIRE DRILL.

How the Fire Laddies are Kept at the Point of Excellence.

The Fire Commissioners are looking about for a suitable location for a drill ground. The fact is that the fire drill, which constitutes a very important part of the present system, keeps the neighborhood of Headquarters, at Sixty-seventh street and Third avenue, in a perpetual turmoil. Some of the residents of the vicinity are annoyed at the perpetual puff of the engines, the smoke, the bustle in the yard, the clambering up the sides of the building by the life-saving corps, and all the confusion of what is really a perpetual drill.

The fire drill embraces not only the newcomers and probation men, but also the regular force. Twice a year each company goes up to Headquarters and is put through the liveliest kind of drill for points. They learn to do things by time marked off in seconds or a fraction of a minute. There is, for instance, one minute and a half allowed from the time the first man reaches the second story until the water is turned on. During that minute and a half the hose must be taken to the top of the house, so that when the water is turned on at the end of the minute and a half the men will be ready at the nozzle at the top of the house ready to play upon the fire. Of course, it is not easy to drag up the hose when the water is in it. Therefore, when the hose is empty, with a man tugging at every fifty feet, it is hustled up stairs at a lively gait. To do this every man must know his place and be able to go promptly at work without special orders. To secure proficiency the utmost constant practice is necessary, and that is what the fire drill is for. It is really this constant drilling that gives the Fire Department of New York its wonderful excellence. There is great emulation among the different companies to get good marks at these semi-annual inspections. It is from the results of these periodical drills, as well as from the actual work at fires, that the best men are picked out for the public exhibitions that are occasionally given, such as that for the Pan-American Congress.

There are fifty-six engine companies, twenty hook and ladder companies, and two water towers. These are arranged so that throughout the city any fire can be reached within one minute after the alarm is sounded. Nothing but constant drill secures this. Every time an alarm is sounded, no matter where it is, the whole force gets ready to start. Every one of the 1,000 men of the department jumps to his post. There are on the average six fires a day, and it is no wonder that even the horses get so used to it that they, too, jump to their places with alacrity when the gong sounds.

The new, or ununiformed, firemen have, of course, much more drilling to do than the old ones. They must first pass a course of exercises in the gymnasium before they can get appointed on probation. Then for thirty days they must do duty at night in the engine houses, and turn out at fires with the regular men. During the day they must attend the schoolof instruction and drill at Headquarters, and keep at it until they are proficient. Before they get through they become pretty good acrobats, and can mount ladders, climb ropes, jump, run, and sling their bodies around as deftly as the average circus man.

The big gymnasium at Headquarters is the scene of constant ground and lofty tumbling. Here are stored the thousand and one tools that are used in the department, and every man must know the use of every tool, and he is drilled until he knows it well. They must learn how to couple the hose, to shift the nozzles, to smash through the strongest building, to tear down walls, to manage scaling ladders, to jump into the life-saving nets, to lower people from windows, to manage ropes, to raise and lower ladders, to manage the fire extinguishers, to grope in smoke, and do all the difficult and dangerous things that fall to the duty of the evoluted fireman. If they cannot show aptitude in these things they have to drop out at the end of their probation, to make room for better men. The fire drill effectively shows whether they can prove equal to the duty.

It is interesting to observe the cool and methodical way in which the department goes at a fire. The hook and ladder companies and the fire engine companies have distinct duties. The force is arranged so that an engine company and a hook and ladder company will arrive at a fire at about the same time. The hook and ladder company proceeds at once to open the building. The men go from cellar to roof and get the passages free, and open the windows and the roof so as to let out the smoke. They not hesitate to smash doors and partitions and windows and skylights promptly if the building is filled with smoke. This apparent reckless destruction is really the best way to save property. It generally necessitates but a comparatively little cost for new carpenter work. The object is to get the smoke out so that the exact location of the fire may be ascertained and so that no more water need be used than is actually necessary.

While the hook and ladder men have been preparing the building the engines and hose have been got ready. The steam is kept up to about twenty pounds pressure night and day. On the way to the fire the engineer gets up more steam. As soon as the engine stops certain men unreel the hose and attach one end to the engine pump. Others attend to running the hose into the building, others attend to the horses, and all this goes on with a system and order that is marvellous and the result of superior drill.

