

"ACTA DIURNA."

The city of Venice enjoys the credit of originating the modern newspaper; but I believe the honour is honestly due to the Chinese. The Chinese *Gazette* was printed centuries before such a thing was known in Europe. It differs, however, from the newspapers of the United States, being exclusively the organ of the Government in everything connected with the religion, laws, manners and customs of the country. No article is published that has not first been submitted to the Emperor; and after being sanctioned by him, not a word must be changed or added. In 1818 an officer of the Chinese post-office suffered death for publishing a false piece of intelligence. What would be the effect of executing such a decree in this country may be left to the imagination of the reader.

Etymologists differ as to the derivation of the title, some holding that the term *Gazette* came from the Italian *Gazzetta*, a magpie or chatterer, and others that it derived from *gazetta*, a farthing of Venetian coin, which was once the common price of newspapers in the great commercial queen of the Adriatic. The first newspaper in Venice was published by the Government, and only once a month. The jealousy of the Government, however, did not allow it to be printed, and for a long time after the invention of printing, the *Gazette* of Venice was circulated only in manuscript. Borrowing the hint from Venice, other Governments successively established small gazettes until they became common to every civilized country.

The author of the "Curiosities of Literature," however, as already hinted, is mistaken in awarding the honour of the idea to the Venetians. Gazettes were not only published at a much earlier period in China, but the Roman historians quote the *Acta Diurna Populi*, or the Daily Advertisers of that empire, which doubtless furnished the original thought to the rulers of Venice. When Julius Caesar entered upon his first consulate (fifty-nine years before the Christian era) he introduced a new regulation for committing to writing and publishing daily all the acts of the people. Therefore newspapers were not unknown to the Romans.

In the galleries which Cicero constructed at his villa at Tusculum in imitation of the schools of Athens, among the amusements of those who frequented them was that of a daily newspaper, which recorded the chief occurrences of public note and general interest, with the more private intelligence of births, deaths and marriages, and the fashionable arrivals, in much the same manner as those of more modern date. It was not, indeed, issued for circulation, being merely hung up either in the forum or some other place of resort, and published under the sanction of the Government for general information, but it may be presumed that it was copied for the private accommodation of the wealthy. It will thus be seen that our "bulletins" daily displayed at the different newspaper offices are not, as many suppose, of modern origin.

The *Acta Diurna* also contained an authorized narrative of the transactions worthy of notice which happened at Rome. Petronius has given us a specimen of the *Acta Diurna* in his account of Trimalchus; and it is curious to see how nearly a Roman newspaper runs in the style of an American one. Whatever information it contained was supplied, as are the papers of the present day, by reporters, who were called "actuarii."

We may be sure, also, that these Roman bulletin-boards were surrounded by as eager a crowd of citizens as those of our own day, since Plutarch states that the country people were very curious in regard to the affairs of their neighbours. The inhabitants of the cities, he further says, thronged the court and other public places to hear the news. Juvenal notices the keenness of the Roman women for deluges and earthquakes; while, as at the present day, merchants and surveyors of corn were wont to invent false news for interested purposes. This last practice, however, was attended with some risk, as it was not uncommon to put the bearers of bad news to death.

We gather further from references made to the *Acta Diurna* by Seneca and other contemporaneous writers that it contained abstracts of the proceedings in courts of law, and at public assemblies; also accounts of public works or buildings in progress; a recital of the various punishments inflicted upon offenders, and a list of births, deaths, marriages, etc. We are told that one article of news in which it particularly abounded was that of reports of trials for divorces, which were remarkably prevalent among the citizens of Rome.

A few extracts from these Roman newspapers are not only curious in themselves, but illustrate the fact that mankind are much the same in all ages and countries—the progress of events and the social and civil relations of society very similar—common incidents happening for the most part alike to all. The names of Paulus, Emilius, the conqueror of Macedonia, Papilius, Lentus, the famous ambassador, Julius Caesar, Cicero and Hortensius impart an air of importance even to the trivial circumstances mentioned in these extracts.

"FIFTH KALENDS OF APRIL, YEAR OF ROME 581.

"The Fuses with Licinius the Consul.

"The consul, crowned with laurel, sacrificed at the Temple of Apollo. The senate assembled at the Curia Hostilia about the eighth hour,

and a decree passed that the Prætors should give sentence according to the edicts which were of personal validity. M. Scapula was accused of an act of violence before the Prætor. Fifteen of the judges were for condemning him, and thirty-three for adjourning the cause."

"This M. Scapula was probably a sort of 'Tammany rough,' and the Prætor the justice or the mayor.

"FOURTH OF THE KALENDS OF APRIL.

"The Fuses with Licinius the Consul.

