

The Legal News.

VOL. XII. OCTOBER 19, 1889. No. 42.

The *Canada Gazette* contains a notice respecting a prize competition to be held in celebration of the fourth centenary of the discovery of America. The essays are not to exceed two volumes of 500 pages each, and may be written in Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, German or Italian. The subject to be treated of is "the vast significance of this discovery of Columbus, the centenary of which it is proposed to celebrate, without in the least detracting from the deeds of Bartolomé Dias, Cortes, Pizarro, and others, bringing into due notice the civilizing power Portugal has brought to bear, and the crowning act of Spain when she for the first time braved the unknown Atlantic and circumnavigated the globe." One prize of £1200, and a second of £600 will be awarded, together with five hundred copies of the book; the authors also to preserve full rights over their works.

A writer in the *Portnightly Review*, describing Russian characteristics, comments upon the awe of the authorities which is usually uppermost in the minds of the people. He translates from a Russian newspaper part of the evidence taken in an inquiry into the circumstances attending the suicide of a peasant who, when suffering from hunger, hanged himself. Some of his friends discovered him a second or two after he had tied the knot, but refrained from cutting him down. "Now he is stark and cold," one witness remarked, "but when we first came up and saw him hanging, he was warm enough; and he dangled his legs about a good deal. There was plenty of life in him then, and for a good while after too. It's gone now." Q. "Why did you not cut him down at once?" A. "Cut him down, is it? Well, at first we were going to do it. But then we said, 'Best let him take the road he chose for himself; for if we cut him down and save him, we shall have to answer to the authorities.' So we let him hang there. And he's as cold as a stone now."

At the last annual meeting of the Victoria Institute of London, a paper was read describing the recent discovery of Assyrian archives 3,500 years old in the palace of Amenophis III. These venerable chronicles, according to Prof. Sayce, show that in the fifteenth century before our era—a century before the Exodus—"active literary intercourse was going on throughout the civilized world of western Asia, between Babylon and Egypt, and the smaller states of Palestine, of Syria, of Mesopotamia, and even of eastern Kappadokia. And this intercourse was carried on by means of the Babylonian language, and the complicated Babylonian script. This implies that, all over the civilized East, there were libraries and schools where the Babylonian language and literature were taught and learned. Babylonian appeared to have been as much the language of diplomacy and cultivated society as French has become in modern times, with the difference that, whereas it does not take long to learn to read French, the cuneiform syllabary required years of hard labour and attention before it could be acquired. . . . Kirjath-Sepher, or 'Book-town,' must have been the seat of a famous library, consisting mainly, if not altogether, as the Tel el-Amarna tablets inform us, of clay tablets inscribed with cuneiform characters. As the city also bore the name of Debir, or 'Sanctuary,' we may conclude that the tablets were stored in its chief temple, like the libraries of Assyria and Babylonia. It may be that they are still lying under the soil, awaiting the day when the spade of the excavator shall restore them to the light." The Lord Chancellor, who was present at the meeting, said that there was nothing more interesting in the literary history of mankind than such discoveries as those alluded to in the address, which he considered a perfect mine of wealth.

APPOINTMENTS.

Mr. William Graham, Q.C., of Halifax, has been appointed Judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, *vice* Hon. Alex. James deceased.

Mr. Theophilus W. Ellis, of Windsor, Ont.