

do not. The theory of our public school system is that all shall be educated free, but the practical result is that the very poor are not educated at all, whilst the well-to-do reap all the advantages of an expenditure that is enormous, crushing, and iniquitous; inasmuch as it compels the poor to pay for the education of the rich, and the conscientious to support a system of godlessness to please secularists and atheists, whilst not a shilling of the taxes paid by them is given towards the support of their own Christian schools.

Sir HERCULES ROBINSON has had no recommendation to make as to a remedy for such an abominable and palpable injustice as this. His suggestion as to fees would relieve the Treasury, but contribute nothing towards lightening the intolerable burdens of denominationalists, who are to continue under the obligation of paying for the free and godless education of other people's children, whilst paying the entire expense of the Christian education of their own. Our Governor, it seems, has no compassion for denominationalists, no rebuke for the injustice done them, no suggestion calculated to lead to a lightening of their undue burdens.

We know not whether His Excellency approves of the project proposed by the Bible in schools people, who wish to have this Holy Book read to children by one who is to make no comments, but he is evidently in favour of religious instruction to be inculcated after the manner now possible in New South Wales; that is, Christianity may be taught after school hours, to fatigued children, in a sort of condemned cell. No doubt an effort will be made next Session to introduce Bible-reading into public schools. But what good can be expected to come from such a practice? Mere Bible reading has failed to do any good in America, and anywhere else it has been tried; and from the nature of the case it could not have been otherwise; for, as Dr. JOHNSON said, "The New Testament is the most difficult book in the world, for which the study of a life is required." If one of the greatest minds, and one of the most learned men England ever produced, found the New Testament so difficult to be understood, what is to be said of the folly of thinking that any good can come of reading such a book, without explanation, to little children. No, it is not by such a practice children are to be taught their duties to God, their neighbour, and themselves. There is only one way of succeeding in rearing up a moral people, and that is to have them well trained in their own denominational schools. Secular systems of education can only lead to loss of faith, and the consequent loss of moral principle; for as faith is the foundation and sanction of morality, and its only real foundation and adequate sanction, so a people without faith is a people without morality.

### OUR MELBOURNE LETTER.

(From our own Correspondent.)

MELBOURNE, April 27th.

WHEN the House is not sitting there certainly is a great dearth of news, and we are in that state at present. Berry and his followers are keeping very quiet, and the Government appear to be devoting all their time to hard work, and so have no leisure for talk.

A few political questions crop up occasionally, such as—"Who is going to be Speaker?" "Who to be Chairman of Committees?" and "Who to be Whip?" These questions have all now been decided, at least as far as the Government is concerned. Sir Charles McMahon has been selected for the post of Speaker, Mr. Cooper as Chairman of Committees, and Mr. Thompson Moore is to be Whip. The Opposition intend to run Mr. Lalor for the Chair, but it is thought he will have no show against Sir Charles.

Mr. David Gaunson has announced that he will stand for the Chairmanship of Committees, and it is stated that he will receive the support of the Berry faction!

Such are politics! Mr. Gaunson did more than any other man in the House to overthrow the late Government. He was never done abusing them, showing up their incapacity and corruption night after night in a way that none but David could do; and now one of the first spectacles which the country will see when the House meets is these men voting for Gaunson! He may win the prize, as he will have some Government supporters vote for him, as well as the whole Opposition.

It is extremely to be regretted that the Ministry could not see their way to electing Mr. R. Murray Smith speaker. That gentleman would have done honour to the position, which I am sadly afraid Sir Charles will not do. But apart from this, the selection of Sir Charles will be an unpopular move. He was Sir James McCulloch's speaker before the celebrated 11th May, and the *coup d'état* of that vaunted day was more the result of hatred against McCulloch than of love of Berry.

Mr. Service is not acting wisely in setting up the old land marks that the people swept away three years ago. To many it will appear, I fear, a sort of defiance. He made a mistake in the first instance in not including more new blood when he was forming his Ministry, instead of bringing back so many of McCulloch's obnoxious team.

The last political scandal come to light ought to be well enquired to when the House meets. Our Parliament House is very badly

ventilated, and various have been the attempts made, from time to time, to bring fresh air into the heated chamber, and all unsuccessful. That eminent engineer, Mr. John Woods, late Minister for Railways, was the last to try his hand at it, with this result, that he left it much worse than it was before. This fact, of course, we all knew long ago, just as well as we knew that he had invented a "brake." But we did not know how the little game was worked. It was in this wise. Mr. Woods, Minister for Railways, was engineer; Mr. R. G. Ford, the Minister's factotum at the Railway Department, superintendent; Mr. Ford's brother contractor (not let by tender, mind you); and Mr. Patterson, Commissioner of Public Works, paymaster. This was getting the hand into the Treasury in a free, accessible manner, but it became too free even for Mr. Patterson, who, after passing a number of accounts, jibbed at last, and declared that he would have no more to do with it. But this did not baulk John Woods. He took an opportunity when his colleague was at Castlemaine, marched down to the Public Works office, accompanied by the Attorney-General, and passed the account, notwithstanding that Mr. Patterson telegraphed, from Castlemaine, to his officers not to have anything to do with the matter. The Wood's ventilation experiment cost the country £5000.