Bearing in mind always the first necessity of saving life, the entire force is a life-saving corps. Each truck has its tools carefully placed so that each man knows where to find them. The chiefs and captains are on the alert to know where to use the tools, which are adapted to all sorts of exigencies. While each man has a special duty, which must first be performed, the force is largely elastic. The engineers and the drivers, after looking out for their special charges, are drilled to lend a helping hand at other work. If nets are to be used, outside hands are quickly summoned to aid, but generally the police quickly draw the fire lines and keep the unwelcomed from coming at their work systematically and methodically, as if they were at work at the school of instruction and drill. In this way, especially where an alarm has been given promptly, it is wonderful to observe how intelligently the force is used; how each effort tells, and how the men tackle exactly the best place for them to work, and use only enough water to do the work, while ready to concentrate all forces at a given point to master a sudden difficulty. It is a perpetual wonder how an ordinary fire can be managed by a few men well drilled. When an engine company starts out there are two officers, two drivers, two engineers, and six ordinary firemen. These twelve men, by constant drill and practice and superior methods of work, are able to do much more effective work than was done by the best of the old companies of fifty or more men, who used to make the scene of a fire a pandemonium and get in one another's way, so that the loss was getting such a stage that its ravages became great. The average loss at fires has been constantly on the decrease, and the efficacy of the department is now so great that no large fire can occur without great delay in giving the alarm.

The tools that a truck carries may be likened to a giant's pocket knife kit. They can open the stoutest doors or windows in a jiffy. The battering ram and the sectional jimmy are the universal door openers, entirely unknown to the old department, and yet so efficient that it is a matter of wonderment how their use could have been so long delayed.

There was an illustration of the prompt and efficient methods of the present department at a recent fire down town. The alarm had been delayed, so that when the firemen reached the scene the store on the first floor was a sheet of flame, and the total loss of the building seemed inevitable. But in less than five minutes after the men began work the fire was under control, and never got beyond the first floor. The way it was done was this. The store was fitted with great big ironclad doors and shutters firmly secured. The big battering ram was got ready while the hose was stretched and the water started ready for action. As soon as the door was burst in the pipemen followed up sharply with the streams, and actually walked slowly from the front to the rear of the store, putting out the sheet of flame as they walked. It was done so quickly that the fire did not get a chance to spread. Nothing but the quick application of a large body of water could have saved the building.

At a recent fire in a West Fourteenth street dwelling the flames spread from the basement to the roof through a succession of closets one after another. There were many persons sleeping on each floor. Before half of them were out of bed the firemen had entered the building, thrown open a l the windows, cleared the house of smoke, and put on just enough water to extinguish the fire on each floor. They hardly used a cupful more than was needed. Although the fire ran up through a well hole and burned considerably on each floor, and spread somewhat, the water was so judiciously applied that a large part of each floor was left habitable and the loss was comparatively small.

The firemen are drilled to be by no means delicate about hustling people out of a building where there is a dangerous fire. People always have a natural desire to save property. Much time of life is conditioned by the ruling passion to save property where people ought to be content with saving their lives. Especially among the tenement houses of the east side do the firemen experience this difficulty. The poor people cling frantically to their goods and effects. But the firemen are drilled to rush the people out and compel them to go to places of safety. Indeed, the apparent roughness and incivility and domineering conduct of the firemen often saves lives. It is a kind roughness, a humane incivility, and a tender domineering. A well-drilled fireman has no hesitancy in breaking open the door of a lady's bedroom, pulling her out of bed, bundling her up in the smallest possible amount of clothes, and rushing her into the street. Protestations are vain; resistance is useless. Out the unfortunates go, and afterward they usually are glad that the fireman had the nerve and force of character to bounce them unceremoniously.

One of the most difficult things for the recruit to learn is to wake up out of a sound sleep, hurry on a few clothes, and dash to his place at the apparatus. Hats and coats are kept on the hose tender, so that he must finish dressing in the street while the galloping horses are carrying him to a fire. It is a fearful shock to the novice to go from a warm bed on a cold winter's night, to finish making his toilet in the street. But it is part of the system which is conceived for the purpose of saving seconds at the outset, and with the knowledge that every minute saved at the beginning of a fire is of the utmost importance.

