

SNOW-PLUGS IN A DRIFT.

Among the difficulties with which railroading has to contend in Canada, the "beautiful snow" is not the least formidable. The writer well remembers, nine years ago, a blockade in the Guelph branch of the Great Western, just beyond the Village of Hespeler, where the train was delayed from nine p. m. until one o'clock next day, and the passengers then only escaped by hiring a farmer's team to drive them into Guelph. Two winters ago railway travel was almost suspended for a week because of the terrible drifts piled up upon the tracks; the capital of the Dominion was shut out for three days from communication with the exterior world, and many were the trials endured by hapless wayfarers on the Grand Trunk and other roads. In this issue we give an illustration from a sketch by Mr. Armstrong, of a scene on the Grand Trunk railway near Stratford, Ont., in which the snow-ploughs are making their way through the drift. The scene is one of many that occur throughout the winter season on nearly all parts of the road, but especially on the eastern division, where the winter is more severe and the snowfall heavier than in the West. The Grand Trunk Company is now in a much better position to battle with the snow-drifts than ever it was before, having added two new and powerful snow-ploughs to its working material. The present winter, so far, has not been prolific of great snow-storms, but this month of February will probably remind us of many former experiences in that respect, so that the snow-ploughs will, doubtless, be frequently called into requisition.

THE CENSUS OF MANITOBA.—The census lately taken in the Province of Manitoba shows that the population is scarcely so large as we have been in the habit of supposing it to be. The total population is 11,965. Of these 4,070 are English half-breeds, 5,690 French half-breeds, 581 Indian householders; the remainder, 1,614, being white inhabitants; half of whom are natives of the North-West Territory, and the remainder Englishmen, Scotchmen, Canadians, and foreigners. Of Protestants there are 5,906; of Roman Catholics, 5,059. 11,303 are British subjects, only 62 being American subjects; 3,928 are married; 6,761 are single; 265 are widows, and 102 are widowers. There are 6,212 males, and 5,703 females in the Province. Of these there are:—

|                 | Males | Females |
|-----------------|-------|---------|
| Under 10 years  | 1,934 | 1,992   |
| From 10 to 20   | 1,534 | 1,392   |
| " 20 to 30      | 1,040 | 960     |
| " 30 to 40      | 682   | 577     |
| " 40 to 50      | 469   | 403     |
| " 50 to 60      | 245   | 217     |
| " 60 to 70      | 70    | 144     |
| " Over 70 years | 231   | 68      |
|                 | 6,212 | 5,753   |

Out of the 193 persons over seventy years of age, no less than 62 are whites from among a population of 1,614, while only 110 are from among the half-breeds, who number 8,770 persons. This seems to indicate that the admixture of white and Indian blood does not promote longevity. Among the 62 whites over seventy years of age, there are 31 Scotchmen and 6 Scotchwomen, together with 17 natives of Canada and 3 Englishmen. Out of the 1,614 white inhabitants of the Province, 771, or very nearly one-half, were born in Manitoba; only four of these have attained the age of seventy. There are 312 Canadians, 128 Englishmen and women, 247 Scotch, 49 Irish, and 16 natives of France, 67 born in the United States, and 24 in other foreign countries. Among the 581 Indian householders (Christians) are 27 persons over seventy years of age.

HOW TO MAKE COFFEE.

A correspondent travelling in Sweden was immensely delighted with the coffee served on the steamboats and in the hotels. "At Upsala," he writes, "we determined to find out just how they made such perfect coffee as we had just drunk, and stepped into the neat kitchen of the little hotel; and this was the report: 'Take any kind of coffee-pot or urn, and suspend a bag made of felt or heavy flannel, so long that it reaches the bottom, bound on a wire just fitting the top; put in the fresh-ground pure coffee, and pour on freshly boiled water. The fluid filters through the bag, and may be used at once; needs no settling, and retains all its aroma. The advantage of this over the ordinary filter is its economy, as the coffee stands and soaks out its strength, instead of merely letting the water pass through it. 'Do you boil it?' inquired the learner. 'Na-a-a-y,' said the maid, in simple astonishment that any one should be so wasteful as to send away the precious aroma in steam; should not that prince of food of that evanescent something which constitutes his nobility, and reduce him to mere aliment. As soon would one think of throwing away that drop of sunshine, charged with all the summer's gold, which lies at the throat of a bottle of Jobanidberger.'—Scientific American.

VANITY NOT CONFINED TO ONE SEX.

