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All literary correspondence, contributions, &c., to be addressed to the Editor.

When an answer is required stamps for return postage must be enclosed.

City subscribers are requested to report at once to this office, either personally or by postal card, any irregularity in the delivery of their papers.

NOTICE.

Our agent, Mr. WALTER STREET, is now visiting the towns and villages situate on the Brockville and Ottawa and St. Lawrence and Ottawa railways, and the district between Montreal and Gananoque on the Grand Trunk Railway, collecting accounts and seeking new subscribers to the ILLUSTRATED NEWS. Subscribers whose accounts are overdue are requested to settle with him for the amounts in which they are indebted and we also trust they will do their best to assist him in his efforts to secure new subscribers.

NOTICE.

As the year is now verging to a close, we think it opportune to make a call upon such of our subscribers as are in arrears with us. The rule of payment in advance ought to be applied everywhere, and it was made one of the chief recommendations of the Quebec Press Association, lately organized in this city. All our friends should understand that an illustrated paper which requires so great an outlay, must, as a matter of business protection, insist upon this rule. For those who do not pay at once, the price of the NEWS is \$4.50 per annum, the extra half-dollar being intended to cover the interest on delay and postage. But as a further inducement, however, and in order to regulate our books and accounts with the opening of the new year, we will charge only the regular rate of \$4.00 to such of our subscribers as will settle with us immediately, or between this and the close of December. We are glad to know, from the reports of our patrons and the notices of our contemporaries of the press, that the efforts we have made to improve the paper are duly recognized, but with proper encouragement we are prepared to improve it still more. Our readers can help us in this, first by prompt payment of their subscription, and by inducing others to subscribe. Let each reader of the NEWS send us at least one subscription besides his own, and by thus doubling our circulation, we shall be enabled to give them a paper second to none in its special sphere. Canadians, all over the Dominion, should take pride in supporting an illustrated family and literary journal, and making it a truly national institution, the reflex of Canadian life, progress and thrift.

CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, 9th Dec. 1876.

CANADIANS AT THE POLE.

The British Arctic Expedition, several illustrations of whose adventures we have published, including a graphic one in the present issue, has naturally turned the attention of scientific men and travellers generally to the subject of exploration toward the North Pole. It seems to be almost universally admitted that there is no hope of reaching the Arctic circle by means of ships. The British Expedition has demonstrated at least this fact, that sledging is the only means left of penetrating to the ultimate latitudes of the earth. This being conceded, a number of suggestions, more or less fanciful, have been put forward. An Englishman proposes the propulsion of sledges by means of galvanic batteries, demonstrating to his own satisfaction that these would overcome every obstacle that has hitherto proved insuperable to Esquimaux footman or Greenland dog. A Frenchman advises the use of aerostation, insisting that if Captain Nares had employed balloons, he would have reached the Pole, from the highest point attained by his vessels, within a few hours. That other expeditions to the frozen North will speedily follow this late one, and that other scientific appliances will be brought into play, there is no reason whatever to doubt. Pending these future attempts, it has struck us that we have the material in this country for the very best specimens of Arctic travellers. While the views of suffering and endurance in the Polar regions, as given in the illustrated papers, freeze the blood of most men, and while the account of these hardships bring the tears to many who, like GEORGE AUGUSTA SALA, for instance, ought to be familiar with the varied aspects of human endurance, they are regarded by Canadians with a feeling of calm familiarity. We are all used to just such scenes. Snow, ice, hail, blinding drifts, cutting blasts and the premature darkness of winter days, are things which we know and to which we have become hardened from childhood. In view of these facts, it appears to us that the very best men to enlist into an Arctic expedition, whether on the score of intelligence, hardihood, courage or fertility of resources, would be a band of our Canadian *voyageurs* or *coureurs des bois*. These and the Metis of the Saskatchewan, for example, could be trusted to go as far as, if not farther than, any similar body of men in the world. We rank them as superior, if anything, to the Greenlander, the Icelander, the Labradorian and even the Esquimaux, in all the qualities that go to make up the successful Arctic explorer. If another British Expedition is fitted out, we think they would only consult their own interest in selecting a part of their crew from among our hardy Canadian woodmen.

THE NEW WINTER PORT.

The Government have notified the Allan Steamship Company that in future, during the winter months, mails must be landed and shipped at Halifax instead of Portland. The mail steamships of this line leaving Liverpool will therefore call at Halifax, whence the mails will be sent west over the Intercolonial. The question of making Halifax the winter port of the Dominion, so far at least as the transatlantic mail service is concerned, has been under discussion ever since the successful termination of the Intercolonial Railway. Many and very obvious advantages were urged in favor of this selection. In the Lower Provinces, more especially, no two opinions were admitted in the matter. We are amused to see that some parties are endeavoring to make political capital out of the measure, but as they are of those who subordinate everything to partisanship and the love of office, we do not apprehend that their agitation will amount

to much. In acting as they have done, the present Government have performed only what their predecessors would have performed, and may therefore be regarded as simply carrying out a policy bequeathed to them, without really any option in the premises. It is purely and simply a question of trade, and the Government cannot possibly take any other view of it. So far as we have seen, there has been no direct opposition from any influential quarter in the Upper Provinces. The only fear expressed was that the Intercolonial service during the winter had not been sufficiently tested, and the advice given by Sir HUGH ALLAN and the Montreal Board of Trade, for instance, was that the change should be delayed for another season. It has also been urged that there will be a diversion of much mail matter, and even of freight carriage, to New York. We are hardly prepared to admit the full cogency of this objection. We believe Halifax will be given a fair trial on broad national grounds. Should that route cause delay, there will then doubtless, and very properly, be a recourse to the facilities of New York. But with regard to freight and merchandise, it is not to be supposed that Halifax will offer much rivalry to Portland, at least for this winter, and hence we do not look for much disturbance in this respect. A little good will on all hands will, we trust, lead to generally satisfactory returns, and in the meantime we congratulate our Halifax friends on the opportunity thus thrown open to them.

