

visitors to the shrines of Shakespeare and to the shrines of Burns are presented as follows: Shakespeare's shrines—Shakespeare's house at Stratford, 31,748; Shakespeare's museum at Stratford, 20,144; Shakespeare's tomb in Stratford church, 25,731; Ann Hathaway's cottage, 13,652; total, 91,275. Burns' shrines—Burn's birthplace at Ayr, 50,092; Burns' monument on the banks of the Doon, 66,158; total, 116,250. This writer contends that this statement shows that 24,975 more people did homage to Burns than did homage to Shakespeare by way of pilgrimages in the year.

THE CONSCIENCE FUND IN THE FEDERAL treasury is growing rapidly these days. According to the Washington correspondent for the New York World during the week ending March 7, \$5,500 was contributed to that fund. Contributions to the conscience fund attract considerable attention in the treasury department. The World correspondent says that from fifty to seventy-five contributions are received every year from persons who have defrauded the government and want to make reparation. The contributions range from a two-cent stamp to thousands of dollars, and they come from children and gray-haired men and women. The government guards the fund most carefully. No prosecution is ever based on the remittance from a person with a troubled conscience and the names of the senders are never made public. Not many of the letters sent with money are signed, but there are often cases where the identity of the senders could be easily established, but there is no effort to trace them. The government is content to get the money. Most of the letters are signed "Conscience" and the writing is often disguised. Each contribution is acknowledged by a bulletin posted in the secretary's office, giving the amount and the place it came from.

THAT THE LARGEST ADDITIONS TO THE conscience fund come from business men who have given undervaluations in importing goods and who have cheated the government out of duties and have since experienced a change of heart is an interesting fact presented by the World correspondent. It is explained that many contributors are received from women in payment of duty on articles smuggled into the country. The small sums are usually for stamps that were used twice. The following letter was received from a Baltimore woman on February 16: "Inclosed find \$20 American money which should have been paid at the New York custom house." This one came in a few days ago from a woman in Santa Ana, Cal.: "United States Conscience Fund: When I was a very young girl I once used a two-cent stamp which had been cancelled. I did not realize the sin then, and did not know of the conscience fund until a year or two ago. I am sorry I did it, but God has revealed my duty to me, so I send the inclosed stamps, eight cents." A New York man sent four \$100 bills to the fund this week by open mail. With the money was this note: "Inclosed please find \$400 conscience money." The largest contribution ever received was a draft for \$14,000 sent by a minister in England. He said the money was given to him to send by a man who was converted in his church. The most peculiar contribution came from a man who cut a pile of \$8,000 in bills squarely in halves. He sent one-half, and said if that were acknowledged he would forward the other. He evidently feared that the money might not reach the proper authority. The receipt of the first half of the bisected currency was acknowledged and the other half was received a few days later. The following shows the total additions to the conscience fund in recent years: 1902, \$35,868.22; 1901, \$2,263.30; 1900, \$3,816.22; 1899, \$8,666.11; 1898, \$5,110.70; 1897, \$2,842.22; 1896, \$16,740.56; 1895, \$2,693.07; 1894, \$3,663.01.

NEW ORLEANS CLAIMS THE HONOR OF being the first city in the United States to erect a statue to a woman. The New Orleans correspondent of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat says that "the monument stands in Margaret place, at the intersection of Camp and Prytanla streets. It commemorates the charities of Margaret Haughery, a woman reared in poverty, who accumulated a fortune in the milk and bakery business. She spent freely in the care and help of the poor in the city, and when she died her money was divided among the charitable institutions of New Orleans. Margaret was a young, ignorant woman when she lost her little boy, and, although she had but servant's wages, she began at once to spend her money for the children of the poor about her. She used to carry bread and milk to the orphan asylum when she had no money to

give, and no matter how little money she possessed she divided with those who were poorer than she. When she died the people of New Orleans erected this statue in her memory. Margaret is represented in the woollen shawl and cotton dress familiar to residents of the city for so many years, with a little child by her side."

THE MODERN SKYSCRAPER IS NOT EX-empt from trouble, if one is to accept the opinion expressed by Maximilian Toch, a member of the New York Chemist club. In an address recently delivered in New York city, Mr. Toch said that several large buildings in New York are doomed to early destruction. He presented the pictures of two of the doomed structures and pointed out that because of the faulty construction in steel work these buildings were subject to corrosion by the elements. Mr. Toch showed lantern slide pictures of the girders taken from certain large buildings in which it was shown that these girders were badly eaten with rust, although they had been in use for only five years. He expressed the opinion that when these buildings were properly constructed with steel girders and beams imbedded in the proper material they would last hundreds of years, and yet the dangers of corrosion by the elements have not yet been properly considered by builders.

THERE IS NO MORE INTERESTING CHAR-acter in the world than Helen Kellar, the talented woman who is deaf and blind and yet who in spite of her afflictions is actively engaged in a great educational work. Recently Miss Kellar appeared before a committee of the Massachusetts legislature in support of the bill providing for the appointment of a commission to investigate the condition of the adult blind with a view of establishing a state industrial training school where such afflicted people may learn to become self-supporting. Speaking before this committee, Miss Kellar said: "If this commonwealth will establish a commission to place the blind in positions of self-support it will be doing three things—helping the blind, relieving itself of the burden of caring for them and setting an example for other states. Already Massachusetts has delayed too long in a work in which she should lead. It is not higher education the blind need; it is not Greek and Latin, but industrial training and some one with influence and authority to help them to a place in the industrial world."