"It thundered, and an oak was struck with lightning in that part of Mount Palatine called Summer Velia, early in the afternoon. A fray happened in a tavern at the lower end of the Banker's street, in which the keeper of the Hog-in-Armor tavern was dangerously wounded. Tertinius, the adile, fined the butcher for selling meat which had not been properly inspected by the overseers of the market. The fine is to be employed in building a chapel to the temple of the goddess Tellus."

Some of the readers of *Potter's American Monthly* may recollect that a few years ago Banker's street in New York City was noted for its frays; so the resemblance is striking. The "Hog-in-Armor Tavern" was probably at the Five Points of Rome.

"THIRD KALENDS OF APRIL.

"The Fuses with Emilius.

"It rained stones on Mount Vatican. Parthenius, the tribune, sent his crier to the consul because he was unwilling to convene the senate on that day; but the Tribune Decimus put in his veto, and the affair went no farther. Thirty boys and forty girls were born at Trimalchi's estate at Cumæ. The same day a fire broke out in Pompey's gardens, which began in the night in the steward's apartments."

"PRIDIE KALENDAS APRILIS.

"The Fuses with Licinius.

"The Latin festivals were celebrated on the Alban Mount, and a dole of raw fish distributed to the people. Dimiphron, the famous pirate, who was taken by Licinius Nerva, a provincial lieutenant, crucified. The red standard was displayed at the capitol, and the consuls obliged the youth who were enlisted for the Macedonian war, to take a new oath of allegiance in the Campus Martius. Paulus, the consul, and C. Octavius, the prætor, set out this day for Macedonia in their habits of war. The funeral of Marcia was performed with greater pomp of images than attendance of mourners. The pontifex, Sempronius, proclaimed the Megalesian plays in honor of Cybele."

At the present day, instead of there being more images than mourners, there would be more carriages, since we have so far adopted the unfeeling fashion of London that it is now not strange to hear some of our fashionable people, while affecting to deplore the loss of a friend, add the remark that they sent their carriages to the funeral.

"FOURTH OF THE NONES OF APRIL.

"A *ter sacrum* was vowed, pursuant to the opinion of the College of Priests. The fleet stationed on the African coast entered the port of Ostia with the tribute of that province. An entertainment was given to the people by Marcia's sons at their mother's funeral. Popilius Senos, C. Decimus and C. Hostilius were sent as ambassadors in a joint commission to the king of Syria and Egypt in order to accommodate the differences about which they are now at war."

"FIFTH KALENDS OF APRIL, YEAR OF ROME 691.

"M. Tullius Cicero pleaded in defence of Cornelius Sylla, accused by Torquatus of being in Cataline's conspiracy, and gained his cause by a majority of five judges. One of the Prætors advertised by an edict that he should postpone his sittings for five days on account of his daughter's marriage. C. Caesar set out for his government of the farther Spain, having been long detained by his creditors."

"FOURTH KALENDS OF SEPTEMBER.

"The funeral of Metilia Pias, a Vestal, was celebrated. She was deposited in the family vault in the Amelia road. Q. Hortensius harangued the people about the censorship (*i. e.*, delivered a stump electioneering speech in his own behalf). Advice arrived from Etruria that the remnants of the late conspirators had begun a tumult, headed by L. Sergius."

There is no necessity for extending these quotations from the old Roman newspapers further. These examples show that, in the ordinary progress of events, there is but little change. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun." The Roman editions, however, were more concise than the moderns; and paragraphs detailing scenes and events like these, with us would be extended to three times their length. Nor do we find in Roman editorials the modern excuses for positive untruths, such as, "If we are not mistaken," and "This wants confirmation."

The history of the lives which have come down to us show that, in the Roman republic, with all its boasted equality and freedom, the senate frequently continued to exercise a power as arbitrary as that of the sternest despot. Like the proceedings of all arbitrary bodies, those of the Roman Senate would not bear the test of publicity, and therefore all mention of their acts or discussions was prohibited in the *Acta Diurna*, until Julius Caesar, as we are informed

by Suetonius in his life of that great man, upon obtaining his first consulship, made provisions for giving the same publicity to all the proceedings of the senate which already existed for the more popular assemblies. In the time of Augustus, however, the government had again so far assumed a despotic character that an institution of this nature was considered inconvenient, and therefore repealed; while, at the same time, the utility of this daily record was still further narrowed by the destruction of popular assemblies and by the sanguinary laws promulgated against libels, under which head was probably classed the publication of any circumstances unpalatable to those in power. By way of still further restraining the liberty of the pen in the reign of the Emperor Augustus, it was ordained that the authors of all lampoons and satirical writings should be punished with death; and succeeding tyrants frequently availed themselves of this severe enactment to wreak their vengeance on those they hated or had occasion to dread—a course not wholly unlike that pursued by vindictive men in our own day, when they avail themselves of the anomalous state of the law of libel to inflict deep and often total ruin upon those who may have unconsciously brought themselves within the operation of the law. Although the *Roman Gazette* contained necessarily a very meagre abstract of public events with the awkward writing materials then in use, yet it appears that the art of the short-hand writer was not unknown to the Romans, for we read that persons of this description were employed by Cicero to take down verbatim the speech of Cato in the celebrated debate of the Roman senate upon the punishment of those who had been concerned in the Cataline conspiracy.

