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TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

It has become necessary once more to call the attention of our subscribers to the large number of subscriptions which remain unpaid, after repeated appeals for prompt settlement. Prompt payment of subscriptions to a newspaper is an essential of its continuance, and must of necessity be enforced in the present case. Good wishes for the success of our paper we have in plenty from our subscribers, but good wishes are not money, and those who do not pay for their paper only add an additional weight to it, and render more difficult that success which they wish, in words, to achieved.

Let it be clearly understood, then, that from all those whose subscriptions are not paid on or before the 1st of December next, we shall collect the larger sum of \$4.50, according to our regular rule, while we are of necessity compelled to say to those who are now indebted to us that if they do not pay their subscriptions for 1882 before the above date, we shall be obliged to discontinue sending them the paper after the 1st January, 1883.

All those who really wish success to the Canadian Illustrated News must realize that it can only succeed by their assistance, and we shall take the non-payment of subscriptions now due as an indication that those who so neglect to support the paper have no wish for its prosperity. We have made several appeals before this to our subscribers, but we trust the present will prove absolutely effectual, and we confidently expect to receive the amount due in all cases without being put to the trouble and expense of collecting.

We hope that not one of our subscribers will fail in making a prompt remittance.

TEMPERATURE

as observed by Hearn & Harrison, Thermometer and Barometer Makers, Notre Dame Street, Montreal.

THE WEEK ENDING

Nov. 26th, 1882.			Corresponding week, 1881		
Max.	Min.	Mean.	Max.	Min.	Mean.
Mon.. 48°	28°	34°	Mon.. 46°	40°	43°
Tues.. 48°	30°	38°	Tues.. 48°	30°	39°
Wed.. 48°	30°	38°	Wed.. 36°	26°	31°
Thur.. 50°	40°	45°	Thur.. 46°	26°	36°
Fri.. 51°	40°	45°	Fri.. 50°	33°	41°
Sat.. 54°	38°	47°	Sat.. 50°	33°	41°
Sun.. 58°	40°	49°	Sun.. 62°	46°	54°

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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, Dec. 2, 1882.

THE WEEK.

MR. DAVIN, in his most delightful lecture on "Down the Gulf and by the Sea," lately delivered at Winnipeg and Regina, tells the following very characteristic story of the veteran statesman at the head of the Canadian Government:—

"In due course the party arrived at Quebec. The visit to the Anglican Cathedral brought out some new and original ideas on the subject of church decoration from Mr. Roby; the visit to the citadel, the St. Louis Hotel and Mount Hermon Cemetery also contributed to the general amusement and interest. And the first chapter of what is really a novel in three volumes concludes with this scene, which we believe is historical, and took place this summer. On reaching the St. Louis Hotel they saw Sir John Macdonald, with his thoughtful face and dark curls, which still fight hard against the blanching touch of time. He was surrounded by a lot of cabmen all crying, 'I'll take you, sir, 'I've a fine horse, Sir John.' Then our friends had the opportunity of witnessing one of those acts, which more than even his great ability has endeared Sir John Macdonald to a large portion of the Canadian people. Sir John asked whether Jim McCulloch was there. Jim was not there. But a little boy said Jim was on the stand, and he would fetch him. Many years ago when the old Parliament met in Quebec, Jim always drove Sir John. Jim now came, old and ragged, driving the worst cab in Quebec. Sir John shook hands with him, inquired how Biddy and the children were, and then amid cheers in which even the disappointed cabmen joined, drove off to visit the Governor-General and the Princess Louise."

MR. THOMAS HARDY'S novel "Two on a Tower," concluded in this number of the *Atlantic*, will prove in its denouement a disappointment to most readers of refined taste. The story in its earlier stages, if a trifle too *riqué* for any old-fashioned and fastidious purists, if such there be, whom the modern theories about free speech and perfect knowledge for all, have yet left us, yet had withal an artistic finish and cleverness of treatment which redeemed its dangerous features. But the last incident is, and must be, to all right thinking people, simply disgusting, neither to be tolerated from an artistic point of view, nor to be endorsed in its treatment by the author.

