

NICKLE-PLATED SHAM.

For a long time I rode down in the street cars every morning with a well-dressed, pleasant-faced 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.

This young man I have studiously avoided ever since, for there is no pleasure in holding any converse with even a "white bar." 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.

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 when things moved more actively than they do,

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.

One of the worst specimens of this order I ever 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 entrée of the best society. He was a club man, a turf man, a betting and sporting man and a prince of jolly good fellows.

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.

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.

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 ruthless 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

Capitulum Duce et Provincie Sub Prefecto

Prolegente et adjuvante

Extracta

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--Prescott--and Hope Gates are conspicuous.

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 ILLUSTRATED NEWS, will soon be forthcoming.

J. M. LEMOINE.

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

How A BIRD 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.

A PLEA FOR THE CLASSICS.

"Think well by night, think well by day The classics."

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 learns.

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.

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 question England appointed a Royal Commission of men of the most untrammelled and liberal minds.

Now let us take a vigorous logical argument that of *instantio convenientes* and *instantio negative*. Take the English and American politicians. What "Yankee" even will not allow the superiority of the former in every way, oratorical, mental, and moral.

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

Let us now see why the study of classics is so potent a brain-stretcher to train the human mind. 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.

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.

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.

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 classics.

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 Shakespeare's line:

"The good men do is oft interred with their bones," carefully observes that this interment can generally take place without crowding the bones.

An 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 answer."

"PLENTY of milk in your cans this morning?" the customer asked a Burlington milkman yesterday morning. And the milkman nodded gravely as without a wink in his eye he made reply, "Chalk full."

A brave and good little Ohio boy sat on the fence 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 impending 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 vengeance.

SCIENTIFIC.

THE sandstone slabs containing the supposed fossil tracks of a man and a bird, discovered at North Canton, Conn., are believed to be bogus, as the man who had them disappeared when a committee of scientific 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 half a pound of gun cotton at intervals of fifteen minutes during fog. When there is little wind, as is usual in fog, the sound is heard three miles off.