

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

Enlarging Our Choice.

JUDGING from the reports of aviators' experiences and also of the experiences of those who consort with aviators, our choice of accidents is being steadily enlarged. There was a time when a man got into an accident only by getting in front of a railway train or rocking a rowboat. At least these, speaking generally, were the favourite methods. Then the bicycle added to our opportunities. If we desired to be "accidentated" in the daily news-horror-sheet, we simply stepped off the curb at some unusual stepping-off place and the first bicyclist did the trick. When bicycle-scorching went out of fashion, motor-scorching came in. It was a more painful method of getting into the accident column and finding an entrance to the pay-roll of the accident companies. When a motor-car hits you, it strikes you real hard and is apt to hurt you badly. Because of this there are few motor-accidents except among those who go "joy-riding" and the fools who speed on race-tracks.

Aviation, again, has come in just as motor-scorching is growing unfashionable. In another year or two it will be quite possible for any modest citizen to have an accident with an air-machine at a moderate cost. An aeroplane good enough to fall down and break your shoulder-blade can be had from \$1,200 to \$2,000. If you cannot afford this sum, then regular sittings among the amateur aviators as they make their attempts will be equally effective.

* * *

Animals and Their Sufferings.

WOULD it be possible to enact that in cities with 500,000 inhabitants or more, no one should be allowed to keep pet animals? This question is stimulated by a report in the *New York Herald* of July 12th, telling that seventy-five horses were killed the previous day in the Big City, and that 8,000 dead dogs and cats were picked up in the streets in eleven days. The number of rabbits, canaries, parrots, and other pets are not mentioned. Surely here is a situation which demands the attention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

During the exceptionally hot weather of the past three weeks, the suffering of the horses employed in all large cities has been tremendous. Even in Toronto and Montreal, many horses have dropped dead on the streets. This loss and suffering seems unavoidable. Not so with cats and dogs. They are not necessary. If their presence in crowded districts was prohibited, the suffering would be eliminated.

The dog and the cat add an element to home life which is educative in its way; but we who insist on living in crowded foul-air districts, where no living thing has a chance when the heat goes over one hundred have no right to keep pet animals. If we must have pets, the city should force us to become customers of the suburban railways.

* * *

Ottawa's Growing Unpopularity.

OTTAWA is quite unpopular these days. It is a pleasure to visit the Capital City when the frosty air, the merry cab-sleigh, and the frolicsome racoon-coat make its streets attractive and inviting. Newspaper men, members of parliament, senators, officials and sellers of government supplies love Ottawa in the good, old winter-time. But a session in July and August—it seems inconceivable.

Last Saturday, a great sigh went up from a thousand pretty little summer cottages scattered through the Ottawa region, from Montreal to North Bay. A thousand hard-working civil servants tore themselves from the bosom of their families and, donning their lightest clothing and a somewhat austere countenance, took train or boat for Parliament Hill. Not that they went back to work—they returned to Ottawa to explain to Sir Wilfrid and Mr. Borden that it would be necessary to get this adjourned session closed up at once. As one man said: "We can tolerate dawdling legislators in the winter season, but not in July and August. It is permissible to take a week to do a day's work in February, but not in July."

Then Ottawa is unpopular with both political parties just now, because a decision about the general

election has got to be made. Mr. Borden says on the stump, "We will fight to the finish." Sir Wilfrid says, less dramatically, "If the Opposition desires a battle, they must be accommodated." Now, out of parliament, these assertions are quite permissible, but when they are made on the Floor of the House in July it is different. Then begins the real work for which members of parliament and cabinet were created. That means a general election, long evenings over voters' lists, a close inspection of bank accounts and much exhausting conversation. No wonder that Ottawa, the place of necessary decision, is unpopular just now.

* * *

New York State Backs Down.

PROGRESS is sometimes over-done in reform as well as in commerce. When this happens, there is a reaction. Last year the New York State Legislature, tinged with the socialism of the period, enacted a law which was intended to increase the revenue from inheritances. It was another case of slaying the goose with the golden egg habit. The tax-rate was put so high that people with money to leave to heirs and collaterals fled the State. Governor Dix estimated the treasury's annual loss at two millions of dollars. Now the State Senate, with only one dissenting vote, has passed a bill to reduce the rate. The Assembly is expected to approve.

Will all the provincial legislatures in Canada please take notice! Go after the rich man if you think it right to do so, but don't drive him and his heirs out of the country. Riches are useful. They are dangerous only when improperly used. Inheritances may reasonably be taxed, but they should be taxed reasonably.

* * *

Perpetuating History and Heroes.

ONE can scarcely understand how slow Canadians are to get past the portrait period. Our public buildings are being filled to overflowing with cheaply painted portraits of public men, present and past, and the deeds which are more important are not recorded. This is true of the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa, of the Legislative Buildings in Toronto, and elsewhere throughout Canada. At the moment I cannot recall a single historical cartoon in any federal or provincial public building.

