

WHERE LABOR IS LIGHT.

THE HALIFAX CUSTOMS MEN HAVE A VERY GOOD TIME.

Their Hours are too short to Suit the Convenience of the Public—A Suggestion to Lengthen them Throughout—Other Important Matters.

HALIFAX, Dec. 3.—Of how much less hard work is a customs or other civil service official capable than is his fellow citizen in any other department of work? The customs man must be far less capable than others, judging by the hours he works. What suggests this idea is the office hours in the customs house in this city. These clerks "labor" daily at hours ranging from 9 to 4 or 10 to 3, with an hour and a-half off for lunch. Other people work from 8 in the morning till 6 at night, and many longer hours than those. Banking hours, true enough, are from 10 to 3, but the clerks are in their places at 9 in the morning and then labor not till 3 but till 5 and frequently late into the night. Take the customs appraisers office in this city as an instance of a department where the hours are outrageously short. Very late in the morning, when the forenoon is half gone for many business people, they open their doors. Each of the staff takes an hour and a half to lunch. At four o'clock, when, for some of our merchants business is still at full tension, these aristocrats of labor, sharp on time, lock up their office and are gone. No matter how urgent the demand, they will do nothing after four o'clock. In the "long room" of the custom house it is the same thing. The clerks most of them seem to have their coats on at one minute to four, so that when the clock strikes they may vanish for the day. Others of these clerks find a way to leave their offices at three o'clock.

Now these fortunate people should bear in mind that they after all, are the peoples servants. Their salaries come out of the pockets of the tax payers. Why then should they toil so much less fiercely and for so much shorter hours than their masters. There is no reason why they should, but the contrary.

Such being the case, how good a thing it would be, and how popular, for the government to regulate the hours at the custom house—to lengthen them very materially, so that the people's convenience might be conserved and not merely the happiness and pleasure of a crowd of civil servants. Six o'clock in the evening would be a very reasonable hour to which to ask the appraisers for instance, to remain at work. The hours in the "long room" of the custom house should also be lengthened. Adding thus to the hours of work would be a popular thing for a reform government. Let it to be done, and thus somewhat equalize the burdens of life between the people who are the masters and the custom house staff who are the servants.

A CLEVER MUSICIAN.

He Has Written a Comic Opera and Several Bright Songs.

When the Gilbert Opera Company played a very successful engagement in St. John a little over a year ago, the clever musical director of the company was Mr. Dan Dore, who has since visited this city with other companies in the same capacity. Mr. Dore has written a comic opera, "Captain Kidd", which will be produced in Hartford, Conn., next Monday evening, December 7th. He has also written several bright and pretty songs which are being sung by such well known artists as George Thatcher, Harry Leighton, Bob Price and others, and among the most popular of these songs are Roses of Long Ago, A Little Song for Two, Love me again, Your Letter one Hour too Late, Sing Heigh-ho etc. Of the last named song the Oliver Ditson Company in its latest descriptive catalogue says: "Heigh-ho, music by Dan Dore, words by Charles Kingsley; a soprano singer who desires a song, which will test to the utmost her vocal power, and if successfully handled, create an enthusiasm seldom produced in concert halls, will find all the material necessary in this song. It is an exceptionally brilliant composition."

Mr. Dore who is almost wholly French, is prepossessing in appearance, is a clever linguist and conversationalist, and is highly educated. He is an A. B. and Mus. Bac. of European institutions and though it is quite a distance from the church to the stage, he has filled the position of organist upon several occasions. His compositions, tuneful and catchy, are gaining deserved recognition.

HOW HAIRPINS ARE MADE.

Enameling in the Most Difficult Process of the Work.

For ages the English and French controlled the manufacture of hairpins, and it is only within the last twenty years that the goods have been produced in other countries to any extent. The machinery used is of a delicate and intricate character, as the prices at which the pins are sold necessitates the cheapest and most rapid process, which can only be produced by automatic machines.

The wire is made expressly for the purpose and put up in large coils, which was placed in a clamp, and so carried to the machine while being straightened. This machine cuts, bends, and, by a delicate

and instantaneous process, sharpens the points. Running at full speed, it will turn out one hundred and twenty hairpins every minute. To economize, it is necessary to keep the engines going day and night.

The difficult part of the work is in the enameling, which is done by dipping the pins in a preparation and baking in an oven. It is here that the most constant and careful attention is required, as the pins must be absolutely smooth and the enamel have a perfect polish. The slightest particle of dust causes imperfections and roughness.

NATURAL BRIDGE.

A Visitor Describes Virginia's Famous Arch of Rock.

"That is where they let down the rope to the boy. He jumped from that little ledge you see away up there—the bird just flew past it!—and caught the rope as it swung toward him."

