

Wide Awake for April is before us. It would be a sad heart indeed that could not enjoy this delightful magazine at any time, but the current number opens with such a happy burst of Easter beauty and hope, and such a characteristic frontispiece wherein youth and innocence go hand in hand loaded with *fleur-de-lis* offerings, all suggestive of the life that is just now being expanded by nature into beautiful flowers, and of the other life that we all hope will be ours in the sweet by-and-bye, as to make glad hearts of the most care-worn. As is always the case, *Wide Awake* is filled to the brim and overflows with good things, each of which is as good and fragrant and entertaining as any other. There is no choice or preference where each possesses the acme of excellence. All Canadian children should subscribe to this excellent magazine. It is published monthly by the D. Lothrop Company, Boston, Mass., at \$2.40 a year.

THE Bradstreet Company, whose headquarters are at 279 Broadway, New York, have sent us a brochure which they call "A Record—not a Prospectus" of their business since their incorporation fourteen years ago; the book having reference to the company's methods of reporting the credits of firms, individuals and corporations engaged in mercantile or industrial pursuits. The labors involved in this undertaking extend over 3,800,000 square miles, and among more than 70,000,000 people. The task of gathering the information is performed by several thousand employes, aided by more than 10,000 correspondents; and an evidence of the painstaking nature of the company's efforts is shown in the fact developed that approximately there exists about one strictly commercial mercantile or industrial establishment in the United States and Canada to each seventy inhabitants. This company have agencies in all the principal cities of the United States and Canada, and also in Great Britain, Australia, Germany, Austria, Hungary and France.

THE publishers of the *Victoria Colonist*, Victoria, B. C., have in preparation a series of cuts of the public, business and residential buildings of that city, of scenery in an about Victoria and Esquimalt, near there, and numerous maps showing the extent of Victoria and its geographical and commercial position and advantages. These are intended for the illustration of a mammoth special number of the *Colonist* soon to be issued. The letter-press will consist of well written descriptive and statistical articles relating to Victoria's business, progress and prospects, together with all other matters tending to show to the outside world its importance and commanding position from a commercial standpoint, and also its many scenic beauties and its desirability as a place of residence and resort. The edition will be between forty and fifty thousand copies, which will have a world-wide circulation. It will be the finest number ever issued in the Province, and will prove of great benefit to the city and Province in making it known to capitalists and immigrants.

THERE is no more beautiful literary visitor to our editorial table than *The Illustrated American*. This is a new venture in the field of pictorial journalism, and the specimens now before us indicate that its publication is upon a high plane by which it is made the peer and equal of any similar publication in America or Europe, and this is saying much. And while it is the equal of any it is far ahead of many illustrated periodicals, however pretentious they may be. The illustrations are the chronicling of contemporary history, referring to events, not only of American history but having reference to things, places and persons of importance in all parts of the world. In the production of this beautiful magazine no expense is spared. The artistic work displayed in the illustrations is of the highest order of merit; the literary matter of the most entertaining character; the paper is the best and finest made and the presswork unsurpassable; an attractive feature being a colored supplement in every number, these alone being worth the price of the magazine. It consists of not less than twenty-four pages, 16x12 inches, and supplement, enclosed in colored cover. Published by the Illustrated American Publishing Company, Bible House, New York City. Price \$10 a year, and twenty-five cents per copy.

CANADIAN ASBESTUS.

THE February issue of the *Popular Science Monthly* contains an interesting paper by Prof. J. T. Donald, of Bishop's College, on "Canadian Asbestos": Its "Occurrence and Uses." Many Canadians will doubtless be surprised to learn that in the production of the strange mineral to which, on account of its fire-resisting properties, the ancients gave the name of "endless" or "ceaseless," this country possesses an industry which has already assumed large proportions, and which promises to become ere long one of great importance to it. It was only so recently as 1878 that the first

Canadian asbestos deposit was opened and the output for that year did not exceed fifty tons. In 1888, however, nine mines were in operation, and their total production was 4,404 tons, valued at the mines at \$255,000. The only other great source of supply is Italy, and Canadian asbestos is now being shipped even to that country. The United States, however, is our chief market, over three-fourths of the output of 1888 having been sent thither. Preparations are now being made by an English company which controls the Italian mines for the extension of operations in the Canadian field, and there is no reason why this should not become one of our most important industries.

