NICKLE-PLATED SHAM.

For a long time I rode down in the street cars every morning with a well-dressed, pleasantfaced young man who impressed me with the idea that, though he was not a gentleman, he was a clear-headed, decent sort of person, who would after some rubbing through the world, make his way, and tone himself into something approximating gentility. It was quite a time before we got so far as to converse together; he was ready enough, but I am difficult of opening relations of any kind with strangers, particularly of the class who affect striking costumes, and offend your nose with perfumes altogether unnecessary in the morning, and suggesting themselves as inappropriate to a business office. Toward the middle of the summer I found, from my fellow passenger's remarks to me, addressed quite casually, indeed gratuitously, that he was a commercial person. The information was conveyed on the occasion of my loaning my copy of the Gazette to him, at his request, and from the conversation that ensued on that and other mornings, I learned that the young man was not alone a commercial person, but one in the position of manager of an extensive business concern. Engaged upon literary work which is of vastly greater benefit to the public than it is to myself, or the family over which Providence and my own conduct have called me to preside, I paid little attention to observations which. however important they may have been to this individual, as tending to elevate his station in the eyes of those with whom he was habitually accustomed to travel, were not cermain to the thoughts occupying my intelligence. Happening to have some business to transact in a mercantile house one day, I was a little surprised to see my quotidian morning companion, not indeed occupying the office of manager, but discharging the humbler function of a subordinate salesman. I saw then that he was a person not inclined to wrestle with conscience, and I have not trusted him since. He was a nickle-plated sham, so to speak. The native brass was covered only with a base metal.

This young man I have studiously avoided ever since, for there is no pleasure in holding any converse with even a "white har." Strange to say, I became acquainted with his employer a little while before his establishment was taken in charge by one of the numerous official assignees nominated by a paternal government to make a living out of the never-failing harvest of insolvency. Self-made man, he was, he told me, though he came from a cadet branch of an ancient English house. Had worked his own way up in the world, and had no one to thank for his success. Liked to pay one hundred cents on the dollar, and could easily pay one thousand. Would found a family on his own merits, and ask no man's favour. I went, at his request, to his home and found it very magnificently, and very garishly furnished, Boston parlour set, stiff, gilded, repped and coloured to death. Gorgeous varpets, harmonizing as little with the furniture as the brocasied curtains and brutally massive cornice did with it. Pictures, shown as old masters, but claiming from the casels of the suppliers of the New York smoke houses, bric.a-brac of the distressing order, and plenty of it. Incongruity of splendor, and unhappiness of selection every where. Hall with mediaval chairs and an oil-cloth; dining-room Louis XIV, with all the modern improvements. Gilding enough everywhere to replace the maces of the Provincial Legislatures, and glaring colour sufficient for a fireworks exhibition. This I was called upon to criticize freely, and I take to myself the credit that while expressing to this party an opinion that he had very many fine things under his roof, I said that what was wanted was an artistically appropriate disposition of them, a banishment of glare, and an adoption of a subdued harmony of association and connexion, and that he had got his treasures together the wrong way. Just then his wife came down in raiment that would have glorified a duchess, as to riches, and I, overpowered, hastened away to a house where a lever woman with ten dollars, and her tasteful little head to direct its expenditure, can do more to make the house cheerful and attractive than all this digging after finery that ends in so much dissatisfaction and despair. The individual I allude to lived in very excellent style His advance in the world had been rapid. From the boarding-house he had progressed to £75 per annum, and from thence to a mansion. His stables showed some excellent horsetlesh, and his liveries were nest but not gaudy. The attire of the ladies of his household on such occasions as they appeared before the world and their friends, was very rich and showy. The family diamonds had been set up, and they compensated for any little defects of education and training observ able to the critical individual individual whose car and eye are offended by solecism.

