

is perhaps a model of good-humour during the soup, and of playful wit at the roast, may often be observed to develop a certain gloomy abstractedness of manner as the feast draws near its close. His animation deserts him, his lively sallies are no more, and the face which was flushed with enjoyment, if with nothing else, takes a sickly hue. The explanation is to be found in a glance at the programme—he is down for “The Reserve Forces”—and his hour is nigh. He rises, and all the brilliancy of his natural gifts is gone as he gasps out the very commonplaces of his theme with a tongue that seems to have been suddenly dried by a breath of the simoom. He looks helplessly across the table for a missing epigram, and fumbles in his waistcoat-pocket for a peroration which he has left in his great-coat. It is all stage fright—the worst of the waking terrors of life.

ARCHDEACON FARRAR'S lectures in America on Dante and Robert Browning are awakening some interest. Of Dante Archdeacon Farrar says:—“The three greatest poets are Æschylus, Dante, and Milton, and the greatest of these is Dante. You may wonder at my apparent forgetfulness of Shakespeare; but I venture to say that the world will have another Shakespeare before it has another Dante. He combined all that was great in the poets that had gone before him, and he excelled all that followed him.”

ELECTRICITY has been applied by an American inventor, Mr. C. H. Pond, to the automatic winding of clocks. The apparatus has been introduced into England, and is now to be seen at the office of Mr. B. Watkin, of Leadenhall Buildings, London. A small battery, operating an electric motor, is the means employed to effect the winding, and it is capable of doing so for two years without renewal of the battery. The hour wheel at every hour switches the current through the motor, which rapidly revolves for six seconds, and by a gear wheel actuates a small spring, which thereby acquires sufficient tension to run the clock another hour. The battery is cut off and rests for the ensuing hour, when it is again called into play. It is thus only employed for six seconds in an hour, or fifteen hours in a year. —*Engineering*.

OF Browning Archdeacon Farrar says:—“He has given not a book but a literature, and to have studied and understood him, I say, deliberately, is a liberal education of itself. I do not know of any poet, except Shakespeare, in whom you will find so marvellous a portrait gallery. He brings jewels from the East and West, from nature and art. History is his plaything, psychology his electric spark. I know of no poet more learned, exact, or thorough. He builds his poems out of rough blocks of marble. He is obscure only in the sense that his thoughts are profound. I think many of Browning's nature paintings will take precedence of many of Tennyson's. Browning is didactic, as nature is didactic. He is essentially a poet of humanity. He does not destroy; he is a worker in fine metals, a moulder of the passions of men's minds. He thinks at full speed.”

CAPTAIN H. F. PERLEY, in bringing to a conclusion his interesting notes on rifle shooting, which have been appearing in the *Canadian Militia Gazette*, says: “There is one thing which should be borne in mind by all shooting men—that the rifles they use are those placed in their hands for the purpose of drill and becoming proficient as soldiers in their use. Every man to whom a rifle is issued should pride himself on becoming efficient in its use on the range, and on being as well one of the best-drilled men in his company or battalion. Shooting men should remember that a systematical and intentional neglect of drill can only be construed as a slur on the corps to which they belong. The man who shoots because it pays, and is always ready to engage in scratch matches at a favourite range, or for sweepstakes, makes but a poor soldier. Such as he shoot for the sake of winning prizes, forgetting, it may be, that prizes should be viewed in their proper light, as rewards for good, true, and honest shooting. It is to be regretted that few of the officers take an interest in shooting, forgetting that it is part of their duty to teach their men how to shoot.”

WE have recently seen a rifle vernier sight marker, from Mr. W. W. Greener, the well-known rifle maker of Birmingham. This little instrument is the invention of Private H. Greener, of the 1st V.B. South Staffordshire Regiment, and is designed to serve the double purpose of a bar elevator and line marker. For the former purpose the instrument is applied exactly in the manner of the ordinary “Murcott” vernier. To mark the bar, the vernier is turned over and applied to the sight tangent. A vernier scale on the face of the instrument, in addition to the usual scale marked on the edge, permits of an easy and accurate reading whilst applying the marker to the sight; the vernier is depressed to mark the bar. The arm furnished with a point makes a fine and clearly definable line, by removing the smoke or black from the bar, and the line is got just where it was intended to be—there is no possibility of slipping or a faulty line being marked on the bar, as is often the case when a separate marker is used in conjunction with a vernier, and smudging is avoided; the time occupied in putting on the line is also reduced to a minimum. —*Volunteer Service Gazette*.

