

said the visitor, "how in the world did anyone find time to change his saddle so often that day?" "Good gracious," replied the agitated cicerone, "that ticket should be on the spurs." And the ticket was immediately changed.

The meanest man in town rode into the city on a street car the other day. He tendered a dollar bill to the conductor, asking for twenty-five yellow tickets. The conductor had none, but offered him a quarter's worth of blues. The passenger, who was elaborately dressed in broadcloth, and a silk hat, refused, on the ground that for a quarter he could get only six tickets while, for a dollar, he could make a gain of one. The conductor suggested that the passenger should merely pay his five cent fare, but this was also objected to, and the discussion terminated by the conductor paying the fare from his own pocket.

There is one of the city's economies which is of an ungracious nature, and which always affects us in days of thaw. It is that whereby the principal street crossings are left unswept—a simple matter, but one which means a great deal. Why not allow crossing-sweepers if the Street Commissioner has not funds enough to attend to it? We, of the Street Corners, feel that we pay our taxes and we have a right to clean walking—or as clean as it can be made. Now, on the coming in of a thaw a man ought to be posted at every *principal* crossing. Keep the mud off the crossings and you keep it to a large extent off the pavements. Leave it on the crossings and every pedestrian passenger will take a little of it on his soles and deposit it on the sidewalks. I say the *principal* crossings because these are used by nearly everybody and should be kept clean.

In the old country crossing-sweepers are an institution and nobody grudges a penny to the knight of the broom. If we may believe some of the stories that are told about these crossing-sweepers some of them realize a competency by their industry and civility. A muddy day is to them a god-send and they hail wet weather with cheerful hearts.

I wish the melodious Male Chorus would get a more harmonious and meaningful name. The members of the Toronto Male Chorus sing delightfully, but there is nothing in their title to show that they belong to the human species, is there? I am open to correction, but I never speak of a woman as a "respectable female," and I have heard a male chorus sung in varying tones by dogs. I may be open to the charge of being hypercritical, but I really see no reason why this excellent organization should obtrude its sex, but hide its species.

I am glad to hear that Mr. C. W. Bunting, of the Mail and Empire, is sufficiently recovered to return to Toronto after his sojourn in North Carolina. Many friends will hope that these colder latitudes will not interfere with the work of complete convalescence.

I have been shaken hands with by several candidates who are running for the City Council. They beam upon me effusively, and if only they will let their light shine in the Council as their countenance shines on possible supporters in these waning days of December, the old civic chamber will be illuminated as never before. At the present time of writing it is not clear who are to offer themselves for the Mayor's chair, although it seems to be certain that Alderman Shaw will be in the running and a favourite. He knows the civic business very well and there seems to be reason in allowing him to finish the waterworks revision which he began so well by initiating the visit of Mr. Mansergh, C.E., for the purpose of reporting upon it. Failing this, I should like to see Mr. E. B. Osler come out. He tried once before to obtain the position, but the electors did not know enough to close with his offer. They are better informed now, perhaps, and I feel sure that if Mr. Osler were to come out again a majority of our best citizens would work hard to elect him.

A French newspaper, published in the manufacturing city of Lyons, makes the astounding statements that

"Jabez Balfour, who has been convicted of fraud, is related to Lord Arthur Balfour, leader of the House of Commons, and Duke Salisbury, the Prime Minister, and that on account of his rank, the convict will most likely be imprisoned in the Tower of London, which for many hundreds of years has been reserved as the gaol for breakers of the law among the nobility of England." This appears as a perfectly serious item of news. No wonder France is a gay nation. If the serious papers are as entertaining as this what must the comic ones be? I venture to say that even a Liberator victim could not read the paragraph I have quoted without smiling.

One of the most interesting street corners at the present time is that where Bay and Queen Streets join, and from which a view can be obtained of the new Court House and civic buildings. There are many citizens who do not realize how impressive the edifice is to be which has now for some years been gradually rising there. When completed it will be far and away the finest structure in Toronto, judging only from what one can see in its present state, surrounded as it is by ugly boarding and building material. It will cost a heap of money before it is finished, but it will be a beautiful building, a credit to the city and to its architect, Mr. Lennox.

I am glad to think that Mr. Chiniquy's gratuitous remarks upon the magnificent gift of our fellow-citizen, Mr. Hugh Ryan, to the St. Michael's Hospital, do not in any extensive way reflect the opinion of Toronto people. Mr. Chiniquy would apparently deny that there is any beneficent intention in the gift at all. For my part I am glad that we have among us a man large-hearted enough to apply some of his wealth to the relief of his fellow creatures. A man who has the consciousness of having sincerely done this can afford to treat remarks like those alluded to with a becoming calmness and indifference.

DIODENES.

Music and the Drama.

MR. ANTHONY STANKOWITCH is a pianist from New York who gave a recital in the hall of the Conservatory of Music one evening last week. I did not hear him. The recital, however, was arranged in the interest of the Virgil Practice Clavier, an instrument containing a piano key board having no tone, but producing clicks instead when the proper touch is applied. I have spoken before in these columns of the mechanical uses of this very ingenious instrument and of its importance in developing an accurate pianistic technic (mechanism) under certain conditions, and of a certain kind. But there are people who run to extremes over every fad, and thus are often led away from the real truth after which they are supposed to be striving. In piano playing, mechanism is one thing; a musical, emotional tone, having richness and beauty, quite another. This latter quality cannot be acquired on any instrument having solely for its object mechanical dexterity. In practising on the clavier one's whole mind is absorbed on technic, supple finger action, the equal development of both sets of muscles controlling the fingers, as well as those of the wrist and arm. The clicks, if properly brought out, ensure and develop evenness of action, the up clicks particularly assist the student in procuring a free, buoyant and prompt release of the key, which, in itself, is a strong incentive to clear playing and rapidity of muscular movement. It is likewise a valuable aid to memorizing, as the clicks sound all the same, the eye has to be particularly acute in discerning whether the right keys are played, and so this creates care and concentration. Now all this deals with external things, excellent in themselves, for technic is and always will be a very desirable, although elusive, commodity. But fortunately music does not end here, a sympathetic appealing tone is of far higher importance, beauty of touch, with a feeling for this lovely human tone with all its expressive emotional charm, should ever be placed before the pupil as an ideal, and if associated with technic from the beginning, will create a desire for this highest conception of the beautiful in sound. The *Clavier will not* and *does not* develop this feeling; tone is not one of its char-