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Free Libraries in Victoria.

In our last issue we made mention of the library facilities afforded by the State of Massachusetts to its people, and to the wretched showing Montreal makes in comparison. It may be of interest to look at the most populous city in the Australian colonies, and see how it compares with Canada's commercial metropolis in this respect. Melbourne is scarcely half a century old, its incorporation as a town being dated 12th of August, 1842, and as a city five years later. Its rapidity of growth has been enormous, the population being now close on half a million; but its rulers and chief citizens have not allowed business success to exclude those subjects which tend to mental improvement and culture. In fine arts, in collections of objects of curiosity and interest, and in all educational and literary privileges, it is surpassed by few cities in the world. Its Public Library building is a magnificent structure which has cost over half a million dollars; it contains about 275,000 books and pamphlets, and is open to the public daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. without any charge for admission. During 1889 it was visited by some 462,000 persons; but this large attendance is not surprising when we remember that in Melbourne the day's work almost universally ceases at five o'clock, thus giving all classes of citizens time to take advantage of the literary facilities so freely put before them. These are not confined to the city. Throughout the colony of Victoria, the government returns show that 378 free libraries or literary institutes exist in addition to those of the capital, that these suburban institutions possess close on 450,000 volumes of books, and that about 2,900,000 visits were paid to them during the year 1889. The total population of Victoria is, in round figures, 1,200,000. While these privileges are scarcely equal to those enjoyed by the residents of Massachusetts it must be remembered that the colony, if more progressive, is very much younger and is far less advantageously situated for the easy acquirement of books. Away off in a distant corner of the world, its importations of literature from Great

Britain and the United States are necessarily attended with considerable delay and expense; and native productions have not as yet assumed very considerable proportions. Here in Canada we lie between the two great producers of English literature, and the effort and financial outlay necessary to procure the printed outcome of great minds is reduced to a minimum. Effort and energy are certainly needed to remedy our deficiencies, or we must continue to figure by comparison with sister colonies and foreign nationalities as vastly inferior to them in the measure of literary privileges we offer to our people.

Mr. Egan in Chili.

The present strained position of affairs between the United States and Chili, and the bitter hatred with which Americans are regarded in that fiery little republic, are distinctly traceable to the "popular" system of government which so many regard as the best of all national systems. It is almost impossible to conceive of any administration but one which places subservience to a powerful faction before the first principles of good government appointing a man like MR. EGAN to the position of "Envoy Extraordinary" to any foreign state; much less to one of no little influence, of strong national prejudice, and of considerable fighting calibre. The previous record of the man was such that his possession of tact, impartiality and diplomatic courtesy—qualities essential to a successful ambassador—was absolutely impossible; and, whatever his qualifications may have been for other government positions, his appointment as a representative of the nation to a foreign court was an inexcusable blunder. Within the past few years, troubles have risen fast and furious in almost every Republic on the globe—all due to a system theoretically so excellent but practically so defective. Mob law and faction influence have usurped good government; and it is to the limited monarchies of Great Britain, Germany and Austria we must turn to see nations ably ruled, kept free from internal disorder, and possessing intense love of country. The diplomatic service of a monarchy is necessarily of great importance, and is carried on by men of high social class, systematically trained for their duties. The appointment of such a man as MR. EGAN by a well-governed power would be an impossibility.

Our Christmas Number.

To avoid any misunderstanding we beg to notify our subscribers that the Christmas number is an extra one, and is sent only when specially ordered. The price is fifty cents, and we would recommend that early orders be placed.

Two articles that have commanded much favourable attention are those by Dr. George Stewart, of Quebec, on "Oliver Wendell Holmes" and "James Russell Lowell," in recent numbers of the *Arena*, one of the best of the American magazines. Dr. Stewart is not only adding steadily to his own reputation but to that of Canadian literature by such brilliant work, and we hope to see more from his pen in future issues of the best foreign periodicals.

The election for a member for the Strand division of London, has resulted in the return of Mr. Frederick Smith (Conservative) son of the late member, by the handsome majority of 3,006 votes over Dr. Guttridge, the Liberal candidate. The figures were Smith 4,952, Guttridge 1,946. The Strand voters have evidently little sympathy for Gladstone and the silly policy his followers have mapped out for the next campaign. Mr. Smith is a young man fresh from college; he is highly spoken of, and is said to inherit much of his father's strength of character.

Literary and Personal Notes.

To our friend, Mr. J. M. Lemoine, F.R.S.C., we are indebted for a valuable Ms., "Supplementary Notes on Baron Maseres," which will be reproduced in our issue of 14th inst.

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One of the most contemptible things we have noticed for some time is the publication in several prominent American journals of the fact that one of the favourite writers in the leading comic weekly has just completed seven years penal servitude, mentioning his name and other details.

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Among the coming issues of the "Makers of America" series, which Messrs. Dodd, Mead & Co., of New York, are publishing, are two of interest to Canadian readers; they are, "Sir William Johnson and the Six Nations," by William Elliot Griffis, D.D., and "De Bienville, the Founder of New Orleans," by Miss Grace King.

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Referring to Mr. Macfarlane's first paper on "New Brunswick Authorship," which appeared in our issue of 24th ult., and to the mention of the probable existence of only one copy of James Hogg's earlier works (published at St. John in 1825), we learn from Mr. Bain, chief librarian of the Toronto Public Library, that that institution also possesses a copy of the book.

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One of the largest book deals ever consummated in America was closed on the 27th ult. by telegram, the University of Chicago being the purchaser, and S. Simon, of Berlin, the seller. The library has 280,000 volumes and 120,000 dissertations in all languages. The price paid is not made public. The catalogue price is between \$600,000 and \$700,000, and the bookseller's price \$300,000.

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Without losing his grasp of the sword, Lord Wolseley is devoting more and more of his time to the use of the pen. His contributions to magazine literature of late years have been considerable, and he is now working hard on a "Memoir of the Duke of Marlborough," which is swelling into several volumes; the first two of these—now completed—bring the narrative down only to the death of William III.

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Those of our readers who possess "Allibone's Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors" will be glad to learn that the long-looked-for supplement is now completed, thus bringing the work down to the present date. No pains or expense have been spared to make the work complete and authentic in every particular. It may be noted that the original three volumes comprised the names of 46,000 authors, and the titles of all their works. The supplement will have nearly as many, about 37,000 names.

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Interesting items in London book sales are: First edition of Thackeray's "Paris Sketch Book," in the original cloth, 10 guineas; Walton and Cotton's "Complete Angler," Pickering, 1736, £16 15s; first edition of Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," fine copy, £35 10s; Howell's "Complete Collection of State Trials, 1615; La Fontaine's "Contes et Nouvelles," the "Fermiers Generaux" edition, £16; "Horæ Beatæ Mariæ Virginis," fifteenth century manuscripts on vellum, illuminated, £13; Punch, set to date, including the Almanacks, £17 17s; "Ovide Metamorphoses," in Latin and French, Paris, 1767-70, £13; "Notes and Queries," five series, £14 5s; first edition of Swinburne's "Atlanta in Calydon," £7 15s; Thomson's "Sea-son's," coloured engravings by Bartolozzi and Tompkins—"there were only three coloured copies published, one for the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of George III.; one for the Queen of England, and this one procured for Walter Fawkes, of Farnley Hall" (manuscript note), £21 10s; document signed by personalities of the Court and of the time of Louis XIV., £20; letter of Napoleon I. to Marshal Berthier, £12 10s.—*The Collector*.