In the United States it is quite different. They have passed through the portrait stage and have come up higher under the leadership of Massachusetts. Almost every state building now has its mural paintings of the great events in its history. For example, the Court House in Jersey City is being decorated by three artists—Turner, Millet, and Blashfield. "History of the Revolution and the Glories of the Hudson River" is the main theme, but each painting has its own particular subject.

Some time ago, Sir James Whitney talked of putting some mural decorations in the parliament buildings in Toronto, and also of establishing a provincial art gallery such as graces the capital of every Australian province and of almost every state in the Union. Apparently, however, other important projects have crowded out these ideas, or at least submerged them temporarily.

* * *

Ice Cream and Temperance Reform.

IF all large cities had a plentiful supply of pure water there would be less need for ice-cream selling on Sunday, and there would be a smaller patronage in the bar-rooms on week-days. People must have cooling drinks in hot weather. It would be criminal to deprive them of the privilege of buying ice-cream and soft drinks, where the drinking-water is unsafe.

In Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, and other cities, the water supplied by the municipality is not absolutely safe. Indeed, if private corporations supplied such water, the public press would clamour for criminal indictments. But, of course, no municipality can commit a wrong!

Temperance reformers should oppose the extremists in the Lord's Day Alliance who desire to prohibit the sale of ice-cream and soft drinks on Sunday. They should also get up a campaign on behalf of pure water. If they will do these two things, they will accomplish much on behalf of tem-

perance reform and general social improvement.

A third feature of their programme might be the advocacy of a general law preventing the dumping of sewage and refuse into all lakes and rivers which pass close to towns of over two thousand population. For example, the town of Smith's Falls supplies its seven thousand citizens with unfiltered water from Rideau Lake, although this water is contaminated by all sorts of sewage and decaying matter. Such a law would be difficult to enforce, but it would do much good.

* * *

What Will the Population Be?

WILL the census show more than eight million Canadians? This is the question which will be answered by Census Commissioner Blue in a few days. So far as information has been given out, it is evident that the figures are to be larger than most of us anticipated. The United States authorities have been claiming that a large number of Canadians are passing over the border, and that our net gain by the population movement north and south is not large. If this claim is accurate, a population of seven and a half millions is all that should be expected. If the claim is inaccurate, and if the migration southward has really stopped, then the eight million mark should be reached. A favourable report from the census office, continued favourable weather for crop-growing in the western provinces, and a little cooler weather in Eastern Canada would enable us to endure the burden of the impending general election.

* * *

The Rideau District.

PEOPLE in Ontario have overlooked the Rideau Lakes region. Here is one of the finest stretches of land-and-water scenery in Ontario, close to the larger centres of population, and yet less famous or popular than Muskoka, Lake of Bays, and Temagami. The explanation is simple. No tourist region in Canada ever gets much advertising outside that which originates in the railway offices. Show me a region which is served by no railway, and I will show you a region whose fame is merely local.

The Rideau Lakes Navigation Company has had steamers running from Kingston to Ottawa for years, and the company issues a nice illustrated booklet. But this small company could not afford to advertise in the national publications of the United States and Canada as do the Canadian Pacific, Grand Trunk, Canadian Northern, and Intercolonial Railways. The Grand Trunk touches the Rideau at Kingston and Ottawa, while the Canadian Pacific crosses it at Smith's Falls; but otherwise the Rideau has no railway service. No railway runs parallel with it, nor makes a pretension of developing its tourist traffic. Hence the Rideau is almost (but not quite) as local as the Newmarket Canal.

Some day a railway will run from Kingston to Smith's Falls, and will touch at the best spots along the Catarqui River and the Rideau Lakes. Then there will be a rush to what is now a cottager's and fisherman's paradise for adjacent towns. Ottawa, Smith's Falls and Perth people, with an odd visitor from Montreal and Toronto, are enjoying in comparative solitude one of the most beautiful and most historic beauty spots in Ontario. If these people are wise they will keep that railway away as long as possible. When it arrives it will bring the American fisherman who joyfully cleans out every water in which he fishes. It will also bring the lady with two maids, a nurse, and a supply of fashionable gowns such as might add to the splendour of Newport or Atlantic City.

* * *

Ontario's Bush Fires.

PORTIONS of Northern Ontario have been swept by fire, with great loss of life, and tremendous loss of property and timber. This province is practically the only province in Canada where bush fires are of annual occurrence. The other provinces, and the bush lands under supervision of the Dominion Government are either better patrolled or have greater luck. Perhaps the Ontario authorities have done everything which reasonable prudence demanded, but it does not look that way. It may be that the exceptional weather and the rapid rush of miners and prospectors to a new territory increased the danger beyond what a reasonable administration might have anticipated. Be that as it may, steps should be taken at once to prevent another occurrence of this kind. We must all learn by our mistakes if we are to learn at all, and Ontario should profit by this severe lesson. Greater precautions must be taken to protect this fast developing district.