The term "asbestos" properly denotes a peculiar form assumed by several minerals rather than any particular species. The mineralogist, however, originally applied it to the finer sorts of fibrous horn-blende, and it has now come to denote fibrous serpentine, which is the asbestos of commerce. This mineral occurs in fibers so fine and flexible that they may be woven into a fabric like cotton and flax, and this fabric is capable of resisting a very high temperature, some varieties being infusible even at 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Its chief components are silica and magnesia, and, as has already been said, it is chiefly found in Italy and Canada, though extensive deposits have recently been discovered in Australia. Serpentine occupies large areas in Canada in the Laurentian formation, which extends from the coast of Labrador westward beyond the Great Lakes, and in the Quebec group, which lies between the St. Lawrence and the United States boundary. In the serpentine of both of these formations asbestos occurs, but it is only in that of the Quebec group that productive mining has as yet been carried on. Throughout a belt of this rock, extending with frequent breaks from the Vermont boundary to some distance beyond the Chaudiere river, which enters the St. Lawrence near Quebec, asbestos appears to exist, but mining operations have up to the present been confined to a small area on the line of the Quebec Central Railway about midway between Sherbrooke and Quebec. The country here is very rugged, the serpentine rising into bold peaks and ridges. The asbestos is formed in irregular veins varying from mere threads to four, six and sometimes more inches in width. The rock is blasted out and the mineral separated from it by hammering, a primitive process which occasions great waste, especially in the case of the lower grades, which do not readily separate from the rock. Where the veins are very thin, moreover, it does not pay to endeavor to separate them by the method at present in use. The finest quality of asbestos sells at from \$80 to \$110 a ton, and the third or lowest at from \$13 to \$15. In good mines the yield is from three to five per cent. of the rock quarried and the cost of mining is from \$25 to \$30 a ton. The value of asbestos has been recognized by man since the times when the ancient Greeks used it as a wrapping for the bodies that they burned on the funeral pyre, and probably from a still earlier date, but it is only within very recent years that the mineral has been utilized in the industrial arts. The sphere of its usefulness, however, is now being rapidly widened and before many years the demand for it will without doubt have very greatly increased. At the present time its most important use is in connection with the steam engine and boiler, its non-conducting power and ability to resist high temperatures rendering it most valuable as a packing for pistons, hot-air joints, cylinder-heads, etc., for which purposes it is spun into yarn or rope or made into mill-board. It is also much used in the form of felt as a covering for steam-pipes and wood-work that is exposed to heat. In Europe many theatre drop-curtains are made of it, and in Paris the members of the fire brigade have recently been supplied with suits of asbestos cloth. It makes admirable salvage blankets and gloves for stokers and furnace-men, and it is announced that mail-bags will soon be made from it. It is also used for the manufacture of indestructible writing and printing paper and of fire-proof paints and wall-papers. It is proof against the action of most chemicals, and in this respect is of great service to the scientist and to the manufacturer as well. Many other uses to which it is put might also be mentioned.

It will be seen, therefore, that man has begun to realize the value of this singular product of the earth, which seems to possess certain of the qualities of the vegetable as well as that of the mineral kingdom to which it belongs. That he will continue to adapt it to his purposes is beyond question, and it is safe to say that it will not be long before it becomes a most important article of commerce. It is gratifying to learn, therefore, in connection with the fact that the Canadian supply of the mineral is almost inexhaustible, that it has been conclusively proved that "mining for asbestos, when properly conducted, shows a more steady return for the money invested, with less elements of risk, than mining for any other known mineral." Here is evidently an opportunity for Canadian capitalists which they should not let slip.—*Toronto Mail*.