And is vanity, and the excessive love of personal display, unknown to the male sex? Is this which we have written concerning woman a moral fact, or a popular fallacy? and if so, why so? What has been said here of the vanity of woman is simply an accepted belief of society, but grounded upon no special warranty of actual fact. It is the fashion to attribute solely to the gentle sex the love of personal show and the excess of self-satisfaction as to appearance. But we say no more than is justifiable and strictly truthful when we assert that man is even more vain than woman, that, as in the lower animal world, he still loves to set up his mane, to spread his feathers, to strut and plume himself before the females of his species. For her he endures boots which would have won a prize in a competition for engines of torture in the Middle Ages; for her he makes his whisker like a willow-tree; his moustaches like cats' bristles, his beard like a cascade of water. To be gracious in her eyes he struggles into a coat whose seams are ready to start at his slightest sigh, and into pantaloons which must have cost their designers many weary nights and days. For her he anoints his stubborn locks with olearious washes and ambrosial pomades; for her he is sleepless for contemplation on the colour of his neckcloth; for her he practices "amorous ditties all a summer's day," schooling an impracticable baritone into a reedy and uncertain tenor;

for her he brags, he wears flowers in his button-hole, he rides about in cabs, he constantly refers to his pocket-glass and pocket-comb; he is distracted, for her sake, if an impertinent erubescence glows on his chin, his cheek, his nose; a "black," fallen promiscuously on his Olympian forehead, prostrates him to despair, when she is by, and makes him feebly waver in his talk. For her the hair that nature tipped red assumes the shadow of the dusky night! and pads supply the manly *andropod*; high heels add stature of a cubit's length, and powder tempers his too rosy flush. He writes, walks, reads, smokes, fights, rides, and shoots, to make a figure in a woman's eyes. He lives in a halo of self-satisfaction; he believes that he fascinates every woman on whom he looks, with whom he converses. He is eaten up with conceit; he is affected, puppyish, more thoughtful of his exterior than the proudest beauty, and without her excuse. Women's artifices to increase their pretty appearance are not unknown to, and not unused by, men; but, in extenuation, let us add that it is to shine in her presence, to win her smiles, that man, the vainest of creatures, condescends to tricks of art. We have spoken the plain truth, but hope that our readers of the gentle sex will not be too hard upon us.—London paper.

EXODUS OF RATS FROM PARIS.—A Versailles correspondent writes: "I hear from officers commanding outposts that their nightly rounds are troubled by encounters with troops of rats—who, having found out, with the wonderful sagacity which characterizes their race, that Paris is no longer a place in which respectable rodents can count upon a secure and honourable existence, are emigrating by hundreds of thousands into the open country. Probably amongst the garbage reaching the sewers, for some time past, individual rats of acute perceptions and long experience in the study of the 'bones' have found, in unusual quantity, vertebrae and other 'ossements' belonging to dear departed friends and relatives, and have come to the conclusion that the deceased had succumbed to some sudden and inexplicable malady hitherto unrecorded in the medical annals of the rat faculty. These sages having made their reports to the council of their nation, it may be that the venerable conscript fathers of Ratom have issued orders to the subterranean republic that the moment has come for an *exodus en masse*—that every rat, of high or low degree, should pack up his trunks, and hold himself in readiness to convey himself and family to fresh sewers and cupboards new; and that it is nobler to meet death in the open field, at the cannon's mouth, boldly facing the '*ennemis de la patrie*,' than to die ignobly in treacherous traps, set by false friends for cruel and unnatural purposes. Can you not fancy what a stirring and passionate proclamation may have been issued to his *concitoyens* by the grey-whiskered rat president? The wise rats, acting with their customary splendid solidarity, have *demenagé* to a rattling, and quitted the *foyers* of an ungrateful capital for the comparative safety of the Prussian lines, in search of rustic joys and humble fare. So our 'Vorposten' are overrun with the late denizens of the Grands Egouts and the catacombs. What a subject for Victor Hugo!"