There are three distinct authorities at a fire. First comes the police, who preserve order, look out for thieves, and keep the firemen unmolested. In emergencies they do important work in the saving of life. The next authority is the firemen, divided and sub-divided as to their duties, but all under one head. The third authority is the fire patrol. This is supported by the insurance companies, and is not under control of the Fire Department. The duty of the fire patrol is to save property and protect property, so that the losses, which the insurance companies have to pay, are kept down to the lowest notch. When the fire is in progress they remove property where they can. They prevent a great deal of loss by water by covering up with heavy tarpaulins goods that would otherwise be saturated. All these independent authorities work harmoniously at a fire, but it is tacitly recognized that the Chief of the Fire Department ranks everybody else. The fireman's drill and instruction teaches him, among other things, to know his own duties and the precise relation he bears to the other authorities at a fire. It is seldom that he is called upon to do either the duties of a policeman or a fire patrolman, but in an exigency he will be found there.

When the Commissioners get their new drill ground the daily fire drill will doubtless continue one of the regular sights of the city even more interesting than at present.

JACK'S CAREER IN THE NAVY.

As Compared with Many Careers on Shore it is a Very Good One.

A reader of THE SUN, who signs the attractive name of "A Young American" to his letter, has written to ask whether or not we would advise him to ship as an apprentice in Uncle Sam's navy. To help us in deciding for him he says that he is a lad yet "in his teens," that he has "more or less affection for the sea," and that so far as his observation of naval apprentices has enabled him to form an opinion, "their employment certainly must be more healthful, physically and mentally, than that of those who spend their time in poorly ventilated offices scratching out their earthly existence."

Having so far shown a leaning toward an affirmative answer to the main question he wishes to know, very properly, what objections may be urged against the life which he thinks of entering. He is quite certain that such objections do exist, for the reason that THE SUN has frequently lamented the great proportion of foreign seamen among those who man the American navy.

While we are not able to tell "A Young American" definitely whether he ought to seek a life career in the American navy or not, we may perhaps be able to assist him to determine the question for himself. There is need enough that intelligent and patriotic young Americans should take the place of the unpatriotic Dutchmen and Dagos, to use the sea terms now to be found on American war ships. But whether this or that young man should offer himself as an apprentice depends first, on his physical ability to stand the service and become a good seaman; second, on his tastes; and last on his prospects in life should he remain on shore.

If a man is without physical defects and enjoys spells of active exercise with other spells of drudgery and others still of idleness between, he can get on very well in the navy. While the war ships of the future will spread very little canvas, and there will therefore be but very little going aloft on them, they will be provided with no end of machinery and guns, and the drills necessary to make a crew familiar with these will make life mighty active at times on shipboard.

For drudgery the sailor has holystoning the decks at 6:30 o'clock (before daylight) on a winter morning with the thermometer well down to zero. He has the guns to clean and the ship to paint. For infractions of the regulations (and every seaman worth having will sometimes break the rules), he will have a plenty of extra duty of a disagreeable character to do. He will have to stand on lookout on the forecastle deck when she's crossing the banks, although the spray that will drench him will sting like red-hot needles when it touches the bare skin.

In the matter of tastes let no man who loves home or hopes for wife or children think of entering the navy. If there is any soul in the world more to be pitied than the sailor on the China or Alaska station, pining to see his wife or child, or perhaps both, for years after he has his ship sailed, it is the wife or child left behind. Society young men not infrequently envy the dashing naval lieutenant, but if they could see the lieutenant's hair turn gray from anxiety about loved ones at home the envy would turn to pity.

On the other hand if a man cares not for a wife and home, there is no better place for him, generally speaking, than the navy. Uncle Sam's sailors are such a healthy, lusty lot that they receive a welcome calculated to stir a sailorman's blood in every port they enter.

While every sailor who attends to his duty and shows the manly qualities needed in American seamen may hope to complete his life about every country that borders the sea, he should not be deluded into the notion that he will have any great opportunity to study these countries as a traveller. He may get leave of absence once a month if the ship remains in a foreign port any length of time, and if it does not he will be lucky to get ashore for one day. His opportunities for social enjoyments will be limited in a way that will seem mighty disagreeable to a young fellow who has been accustomed to go to the theatre three nights a week besides attending no end of church socials, political gatherings, &c. But when Jack does get ashore he is likely to have enough fun to last any reasonable man a month.

