

THE DOMESTIC DIFFICULTY.

II.

"While Tom bears logs into the hall,
 "And milk comes frozen home in pail,
 "When blood is nipped, and wags be foul,
 "Then nightly sings the Screeching Owl
 "'Tu whit, Tu Woo,' a merry note,
 "Whilst greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

The "Tom" of our days wants an assistant and charges \$1 a cord for two saws and a split; and "greasy Joan" wants her evenings out, leaving her pots unkeeled!

Times you see are changed. How are we as a community to advance with them, and to re-adapt our households to the scarcity of domestic labour which we must all admit? That is the question! Without attempting to solve all the problems at once, we present a few suggestions which may here and there be at once adopted, and others which we may as a community gradually work up to.

No. I.—THE FUEL DIFFICULTY.

This is one of the greatest bugbears of the domestic servant in small families.

The coal is perhaps purchased on the wharf and sent up in little carts, drawn by little horses, and driven by inhuman if not infernal little carters, who ingeniously "dump" the coal on the spot best adapted to increase the labour of its storage, and to create the greatest possible amount of inconvenience in the meantime to passers by. If possible, the weather chosen is wet, and the time, towards dusk; and the two men with large shovels, who demand the job of putting in your coal, leave you no option but to pay them whatever they choose to demand, rather than allow the coal to lie in the street all night.

Or, you order a load of kindling wood, and pay \$3 for it, including delivery—after a few days you find a quantity of long, rough boards "dopped" down in the street opposite your door, and you are compelled to go out and seek a man or two to haul them into the "wood shed." A snow storm is usually selected for this kind of delivery, because it is essential that your wood should be dry for "kindling purposes."

Now, "Paterfamilias," do you really reckon every year how much your fuel costs you, and how large in proportion is the cost of the labour which you put upon it?

Are any of these "wood yards" situated across an open yard whence Bidly is expected to trail to and fro day by day for her wood?

Are there any families in Montreal, where Bidly is expected to bring in her blocks at night, and pile them up round the kitchen fire, and chop her "kindling" and put it in the oven at bed-time, to get it dry for lighting the fire in the morning? Is it a comely, comfortable, safe, or necessary practice?

In metropolitan cities, it is always necessary to lighten labour, and in this city if our fuel associations, homes of industry and retail tradesmen will take the hint, we venture to predict that an overwhelming success would follow the introduction of European conveniences, in the delivery of fuel to the consumers. Coal should be delivered in sacks after the London usage, and coal cellars should be provided before every house, opened to the footwalk by grids, so as to ensure delivery from the street in a few minutes. Wood should be delivered and stacked within the premises in small convenient blocks, sawn and split by steam power at the yard—a very small percentage on the value would cover the cost of the labour thus applied. Kindling wood should be prepared in small bundles, enough for one fire, with one resined stick and string so placed as to ensure combustion of the whole.

If it is said that this is already the practice of a few, then we reply—"let the exception prove the rule" and be placed within the reach of all.

But the improvements of the future in our city life should go far beyond such conveniences, which after all would only bring Montreal, as a rising metropolitan city, up to the level of the present age. In the future we see results which were regarded as "Utopian" when it was proposed to convey gas into private houses, and to tax a whole community for a water supply. Prejudices melt more slowly, but not less surely, than snow; and the time may come, and we may live to see it, when hot water pipes, as well as gas pipes, will be demanded of every landlord. Hot water is an essential in civilized life.

It is an expensive luxury when each family has to boil its own kettle, but it would be only a little dearer than cold water, if the consumption were as general and the mode of distribution as universal. What would be the saving of labour? An efficient fire brigade would, at each of its principal stations, have a great stationary engine, capable of ventilating sewers, heating dwellings, running small machinery, and heading fires, with a power and economy yet unknown, or if known, yet undeveloped—with a gain to the Corporation and a tenfold gain to the community. In Liverpool, England, hydraulic engines may be purchased from the Corporation, and water-power is on the bill of fare of the Water Committee. Let us not forget that in some of the devices and contrivances of civilized life Montreal is behind the age. We are ready on the fuel question—area coal cellars—sawn and stacked wood—kindling bundles—only *ad interim*; then our City Corporation will supply us with hot as well as cold water.

Next to fuel is the important question of
 FOOD,
 which will be the subject of our next.

QUEBEC.

(By a Correspondent of The Queen.)

If the readers of *The Queen* could but obtain the magnificent view of the St. Lawrence which I enjoy from my window in the third story of the St. Louis Hotel, they would neither sigh for the dreamy waters of Venice nor the beautiful reaches of the Rhine. The river is grand, beyond my powers of description; it is a fitting inlet for all the ships of the world; a suitable outlet for the great fresh-water seas of the interior of America. The rivers of England are streamlets of reasonable size to flow into it on either side; but none of them would rank with its principal tributaries.