A GALVESTON, TEX., SCIENTIST HAS DE-termined at least to his own satisfaction the cause of the unusually heavy rains this season and speaking to a representative of the Galveston News, this scientist explains that it is a recently established fact in weatherology that every drop of rain must have as a nucleus a particle of dust, therefore an increase in the dusty supply may cause an increase of rain. This nucleus is not, of course, dust such as is blown up from dry roads and plains, but extremely fine volcanic dust such as falls on ships thousands of miles from land. Hence, he attributes the recent increased rainfall to the millions of tons of dust thrown into the upper air by the eruptions of Mount Pelee and Soufriere, coupled to the circumstances that the drift of the higher air currents as proven by the course of cyclones is from the Antilles towards the gulf and Atlantic coasts. It seems at least a more reasonable theory than that of attributing weather conditions to the position of Jupiter.

ALTHOUGH IT HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN said that the veterans of the civil war are rapidly disappearing from public gaze, it is a fact that among the membership of the United States senate there are fourteen men who served in the confederate army and thirteen who served in the federal army. Among this number Senator Pettus of Alabama served in the Mexican as well as in the civil war.

SOME ONE RECENTLY SAID THAT VEN-tilation is to be the fad of the future. The citizens of Anaconda, Mont., have taken time by the forelock and are undertaking to provide ventilation for the entire city. Anaconda is one of the copper cities of Montana and the people there have been sorely afflicted with the stifling vapors that ascend from the chimneys of the smelter. The Portland Oregonian says: "Loaded with the fumes of arsenic, antimony, zinc, and sulphuric acid, these vapors have been anything but agreeable or healthful. Experiments looking

to their elimination have been carried on for the past three months, and it has finally been discovered that by cooling the gases of the volatilized compounds they will condense, and by building flues sufficiently large so that the velocity of the gases will be very low, the condensed particles will settle at the bottom of the flue, allowing only the permanent gases to escape. These are not injurious, either to vegetable or animal life, hence it is thought that the 'smoke nuisance' of the copper city can be abated. A flue sixty feet in width and twenty feet deep will be constructed at once in connection with the new smelter of the Anaconda company, which will pass its gases into a monster stack 30 feet in diameter and 300 feet high, delivering the permanent-gases and products of the combustion at an elevation so high above the valley that no trace of their fumes will load the air of the town or the valley below. The expense will be enormous, but if there is a business that can stand it, it is the copper business. The effort of the company to abate this disagreeable feature of its industry cannot be charged wholly to its regard for suffering humanity, since it was undertaken to quiet clamor raised against the location of its new reduction works. However, no one is inclined to look the gift horse in the mouth, and the people will accept the relief promised without questioning the motive that prompted it."

FORTY ACRES OF PURE PLASTER OF Paris from ten to fifty feet thick, according to a news item in the New York Tribune, is the result of the effort of two boys to smoke a rabbit out of a hole under a ledge on Gloss mountain, Woods county, Oklahoma. The gypsum ledge was formerly the home of numberless wild creatures, which lived in the crevices of the rocks, using dry cow chips, sticks and other rubbish for their nests. The whole mountainside was a mass of flames almost immediately when fire was applied, and it burned for days. Only 300 degrees is required to convert gypsum into plaster of paris, and the ledge is being transformed into white powder.

A TREE LOVER WHO HAS RECENTLY VIS-ited Mt. Vernon informed a representative of the Philadelphia Record that all the weeping willows in this country are descended from a twig planted by a step-son of George Washington at his place at Abingdon a few miles from Mt. Vernon. This tree lover tells the story in this way: "Young Custis, as a member of Washington's military family, sometimes carried messages, under a flag, between the belligerent commanders. In this service he became acquainted with a young British officer who, like others, had come over with an impression that the 'rebellion' would be speedily crushed out, and that he would then settle on the confiscated lands of the rebels. He had even brought a twig from the weeping willow near Pope's villa, at Twickenham, carefully wrapped in oiled silk. As his visions of a castle in America faded away he gave a twig to John Parke Custis, who, on his return to Abingdon in the spring, planted it near his house. It grew and flourished. Just how it multiplied may be noted from one end of the country to the other."

AN INTERESTING DISCUSSION IS NOW ON among English scientists with respect to the Star of Bethlehem. A London cablegram to the Chicago Inter-Ocean says: "David Forbes hazards the supposition that it was the comet called Halley's comet, which has an interval of approximately seventy-five years, ten months, and six days. It was last visible in October, 1835, and will probably, therefore, be seen again in 1911. Halley, who saw the comet in 1682, predicted its return in 1759. Several reappearances have been observed. Pompey's defeat of Mithridates in 152 B. C. was signalized by one appearance; Josephus mentions another at the destruction of Jerusalem, about 75 A. D. Mr. Forbes contends that one of the returns of the comet between these two dates must have been about the date of the birth of Christ. Some months before the birth the wise men saw 'his star' in the east. The comet would then be on its course toward the sun, on its return six months later it would be in the zenith above Bethlehem about the end of December. If the subsequent dates are computed it will be noticed that the comet was apparently fifteen years out, and should have reappeared in 1820 instead of 1835. Mr. Forbes surmounts this difficulty by remarking that it was not until the sixth century that Dionysius made out the present chronology, and that he then made an error of fifteen years, which became stereotyped. This year, therefore, should be 1888."