

NOBILITY IN ITALY.

Reasons Why It is Numerous and of Comparatively Little Account.

The opinion is somewhat current in the United States that the marriageable daughters of rich Americans, as well as their fathers and mothers, are frequently attracted by Italian titles of nobility. Whether this opinion is correct or not, the status of this nobility is one of the subjects that attracts the attention of the students of the social condition of Italy. Ten years ago there were in the peninsula, according to a distinguished authority, 400 princes, 455 dukes, 983 marquises, 1,659 counts, 923 barons, and 5 vicounts, as well as 1,334 persons of patrician rank, 2,373 with a right to the designation of "noble," 318 distinctively signori, and 46 hereditary knights. In the "Golden Book of the Capital" were inscribed 321 patrician families, of which 28 had the title of prince and 8 that of duke, while the others were marquises, counts, or simply patricians. Five orders of nobility were recognized. The causes of this extraordinary profusion of titles are two in number. Under the old regime there were a dozen or more independent sovereignties, and an equal number of "fountains of honor," all of them influenced by the usual motives in the distribution of titles of nobility. Every king or grand duke must have his court and noblesse. Indeed, the heads of small states and principalities are very apt to distribute titles with more liberality than great kings and emperors. Then by custom an Italian nobleman bequeaths his title to all his sons, no matter how numerous they may be, although the eldest is the head of the house and the proper successor to the title; a custom that results in a numerous pseudo nobility. As all the "fountains of honor" but one dried up with the unification of Italy, it is fair to suppose that fewer persons are ennobled now than formerly, but, as the old nobility or nobilities are very numerous, and as the other cause continues to act, there is no reason to fear an immediate scarcity of titled personages. It should also be observed that the Italian princes are by no means the equals in rank of the English princes. In England the title is reserved for the princes of the blood; not so in Italy and in other continental countries.

Perhaps it is needless to say that the power of the Italian nobility is but a fragment of what it once was. The march of democratic ideas, the spread of the commercial spirit and the increase of wealth have played havoc with the old aristocracies. No doubt the Italian nobles still possess very considerable influence, but much of what they once had has passed to the professions and to the representatives of industrial and commercial life. They are not conspicuous in politics, or in the army or navy. M. Rudini, the present prime minister, is indeed a marquis, and is reputed to be very wealthy, but he was in no way prominent until he became the head of the coalition cabinet on the downfall of Crispi.

FOR POSTAL CLERKS.

A Measure for Their Classification and Promotion.

The bill for the classification of clerks in first and second-class post offices which congress is considering ought to become a law without opposition, says the Century. It was prepared by the National Association of Post Office Clerks, and is a measure conceived and designed for the sole purpose of securing just and fair treatment to a very hard-working and meritorious body of public servants. It fixes their compensation upon an equitable and reasonable basis, insures promotion according to service and ability, and makes faithfulness and efficiency the sole requisites for permanent employment. It is a measure in the interest of true civil service reform, as well as national justice, since it classifies the service, makes it mandatory that all appointments to the higher grades shall be from the lower grades, on the ground of proficiency and length of service, and requires that all new appointments shall be to the lower grades after competitive examinations as required by the civil service act.

Under the present system, or rather lack of system, the clerks have no classification which insures promotion according to service and ability, have long hours of labor, are poorly paid and have no annual vacation. To say that a great and rich government like ours is justified in treating its employees in this heartless, unfair and parsimonious manner is obviously absurd. A private employer who pursued such a course would be censured roundly by all reputable men. As a nation we are abundantly able to pay our servants fair wages, and we ought to see that it is for the best interest of the whole public to have our post office clerks a permanent, well-drilled, intelligent, capable and contented body of servants, for it is only from such a body that the best service can be obtained.

Minute Trees.

The Japanese art of making miniature landscapes and gardens consists chiefly in starving the plants so as to retard the circulation of the sap of life-giving juices. Ferguson, who was one among the first of English adventurers to visit China and Japan, mentions the fact that he saw at Canton, "a box about the bigness of ladies snuff-box, which did contain a littly dirt and sixteen tiny littly trees, four of which were in full blow, the whole box, trees and all, so small that a man could put them in hys mouth together."

Very Different.

An American lady, visiting Paris, was continually interested in the smart little boys, in white caps and apron, who deliver the wares of the pastry cooks. One day she said to one of these boys, who had brought her some cakes: "Ah, I suppose you get the benefit of one of these cakes yourself sometimes?" "What do mean, madame?" "You eat a cake now and then?" "Eat them? Oh, no, madame, that wouldn't do. I only lick 'em as I come along!"

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"I was a sufferer, for years, from chronic dyspepsia and liver troubles, and found no permanent relief until I commenced taking Ayer's Pills. They have effected a complete cure."—G. W. Mooney, Walla Walla, W. T.

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"In 1858, by the advice of a friend, I began the use of Ayer's Pills as a remedy for biliousness, constipation, high fever, and colds. They served me better than anything I had previously tried, and I have used them in attacks of that sort ever since."—H. W. Hersh, Judsona, Ark.

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"During several months past I have been subject to attacks of bad headache, without being able to remove the trouble by medical treatment. In looking through Ayer's Almanac I read the statements of persons cured of similar attacks by the use of Ayer's Cathartic Pills, and was induced to give them a trial. They have benefited me so much that I consider it my duty to mention my case to you for the benefit of others."—Mrs. Mary Guymond, Flint Village, Fall River, Mass.

"I have now used Ayer's Pills in my family for seven or eight years. Whenever I have an attack of headache, to which I am very subject, I take a dose of Ayer's Pills and am always promptly relieved. I find them equally beneficial in colds; and, in my family, they are used for bilious complaints and other disturbances with such good effect that we rarely, if ever, have to call in a physician."—H. Voulliens, Hotel Voulliens, Saratoga Springs, N. Y.

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Respectfully, J. H. BOGART

Franklin, Va., Dec. 15, 1894.