We looked up, stretching our heads back until our necks ached.

Is that story really true?

"The old settlers around here say so. The boy was a student from Washington and Lee, which is not very far from here. Of course the account of the feat, usually found in Fifth Readers, is a good deal exaggerated. There was no crowd watching while he climbed, as the story says; only a few of his friends were with him; but it is true that a boy really did climb nearly to the top of the bridge. You see that ledge up there almost under the arch? When he reached that place he could climb no further on account of the arching over the bridge. Then they say he looked back to see how to climb down again. You know it's a fact, that you can climb up much easier than down." There may be a deeper significance to those words I thought. "When you look downward everything appears to be smoother. So there the boy hung, nearly 200 feet from the ground, unable to move one way or the other."

We looked again up to that tiny projection, not much bigger than the bowl of a spoon, it seemed from that great distance. It was awful. (Later, when we went to the top of the bridge, we looked down; it was frightful.)

We were standing under the shadow of that fearful monument of the Builder who knows no limits, the bridge whose walls are mountains and whose buttresses are peaks. The ravine is so deep the sun shines in only about noon. And all this magnificence of architecture royally thrown away on a mere wading stream! Its fish no bigger than minnows. But the Builder's quarry, likewise, knows no limits.

The approach to the bridge is by a narrow, tortuous, rapidly descending path. A small stream tumbles down the mountain beside us all the way. The deep foliage of the trees keeps us hidden from a view of the bridge until a sharp turn to the right suddenly brings us up almost under it.

But the first sight, perhaps is a little disappointment. The mind has to take time to adjust itself to these enormous dimensions. As we approach it, at length stand just under the bridge itself, and look upward, perhaps even then we are still a little disappointed, until suddenly we are startled by a faint crying flock of swallows flying under the bridge; then we begin to comprehend its dizzy attitude.

The approach is not so impressive as the opposite view on account of the dipping of the arch on that side. To walk 100 feet further on, passing under the bridge, and then look back at it, one catches the curves of its enormous convexity, and the lift of its span. On this side, also, the two mountains that buttress the bridge rapidly rise for some distance further on; consequently the ravine walls are much higher. All these things combine to make the latter view of the bridge very impressive.

Cathedral wall, nearly 300 feet high, straight as the side of a house, buttressed and turreted, towers up on one side. Across the ravine from it, overhanging the abyss below, is a little ledge of rock not ten feet square, Pulpit Rock. Here one may stand and look below—if he can!—and try to realize the horror of that boy when he "caught the faint echoes of the people beneath him shouting to him to jump for the rope." In an old Virginia history there is a statement that when the boy was drawn up his hair had turned white.

Nothing grows down the sides of this ravine. It is all rock, solid and ghostly. If one were to slip, he would strike against nothing on his way until he struck the ground. There is scarcely place for a bird to alight. How did the boy climb it? The story goes that he had a knife and cut footholds between the rock rims.

And it is narrow, that little silver running ravine; just room enough for its brook and a footpath beside it. It is narrow and cold under the shadow of these eternal ramparts. When birds fly down into it they merely drop; there is not room to use their wings. They spread them out to break the fall, and drop down like leaves. If a Niagara were spilling over one of its sides its leap would strike against the opposite wall. Above, nature has so coyly softened the edge of the hideous precipice so hidden it with blossoming trees and mossy turf, that

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a dreamer walking there some day would unexpectedly feel a sharp slip of his feet, would catch out at a tree, a bit of grass—the sudden flashlight of a yawning abyss—death! One comes shouting and laughing down the steps toward Pulpit Rock—suddenly stops himself aghast, quivering on the very edge of the frightful drop.

In 1779 a great mass of rocks was split off from the arch by the freezing of the water in its crevices, and was hurled below, crashing into a million fragments. The ground is littered over with bits of rock, with here and there a boulder half embedded in the soil. There hangs on the left of the arch as one approaches another mass just ready to fall; a wide crack extends from the top of the hill almost down to the ground. Half a bill yawns! A column of earth and frightful rocks half as big as freight cars stand up there in the air, held back by a few clouds, a slender stone, a root or two. When it falls one power exists that may clear it away—the river.

"G. W." There it is; his own autograph—"Washington's." It is one of the great "prize boxes" of the bridge. If it cut deep into the rock about 30 feet above the ground. Several other names are cut above this, but they were not put there by climbers; some engineers placed ladders against the rock and thus reached the point. The "G. W." is said to be really genuine. The old settler vouches for this fact. The "W." is quite plain, but the "G." is somewhat uncertain.