Another thing to be considered soberly by "A young American" is the matter of discipline. On shore every American feels that he is the peer of every one he meets. In the navy there are well-defined ranks. The admiral orders everybody. The Captain orders every one of less rank, and so on down to the able seaman, who orders the apprentices. Very likely "A young American" is sometimes addressed as "Mister" or "Sir." In the navy it will be, "Boy, lay aft and clean bright work," or "Sheldon, demish down the topsail halyards," and the outspoken "I will behoove you boy" or "Sheldon" to touch his cap respectfully and say cheerfully, "Aye, aye, sir." Even gray-haired old salts have to answer in that fashion to beardless cadets fresh from the naval academy.

Rightly considered there is nothing humiliating in this, for ninety-nine times out of a hundred Uncle Sam's naval officers are entitled by reason of their attainments to this respect.

Further than that, the treatment which the men receive at the hands of their superior officers is so much more considerate than that accorded to a vast host of employees on shore that there is no comparison to be made. Apprentices in shops and factories, clerks and accountants in stores, mechanics and workmen of all sorts are obliged to submit to browbeating that would incite a mutiny in no time in the navy. For instance, consider the street car driver with his bell punch around his neck, a badge that says very plainly, "You would steal but for me." In the navy every man is supposed to be honest until proven a thief, and there is a pride in their honor among the men that calls for blood (by fisticuffs) whenever it is impugned. Then think of the tyranny of the walking boss, who calls the mechanic from his opportunity to earn a half loaf to gratify, perhaps, some petty malice.

This leads naturally to the consideration of "A Young American's" prospects in life. If he has no hope beyond "scratching out his earthly existence" in an ill-ventilated office, his prospects on shore are not alluring. How many clerks and mechanics get $300 a year and their board, ready for action. As soon as in the navy any lad who ought to enter the service can be sure of getting that from the day he is 21 years old. If a likely lad and ambitious he will have an excellent prospect of doing better than that. "A Young American" is a good penman and writes a good letter. He could, very likely, soon become ship's writer at $45 a month, or a yeoman at $60. Failing that, if willing to make a special study of some branch of his profession—say gunnery—he could become gunner's mate at $30, and there would be a chance—not large, but worth fighting for—of getting a warrant as gunner, with sea pay of from $1,200 a year up to $1,800. The other officers are boatswains, gunners, carpenters, and sailmakers. These are the present limit of an apprentice's ambition. It is an un-American limit, that will some time be removed.

There is one other consideration that weighs heavily with naval seamen. Once in the navy they are sure of continuous honorable employment. Nothing short of crime or disgraceful conduct can dismiss them from the service so long as they can do duty. There is no provision now for retiring aged seamen on a pension, but there will be inside of three years. Then a seaman will be wholly without any anxiety about the future. He has only to do his duty and let the wide world wag as it will.

On the whole, if "A Young American" has good health, is free from luxurious desires, and has enough ambition to keep a weather eye on a chance for promotion, he can make a very good career in the navy.

There is but one place for him to ship should he choose to ship, and that is on board the big war ship at the foot of West Twenty-seventh street in this city.

WISDOM OF THE WITS.

Like the Kine's Clown, They Are Philosophers of the First Class.

"Do you feel any change?" said the minister, solemnly, as he walked back during the revival meeting and placed his hand gently on the sailor's shoulder.

The sailor, thinking he was expected to contribute something, quickly ran his hands deep down into his pockets, then, looking up into the minister's face with a bland smile answered, "Not a derned cent, parson.—*Punxsutawney Spirit.*

You may talk about your terrapin,
And canvasback and wine,
We're here to sing of buckwheat cakes
And gravy from the swine.
There's nothing that delights us so
In all the gastronomics
As watching flapjacks steam and glow
And hearing them "kerplomicks."
—*Punxsutawney Spirit.*

Mrs. Toto (strictly temperate)—Why, you know, Mr. Lusher, that I am so conscientious in my temperance principles that I never allow my cook to put brandy in the mince pies.

Lusher—It does you credit, madam, great credit. I agree with you. It does seem like a waste of good liquor to put it into pies.—*Boston Transcript.*

Miss Van Allwool—Are you sure Baron De Schnag is a genuine nobleman?

Mr. McBallister—Sure? Why, he borrowed $500 of one man.—*Time.*

"Did you take Miss Phair under the mistletoe last night?"

"Yes, and then went out under her father's missile-toe."—*Munsey's Weekly.*

"Bilkings says the reason you dress so shabbily is that your father is a tailor?"

"I suppose that's so! You know shoemakers' sons generally go barefoot and milliners' daughters wear cheap hats."

"That's about so."

"Your father must have been a great man."—*