FASHION NOTES.

PANIERES made entirely of flowers are worn in Paris.

CHINESE red and old gold are the favourite colours in furniture coverings this season.

PRETTY batiste ties, in pale pink and blue, at Macy's, are heavily embroidered on the ends.

THE handsomest coaching parasols are in wide stripes of satin in strongly contrasting colours.

FRENCH women make paniers from the apron fronts of old dresses, cutting them in two and using one-half for each panier.

THE fashionable style in gentlemen's hosiery is in clouded goods, in which obscure effects are shown in cardinal, brown and navy blue.

THE crepe effect so extensively introduced this season is given in a new summer silk called *monie* silk. It comes in ecru, fawn, garnet and cerise blue.

AMONG the new fashions are the jet embroidered bonnets, the fine jets being exquisitely wrought on net, tulle and satin. Other styles of netted jet are made over satin.

OF course, it had to come. Pinafore is to be the popular name for new styles in collars, neckties, hats and other articles of clothing or adornment during the season just opening.

RICH black silk costumes are made up in polonaise, with revers fronts; the revers are formed either of satin, brocade or watered silk, with collar and sleeve trimming to correspond.

FOULARDS in chintz figures are trimmed with silk to correspond with the darkest figures, and beautifully tinted pearl buttons inlaid in colours to correspond with the different colours of the dress.

BELTS are very fashionable and are of all materials, leather and velvet being the most popular. Leather are the best, and these have a small satchel attached to the belt, which is useful in carrying coin.

HUMOROUS.

THERE cannot be named a single pursuit or enterprise of human beings in which there is so little possibility of failure as in praying for sanctification.

IT doesn't take long for a rural neighbourhood to find out what kind of carpets and furniture a newly-arrived family possess, after the usual round of formal calls have been made by observing women.

NEW YORK proposes to call back its Pinafore companies before the next census is taken. If it don't there is no knowing where the balance of power will light.

BOUGHKEENSIE is to have a home for old men. "Now who," asks the *Kingston Freeman*, "will endorse a home for old women?" What foolishness! Dear sir, there are no old women.

THE present plan adopted by churches of making contributions by envelopes enables a man to drop two old-fashioned cart-wheel copper cents into the basket with as much style and flourish as if they were traded dollars at par.

A WEALTHY bank officer, on being applied to for aid by a needy Irishman, replied, promptly: "No, no; I can't help you; I have fifty such applicants as you every day." "Shure, and you might have a hundred without costing you much, if nobody gets more than I do," was the response.

WE once heard of a poor fellow, a reporter, who was engaged to the lady of his choice for fourteen years, at the end of which time she sued him for breach of promise. He pleaded in defence that his heart was in the right place, but he had not been able to get a day off in which to consummate the contract. He was acquitted upon the strength of this plea, and the equally weighty one that he had no money and owed for six weeks' washing.

THEY come, they come! Already the sea-serpent has been seen twice off Newport, a hour came out of the woods at Catekill, and the wild man ran naked out of a swamp in Texas, and bit a whole porter-house steak out of a man before help arrived. And last Saturday night, at the last stroke of twelve, a dark figure with upraised arms stood on the porch of the Burlington court house and said, "Ha! Ha! Ha!" in sepulchral tones. He was taken along and fined \$3.25.

THEY say that profanity was not known in the world until one day, somewhere about five hundred years before the Christian era, when Aristides, chasing from his office in desperate haste to catch the last street car, was stopped by Themistocles, who wanted to tell him how the rheumatism had been troubling him nearly all winter and how many things he had tried for it.

BLOWING into the muzzle of a shot-gun is a standard method of producing newspaper items. It remains for a young lad down town to introduce a variation. The street hose wouldn't work; the water was turned on at the epiglot all right, but there seemed to be an obstruction. He placed his mouth completely over the end of the nozzle and blowed just once. The pressure of the whole reservoir suddenly broke loose, concentrated into that one nozzle. The lad let go with his mouth and sat down about fifty feet away, down the street, and he has not yet been relieved of the impression that his brain is waterlogged.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

LONDON critics say that Capoul's voice has lost much of its former beauty.