AT what hour of the day is a man at his strongest, and so fitted to do hard work with the least weariness? The answer returned by Dr. Buch, from the results of his experiments made with the dynamometer, is that a man is at his best when he turns out of bed. The muscle force is greatly increased by breakfast, and it attains to its highest point after the midday meal. It then sinks for a few hours, rises again towards the evening, but steadily declines from night to morning. It is probable that there is some confusion here. No doubt a sudden and powerful effort, such as is registered by the dynamometer, is better made after the muscles have been for some time in use, and any products of their disintegration which may have accumulated during the night and sleep have been washed away by the

improved circulation that follows waking; but we can entertain little doubt that sustained effort, whether mental or bodily, could be best performed during the morning, and not after the midday meal. Dr. Buch is, however, right in maintaining that the two chief foes of muscular force are overwork and idleness. Sweating whilst working deteriorates muscle force. Many of the greatest workers in the world, though not all, have been early risers. But early rising, according to Dr. Buch, ought always to be supplemented by early breakfasting. —*Lancet*.

M. PAUL BERT read a paper at the last meeting of the French Academy of Sciences on the experiments lately set on foot by the Hereditary Prince of Monaco, who was himself present at the meeting, with the object of determining the course of the current of the Gulf Stream. The received belief is, that after passing the Azores it flows in a north-easterly direction, washing the shores of the northern countries of Europe; but this theory has never been scientifically verified. The Prince took several hundred floats to the Azores last summer, and sailing in a northerly direction, he dropped them one by one into the ocean, allowing an interval of a mile or two between them. In the interior of each is a paper giving the latitude and longitude of the spot where it was dropped; and mariners have been requested through the usual channels to note the time and place of their picking up any of them they may happen to fall in with. If a sufficient number of these observations can be collected, a much-needed light will, it is hoped, be thrown on the direction and velocity of the Gulf Stream. So far only three of the floats have been recovered from the ocean, under circumstances, it must be added, which seem to make against the received theory. Instead of being found at a point northward of that where they were deposited, they had floated considerably to south of it, and were cast ashore on the Eastern Azores.

“At the beginning of every month a packet-boat sails from Falmouth for North America, having a mail for Quebec on board. In the summer months she puts in at Halifax (on her way to New York), and there delivers the mails for Canada. From Halifax they are forwarded by post for Quebec. In the months of November, December, January, and February the packet-boats pass Halifax and deliver the mails for Canada to the agent for British packet-boats at New York, who forwards them through the United States by the nearest post route for Montreal. A mail for England is despatched from Quebec once every fortnight in summer and once a month in winter to be put on board the first packet-boat for Falmouth. A mail for Burlington in the United States is made up at Quebec every Thursday, and at Montreal every Saturday, by which conveyance letters may be sent for Europe, under cover to a friend at New York, on paying the Canadian postage at the office at which the letter is put in. Opportunities offer weekly at New York for England. The post for Montreal leaves Quebec every Monday and Thursday at four o'clock in the evening, and the post leaves Montreal for Quebec on the same days at the same hour. The post arrives at those places on the morning of Wednesdays and Saturdays. A monthly communication by post between this Province and Upper Canada has lately been opened, and will continue during the winter.”

Probably before reaching this last sentence the reader will have come to the conclusion that the above is not from Copp, Clark, and Company's Almanac for 1886. It is from the Quebec Almanac for 1808, seventy-seven years ago—when a monthly mail was first established between Upper and Lower Canada.

D.

LITERARY GOSSIP.

C. KLACKNER is publishing a number of large etchings by Hamilton Hamilton.

THE biography of Louis Agassiz, written by his widow, has been published in England by Macmillan and Co.

“THE LEADING FACTS OF ENGLISH HISTORY,” by D. H. Montgomery, will be published by Ginn and Co. about January 15.

LAURENCE OLIPHANT has written some sketches of autobiography, which will probably appear in *Blackwood's* during the coming year.

THE sixth volume of the variorum edition of Shakespeare, edited by Horace Howard Furness, is “Othello.” It is now in the press of the J. B. Lippincott Co.

OUR readers will find in our advertising columns this week announcements of an unusually tempting display of literary and other wares.

THE *Grip* Company has issued a new Canadian Christmas Annual—Canada's Christmas—filled with lithographic illustrations of Canadian scenes and sports.

GEORGE H. BUCHANAN AND CO., of Philadelphia, have ready “The Ethics of George Eliot's Works,” by the late George Crombie Brown, with an introduction by Charles G. Ames.

THE eighth edition, in English, of M. Taine's “Notes on England” (Chapman and Hall) appears for the first time with a portrait of the author, which is, by the way, a striking likeness.

TICKNOR AND COMPANY will publish the recently discovered Emerson-Carlyle correspondence in a supplementary volume for the benefit of those who already possess the first edition.

THE *Globe* made its appearance last week attired in a handsome new dress. It is now printed from a new Scotch metal-faced type, and is as clear and readable typographically as it is literary.

MR. EDWIN GLEDHILL, composer, of this city, has set a pleasant but rather unseasonable song, “’Twas a Balmy Night in June,” to very sweet music. It may be found at Nordheimer's.

MESSRS. L. PRANG AND COMPANY'S series of Christmas and New-Year cards for this season comprehends a great variety of subject, executed with most artistic taste. The flower and figure-pieces, book-mark designs and others form an art collection impossible to match in so small a compass. The sole Canadian agents are the Toronto News Company.