

MONTREAL GOSSIP.

One has to live in the Province of Québec in order to fully realize what may be implied by the phrase, "a clear, cold day." During the past week the thermometer has ranged from ten to twenty-two degrees below zero, and Jack Frost has played strange freaks.

"Just the weather for a carnival," say the disappointed ones ruefully. Well, if we have no carnival, we have at least an ice palace—one of grand proportions, too, in the ruins of the late fire in St. James Street, which present a very beautiful and curious appearance, encrusted as they are with ice. From the street level to the top story, the buildings are one glittering mass. The night of the fire was so intensely cold that the streams of water from the hose froze as they fell, covering bricks, beams, window sills and walls with a brilliant coating of ice. Some parts of the interior have the appearance of caves of stalactites, the icicles reaching from ceiling to floor. For the first few days after the conflagration the flames burst out at intervals and imparted a fiery glow to the crystal castle, which enhanced its beauty. These little ebullitions, being extinguished, were followed by clouds of steam, which, floating from the apertures of the ruin and ascending heavenward in filmy clouds, had a good ghostly effect. In one of the higher windows stands the fossilized remains of a valuable dog belonging to Mr. E. L. Furniss. The poor brute, afraid to jump from so lofty a height, stood barking for help, and as the water from the hose played upon him, gradually froze to death. The icy stream kept on until the dog became literally encrusted as we now see him—a sort of canine crystal.

"*Regardez donc vos oreilles,*" called out a street gamin to me the other day, "*elles sont gelées.*" Apart from the physical impossibility of looking at one's ears, it is, when one's eyelashes are frozen together, difficult to look at anything. However, putting up my hands, I discovered, by the dangerously brittle feeling of my ears, that they were visited in a special manner by the storm king. Hailing a street car, I hurried home to thaw out. I had some trouble to pay my fare honestly and according to rules, for the last passenger's five cents had frozen in the aperture of the conductor's money-box, and, like the "Noble Duke of York" in the old song, would "neither go up nor down."

In weather such as this, the city Passenger Railway Company and the cab owners reap a harvest. It not so nice for the cab drivers though—freezing on their high box seats. I questioned one yesterday as to the average earnings of a day, but, like most Irishmen, he dwelt more on the extreme than on the average. The tariff here is very low—twenty-five cents for a drive not exceeding twenty-five minutes. Cabby said that two dollars was for him a fair day's earnings, but sometimes he brought home five and six dollars, while he knew chaps who had only got a quarter in the whole day. "You see," said he, chewing a straw in a reflective manner, "cabs is so plenty here, and they are plentier this winter nor ever."

Talking of Montreal cabmen, a good story is told of one in connection with "Father" Chiniquy's visit to Montreal. That worthy was staying at the St. Lawrence Hall, and one day wanted a cab. A cab was accordingly called and came. "The apostle" was reverently assisted across the pavement by some of his admiring friends—foes to abstinence and confession. One of them, fearing lest misfortune should overtake his hero, called out, "Take care, Mr. Chiniquy, the step of that sleigh is slippery!" Up sprang the cabman, who all along had been in blissful ignorance of the name and fame of his fare. "What! you Chiniquy! you who have said wicked things about la tres Sainte Vierge! you, gros cochon, crapaud, you! *Va'teu!* go away! Do you think I want my horse and sleigh to go to hell!" As the discomfited "apostle" retired quaking, cabby seized his sleigh robes and shook them, then rubbed them in the snow, carefully wiped the steps free from any possible pollution, and drove off, indisputably master of the situation.

They are witty, these Montreal cabmen. Another, this time an Irishman, being asked to drive an evangelical gentleman to Christ's Church (that being the name of the Anglican Cathedral here) took him up St. Alexander street and reined

in at the door of St. Patrick's Church. From the cab window out popped the evangelical head. "You Irish blackguard, you! Didn't I tell you to drive me to Christ's Church?" "Sure," says cabby, "If this isn't Christ's church, then devil a church has Christ got in this city at all at all!"

Quite a feature in the entertainments of the season was a "Leap Year Ball," given by one of the leading families here. Several gentlemen arrived with their hair dressed in a most approved fashion, powdered, curled and decorated with flowers or feathers. Some of these fascinating creatures were at once beset for dances and their programmes filled at an early hour; others were slighted—one in especial, who is not noted for his genial politeness, was a wall flower. But supper time brought the climax, when the ladies served their helpless partners with a morsel of chicken, a speck of jelly and one or two grapes, then hurried them back to the ball-room and returning to the supper-room, closed the doors and spent a good hour in refreshment.

Lovers of sacred music are anticipating a great treat in the sacred concert to be given on the evening of the 3rd of February, by the choir of the Gesu. This choir, under the leadership of Rev. Father Garceau, has more than sustained its reputation this winter. Whether owing to the excellence of the music or to the eloquence of the Rev. Fathers Kenny, LaRue and Connolly, this exquisite church is crowded every Sunday evening. Apart from the pleasure of listening to the praise of God worthily rendered in the sweet strains of a well-trained choir, or the still rarer pleasure of hearing His truths proclaimed in faultless English by men who are cultivated as well as learned and who are dramatic and sympathetic in their pulpit oratory, it is an advantage to be privileged to pray in a church that is always warm and clean and bright, a church in which on all sides beautiful thoughts have been wrought into a beautiful pictures which lift the soul to God—a church that is well served and well ordered at all times and seasons, and that is like the King's Daughter of Holy Writ—"all glorious within."

OLD MORTALITY.

BOOK REVIEWS.

Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia. We have received the first volume of these valuable *Records* covering the years 1884, 1885 and 1886, the careful perusal of which enables us in some measure to estimate the rich results of the American Catholic Historical Society's labours since its organization in 1884. It is impossible to overestimate the value of historical societies, and their usefulness in truth's cause. In one of those magnificent encyclicals which have helped to render the present Pontificate glorious, even in the annals of the Papacy, Leo XIII. has directed attention to the great importance of historical studies, and with a masterly hand has sketched the remedy for the false notions of history which have for so long been the foundation of the enmity of peoples outside the Church, towards the Holy See and the Vicar of Christ. That Catholics have nothing to lose and everything to gain by the bringing to light of accurate records of events as contained in original documents, the Holy Father has conclusively shown. In this course, it may be said, and in this only, can the truth be arrived at, and suiting the action to the word, also with a view to setting an example to others, Leo XIII. has thrown open to scholars the wonderful treasures of the Vatican Library. Some years have now passed since this was done, and the result may be seen in the new light in which many historical events are coming to be regarded in defiance of hereditary prejudice and distrust. Another and not less important result is the renewed interest which is being manifested in historical studies in Europe and America, as is evidenced by the formation of innumerable historical societies. In the United States Catholics especially have displayed unexampled zeal and energy in this respect with results such as, it has already been said, it is impossible to overestimate. The oldest and, judged by its achievements, the most active association of the kind is the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia, an association which includes amongst its members such well-known and venerable names as those of Archbishop Ryan, Mgr. Corcoran, of Washington; Rev. Dr. Horstmann,