

intelligible and agreeable to each other." For a short period, that devoted to tobacco, the party breaks up, but all shortly meet, where, on a promontory of smooth flat rock, the materials for an enormous fire have been collected in our absence. Far into the night we sit round the great pile of hissing, blazing timber; camp games are played, camp stories are told, and camp songs sung, for is not this life of luxury and ease surnamed "camping-out"? It is true, that when at last we do retire, it is not to a tent and couch of pine boughs, but to rooms and beds of civilization. On the other hand we wear flannels, etc., all day, we don't dress for dinner, and so when we go to Muskoka, emphatically, we do camp out.

To the worker or man of pleasure from a city, this life is a salvation. If he be wise he has left instructions that his letters are not to follow him, and even the daily papers he taboos. He is fifty miles from a railway and some distance from the daily steamboat's course; he is in society congenial but essentially unexact, while all nature is restful, peaceful, quiet. If he is observant of these qualities and knows a very beautiful poem, he will often ask himself, as he eats his lotos,

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from weariness?  
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,  
We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan.

W.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## THE AMERICAN IDEA OF GOVERNMENT.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—An article in a recent number of the *Magazine of American History* on the "Evolution of the Constitution," by C. Oscar Beasley, calls attention to the fundamental distinction between constitutional and monarchical governments as illustrated by the development of the American Constitution. The writer shows first of all that the earliest form of government in the United States was derived from the authority of the crown. Gradually, however, a change occurred, and we find a long series of documents in which authority is derived directly from the people themselves. This is the essential American idea of government, and while the articles of Federation exhibit a return to the old idea, in which authority is derived from the state, ignoring the people altogether, the Constitution itself, as finally adopted, begins and ends with a recognition of the people as the source of all power.

The acknowledgment of the people as the grantors of authority was, in truth, a new incident in the history of governments. It showed the complete decline of the ancient belief in a "divine right," and a transmission of power through the person of the king. The American Constitution and its forerunners settled for all succeeding time the fountain from which all authority was to be derived. Its influence has been immense. Not only has this idea developed so as to bind together one of the strongest and most progressive people on the earth, but it has served as a guide for other countries, and has been the model for every constitutional reform since it was promulgated. In England, where, notwithstanding the wonderful bursts of liberalism this century has witnessed, there is a deep-seated conservatism, the authority has been gradually stripped from the royal personage and transferred to the people as represented in the House of Commons. The Sovereign and the House of Lords have for years ceased to be an item of even ordinary importance in politics, though the personality of the former may rehabilitate, for a time, the seeming importance of the royal office. In all other countries of Europe the same phenomenon may be noticed, though nowhere to so great an extent as in England. Even in Germany and Russia, where the power of the sovereigns is autocratic, there are large and powerful liberal elements that are destined, sooner or later, to overcome by their superior impetus, the power of the monarchy.

It is an unquestioned fact that among unthinking people, those who for years, it might almost be said for centuries, have been accustomed to one form of government, and who look upon the sovereign with superstitious awe, no such indication of a transference of power is to be noted. But each succeeding year this class though still very large in some districts recedes before the march of superior intellect, and while it would be far from wise to predict a time when such ideas will cease to have circulation, their extinction is simply a matter of time. The world is destined to see at no distant day a complete reorganization of governments on the American plan, in which the people shall themselves be the source of all power, delegated by themselves to their own representatives. The American Constitution, as Mr. Beasley has so ably shown, marks the beginnings of this gigantic movement. The Constitution did not spring into existence with one bound, but is the resultant of a series of preliminary essays or experiments in constitutional methods. This is an important historical fact that is apt to be ignored by those who are familiar with the Constitution itself alone, without reference to the earlier documents which preceded it. Yet while the Constitution stands to-day as the universally recognized perfect paper of its kind, it is the result of an evolution extending over less than a hundred years. The doctrine of evolution cautions us that we must not affirm it cannot be improved, or even admit that it is incapable of improvement, but it is nevertheless a fact of the deepest significance that this great state paper has

stood the test of a hundred years' wear and tear; it has stood the shock of the greatest internal struggle the world has ever seen, and the man has yet to come boldly forward to improve it or to venture to assert that it is not the best conceivable document for its purpose. And above all this is the great distinction of having given to the world a new political conception that will be known for all time as the American idea of government.

New York.

BARR FERREE.

