

# The Dominion Illustrated.

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A Swiss philologist has put forth a theory that a man in cultivated society must have at least 10,000 words at his command, while a college graduate ought to have 25,000. What language does he mean—French or German—the two tongues used in Switzerland? In English we do not see how this distinction holds as, the wider the scholarship, the fewer the number of words needed.

The old province is getting on. A lady has been admitted to the practice of physic by the Quebec Provincial Medical Board, at its last half-yearly meeting. The applicant was a Miss Mitchell, of Queen's University, Kingston. How soon will she be followed by a French sister, although, for that matter, in this city and throughout the country, there are women who do the setting of bones and limbs, called *amanchage*?

The Governor-General, although in love with Quebec citadel, has left it at last and gone to Rideau Hall and his office, in the "Eastern Block," for the winter. His three sons, having landed from England, his Lordship will have his whole family around him. The Ministers are all at their posts; Cabinet Councils are regularly held, and the machinery of Government will run according to rote, until the meeting of Parliament, which may be called earlier than usual this year.

Of all vegetables, celery deserves a good word. It is fair to see, nice to smell, toothsome and tonic. Vegetarian specialists say extraordinary things about its use for the relief of rheumatism. It grows easily, and, in the right soil, for any number of years. It is an early vegetable, and, in these late fall days, the display of bunches is inviting. Always have your crystal holder of celery on the table. Asparagus is another most wholesome dish, which can be had from May to November.

North Minnesota and Dakota claim to rival Manitoba and Keewatin in the quality of their wheat. This year the rivalry cannot be maintained, since our No. 1 Hard has been the cry of Canadian millers, in every province, and the price thereof ranged, in September, 82c. at Grand Forks; 90c. at Emerson; 95c. in another place, and in our "Dominion News" there are instances of \$1. That is legitimate, and not the "Old Hutch" cornering, from 135 to 160.

The Winnipeg Board of Trade is authority for the statement that, of the crop of 1887, there were exported out of Manitoba 7,500,000 bushels of wheat. This sold at an average price of 55 cents, and the amount taken in by the province, at that price, would be \$4,675,000. A Northwest paper adds that, this year, there will be at least 10,000,000 for export, at the price quoted at the time—82 cents a bushel. This is quite a splendid show-

ing, but the total result swells still further if we take into account the large crops of oats, barley and other grain and roots.

Mr. Blaine showed his good sense and taste in the few words which he spoke at St. Thomas, Ont., a few days ago. He closed with these terms of wisdom: "Your and our interests are closely united, and the tendency is, and ought to be, that we will grow closer and closer together. Whether we will ever be united depends on you. When you come, we will give you a cordial welcome, but we never want you to come till you make the first move yourselves."

On the same subject, that staid old paper, the *Journal de Québec*, has a quiet answer to those who find fault with the majority of the province, as an integral factor of the Dominion. It denies that its people are in any way a disturbing element, and affirms that they desire no change, being well pleased with existing institutions. It is only natural that they love the country as much as, if not more than, the other sections of the people, inasmuch as they have lived longer and toiled harder at the soil.

We are afraid that the Germans are laying themselves open to the compliment of ingenuity in doing small things. The latest trick is the ban against displaying in shop windows or selling any print with French title or legend thereon. When there is danger of hurting the plate itself, a piece of paper, with the German words, is pasted over the French text. No wonder that the leading publishers and the art purveyors loudly utter their annoyance at this trifling.

"Observer," in the *Globe*, pays a tribute to the Montreal cab service, which he pronounces superior to that of Toronto. He might have gone further, and safely said that there is none like it on this continent for cheapness, comfort and despatch. For five and twenty cents you are carried to almost any part of the city. The carriages are handsome, the horses good, and the drivers obliging as a rule.

