

The same, unfortunately, cannot be said about the wretched proposal to erect an elevated railway along one of our principal streets.

Pleasant news comes to us from France. Monsieur Fréchette's poem, *La Légende d'un Peuple*, meets with ever-increasing success. Not long ago Monsieur Francisque Sarcey, one of the first critics in Paris, lectured on it, and the leading papers contain critiques of it. Finally, the Academy of Rouen, the second in France, devoted two of its meetings to the study of this Canadian work. It is when we are pronounced "poet" by an Old World tribunal that we are really worthy to bear the name.

LOUIS LLOYD.

THE BALL AND THE STAR.

(AS ONE SPEAKS.)

Do I hold my life in my hand
To make or to mar,
To prize or let fall,
To round to the perfect ball,
To mould to the matchless star?

Here has rolled to my halting feet,
From the nursery stair,
From the children's nest,
A rubber thing that is drest
With a gaudy patchwork air.

Its colours I may not admire;
Bright red and bright green
Are not to my taste,
And their vulgar is not effaced
By the line of yellow between.

Still, 'tis a ball, and that's much,
Made fit to bound,
Made fit to stay
On a table—that is, away
From the edge—or upon the ground,

Even it, a ball, will fall,
That's nought of a fault,
As I see, in the ball,
But in the putter—in all
That becomes a ball, to vault,

To roll and rebound, how full,
How round it must be!
How smooth, without trace
Of ragged and jagged rough on its face,
To rebound so swiftly, so perfectly.

It does its work well, no doubt;
Ah! yes, but then
It is well made,
Of its work not a whit afraid,
Though only fashioned by men.

Only fashioned by men, I think—
What do I know?
What does it matter?
Upstairs, a more divine clatter,
Hiding, hunting, the children go.

The truant toy has been missed;
With ecstasy—
Mothers know how—
A child, with an innocent brow,
And eyes that will brim with glee,

Will gather to him the ball;
The vulgar yellow,
The glaring green,
Will cosily, safely lie between
The pinky fists of the little fellow.

"Wanted," the ball is. Has its place.
The little hands
Are quick and kind,
And the little eyes are seldom blind,
'Tis a little child who understands

That the ball has rolled and rolled and rolled
Far from its home,
From the nursery stair,
Far from the innocent upper air—
Even a rubber thing will roam.

But does it suffer in roaming? Not it.
It will return
Just as it came,
Not a whit broken, marred or lame;
The ball, you see, has nothing to learn,

Nothing to spend and nothing to save,
Nothing to give,
Except some day—
Its round and beautiful life away,
How long ere that be? Might it not live

Forever with care on a shelf somewhere,
Where pins are not,
And needles gay,
For ever and ever are out of the way?—
What was the other wandering thought?

Oh! here, this morning on my sleeve,
Appeared a star,
With a wonderful law
In its wonderful points, with not a flaw
In its beauty although it fell so far.

It breathed for a moment, then died.
While I stood at the door
And counted its rays
It died at the strength of my gaze,
From a snow-star, so much and no more.

Perfect the ball and the star,
Each in its day,
Each in its end.
I shall never mend! I shall never mend!
I, imperfect, will go away.

Do I hold my life in my hand,
To make or to mar,
To prize or let fall,
To round to the matchless ball,
To mould to the radiant star?

SERANUS.

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

LOSS OF SPEED IN PLANETS AND COMETS.

Is the motion of planetary bodies perpetual? At first, everything seems to show that it is. The earth with its mass of three thousand trillion tons turns with a speed which enables a student to go bare-headed a good many miles without catching cold in the act of saluting a professor, for a long time defied all attempts to detect in it loss of speed; but with the friction of the tides continually at work such loss must take place, and now it is pretty certain from the calculations of Adams, the astronomer, that the earth loses about an hour in 16,000 years, and is coming to rest, though it must be admitted rather leisurely. So, also, the hurrying up of the comets as they go round the sun is possibly accounted for by a retarding action in space which makes it necessary for them to try and make up, as it were, for lost time; and in fact the general arguments in the present day are in favour of what Sir Isaac Newton believed—that the motions of all bodies in space are suffering retardation, and that their velocity is becoming less and will ultimately cease.—*Nature*.

TEA-DRINKING AND NERVOUS DISORDERS.

TEA has a powerful action on the nervous system of some individuals. Dr. Bullard, of Boston, believes that it may produce a chronic poisoning of the nervous centres, shown in increased excitability, due partly to direct action of the alkaloid on the nervous matter, and also indirectly by the production of gastric derangement. Taken, therefore, too frequently, even in moderate doses, it places the nervous system in a condition of greater vulnerability to slight external influences, and favours the development of functional neuroses, or helps to render them permanent. Whilst there is no evidence to show that tea causes organic changes in the nervous tissues, yet, if such exist, tea may readily aggravate some of the symptoms. Tea may act as an important factor in the causation of neuralgia, hysteria, and allied affections. When taken constantly in large doses, dyspepsia usually supervenes before irreparable harm is done to the nervous system. In hemicrania, and possibly some other functional neuroses, there is probably a craving for some stimulant, and tea is better than other equally accessible articles, and so it happens that many sufferers from megrim are great tea-drinkers.—*Lancet*.

WORTH THEIR WEIGHT IN GOLD.

It is no unusual thing to see small volumes that you can hide almost in a vest pocket go for from \$20 to \$80. Some books, if they are rare enough, of the *incunabula* and black-letter kind, will bring hundreds of dollars. The first edition of one of Longfellow's books, *The Coplas de Manrique*, thin and dingy though it be, brings almost always near fifteen or twenty times its original price. Tennyson's first thin volume, containing also his brother's poems, which must have been published for not more than \$1.50, I saw sold the other day for only a trifle short of \$40. "First editions" are especially stimulative to prices, as there are so many collectors who pride themselves on their possessions in this line. The editions, however,