The estate has not proved a satisfactory one to the creditors. They hope yet to be able to get something like a dividend, but, with the shrinkage of values, circumstances are against them, and I fear that my acquaintance has played them a rather scurvy trick. He is absent just now, and so is his family. Those who know him better than I do say that he is not likely to return to Montreal, permanently

This person was another glittering nickle-plated fraud and sham. It turned out that he commenced life as a clerk with a respectable house, and was established in business at a time

now. He had not a dollar of capital of his own and he commanded but a meagre credit at first. Upon this he worked, pushed a business based upon unsound and haphazard principles, encouraged by his example a large unprofitable competition, sold recklessly and bought wildly, played off Peter against Paul so as to meet his engagements, maintained a financial kite-flying game as long as it could last, did not scruple to endorse his own paper with the names of strong houses without seeking their consent, lived extravagantly in order to be considered prosperous, and enjoyed the good things of life in his shallow, vulgar way, until all hope was gone. Then, having sent his wife before him, and converted every possible valuable into money, he left his creditors and his establishment secretly one night, and now he enjoys himself on the other side of the line. No doubt the facile nature of the Canadian credit system debauched this person's moral perceptions; certain it is that he is a swindler, yet the world will look upon him leniently as one against whom the fortune of war went, and who only needs another chance to reinstate himself. He was a brassy nickle-plated sham from the beginning, yet the world took him and "gave him a show" because he had confidence enough to put a bold face on it and claim for his gaudy display the recognition of the multitude.

One of the worst specimens of this order I ver knew was a notary and real estate agent in a distant city, who had an immense practice, and was entrusted with the management of the concerns of many large estates. Scion of an aristocratic family, he lived well and commanded the entree of the best society. He was a club man, a turf man, a betting and sporting man and a prince of jolly good fellows. He kept two or three cheres unies in seperate establishments, where he occasionally feasted his friends in style copied from the Petite Trianon, and his way through the world was one of the gayest and most extravagant—till the end came. The man of pleasure had to flee from wife and children, mistresses, friends, sycophants and creditors. He tunes, but those of all who had confided in him. and placed trust in the name he bore. He was followed by the curses of widows and orphans, and if he had any heart at all he must have been listracted by remorse at the destruction which his villainy had accomplished. But he was a club man, and a representative of fashion. Every voice was hushed. The distress of those whose substance had been dissipated was sithe most exalted in the community. The defaulter died in a strange land, and his remains were brought back in pump to the city in which he had been worked out his meteoric career. They were committed to the ground with all the grandeur of ceremony peculiar to the church of which he had once been a member, and all that was tashionable of the city turned out to do honor to the memory of one who had pitilessly ravaged the property which had been committed to his trust, and spent upon his vices the substance of people whom his extravagance had impoverished. This is no fancy sketch, and it shows how the world will tolerate and applaud successful shams.

I suppose that in our artificial society outward show will always command a large amount of appreciation and credit. Men and women are apt to be more taken with the display that they see, than with qualities that may exist but are not represented by any exhibit of money value. With new rich people growing up every day, asserting themselves and forcing their way into the ranks of what is known as "society" it is very difficult to prevent the vulgar element, whose gospel is ostentation, from diffusing the mistaken idea of surface value, and appraising character at the invoice price of what it can put on its back and spread abroad in its rooms.

W. LESLIE THOM. (To be Continued.)

CANADIAN HISTORY.

There are few, I am sure, of your Canadian readers who will not have read with interest the two papers, recently contributed to the columns of the News, by Mr. W. Leslie Thom, in relation to Quebec antiquities. The first paper refers to Gallows Hill, St. John Suburbs, and its ghastly memories. The second embodies the souvenirs clustering round that immensely historical and dirty little street Dog Lane which, under the frowning guns of the Grand Battery, meanders from time immemorial round the Cape, from Dambourges street to the eastern terminus of Sault-au-Matelot street.

Nothing can be more flattering to me than the excellent use to which have been put the materials for Canadian history, accumulated in "Quebec Past and Present," and in the "Histoire des Rues de Québec," so neatly translated for the News, in English, by my old friend,

Charles Aylwin, Esq., of Cap Santé.

More than once, Mr. Thom has given his Quebec readers occasion to enjoy the effusions of his lively pen, and his recent efforts to perpetuate in such a widely read publication as the News, the historic memories of the "ancient capital," must necessarily swell the list of admirers he has left behind, on removing to Montreal.

We must all welcome with pleasure a champion who comes forward, and does battle to save the "Walled City of the North," from the ruthwhen things moved more actively than they do, less vandalism rampant in so many quarters. I

wish merely to add one word, to complete the information contained in Mr. Thom's graphic portraiture of Dog Lane.