THE VELOCIPEDE.

A Coventry maker of bicycles has received extensive orders for the manufacture of a new patent bicycle, of which great things are expected. The new machine is the invention of a Brighton gentleman. The action of the ordinary bicycle is reversed, as the smaller wheel is placed in front and the big wheel behind, the riding saddle being in the middle between the wheels. One great advantage gained is that there is no strain on the rider's wrists. The improved machine may be driven at the rate of twenty-four miles per hour. It is easily stopped, the rider having merely to stand up, so to speak, in his stirrups or treadles, when a novel spring action stops the bicycle instantaneously. It has always been a wonder to us that the velocipede, which created such a fashionable fury in this country, only a few years ago, should have been entirely abandoned. We lately saw one solitary rider in this city—and a very fair rider, too—but he trundled his way at night, and through dark streets, as if ashamed of himself. In England, the bicycle has been maintained and is in extensive use at present as a gallant, manly mode of exercise. In France, it is so popular that mail carriers employ it along the high ways of the Departments to deliver letters from village to village. It is likewise adopted in the army for the purposes of despatch. In Canada, where outdoor sports are so popular, and so much in consonance with the hardihood of our young men, it seems to us that the velocipede ought to be brought into favor. For the purposes of locomotion there is as much fun in it in summer, as there is in the snowshoe in winter. It is a fleet vehicle of pace than the webbed sandal. It trains the eye and the muscles of both foot and arm. It induces a grace of carriage beyond that of horseback riding. There is no more danger of breaking one's neck in propelling it than in jumping hurdles, and the lacrosse breaks more shins than the twisting axle. But even the few "accidents" that might occur would only add zest to the novel enjoyment. We should therefore recommend bicycle clubs, to compete for ladies' smiles with cricket, lacrosse, baseball, snowshoe and boating clubs.

RAILWAY CONTRIBUTIONS.

The Corporation of Montreal must be considered to be taking a remarkable course when it entertains the idea of re-

pudding its Railway obligations. Whatever may be the aspect of the case as affecting the validity of its subscription to the North Shore and North Western extension Railway Line, no merely technical difficulty can diminish the duty that rests upon the city to stand by the Government that came to its assistance in its trouble, and delivered it from its monetary difficulties, and which it was happily enabled to do with such a handsome margin of profit in the negotiations. If we identify the City interest with those of the Railway, we are perfectly justified in doing so, for the community will actually be reimbursed the whole of its agreed outlay in a very few years in the article of fuel alone, of which it is so great a consumer. The winter trade of Three Rivers and the North bank of the St. Lawrence, and of Ottawa and the North-West districts would have been to a great extent shut off from the inhabitants and merchants but for the prompt action that interposed for their protection at a most critical juncture. When the question comes before the citizens at large we feel sure they will take a more rational view of the situation than that which has been put forth by some individuals of their number.

THE general commerce of Canada has suffered a large decrease during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1875. The total value of exports from the Dominion, exclusive of coin and bullion, have amounted to \$74,628,212, being a reduction of nearly \$10,000,000 from the previous year. The goods entered for consumption are reported as having amounted during the last fiscal year to \$119,618,657, showing a decrease from the year 1873-74 of \$7,795,512. The commerce of Canada with the United States exhibits a diminution during the year above mentioned of \$4,847,563 in the imports from the Dominion, and of \$3,477,752 in imports from across the border. The balance of trade appears to be in favor of the United States by nearly \$22,000,000. In the year 1872 it was in favor of Canada. This is *multum in parvo* with a vengeance.

The members of the Ottawa Civil service pursuing their duties in the Government building may fairly claim among their privileges that of getting pure water to drink. But at the present juncture, in consequence of a dispute between the General Government and the City Water Works Commissioners, upon a question of rating, they are shut up to the use of the water of the Rideau, in the neighbourhood of the mouth of whose conduit pipes a number of sewers duly scheduled in the *Citizen* are daily emptying their horrible contents. *Amor nunquam crescit*, &c. The health of Mr. MACKENZIE himself has lately created some anxiety among his friends and well-wishers. We must not have the curtain falling upon his efforts in that way, if it can be avoided.

A number of citizens of Quebec, with ex-Speaker FORTIN at their head, have successfully petitioned the Provincial Government for aid in establishing a school of navigation, to take the place of that formerly supported by the Dominion Government. The Provincial Government have done themselves credit in reviving an institution which should never have been abandoned. On the contrary, it should be a national establishment.

THE "Ianthé" of Byron's *Childe Harold* is still living. At a private view of the designs for the Byron Memorial, she was particularly struck with the fact that several of the sculptors had depicted the poet in boots. From her recollection of the poet, he invariably wore shoes. It is intended that the statue shall be placed in the Green Park, opposite the house where Byron wrote *The Siege of Corinth*.