The October weather takes me wholly by surprise; it belongs to sunny Italy rather than to a land famed like Canada for ice and snow. A beautiful haze over the water softens the otherwise too rugged aspect of the opposite shore, and I can just catch the dreamy outline of the mountains in the distance. I know nothing of New York, Boston, or the other great seaports of America; but I am not sorry that I have entered the New World by the portals of St. Lawrence. The evidence of all my senses contradicts the appellation "New World." An antiquarian might demonstrate that our abbeys and cathedrals are centuries older than any buildings of Quebec; but there is a something in the quaint appearance of this town which tells one that it is far more ancient than anything that we have at home. I have seen Chester, but it is comparatively modern, and its wall was built a few years ago. If the blank white chalk cliffs of Dover could be made to bear the grey and venerable appearance of the heights of Abraham; if that city were much larger, and built at the bottom and top and in every accessible portion of the face of the cliffs; if the houses were of all outlandish styles of architecture, if they faced all points of the compass; if the streets had all sorts of turns and twists and zig-zags, if they inclined at all possible angles with the horizon; if all short cuts were by long flights of steps, the laborious ascent of which is like climbing from a lower into an upper world; if it had its mountains, its governor's palace and gardens, its handsome French and its ugly English cathedral, and with all this the beautiful autumnal foliage of the Canadian trees—it would be something like Quebec.

The houses generally have double windows for protection against the cold in winter. There is a movable pane in the outer one, which can be opened for the purpose of ventilation when the weather will permit. The rooms are heated by means of stoves, which can be placed in any part of the room. This method is the same as that used in France, and I think it far preferable to that we have in England, as, in the latter case, the heat nearly all goes up the chimney, while in the former the whole of it is utilized, and an equable temperature is diffused throughout the room. The English method would be well nigh impossible in the depth of the Canadian winter, not only because of the enormous waste of fuel, but because no house could be made thoroughly warm. With the coals at the present prices, it would be well for our English housekeepers to take a leaf out of the Canadian book. Certainly, with proper attention, one-half of the amount of fuel will produce double the effect that we obtain at home. The Canadians, however, think anthracite, a species of hard coal principally from the United States, the best coal. It burns without smoke, and by a self-feeding arrangement of the stove, the fire continues day and night from one month's end to another. Many Canadian houses are heated in every room by hot air or water pipes from a furnace or boiler in the basement; but this is only in very superior establishments.

The streets are unpaved and muddy, and they are frequently crossed by gutters or sewers, protected by a few planks. The footpaths are covered with planks laid lengthwise, except in those places where the declivity is so great that steps are required. Some of these are immense staircases, and all that I have seen are built of wood. Some of the houses have one or more of the outer walls of stone, and the others of wood; a mode of construction I have observed nowhere else. The roofs are also a novelty to me; some of them seem to be small pieces of sheet iron placed like tiles, overlapping each other, and altogether unprotected from the weather by paint or any other substance. They are black and somewhat rusty, but exposure to the atmosphere does not seem to deteriorate them very rapidly. Other houses are covered with small plates of tinned iron, placed in the same manner. These preserve their bright appearance to a remarkable extent, so that the roof of such a house appears as if made of sheets of silvered glass. The French cathedral is covered in this manner, and so are many of the principal buildings. Our London atmosphere would tarnish these unprotected tin plates in a fortnight, and yet they here maintain a very considerable degree of brilliancy for years.

Two-thirds of the inhabitants of Quebec are French—not the French of to-day, but people who speak, and speak well, the language of one hundred and fifty years ago. There are many who understand English, but they evidently entertain much greater respect for the stranger who addresses them in their own tongue. They are very economical in their habits, and will live on less than half the amount that an Englishman of the same class considers necessary. They are polite, obliging, and kindly-hearted; their working people are conscientious but slow workers, and earn less than average wages. They follow the lead of the English-speaking inhabitants to that extent that there is a saying among the latter that every "live man" has to carry a Frenchman on his back. It is very strange that under such circumstances they have preserved so perfectly their French tongue of former days, and their French customs, which amount to a law of the land, and even, to a great extent, among country people, costumes that were French fashions before General Wolfe scaled the heights of Abraham. Their market is consequently a very picturesque sight; they come to it from all quarters on foot, and in various outlandish sorts of vehicles, some of which, I have been gravely assured, are not less than one hundred years old. Of the English-speaking inhabitants more than one-half are Irish, and they are said to be by no means over loyal to the Crown.

The Canadian ladies are forced to do their own housework to a great extent, because of the extreme difficulty of getting servants, or helps, as they are called. Although I believe the troubles of my countrywomen to be great in this respect, I cannot but think that they have reason to congratulate themselves on being more favourably situated than so many others.

Servants' wages are not so high here as further west, but even here they are not only nearly double our home prices.

but the "helps" have to be treated with far greater consideration than is generally given them in England.