The stone of Hope Gate is not "all broken up for road metal," as he thinks. The key-stone of this famous old structure, which he last saw, "behind a ball of paper in the Chronicle office," was presented to the writer by Mr. Foote, and the inscription slab with the well-remembered words:

HENRICO HOPE

Copiarum Duce et Provincia Sub Prefecto Protegente et adjuvante Extructa

> Georgio III. REGE NOSTRO Anno XXVI et Salutis 1786.

has also been presented to the writer and serves now as pediment to a small monument, ten feet high, in which the key-stones of Palace--Presnounment of fallen greatness and many sieges now stands on the brink of the historic "Belle Borne Brook," at Sillery, which intersects my country seat. Crowds of litterateurs, historians, &c., including the illustrious Francis Parkman, have been attracted by its fame.

Dear Mr. Editor, in closing allow me to express a hope that the intended "History of the Streets of Montreal, recently promised in the columns of the Leestevier News, will soon be forthcoming.

J. M. LEMOINE.

Spencer Grange, near Quebec, 29th Oct. 1876.

How a Bind Flies .- The most prominent fact about a bird is a faculty in which it differs from every other creature, except the bat and insects-its power of flying. For this purpose the bird's arm ends in only one long, slender finger, instead of a full hand. To this are at-tached the quills and small feathers (coverts) on the upper side, which make up the wing. Observe how light all this is; in the first place the bones are hollow, then the shafts of the feathers left behind him, not alone his own runned for jare hollow, and finally the feathers themselves are mude of the most delicate filaments, interlocking and clinging to one another with little grasping hooks of microscopic fineness. Well how does a bird fly? It seems simple enough to describe, yet it is a problem that the wisest in such matters have not yet worked out to everybody's satisfaction. This explanation, by the Duke of Argyle, appears to me to be the best : an open wing forms a hollow on its under lenced. The press spoke not, for the offender side, like an inverted sancer; when the wing is had been high in the world, and an associate of forced down, the upward pressure of the air, side, like an inverted saucer; when the wing is caught under this concavity, lifts the bird up, much as you hoist yourselves up between the paralled bars in a gymnasium. But he could paralled bars in a gymnasium. never in this way get ahead, and the hardest question is still to be answered. Now the front edge of the wing, formed of the bones and muscles of the fore-arm, is rigid and unyielding, while the hinder margin is the soft flexible end of the feathers; so when the wing is forced down, the air under it, finding this margin yielding the easier, would rush out here, and in so doing, would bend up the ends of the quill pushing them forward out of the way, which of course, would tend to shove the bird ahead. This process, quickly repeated, results in the phenomena of flight.

A PLEA FOR THE CLASSICS.

Thumb well by night, thumb well by dag HORACE.

Are we to give up classics? This is just now the all important question in Canada. For if the happiness of a country depends on its education, its education surely depends on what it

One thing is certain, if a boy can be so trained that, when thirteen or fourteen years old, he will be a fair accountant, a good penman and reader, and able to write a good letter, a wise parent will secure this before all else. Now boys are so trained in the Montreal Protestant Public Schools. If classics prevent this, classics must fall by the board, and classics do prevent this as taught in our so-called classical schools.

In favour of classics we have the voice of antiquity. But are we not wiser than the aged ! Is not the voice of antiquity wrong? To obtain a final answer to this conestion England and pointed a Royal Commission of men of the most untrammelled and liberal minds. They were not loth, we may well believe, to immortalize their names by inaugurating an entirely new system of education. They reported unani-mously in favour of classics. This is surely conclusive.

Now let us take a vigorous logical argument that of instantia convenientes and instantia negativo. Take the English and American politicians. What "Yankee" even will not allow the superiority of the former in every way, oratorical, mental, and moral. In the States, the average member of Congress can no more decline a noun than he can a bribe. In England, Gladstone in his leisure moments (!) comments on Homer and Lord Derby translates him. The Germans again are a classical nation. The French excel in mathematics, which are superior in the arts of war and government.

