

LITERARY AND PERSONAL GOSSIP.

THE WEEK is sincerely grateful for the warm and kindly greetings which it is receiving from representative and popular journals—the established exponents of progressive public opinion—throughout Canada. In our respective spheres it is our aim and duty to exalt the tone of Canadian thought, to advance Canadian interests, and, above all, to uphold our country's honour. In finance, politics, literature, in all the varied walks of journalistic life, we can not only build up our common cause, but we can also aid and cheer one another by that which costs but little, though it often accomplishes much, a kindly word.

THE prospectus of the *Overland Monthly*, for 1891, promises an advance all along the line.

MR. F. T. PALGRAVE has just been re-elected to the Oxford Chair of Poetry for a second term of five years.

MR. GRANT ALLEN is to contribute a series of scientific articles to *Great Thoughts* commencing with the New Year.

LADY VIOLET GREVILLE and Mr. W. Davenport Adams have been appointed joint-editors of *Life*. The gentleman is also the responsible manager of the paper.

AN ardent tree planter is Joaquin Miller, who has already set out more than twenty thousand trees in the vicinity of his home, "The Heights," near Oakland, Cal.

Free Russia, the organ of the English "Society of Friends of Russian Freedom," presents a cheap and available means of information on a subject which is arousing the eager interest of all lovers of civilized freedom.

The Monist for January will be a very attractive number. Professor Charles Pierce will unfold his new philosophy in "The Architecture of Theories." There will be other able articles by well known writers.

HARPER AND BROTHERS have nearly ready for publication an "Elementary Latin Dictionary," by Charlton T. Lewis, Ph.D. The work is substantially an abridgment of Dr. Lewis' larger work published about a year ago.

D. LOTHROP COMPANY announce as among the first books of 1891 to appear early in January: "Miss Dee Dunmore Bryant," by Pansy; "Ways and Means," by Rev. F. E. Clark, D.D., and "A Modern Exodus," by Faye Huntington.

VICTORIEN SARDOU, the French playwright, is entering his sixtieth year in robust and vigorous health. He has never been ill, and attributes his immunity from disease to the fact that he takes eight hours' sleep every night and is never bothered by his digestion.

A LETTER of James Russell Lowell to the University of Pennsylvania, explaining that illness prevents him keeping certain lecture engagements, calls to mind that this distinguished poet and diplomat is full seventy-two years old, and looks back, and not forward, to the best work of his life.

PROFESSOR SCHURMAN of Cornell has had in mind for some time the publication of a philosophical magazine, to be in America what *Mind* is in England. The trustees have voted a subsidy for the carrying out of this plan, and next year the *Philosophical Review* will be published under the editorship of Professor Schurman.

CARDINAL GIBBONS, Dr. Mary Jacobi, Dr. Osler (physician in chief of Johns Hopkins Hospital), Miss Thomas (Dean of Bryn Mawr), and Dr. Folsom, of Boston, all take part in a most interesting series of Open Letters to be published in the February *Century*, on the opening of the Johns Hopkins Medical School to women.

WE wish to express our pleasure with that bright and clever monthly paper, *Wives and Daughters*, conducted by Mrs. John Cameron and Miss Ethelwyn Wetherald. It is a credit to Canadian journalism, and if purity of tone, literary excellence and general interest count for anything in Canada—and we think they do—*Wives and Daughters* will have a long, useful, and, may we add, profitable existence.

IF a novelist feels played out, all he has to do, according to a contemporary, is to buy a plot. There are persons, it says, "gifted with no faculty of writing who for a small sum are prepared to contrive you all the involutions and evolutions of a story, with a full complement of heroes, villains, lovers, heavy fathers, scheming mothers, and all the rest of it." They are much too modest, however, to wish to pose as collaborators.

IN *The Forum* for January, Dr. Austin Flint, of New York, will publish an article on "The Revolution in Medicine." Dr. Flint explains the method not only of Dr. Koch's treatment for consumption, but the probable early extension of a similar system of treatment to most of the other diseases that are caused by bacilli, such as diphtheria, typhoid fever, and measles. This is perhaps the first comprehensive and philosophical explanation that has been made for lay readers of the practical applications of the results of bacteriology.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Alcock, C. W. Association Football. 30c. London: George Bell & Sons.
Bell, Ernest. M.A. Athletic Sports. Vol. III. \$1.25. London: George Bell & Sons.
Green, R. F. Solo Whist. 30c. London: George Bell & Sons.
Onnet, Georges. Countess Sarah. Toronto: William Bryce.
Oakes, Christopher. The Canadian Senator. 30c. Toronto: The National Publishing Co.