PRETTY VINIE CLANCY will be the heroine of a new English opera next season.

LECOQC, the composer, who has been seriously ill, is pronounced to be much better.

It is said that Miss Mary Anderson, during the past season, has made quite a pretty fortune.

A GERMAN composer, Herr Albert Dietrich, has set the story of Robin Hood as a three-act opera, which has been successfully produced at Frankfurt.

J. L. TOOLE and wife celebrated their silver wedding April 27. One hundred guests, more or less literary and artistic, attended, each bringing a gift of silver.

THE death in Paris is announced of the composer Arnold. In his capacity of professor of singing he was the teacher of Faure, Bouly, and of a number of other theatrical celebrities.

THE Paris *Figaro* publishes the music of a march composed by Count Beust, the Austrian Ambassador at Paris, in honour of the silver wedding of the Emperor and Empress of Austria.

SIG. SYLVA, the new tenor, who has just made his first appearance in London, is described as a "heroic" tenor, his voice being of the peculiar quality which makes it difficult to decide whether it is a high baritone or a low tenor.

THE Glee season of opera has not been a success at Covent Garden. There have been a number of new singers who have not particularly distinguished themselves, and not even Capoul, Maurel and Grazziotti have made the season brilliant. Some of the hitherto unknown artists are ridiculed in the London press.

MR. CELLIER is to accompany Mr. Arthur Sullivan and Mr. W. S. Gilbert next October to America, where a new comic opera by these two latter gentlemen will be produced, under the personal superintendence of the composer. It is intended to limit the performances of the piece for some considerable time to the United States. This project is the result of a number of applications from various American managers, who have offered large sums by the extraordinary success of the Pinafore.

THE CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

The illustrations in the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS this week have been prepared with unusual care, and taking it all in all, the present is a very creditable number. Among the illustrations are: a view of the Art Association building; the inauguration of the building; the steamer "Frigate" running the rapids; the lacrosse match between the Montreal and Chateaufort clubs; the grand review; the reception of the 13th at Jacques Cartier pier; the volunteers drilling by the electric light and the decorations in the harbour. —*Witness, Montreal.*

The CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS this week is an excellent number, and contains a number of illustrations with respect to the celebration of Her Majesty's Birthday. The first is a view of the Art Association building, taken from about Cathcart street. Next is an interior scene at the top of the stairs, His Excellency and H. R. H. having just reached the top of the landing. Then we have the lacrosse match and a two-page sketch of the grand review. We have also a sketch of the reception of the Thirteenth, and the scene on the Champ de Mars as lit up by the magnesium light. The reading matter is also excellent. —*Star, Montreal.*

The CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS this week is more than extra in its illustrations. The troops marching on the review grounds, the reception of the 13th Brooklyn, and the opening of the art gallery are all well done, and reflect much credit upon the artist of our contemporary. Our "Canadian Illustrated" will soon equal its sister in the Motherland. —*Herold, Montreal.*

THE ILLUSTRATED NEWS.—This journal, Canada's Illustrated paper, presents an unusually brilliant appearance this week, though for that matter it is always a fine sheet. The artists employed by the *Illustrated News* carefully follow the movements of the Vice-Royal party in their cuts, and give faithful representations of the drilling on the Champ de Mars by electric light, the shooting of the Lacrosse trophies by the boat bearing the 13th Brooklyn Regiment, the Lacrosse match by the Montreal and Chateaufort clubs, the opening of the Art Association building by the Governor General and the Princess, and the grand review and sham battle on Queen's Birthday. The last-named sketch is a fine one, and displays very great talent in the artist. It covers a whole page of the journal, and affords a full panoramic view of the whole field, showing even the likeness of the principal parties engaged. Every house in Montreal should have it framed and preserved. —*Post, Montreal.*

OUR CHESS COLUMN.

Solutions to Problems sent in by Correspondents will be duly acknowledged.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. S., Montreal.—Letter received. Thanks.

Student, Montreal.—Correct solution received of Problem No. 224.

W. A. L., Toronto.—Letter received. Will answer by post.

R. F. M., Sherbrooke, P.Q.—Correct solution received of Problem No. 226, also, correct solution of Problem for Young Players No. 222 and 223.

E. H., Montreal.—Correct solution of Problem for Young Players No. 223 received.

The Essay on Chess by Muns. Delannoy which gained the first prize at the Paris Literary Tournament ought to be read by every chessplayer in order that he may rightly understand the importance of his favourite game, and by every one who is not a chessplayer so that he may be induced as soon as possible to put himself in a position to reap some of the advantages which as yet he has not properly estimated.

The writer is evidently a chess enthusiast, whose devotion to the game has not been diminished either by the trials of life or increasing years, as the following extract will fully prove.