## THE SONNET.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

Sir,—In common with all your readers who love the Sonnet, I have read, with great interest and pleasure, the contributions on that "alphabet of the heart" by "Sarepta," in THE WEEK. Although I am unable to act on "Sarepta's" suggestion, "to add more sonnets on 'The Sonnet,'" I should like to supplement the specimens of that form of verse by the two following:

## THE GOOD, GREAT MAN.

How seldom, friend, a good, great man inherits  
Honour and wealth, with all his worth and pains!  
It seems a story from the world of spirits  
When any man obtains that which he merits,  
Or any merits that which he obtains.  
For shame, my friend, renounce this idle strain!  
What would'st thou have a good, great man obtain?  
Wealth, title, dignity, a golden chain,  
Or heaps of corpses which his sword hath slain?  
Goodness and greatness are not means, but ends.  
Hath he not always treasures, always friends,  
The good, great man? Three treasures—love and light  
And calm thoughts, equable as infant's breath;  
And three fast friends, more sure than day or night  
Himself, his Maker, and the angel Death.

Can "Sarepta," or any of your contributors or readers, tell us who is the author of this sonnet, which was quoted many years ago in an English newspaper, and is, I believe, one of the finest pieces of sonnet verse in the English language. I have tried in vain to discover its paternity. I have heard it ascribed to Coleridge, but it does not appear in any edition I have seen of his attested works; and although it is unmistakably of the Lake School, neither is it to be found among Wordsworth's or Southey's. Who, then, is the author?

This sonnet was printed in 1847, because in that year the following "Answer," first published in an English journal in June, 1851, was written; at least so we are told by the anonymous author of the "Answer." The latter is much inferior to the former, but I quote it as being of special interest in this connection:

## ANSWER.

I would not have a great, good man delude  
His hand with grasping, nor his soul with guile,  
Nor sacrifice to any outward things,  
His inward splendour and his upward wings.  
But, also, would I not behold him blind  
To the world's bitterness and pinching facts—  
Far less, if means of life with a free mind  
Be his, while pennyury his friend distracts.  
Oh, noble sage, forget not, when the hour  
Of inspiration ends, that for its lamp  
To burn with purity and constant power,  
Oil, and four walls, that reek not with the damp,  
Are needful, that the man with steady eye  
May look in his wife's face, nor o'er his children sigh.

Who, may I ask, is the author of this "Answer"?

Woodside, Berlin, Aug. 20, 1889.

JOHN KING.

## PARISIAN LITERARY NOTES.

"FRANÇOIS MIGNET." By E. Petit (Perrin). M. Mignet, the life companion of Thiers, and permanent secretary of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, merits his biography. He occupies a very distinguished place in letters, and his relations with all the eminent men of his day add a further attraction to his life. The volume presents Mignet from the earliest years of manhood-work, when writing for the Press, his college-chum Thiers, being then an art critic on the same journals. At thirty-nine years of age, Mignet was elected one of the Forty Immortals of the Academy. He was a Councillor of State in 1830; Ambassador to Spain in 1833, and subsequently director of the Archives at the Foreign Office till 1848. He was, besides, an historian, a publicist, and he mixed much in cultured society. No Frenchman, in dress and manners, ever came up to the English gentleman so much as Mignet. The author rather evades the social side of Mignet's character, which is regrettable, as he was a brilliant conversationalist. Mignet set out from Aix, in company with Thiers, for Paris, to seek fortune. They had no money beyond their fares, and a trunk in common represented their total baggage. In after years, Mignet was the everyday guest of Thiers at dinner, and resided, free, in one of his houses in the Rue d'Aumale. As member of the Academy, Mignet gave all the time he could spare to editing the "National Dictionary," which, let it be said *en passant*, will some day be finished as was even the Cologne Cathedral. When director of the Foreign Office Archives, it was a peculiar pleasure of Mignet to show the map, drawn up by Prussia, for the dismemberment of France in 1814. The biography will repay attentive perusal.

"NOUVELLES DE L'HISTOIRE DE LA CIVILIZATION." By M. Riehl (Müller; Berlin). This eminent writer has now collected all his novels, and divided them into epochs. The seven volumes are the out-put of forty-two years of consecutive work, and that the public never grew weary of applauding. His last novel, "Life Enigmas," appeared last year. All these *nouvelles*, despite their variety in tone