The hotel accommodation is very good. A round sum per day is charged, including attendance, bed-room, meals *a la carte*, and every necessary. Wines are, of course, extra, and so are private drawing-rooms, if one requires them. The prices are somewhat less than for the same class of accommodation in England, but not so much less as I should judge that the difference in the cost of provisions would fairly warrant. The meals are taken in a large public room filled with tables, each capable of accommodating six persons. The bill of fare includes dishes never seen in England; besides the varieties of bread which we have, there is one of Indian corn which figures for breakfast. It is light, sweet, and delicious, and, though always eaten hot, it is very digestible. Among other vegetables at dinner, green Indian corn takes a prominent place; it is served up in the ears, each about the size of a half-pint bottle, and having a "cob" about one inch in diameter running lengthwise through the centre. Each guest rubs his hot corn over with butter, peppers and salts it, then taking it by the extremities between the thumbs and fingers of both hands, he bites the corn from the cob. There seems to be no other reasonable way to dispose of the delicacy, but, whatever the skillful and fastidious management of the eater, he seems very much in the unligified position of a dog holding a large bone in his paws and picking it with his teeth; but the peculiar sweet taste of the succulent food is not altogether a bad payment for a little necessary loss of dignity in the manner of eating it. Another delicacy unknown to us at home is the pumpkin pie. The hard part of the pumpkin is pared and boiled to a thick paste, then properly seasoned and flavoured and prepared for the table as an open jam tart. It is served up with pure whipped cream. I would commend this dish to the special attention of any of my countrywomen who may be induced to travel in the Dominion of Canada.

The street vehicles of Quebec seem to be of two kinds. One sort, called the waggon, is a high-mounted, flat-bodied, covered four-wheeled trap; and excepting that it is difficult to climb into, it is passably convenient. The other, called a *calèche*, consists of a very narrow covered body, slung by leather straps to a framework, the front portion of which forms the shafts, the rear portion being attached to the two high wheels on which the rickety thing progresses. It seems to me so top-heavy, and especially on the streets of Quebec so "ramshackley" and dangerous, that I have never ventured to engage one for fear of an upset, and a most undignified and rapid progression by short cuts towards the river bank.

Our Illustrations.

"THE FAIR CORRESPONDENT."

Like most of Santa's compositions the subject of this picture is taken from the ranks of the English upper classes. It is a fair, fresh English girl, in the evening costume in vogue before chignon mausoleums and naked shoulders came to be *à la mode*. In all probability the face is a portrait, for it was the artist's fancy to reproduce in his pictures the lineaments of those with whom he came in contact—or at least of such of them as had attractive faces. The freshness of the young face, the gracefulness of the pose, and the modest simplicity of the costume contrast favourably with the *blat* air, and the hideous, often outrageous toilettes which too frequently characterize the drawing-room belle of the present day.

PORT MOUTON OR MATOON

is a broad shallow bay making in from the Atlantic and dotted with islands; it is stated to have derived its name from a sheep falling overboard from one of DeMou's ancient clippers. The country surrounding it is by no means inviting, although long settled. Its inhabitants are few and far between, and composed chiefly of fishermen, the land being too rocky and sterile for profitable farming. One of the most noticeable features of Port Mouton is the extensive sand beaches on its southern side. The sand is extremely fine and very white, from a distance it appears as if the district over which it extends had been struck with hoary winter and covered with its usual silvery crystal carpeting. The sand was blown some distance inland; the trees appear planted in it, which adds very much to its wintry aspect. In the rear of these sand hills are the foundations of numerous dwellings extending far into the woods, proving that an extensive colony must have at one time existed here, of which history speaks not a word. Beneath this snow-white beach are the mortal remains of hundreds of human beings. The ruck of a wagon wheel or the shovel of those who occasionally visit this locality for a cargo of sand discloses the mortal remains of "Somebody's darling." Whether this spot was used as a cemetery by the French, or whether these bodies were washed ashore by some terrible shipwreck, is not determined. Spectacle Island close by was clearly a burial place, and is held in much superstition by the fishermen and inhabitants of the neighbouring mainland—very few would have the hardihood to stay there after dark. Headless warriors and grim goblins, of various stripes, are said to "make night hideous" on Spectacle Island.

The sketch is taken from the head of the bay, with the famous sand hills on the right, and Spectacle Island—a sort of double island connected by a narrow isthmus, hence its name from its similitude to a pair of "specs"—to the left. The immediate foreground is occupied by a very characteristic Nova Scotian sea-shore combination—a small store where may be found all things from a "needle to an anchor." The storekeeper chiefly "trales" for the riches of the surrounding sea, giving his wares and tobacco for fish, oil, and fat herring; his medicines (quack of course) for mackerel, and his cottons for codfish—or anything out of which he can see a possibility of doubling his money—"good careful soul" that he is. His fish flakes, fish house, and fishing fleet are all in view. Within a hundred yards of our sketch is a ship-yard and a fine vessel of four hundred tons on the stocks nearly ready for launching, which will add another unit to the enormous fleet now owned by Nova Scotia. It is in just such out of the way little spots as Port Mouton that contribute so much to swell the fishing and shipping interests of that Province.

There are hundreds of small ports, bays, and inlets on the coast of Nova Scotia inhabited by a hard-working and intelligent race of people, who are not only comfortable but comparatively rich; who manage to build, own and sail vessels from ten to one thousand tons; who can talk timber or sugar freights with the most learned on such matters in London or