THE story, in a nutshell, is this: A couple of lovers are married secretly, and only discover after some time that their marriage has been by an accident invalid. The discovery is simultaneous with a conviction on the woman's part that a too speedy legal marriage will ruin the prospects of her *de facto* husband. They agree, after much deliberation, to separate for several years without the legal confirmation or publication of their marriage, and after the gentleman is beyond recall, the lady discovers that the marriage is likely to have an unforeseen result. So far, the situation is at least intensely dramatic, and we looked with interest for the untying of the Gordian knot. Mr. Hardy, however, boldly cuts it by the prompt marriage of the lady to another suitor who is conveniently ready to hand, and the birth of a child under circumstances which are to say the least of it intensely disagreeable. We have no recollection of a similarly unpleasant situation in modern fiction, but perhaps the worst feature in the matter is that Mr. Hardy evidently considers that he has found an eminently satisfactory way out of the difficulty, and that the heroine and the reader alike ought to be equally well satisfied with the result of the former's ingenuity.

AFTER so serious a charge it seems almost captious to criticize minor defects, which consist mainly in the extreme improbability of several of the incidents. For example, when the Lady Constantine reaches Southampton as the steamer containing her lover-husband steams out of port, she is overcome with the unfortunate circumstance that she has no means of communicating with him except at long intervals and at uncertain addresses, and she sends a telegram to Marseilles and another to Cambridge, Mass., in the off chance of his ultimately arriving at one or other of these favored spots. It does not seem to occur to her or Mr. Hardy that the agents of the line could have informed her at once of its first stopping place, and that a telegram would have boarded the packet and brought back the young man without unnecessary delay or heart-burnings. But such unimportant details probably escaped the novelist in his desire to make a grand *coup de theatre*. And in this, it must be

confessed he has been eminently successful! Only it is of a kind to which we are unaccustomed, and which frankly we do not like.

THE new Ghost Society in London is doing, or preparing to do, great things. Hundreds of letters have already been received containing the most liberal offers of haunted houses for inspection—with good beds, neat wines, and spirituous liquors—to be furnished to all members of the society willing to sacrifice their good night's rest to the investigation of the truth. The first case to be examined is that of the house now well known to all London, situated in one of the most fashionable parts. The reputation this house has acquired of being given up to supernatural visitations has kept it empty for some years past. We all know the terrible sacrifice which must be the consequence. In the square alluded to here every inch of space is worth a modern man's income. Nevertheless, no bill has been put up, and lately even the number has been taken off the door. Some curious inquirers were induced a short time ago to ring the door bell, and only after repeated attempts was the summons answered by a grimy old woman from the area, who answered abruptly, then disappeared. The very next day the door bell was dismantled, and now there is no means of announcing the presence of a visitor. The chronicle will tell you that the house is still under the influence of the magic spell thrown around it by its late occupant, who practiced for years her magic tricks in the rooms on the first floor. This tenant was a lady of high family who had lived in solitude and celibacy—spending her whole life in the pursuit of forbidden knowledge. She is described at great length in the memoirs of a French adept, who came over to England to assist in the work on which she was engaged—that of extracting from a deceased Minister the secret motive which had actuated him in a certain Parliamentary measure by which the career of a member of her own family had been ruined. "Milédi," says the adept, "was a little woman, verging on old age, but full of life and vigor. Her eyes were black and sparkling with fire. When conversing rapidly they seemed to throw out sparks from beneath her broad black bushy eyebrows, over which fell in disorder thick masses of hair, white as the driven snow." After a visit of some days with the lady and many *stances*, to one of which Sir Edward Bulwer was invited, the object was accomplished, but imperfectly, "and," says the adept, "the bitter exclamation which fell from her lips on becoming convinced of her failing power touched me to the heart's core. 'Too old, too old!' she cried, as the instrument she had been using in her vocation dropt from her hand, and she sank against the wall."

It is a pleasure indeed to be able to record the success abroad of one of our native artists. When Oscar Wilde passed through the Dominion some months since he saw and admired greatly the work of Mr. Homer Watson, one of our most promising young landscape painters. The result of his visit was a commission to the artist for a small painting with which Mr. Wilde was greatly pleased. Nor was this all. The work was seen in New York by Mr. William Hurlbert, editor of the *N. Y. World*, and one of the best authorities upon art subjects in the States. Mr. Hurlbert at once sent Mr. Watson a commission for a similar picture, and a few days since expressed to the editor of this paper his delight at the result, and his intention of giving the painting, which had just arrived, a prominent place amongst his art treasures. Those who think that no good thing can come out of Canada, may well pause to consider whether we are not by degrees winning for ourselves the recognition of other nations in art and literature and music as well as in commercial pursuits. Anyhow we are glad to shake Mr. Watson by the hand and congratulate him on his well deserved success.