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

SUNSET BY THE SEA.

ALONG the ocean's distant line
A fringe of snowy lace extends;
The calm blue billows have a sign
Of farewell as the sun descends.

Long tongues of water lap the sands—
Decked in gay pebbly filligree;
And o'er the vernal meadow lands,
The wind brings twilight from the sea.

The golden glimmer in the sky
Is mirrored in the waves below;
And many a richly gleaming dye
Is folded in their ebb and flow.

The heavy clouds scud o'er the vault,
As if the blushing sun to hide;
While lagging vapours slyly halt,
Then journey downward toward the tide.

And nearer to the noisy shoals
The spumy surges madly leap;
Flanked by the stronger wave that rolls
Behind, from the far sounding deep.

The pungent, salty breezes stray
Along the silent, darkling beach;
And soon the glory of the day
Night puts beyond all mortal reach.

—Leon Mead, in the *Saturday Review*.

FASTING.

IN connection with Professor Moleschott of Rome, Professor Luciani, of Florence, made a careful study of the "Hunger Virtuoso," Signor Succì, during his thirty-days' fast some two years ago. The results of their work are published in a monograph entitled "Fasting: Studies and Experiments upon Man," printed in Italian and German. According to the *Medical Record*, Signor Succì, when not starved, is a man of strong muscular frame, with little subcutaneous fat, and weighing about one hundred and forty-seven pounds. During his thirty-days' fast in Italy he lost 6,161 grams, or about thirteen pounds. During his first thirty days of fasting here he has lost considerably more. He drank at that time an average of 577.5 grams of water daily, which is about the amount he takes now. Luciani states that he had "firm muscles, a good deposit of subcutaneous fat, a very slow tissue-change, and, above all, an extraordinary force of will." The Italian professor seems to think that by voluntary exertion Succì is able to slow down the metabolic processes, just as some peculiarly endowed persons can slow down the heart. It is upon this interesting point that Luciani particularly dwells; and he finds in Signor Succì a proof of the regulating influence of the nervous system over the functions of heat-production, respiration, hepatic action, etc.—*Science*.

UNITED STATES' CIVIC GOVERNMENT.

WITHOUT the slightest exaggeration we may assert that, with very few exceptions, the city governments of the United States are the worst in Christendom—the most expensive, the most inefficient, and the most corrupt. Among our greater municipalities, we naturally look first at New York and Philadelphia. Both are admirably situated; each stands on rising ground with water on both sides; each is happy in position, in climate, in all the advantages to be desired by a great metropolis. In each, what is done by individuals is generally well and sometimes splendidly done; and in each, what is done by the corporate authorities in matters the most essential to a proper city government is either wretchedly done or left utterly undone. Everywhere are wretched wharves, foul docks, inadequate streets, and inefficient systems of sewerage, paving, and lighting. Pavements which were fairly good at the beginning have been taken up and replaced with utter carelessness, and have been prematurely worn out or ruined. Obstacles of all sorts are allowed; tangled networks of wires frequently exist in such masses overhead as to prevent access to buildings in case of fire, and almost to cut off the rays of the sun. Here and there corporations or private persons have been allowed to use the streets in such a manner as to ruin them for the general public. In wet weather many of the most important thoroughfares are covered with reeking mud; in dry weather this mud, reduced to an impalpable dust, containing the germs of almost every disease, is blown into the houses and into the nostrils of the citizens. But this is not the worst feature; the city halls of these larger towns are the acknowledged centres of the vilest corruption.—*Andrew D. White, in December Forum*.

HAPPY ACCIDENTS.

THE shot tower of modern times is said to have been the accidental result of a curious dream. A shot maker named Watts lived in Bristol, England. He plied his trade in the usual way, taking great bars of lead, pounding them into sheets of the necessary thickness, then cutting the sheets into small cubes, which he rolled in a little barrel until the corners were worn off by constant friction.