Other points of interest are Lost River, an underground stream whose running can be heard by stooping down close to a hole in the side of the mountain. Saltpeter Cave, a new crevice, under a large ledge of rock, which furnished nitre to the soldiers of 1812; the keeping of the bridge, a perfect profile of a very old man near the arch of the bridge. A glimpse of the rushing waters of Lost River can be seen through the hole in the hill. It is perfectly clear and cold, and as pure as if it had been filtered. Over the hole cut into the stone, by whom no one knows, is the legend, "He who drinks here shall return." Our party felt doubly sure of returning, for we drank of the water unwittingly, and we saw the words only afterward.

What caused the bridge? We can not fail to ask it as we gaze up at the tremendous mass. It is unreasonable to suppose that it is today in the same form that it had in the beginning. Was the entire ravine once a long and tortuous cave? Did the little creek rippling along beside us throughout the ages, stretching so far back that we can not even comprehend the number, thread that enormous needle and work on down and down, painfully drilling the eye, until it is the frightful thing we see it now? Was it once a mountain lake, checked now by a great stone-capped dam that one day while a mastodon and leviathan disported themselves in its waters, long before the angels ever dreamed of man, one awful day suddenly burst through these bounds on its maddened way, that, roaring and hissing, grinding and shrieking, plowed its horrible furrow between two affrighted, gaping mountains?—Atlanta Journal.

PATIENT ANGLERS.

Strangely Enough, Nervous Persons Are the Best Waiters for a Bite.

It is one of the curiosities of human nature that the most nervous and excitable people are often the most patient fishermen with hook and line. This is true as to nations as well as individuals. The French, who are of all people perhaps the most mercurial or "tindery," are also of all races the most extravagantly devoted to angling; and Paris, their excitable and revolutionary capital is a city of fishermen. A recent Parisian writer declares that the amateur fishermen are more numerous than ever.

"They form a double wreath of humanity on both sides of the Seine," he declares, "reaching from Clarenton clear to Maleson-Lafite. For them were created the fortunate isles of Saint-Cloud and Croissy and the verdurous shores of Port-Marly and Chautou. Isolated there in the midst of tumult, calm in the very bosom of agitations, the passers-by smile at their aspect and gibe at their attitude and their immobility. 'They never catch a thing,' the passing skeptics say. What a mistake! The vulgar laity know naught of what these fishermen catch besides fish; for fish are not alone the things they go for.' This means that the contemplation which is in a manner enforced on those who fish with hook and line, especially where no fish are to be found, often result in the apprehension of important things which would never have come if the fishermen had remained among the distracting scenes of Parisian life.

A distinguished French academicien is accustomed to declare that he fished his academical chair out of the Seine with a hook and line; for the poems which really won for him his literary crown came to him while he was courting the wary grudgeon on the banks of the river. He is far from being the only author who has worked in this way. There are 300 and more living dramatists whose works have, in some

Good Words From Old Students



(No. 2)

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shape, been brought out on the boards of the Paris theaters; and out of these, thirty have declared that they should never have had a single success if they had not elaborated their dramatic schemes while angling.

One of these dramatists once came back, radiant with glee, from a session of seven steady hours on the banks of the Seine. On his way home he met a friend. 'Well, did you catch anything?' 'Well, I should think I did! I caught a fifth act in three tableaux and a denouement that will draw all Paris.'

But he had not one fish. A somewhat amusing story is told of a minister of the interior, M de Corbiere, who was accustomed to get up every morning very early and go out with a book and line to quiet his nerves on the bank of the Seine. There came to Paris a man from the provinces who had made application for a certain office, a sous-perfecture in the country. The office-seeker had no influence with the minister, but in some way he learned where the spot was to which the minister went to fish.

Providing himself with 'tackle,' he rose still earlier than the minister, and when M. de Corbiere went to his favorite place he found a stranger installed there, paying no attention to the minister and apparently quite ignorant of his identity. The minister went somewhere else, and got up earlier the next morning, but on arriving at the place he found the same man installed there. Again and again this happened. It was useless to try to forestall the man. He was at the spot before the slightest break of day. At last the minister approached the man and said politely:

'You seem to be very fond of fishing, sir?'

'I am, sir,' answered the other, 'and for the present I employ it as a means of passing the time while I am awaiting a response to an application which I have made to the minister of the interior.'

'You are looking for an office?'

'A small prefecture, sir, in the country. I have waited a long time and may have to wait still longer, but we fishermen, sir, know how to be patient.'

'Will you kindly give me your name and address, sir? I have a little influence, perhaps, at the department, and I shall be glad to mention your case. Between fishermen, sir—'

'Ah, I thank you! Here is my card.' That evening the office-seeker received his appointment and went no more to the banks of the Seine, and the minister thereafter fished in peace in his accustomed spot.—Youth's Companion.

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Announcements under this heading not exceeding five lines (about 35 words) cost 25 cents each insertion. Five cents extra for every additional line.

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