## THE TRASCASPIAN RAILWAY.

We wish to call the special attention of our readers to the views of the Transcaspien Railway, which we publish in the present issue. The reason is that it is the only rival to the Canadian Pacific Railway for direct trade with the Eastern world, and China and Japan.

Next year—unless grave events disturb the peace of Europe—the great line of Siberian railways will have been begun and will be continuously built between St. Petersburg and Wladivostock, on the sea of Japan, in face of the Canadian Pacific, which abuts at Victoria, on the other side of the Pacific. At first the cost of this gigantic work was set down at six hundred millions of roubles, but it has since been ascertained that one-half of that amount, or three hundred millions of roubles, will be amply sufficient. As to the time of completion, it is estimated that three years will be an easy limit, a great deal having been learned from the unprecedented experience of the Canadian Pacific.

Oozon-Ada is the port of arrival on the Caspian Sea. It is already a lively business place. It has a regular steamer service with Astrachan, Russia, Bakoo, the Caucasus and Persia, every week. The cotton trade is very brisk and great, a vessel laden with bales taking its departure

daily. The same remark may be applied to the tea trade, and to the commerce in silks.

The general view of the railway appears in one of our sketches, near the Kopet-Dagh mountains, on the frontier of Persia. At the foot of these hills are found some Turkoman families, with their flocks, tarrying there because there only they can procure the slight quantity of water necessary to their subsistence. Water is the great problem of existence in Central Asia. The soil of the whole country is so rich that, according to the Turkoman saying, if you plant a stick in the sand, and sprinkle it, you have a tree. On the other hand, where water is wanting, the land becomes a desert within a short time. Where arose, in former days—in the oasis of Merv, for instance—flourishing cities, with one hundred thousand inhabitants and more, such as Sultan-Sandjar and Bayzam-Ali, one day the dykes which held the waters captives were destroyed by the invader, Tamerlane or Nadir-Shah. The life-giving water was lost in the sands, carrying away with them the life of these happy and flourishing cities, which are, to this day, desolate ruins where reign solitude and death. But the past may yet be made to revive. The Emperor of Russia has purchased, in the neighbourhood of Merv, a vast domain, where he means to rebuild the great dyke destroyed by Tamerlane. The waters brought in to bounds once more will bring back the fertility and riches of by-gone ages. As a makeshift, in the meantime, the Russians have renewed, before the eyes of the natives, the prodigy of Moses striking water from the rocks. Through iron pipes the water is brought down from the mountains to the Geok-Tepee station.

There are immense spaces wholly deprived of water. Between Oozoon-Ada and Kivil-Arsat no water is to be found, for hundreds of miles, and the only source of supply is by means of distilled water from the sea, conveyed in service trains, as shown in our sketch, for the stations, reservoirs and guard-houses, distributed in large numbers throughout the desert places.

Another serious and dangerous drawback to the Transcaspien Railway are the sudden whirlwinds, driving mountains of sands, which blot the line and all landmarks at one sweep. To obviate these terrible inroads of the elements, palisades and sheds, similar to the snow-guards and tunnels of the Canadian Pacific, are placed along the track. There is also a plant, with deep roots, called "sanaool," which helps to arrest the movement of the sand, as the pine tree does on shifting downs, and furnishes artificial helps for protection along the railway. At the most exposed parts the roadbed is covered with slippery clay, over which the billows of sand roll on without stopping.

These devices, which are sufficient in ordinary weather, are quite inadequate after a wind and sand storm. Then the roadbed has to be cleared, as depicted in our engraving. A body of navvies, under the management of a section engineer, make an attack on these obstructed points. In an emergency the neighbouring Turkomans are drafted for this work of life or death.

While on the subject of the Transcaspien Railway, we may refer to the ruins of the ancient town of Annaou, which, during the Middle Ages, was one of the most popular cities of Central Asia, and was ravaged by Tamerlane. These ruins are on the south of the Transcaspien line, not far from Askabad, the capital of the Transcaspien province. Our sketch represents the grand