I heard the retort courteous given the other night. As I was sitting in the theatre, I noticed a good-looking young St. Kilda bus-driver hard by. A butcher from the same neighbourhood just then entered, and when taking his seat by the side of the driver, he accosted him with "Hallo, Bussy!" The driver looked up, and in a dignified way replied, "My name is Mac Pherson. How would you like if I addressed you 'Hallo, Greasy?'" The butcher looked very uncomfortable and presently changed his seat.

The memorial erected to the memory of the three police-officers shot by the Kelly gang in the Wombat Ranges in October, 1878, was unveiled on the 22nd inst., at Mansfield, by Capt. Standish, the Chief Commissioner of Police, in the presence of Mr. Ramsay, Chief Secretary, several members of Parliament, and other gentlemen. Capt. Standish, the papers say, made an excellent and feeling speech on the occasion. Poor Standish! What an irony of fate he must have felt it, to be obliged to stand up under the eyes of men and talk on that subject. He regretted that the outlaws were still at large, but expressed a hope that the day was not far distant when their capture would enable justice to be satisfied. He believed this public testimony to the worth of the deceased men would have a beneficial influence on the whole of the Police force, the members of which, in some places, carried their lives in their hands. The monument consists of a marble base, which supports a pillar of the same material, surmounted by an urn. On the base and each side of the pillar are two other urns. The memorial is erected on a concrete foundation, and is approached by four blue stone steps, above which are two slabs also of blue stone, upon which the monument rests. It is intended to place an iron railing around the whole.

The colony has been startled by the outbreak of diphtheria and measles. Great precautions are being taken to prevent the spread of these dreaded diseases. Of diphtheria I know nothing; I hope to continue so; but, as far as I can recollect, everybody was glad in the old country when their youngsters took measles,—they looked upon the disease as inevitable, and were glad to have it over.

The unemployed question keeps cropping up. A deputation of workmen waited on the Premier and Minister of Public Works, a few days ago, and Mr. Service is to be highly commended for the patient way he listened to them. His colleague, Mr. Bent, seems not to have been so patient, as he said, on one occasion, when the language of the deputation was impudent to a degree, "I suppose I am bound to listen to this as a Minister, but I object to it as a man. If Mr. Service likes it well and good, but I would not permit it to go on." These men represented a new society, lately started, styling itself "The United Working Men's Union." Anything like their impudence it would be hard to conceive. Their demand of the Government was not work, but remunerative work, and it must be found at once, within easy access to their homes. Stone-breaking was offered to them, but most of them declined it, on the score that it was too hard, notwithstanding that the Premier, to encourage them, stated he had had his share of such work himself. Mr. Service stated that he could find employment at the work for 100 men straight off, and, as the quarries were some miles from town, he sent to the Railway Department for 100 free passes, and, moreover, promised to pay the men at the end of each day's work. Out of 150 shiving members of this Union, supposed to be starving, 12 claimed passes, and out of this number 8 started for the scene of operation.

The Dominican Sisters acknowledge with thanks, remittances from Rev. Father Saazeau, Blenheim; Messrs. M. McDonough, Waimate; S. Canning, Ashburton. Miss Cumming, Port Chalmers. Pupils of St. Joseph's School.

We record, with much regret, the death of Patrick Mullin, of Lincoln, Canterbury. Deceased, who was a native of the county Derry, and only twenty years of age, was driving a team of horses from Christchurch, when they took fright and attempted to turn suddenly round. In trying to check them, the driver was thrown under the wheels of the waggon, and killed. He was a young man of excellent character, and a faithful member of the Catholic Church. —R.I.P.

In our issue of last Friday, referring to the wonderful Musical Cabinets, we stated they were to be seen at Mr. A. Solomons, George street, it is not so; Mr. Lewis Solomon, of the Queen's Pianoforte Warehouse, George street, is the sole agent.

The Fernhill Coal Company have made arrangements to supply their customers and the public generally with coal and firewood of every description. The moderate charges, and prompt attention to orders of the firm entitle them to an extensive patronage.

Mr. A. K. Smith has removed his fishmonger's establishment to the building in Princes Street lately occupied by Messrs. Burton Bros. Mr. Smith's oyster-saloon has been finely fitted up, and will be found furnished with every requisite.