and subject, have for aim, to paint the manners of the past and the present. They are the result of personal observation, of historic inspiration, but in which act, speak, laugh and cry very living persons, for they are animated by the passions and the ideas of their epoch and country. The personages dealt with are not those whose traits history has fixed, and that cannot lightly be altered; they are modest creatures, who truly belong to their age, by their manner of seeing and feeling. Riehl, then, does not fall into the error of the historical novelists, who bring on the scene, the notoriety of a past age, and lose themselves in descriptions of old furniture, old utensils, old faience, etc., like a catalogue of antiquities. Nor does he "image history," as Hebbel observed of Walter Scott; neither does he employ the language of the epoch—under the pretext to be realistic, and cover each page with foot-notes to show he is learned and of Dryasdust accuracy. Riehl leaves the externals—costumes and furniture—aside, and replaces these by ideas. It is the moral side of an epoch he handles, and moulds his characters so to move and speak as if we were perusing memoirs of the period. Such will not please those who deny a novelist the right to select subjects out of the present and its environments. Of the fifty *nouvelles* that compose the volumes, four belong to an antiquity as distinct as Rider Haggard could desire; five also appertain to the Revolutionary epoch, while others relate to the intervening periods. The latest—is the present. The seven stories laid in the Middle Ages are reckoned among his best—the "Old Oak" being the gem of the collection. Love fills an important rôle, but is not the dominant factor. Riehl ranks among the first of German novelists; he is a realist, as comprehended in the broad artistic sense. His style is clear and limpid, his characters very true and living, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Like a sagacious observer, he does not stop at the surface of things; he penetrates downwards to bring up their lesson or their mystery. He does not leave the reader cold—for he is not a pessimist; his studies are healthy and full of moral bracing. As he boasts himself, he has never written a line that he would object to his own daughter perusing.

"HISTOIRE DE LA MONARCHIE DE JUILLET." By P. Thureau-Dangin. This is a work of the historical apology school, where an author selects his central object, aim or figure, and accumulates materials to buttress it up. Perhaps there is no reign more difficult to write, although within the memory of our grandfather generation, than that of Louis Philippe. Certainly no reign has more contributed to produce the political difficulties that have followed the deposition of that monarch. He was the incarnation of the sovereignty of the people; as "King of the French," by a parliamentary vote, his throne was thus seated on the debris of the *ancien régime*. Thiers once said that Louis Philippe "reigned but did not govern." It was because the king did not act up to that canon of constitutionalism that he was swept away. He was always aiming to come to the front, to impress on the minds of the citizens that he, majesty, was their political guide, philosopher and friend, and not the ministers; that it was he who had secured them their material prosperity. "Get rich," was the axiomatic counsel which the stern Calvinist, Premier Guizot, gave to middle class Frenchmen. And it was while gluttonizing in wealth-begetting that that same class ignored the stratum of society, the *nouvelle couche*, below them—the workingmen. So ignorant was the Guizot Government of the "capacity" of the artisans that it refused to extend to them the suffrage. And the strange spectacle was presented to the world, that of modern France, the output of the Revolution of 1789, with a population of over thirty millions, having only a total national voting roll of 300,000 electors. On February 20, 1848, Louis Philippe and his advisers refused to concede any extension of the suffrage to the new "capacities." Four days later the electoral roll welled up to 10,500,000, by the immediate adoption of universal suffrage. The smallness of the "capacities" was remedied by the accession of a mass of "incapacities." It was this sudden addition to the constituencies, the offspring of the "Revolution of Contempt" of 1848, that has since proved the disturbing factor in the succeeding régimes to which France has been subjected. Democracy was unprepared for the supreme gift of absolute power; its education had not been more than commenced in 1848, and indeed it is only now going on—slowly but surely. There lies the fault of Louis Philippe, and next to a crime on the part of the middle classes, who in their egoism, having ceased to be *roturiers* themselves, selfishly united to bar out from a legitimate share in the government of the state the fitted among the members of the new society. And this explains the hatred of the workingmen, of the *prolétaires*, to-day against the middle classes, for the nobility is not in cause, as it was vanquished in the night of August 4, 1789, when Feudalism and Privilege yielded up the ghost. The Bourbon-Orléans had ever a questionable past. The father of Louis Philippe was the disreputable Philippe Egalité, who was the great-grandson of the infamous Regent. Louis Philippe himself fought at Valmy, and after the battle went over, along with Dumourier, to the Austro-Prussian allies. Later, when he spoke about his countrymen, he alluded to them as "the enemy." Beneath Louis Philippe's white hat and buttoned-up-to-the-chin frock coat there was less of a constitutional king than of an authoritative monarch and a jealous ruler. He observed, "My friends have overthrown me because they believed me indestructible." The miracle about his eighteen-years' reign is that he was able to retain his clutch of the throne amidst infernal machines, pistol shots, poignards, denunciations from all parties and satires from every pen. And yet the reign of Louis