One night he dreamed that he had been at a merry-making, and that the revellers were all trying to find their way home, when it began to rain shot; beautiful globules, polished and shining, fell at his feet. Next morning remembering his dream, he wondered what would happen if molten lead were thrown down from a great height. At length he carried a ladle full of the hot metal to the steeple of St. Mary Redcliffe, and dropped it into the moat below. On descending, he found at the bottom of the shallow pool handfuls of perfect shot, superior to any he had ever manufactured. His fortune was made from that moment; he had conceived the idea of a shot tower. Argand invented the lamp which bears his name by long processes of thought, but the chimney which perfected his invention was the result of chance. One day he was busy in his workroom before the burning lamp. His little brother was amusing himself by placing a bottomless oil-flask over different articles. Suddenly he placed it on the flame of the lamp, which immediately shot up the long, circular neck of the flask with increased brilliancy. Argand took the hint, and the modern lamp-chimney was the result. The art of lithography was perfected through accidental suggestions. A poor musician was anxious to know whether music could be etched upon stone as well as upon copper. After preparing a slab his mother asked him to make a memorandum of some clothes to be washed. Having neither pen nor paper convenient, he wrote the list on the stone with an etching preparation, intending to make a copy at his leisure. When about to clean off the stone he wondered what effect aqua-fortis would have upon it. The application of the acid made the writing stand out in relief. Inking the stone, he found he could take a perfect impression.

THE DIAMOND.

THE diamond has been so long regarded as a natural crystalline form of carbon that one remembers with surprise that this assumption rests on such slender scientific support as the similarity of atomic weight, and the property of its gaseous combustion product to cause a precipitate in baryta or lime water. As it appeared not incompatible with this knowledge that the diamond and carbon might bear the same relation to each other as nickel and cobalt, Professor Victor Meyer has suggested the further investigation of the subject. In order to obtain a derivative whose preparation entailed no loss of material and yet admitted of easy determination of its physical constants, Herr Krause led the product of combustion in oxygen gas over red-hot copper oxide and then into ammonia water, from which solution he made the neutral sodium salt. This salt was found to correspond to the chemically pure carbonate in its crystalline form, water of crystallisation, solubility in water, melting point, and electrical conductive power, so that there can remain no doubt as to the identity of the two substances.—*Scientific American*.

TRIUMPHANT SONG.

SOMEWHERE in the forties Grisi and Jenny Lind were singing in different places in London. Those who went into ecstasies over Grisi's "Norma" were the next evening enraptured with Lind's "Casta Diva." Great was the rivalry between them. Finally, the Queen, deeming it a shame that such gifted women should be separated by a mean, unworthy jealousy, requested both to appear at a court concert. Of course, they both came. The Queen warmly welcomed them together for the first time. She gave the signal for the concert to begin. Jenny Lind was the younger, and it was arranged that she should sing first. With perfect confidence in her powers she stepped forward to begin. Chancing to glance at Grisi, she saw the southern woman's malignant gaze fixed on her. The fierce look almost paralysed her. Her courage left her, her voice trembled, everything grew black before her and she almost fell. By the greatest exertion of her will, however, she managed to finish her aria. A painful silence followed its conclusion—a silence that told her of failure. She caught a triumphant expression on Grisi's face. Despite her dazed condition, she quickly realized that failure meant lost glory, disappointed hope, the destruction of happiness, grief and mortification to her family and her friends. Suddenly a soft voice, that seemed to come from heaven, whispered to her, "Sing one of your old songs in your native language." She caught at the thought like an inspiration. The accompanist was striking his final chords. She stepped up to him, asked him to rise, and took the vacant seat. Softly her fingers wandered over the keys in a loving prelude, then she sang. It was a little prayer which she had loved as a child; it belonged to her mother's repertory. She had not sung it for years. As she sang she was no longer in the presence of royalty, but singing to loving friends in her fatherland. No one present understood one word of the "prayer." Gradually the song died away and ended in a soft sob. Again there was a silence—the silence of admiring wonder. The audience sat spellbound. Jenny Lind lifted at last her sweet blue eyes to look into the scornful face that had so disconcerted her at first. There was no fierce expression now; instead a teardrop glistened on the long black lashes. After a moment, with the impulsiveness of a child of the tropics, Grisi crossed to Jenny Lind's side, placed her arm about her, and kissed her warmly, utterly regardless of the admiring audience.