

A SYSTEM OF DANGER SIGNALS WANTED.

To the Editor of the Critic :

Sir,—In commenting upon the frightful accident on the Chicago and Atlantic Railroad, which resulted from the onrush of a train upon one just disabled, and brought to a standstill by the breakdown of its engine, a Montreal journal remarks bitterly upon the absence of a brakeman with lantern to have been sent up the line to warn approaching trains. Now, I would ask, have we not yet supplanted the brakeman and his lantern by something better and more automatic?

We need information here, as to the general service of electric signals in cases of stoppage of a train. If it be difficult, sometimes, for the train servants at the point of stoppage or disaster, to reach the electric handles of communication from their distance along the line from such point of stoppage, could not this be remedied by making those connections more frequent?

It is suggested that a row of electric lights might be supplied, and at every lamp post the means, under lock and key, of instantly illuminating all the lamps of the section which included the stoppage or accident. The lights should be sufficiently numerous to give instant warning to all persons on that section that an accident had occurred, and all trains would be stopped with the smallest possible delay.

If it were desired, from the seriousness of the break, to send the news at once beyond either of the including stations, the station master would do this by instantly continuing the electric illumination one station further, for every alarm, in the special nature of each case, is really wanted for a certain distance, but not beyond.

The row of electric lights must be reserved for this special purpose, and not allowed to be used for anything else, under any pretext. The lights could be colored as desired.

There could be no better warning, when all trains ought to stop on a selected distance, than general and instant illumination along that distance.

But we have no right to start trains so close upon one another's heels, that even the necessary precaution of a general stay of movement on the line becomes in itself a danger.

We want, let us say, more conscientious deliberation in the managers, and very much better training and discipline in the hands, on many of the lines of this continent.

Yours, &c.,

CANADIAN.

CASTINE AND BARON CASTINE.

"His step is firm, his eye is keen,
Nor years in broil and battle spent,
Nor toil, nor wounds, nor pain, had bent
The lordly frame of old Castine."

Whittier.

The ancient town of Castine, at the mouth of the Penobscot, though small, is one of the most interesting places in Maine, and, I may say, New England. In it there is a great variety of grand and beautiful scenery. The view from old Fort George is one of the finest I ever saw. It may be ranked with those of the Bay of Naples, and from the Citadel of Quebec.

It has not only superior natural advantages, but a remarkable historic interest. The Indian name of the place was Pentagoet, and it derived its present name in the region once included in Acadia. It had the flags of five nations float over it. The Plymouth Pilgrims established a trading post there as early as 1626. It was afterwards seized and held by the French for a number of years. At one time the Dutch held it. The site of the old French fort is now easily identified.

Baron Castine was the most prominent figure there during the French regime. He was a native of Boarn, on the edge of the Pyrenees. He came to Canada at the age of fifteen in Carignan's regiment, and when the regiment was disbanded, he went into the Acadia woods and took up his abode with the Indians. He conformed to their habits, and became a chief among them, and was regarded as their tutelary god. He carried on a large and profitable business. His business was largely with his New England neighbors, whom he hated, but was willing to trade with them for his own advantage. He was a decided adherent of the Church of Rome, and had a chapel built and resident priest, and expressed a strong desire to have the Indians converted. It seems he needed to be reformed himself. A priest at Fort Royal, who knew him well, said: "He himself has need of spiritual aid to sustain him in the paths of virtue." Parkman, in one of his histories, writes:—"He usually made two visits a year to Port Royal, where he gave liberal gifts to a church of which he was the chief patron, attending mass with exemplary devotion, and then, shriven of his sins, returned to his squaws at Pentagoet." Perot, the governor, maligned him; the motive, as Castine says, being jealousy of his success in trade, for Perot himself traded largely with the English and Indians. This, indeed, seems to have been his chief occupation, and, as Castine was his principal rival, they were never on good terms. Castine complained to Donoville. "Monsieur Perot," he writes, "will tell you everything. I will only say that he (Perot) kept me under arrest from the twenty-first of April to the ninth of June on pretence of a little weakness for some women, and even told me that he had your orders to do it, but that is not what troubles him; and, as I do not believe there is another man under heaven who will do meaner things through love of gain, even to selling brandy by the pint and half-pint before strangers in his own house, because he does not trust a single one of his servants. I see plainly what is the matter with him. He wants to be the only merchant in Acadia."