A correspondent of *Public Opinion* calls attention to the constant incorrect use of the Latin phrase "*Cui bono*." He says:—

"To anyone who understands the proper use of these two Latin words it is most provoking to see the way in which they are constantly

misplaced by public speakers, press writers, and the public generally. They constitute an old legal maxim applicable to criminal cases, and refer to the motive of the crime under investigation; but instead of being used in their right sense—viz: 'to whom would be the' (presumable) 'advantage?'—the expression is erroneously used as a Latinisation of 'what's the use of it?' and applied to every undertaking, experiment, &c., which the writer may consider of problematical utility."

This is all very well, but surely the expression to which the learned gentleman alludes should be — we speak in all ignorance — "*cui bonum*," which is quite another pair of shoes. "*Cui bono*" cannot possibly be translated, unless we have forgotten our declensions, "to whom would be the advantage." Come forth, O George Murray, and tell us the true inwardness of this matter.

MEASURING THE STARS.

(See Illustration on last page.)

One of the greatest astronomical epochs of the century, says the *Scientific American*, will occur on Wednesday, the sixth day of December. The planet Venus will then make her way across the sun's disk. The actual sight of the transit, except for its bearing on science, possesses no special interest. A tiny black spot will cut sharply into the sun's border, move slowly over its disk, and, after a passage of nearly six hours, will suddenly disappear. This is all that will be perceptible to the naked-eye observer. But to the astronomer and the telescopicist the event is full of the deepest significance. Through its instrumentality a solution is sought of one of the noblest problems ever elaborated by the highest exercise of human reason. To measure the unapproachable, is the point at issue, and never, in any previous combat with immensity, have astronomers had at their command such resources for becoming victors in the contest. The labor demanded is of the most severe and delicate nature, even when assisted by the most perfect instruments that have been invented. The utmost accuracy is required, or the result will be a failure. Measurements must be accumulated like grains of sand upon the seashore. Thousands of observations are often required in correcting an infinitesimal error. The grand object for which nearly one hundred transit expeditions have been organized, is to acquire the right of adding or subtracting less than one-tenth of a second to the polar parallax, from which the sun's distance from the earth is deduced.

It is a work of exceeding difficulty to determine the parallax of the sun, on account of its minuteness. The problem has not yet been accurately solved, after the incalculable labor bestowed upon it; the sun's distance is far from being a certainty. The best authorities give the parallax as less than 9," almost certainly between 8.75" and 8.85". But this tenth of a second that is considered doubtful, is more than a hundredth part of the whole, although says Professor Young, it is no more than the angle subtended by a single hair at a distance of eight hundred feet. If we accept 8.80" as the parallax, an estimate probably nearer the truth than any other, the sun's distance, expressed in miles, will be 92,885,000, while the variation of one-twentieth of a second will change the result either way a half-million miles. The most sanguine observers will feel that they have accomplished all they expect if the uncertainty is reduced to a quarter of a million of miles.

The problem of the sun's distance is of paramount importance, and fully justifies the outlay of brain, labor and money lavished on this uncertain means of reaching its solution. It is the unit or yardstick of celestial measurement, the standard by which everything outside of the earth in the material universe is measured, excepting the distance of the moon. A mistake here makes all celestial computation inaccurate, the diameter of every planet, the radius of every orbit, the distance of every star. Thus the nearest fixed star in the northern hemisphere is sixty-one Cygni. Its distance is estimated at about 366,000 times the sun's distance or earth's radius. This means 366,000 times 92,885,000 miles. If there be an error of half a million miles in this estimate of the sun's distance, it will readily be seen that the error in the star's distance takes on gigantic proportions.

The sixth of December will therefore be a great day in the annals of the nineteenth century. Transit observers will do their utmost to obtain a more accurate determination of the sun's distance. If they do not reach perfect success, and there is little hope of such a result, they will have the satisfaction of feeling that they are laboring in a noble cause. For the observations made during the transit of 1882 will be a rich legacy to aid the astronomers who, 122 years hence, will observe the next transit in 2004.

We can only wish for good weather and good luck to the brave adventurers, and join in the prayer of the great astronomer, Halley, who, from an observation of the transit of Mercury in 1677, at St. Helena, was the first to discover the scientific import of transits. In recommending to future astronomers a careful observation of