Oxford is par excellence the classical university of England; Cambridge, the mathematical. Is it a more coincidence that Oxford has certainly led the world in religious thought, the deepest subject on which the human mind is exercised? Is it a more coincidence that Oxford turned out Wesley, Newman, Pusey, &c? Its it a mere coincidence that the most delight-

ful companion wherever we go the world over, is more or less of a classical scholar

There are many schools divided into classical and commercial divisions. In all we have inquired into the boys on the classical side surpass their commercial school-fellows in their own subjects! To such an extent do classics enable the mind to grasp other subjects with exact precision. At Oxford those who give two years to classics, and six months to modern history, often obtain higher honours in the history schools than those who have devoted the whole two years and a half to modern history alone.

Let us now see why the study of classics is so potent a brain-stretcher to train the human It necessitates the most intense concentration on the part of the student. A boy can glance over his geography lesson and chat meanwhile to a school mate. But even to learn Musa, he must think of Musa and nothing else.

In classics a master can in a few minutes pick out any single boy in a large class who has not learnt his lesson, and hear in a few minutes what has taken hours to learn.

In classics, small differences are all important. All often turns on the one vowel that marks a difference of case or tense. They thus train the mind to that nicety of observation without which all observation is nearly always useless. often misleading and absolutely harmful.

Again brutes reason. Articulate speech is the one prerogative of man. Thought itself is unconsciously conducted in unspoken words. What then can be said of a man who does not understand his own language? English in forty more years (at its present rate of increase) will be the language of the world. Now the only way to understand-or "stand under"-the English language is on the foothold of Latin and Greek. The ordinary words in Latin are used to make up the extraordinary words of English, and the shortest way to make a man sure to understand the scientific portion of the English language is by a short course of Smith's Latin and Greek Principia.

A lady once told us that she learnt more of what language really is by an accidental glance at a list of Latin and Greek roots and their English derivatives than in all her previous training in a good school.

Grammar again is one of the sciences of language. Accurate thought depends on accurate grammar. It is therefore important to study the most accurate grammars of the world-those of the languages of Greece and Rome,

The foundations of modern knowledge were laid in the masterpieces of Greek and Roman authorship. Those who aim at improving the superstructure must surely have some acquaintance with the foundation.

As "delivery" is all important in oratory, so "style" is all important in writing Surely then it is indispensable to read the best models of style which the literature of the world has produced, and it well known that all but a few of the foremost orators in England have been foremost in attributing their success to a study of the Greek and Latin classies. And even Mr. Lowe, who deplores his classical training, is a living instance of its efficiency. Lastly every Protestant at least will wish his son to read the New Testament in that (heretical) language in which it was written, and drink the waters of Salvation in the language in which they first

The conclusion of our argument is as follows: Firstly-A boy should not begin classics to any great extent till he is twelve or thirteen years old when his intellect will be so far matured as to make pleasant (because rapid) progress. Secondly—Vigorous measures must be taken to ease the drudgery of the study, the inflections, the genders, the prosody. Thirdly-Latin Prose and Verse Composition may be deferred till the age of thirty, if by that time a man finds nothing better in the world to do.

HUMOROUS.

VOTIVE OFFERING.—Election bribes.

A very precise person, remarking upon Shake-

THE stove-pipe elbow sticks out very much just now. It hasn't got its new soot yet. "The good men do is oft interred with their bones," carefully observes that this interment can generally take place without crowding the bones.

As exchange asks, "Why are we what we are? One reason, we presume, is because we are not what we are not, though, of course, this may not be the

"PLENTY of milk in your cans this morning?" the customer asked a Barlington milkumn yesteday morning. And the milkumn modded gravely as without a wink in his eye he made reply. "Chalk full."

A brave and good little Ohio boy sat on the fen e two hours in the freezing cold of dead winter, watching a broken rail on the railroad track, so as to carry the latest news of the imponding accident to his father, who was local editor,

THE time is fast approaching when the icicle will relax its hold on the eaves and endeavor to split the cranium of the tramp who persists in ringing the door bell for forty-six consecutive minutes. And some people would term this divine vengence.

SCIENTIFIC.

THE sandstone slabs containing the supposed fossil tracks of a man and a bird, discovered at North Canton, Conn., are believed to be begus, as the man who had them disappeared when a committee of scien-tific gentlemen agreed to examine them carefully.

A VERY useful addition has just been made to ordinary coast warnings by the British Admiralty. It consists in firing an explosive charge of halfa pound of gun cotton at intervals of fifteen minutes during fors. When there is little wind, as is usual in fogs, the sound is heard three miles off.