Just after this Perot was recalled, and his successor received special instructions in regard to Castine. The new governor was directed to require him to abandon "his vagabond life among the Indians," and to give up all trade with the English and attend to effecting a permanent settlement, and

to lead a life "more becoming a gentleman." He afterwards married a daughter of the chief of the Penobscots. When Andros was royal governor, in 1688, he attacked Castine's establishment and seized everything of any value that could be found, except a small altar with its pictures and ornaments. Its proprietor escaped to the woods, and Andros sent a messenger to him by an Indian, that he would restore his property to him on the condition that he became a British subject, which he refused to do. Castine afterwards regained his ascendancy at Pentagoet. In 1697 a plan was devised to capture New England and drive out the heretics. Boston was the central point to attack, and Castine was appointed to fill an important position in that undertaking. He was to move at the proper time with a large body of Indians and Canadians. The enterprise failed, and Castine and his forces remained idle for some time at Pentagoet waiting for orders to move, but the orders never came. The Indians were thus kept for some time from scalping the inhabitants on the borders. It is a noticeable fact that none of the descendants of Castine can be identified, though special pains have been taken in this respect. Dr. Wheeler, the historian of Castine, told me that he had corresponded very extensively to find traces of them, but had not succeeded.

In the war of the Revolution Castine was held some time by the British, who built Fort George, which was one of their strongest points. Sir John Moore, who was killed at Corunna in 1809, and who, afterwards became the subject of Wolfe's poem—

"Not a drum was heard," &c.

was an officer there at the time.

In the war of 1815, the British took possession of Castine. They quartered the officers on the inhabitants, but fairly compensated them. A manuscript orderly book, kept by one Patterson, was lately found, which contains some very interesting information, from which I copy the following. In this is a record bearing the date of Feb. 5, 1815.—"It appearing in the proceedings of the court of inquiry, of which Lieut. Col. Gantlett, of the 62nd Regiment, was president, that several lodgers of the house of Mr. James Perkins were guilty of a most unprovoked outrage toward Col. Harney, of the 29th Regiment, on the evening of the 22nd of Jan., ult., and using abusive language to Capt. Stanus, of the same command, on which occasion Messrs. Long and Rhode appeared to have been most forward movers. Gen. Gosselin, with a view to preserve good order and regularity in this garrison, directs that Mr. Rhode move from this date, and upon no account is he or Mr. Long, who has already absconded (disliking the result of the investigation) to return, so long as the British shall continue in possession of this place. The other persons concerned will give security for their ordinary behaviour. The cause of this disturbance having originated in the neglect and want of inclination on the part of the landlord to provide suitable furniture for the British officers' apartments, though he accommodated five merchants in his house seven days after the arrival of Harney, the Major-General, therefore, directs that his license to retail liquor be withdrawn, and in addition, a number of officers be quartered in his house."

At this time Castine was a British port of entry, and a number of thousand dollars were collected as duty. When the war closed, and the forces evacuated the place, this money was in the hands of Lord Dalhousie, of Halifax, and having written to the Home Government in regard to his disposition of it, he was authorized to apply it to the use which he, in his judgement, thought best. Being an earnest Christian man and a warm friend of education, he decided to appropriate the money to the founding of an institution of learning, where the Christian religion would be prominently recognized. This was the foundation of the college in Halifax, which bears his name. This "Castine fund," so called, was the nucleus of the endowment of this institution, which has done so much good. The grand new building just opened is the most appropriate material monument that could be erected to his memory.

In Castine is a flourishing normal school, which sends out annually a number of highly qualified teachers, which institution has a liberal State appropriation of money.

At an early period there was a paper published in Castine, called the *Eagle*. In glancing over a number for June 5th, 1810, I noticed the marriage of Napoleon Bonaparte to the Dutchess Marie Louise of Austria. What events have occurred since that time?

(REV.) JOHN MOORE.

A TRIP TO THE EASTERN GOLD DISTRICTS.

(Continued.)

(From our Staff Correspondent.)

BEAVER DAM DISTRICT.

This district is five miles from Sheet Harbor, and I had intended visiting it, but Mr. Irwine, the amalgamator at the Dufferin Mine, had just returned from putting through a crushing at the Beaver Dam mill, and gave me such full particulars that a special trip was unnecessary.

Mr. Yeaton is in charge of the mine in which Mr. Pallister and other Halifax merchants are interested.

Six or eight leads have been tapped on the areas, varying in thickness from two inches to a foot. Six men are employed, and the deepest shaft is down only eleven feet. A four stamp mill, run by water power (now limited, but capable by a small outlay of being made abundant) has been erected, and Mr. Irwine crushed from seven to eight tons of quartz, which yielded two ounces to the ton. This is a very favorable showing, and Mr. Irwine is convinced that Beaver Dam is a very fine property.

AN ISLAND MINE.

Mr. Hart is somewhat interested in mining, and showed me a lot of quartz taken from leads on Big Soft Wood Island, in Sheet Harbor, about