Dr. Russell lately stated in one of his letters from Versailles that in the German army before Paris the invasion of England by the Prussians is a favourite topic of discussion. Another correspondent of the *Times*, writing from Orleans, repeats the statement, and says that in Prince Frederick Charles's army also, the invasion of England is a matter of interesting discussion. Let not Englishmen (the writer says) imagine that the minds of Prussian strategists are altogether taken up with the French, or with warfare upon land. What will people think at home of no less gigantic an idea than a bridge of boats from Calais to Dover or thereabouts; not, of course, as the means for a first landing, but to pass over the reinforcements to a small army landed first, and protected by field works. The Channel would thus be treated as a huge river, and it is considered that an army, once across, could live uncommonly well by requisitions. Ammunition would be needed, it is true, but there is no fortified place to stop the direct march upon London, exactly four days. How would the farms and villages of Kent look if full of huge, rough-speaking warriors in spiked helmets? How many field guns could be brought against them? Prince Frederick Charles had more than 400 during the battle of Orleans. How many breech-loader rifles are there to put in the hands of the militia and volunteers? All these questions are being put and answered by officers in the German armies; for man has much of the tiger in him, and grows savage at the taste of blood.

SHIPBUILDING ON THE CLYDE.—The total result of the year 1870, although scarcely up to that of 1869, which was an exceptionally prosperous year, is most satisfactory, and shows a large increase over every other previous year. The total number of vessels launched during the year was 234, with a tonnage of 189,800 tons; a decrease of seven vessels of 4,200 tons as compared with 1869, but an increase of six vessels of 4,800 over 1868, and 75,800 tons over 1867. Of war-vessels there was only one of 2,640 tons launched this year, against three of 9,100 tons in 1869, and eight of 5,384 tons in 1867. Of paddle-steamers there were eighteen iron of 9,400 tons, and two composite vessels of 750 tons, against eleven iron of 6,500 tons, and four composite vessels of 1,800 in 1869, and eighteen of 6,291 tons in 1868. Of the screw steam-vessels, this year shows a most remarkable result, there having been launched the extraordinary number of 121 vessels of 133,000 tons, exceeding by thirty vessels and 50,000 tons last or any previous year. The average screw steam tonnage launched during the last seven years was about 65,000 tons, just the half of the screw steam tonnage launched during 1870. The cause of this increase in the demand for screw steam vessels was the opening of the new route to India and China, via the Suez Canal, for which traffic a lighter draught class of vessel, with engines of moderate consumption of fuel, was required. The new canal route, while thus increasing the demand for steam-vessels, caused a corresponding decrease in the demand for sailing-vessels, and 1870 shows a decrease of nearly sixty per cent. in both iron and composite sailing ships. There were launched this year 40 iron ships of 30,030 tons, six composite ships of 6,100 tons, and 16 wooden vessels of 2,740 tons, against 78 of 71,600 tons iron, 16 of 16,150 tons composite, and 10 of 1,400 wood in 1868. In iron barges for Indian traffic there was a considerable increase, 20 of 3,700 tons of these having been launched this year, as against 10 last year, and eight the preceding year. There were two steam drudge boats, of 1,000 tons, and eight yachts of 450 tons launched this year, which was about the ordinary average for those vessels.

VARIETIES.

The great ocean race—The fishes.

In the five largest libraries in Paris are contained 1,450,000 volumes, and 87,000 manuscripts.

Mr. Murray states that the annual circulation of his foreign and English hand-books is 15,000 copies.

Prince Frederick Charles has written a note of thanks to Tupper for his "verses" on the fall of Metz.

It is estimated that there are at present in New York out of employment, 1,000 bricklayers and masons, 460 stair-builders, and 800 painters.

Napoleon III. declared war on Friday (July 15); on a Friday (August 5) the Prussians re-took Saarbrücken, and on a Friday (September 2) Napoleon handed his sword to the King of Prussia.

A young lady at school, engaged in the study of grammar, was asked if a kiss was a common or proper noun. The girl blushed deeply, as she replied in a low tone: "It is both proper and common."

The last new thing in jewellery has made its appearance in Berlin, in the form of lockets of the shape of a musket-ball with "Sedan," "Metz," or "Strasburg" on them. Some few bear the inscription "Paris."

In a pool across the road in the County of Tipperary, Ireland, is stuck up a pole, having affixed to it a board with this inscription: "Take notice, that when the water is over the board the road is impassable."

"Why don't the great men of France stir? Why do they remain motionless and cold while our bleeding country is ruined?" asked an orator in Paris the other day. "Because they are cast in bronze," answered a voice from the gallery.

There is a characteristic story of General Montenfel's "liberality" at Rouen. The General sent for a barber, who consequently attended him at the inn. The General next sent to the innkeeper for a rapoleon, and gave it to the barber for his services.

Hans Breitmann has been figuring during the last six months as a Prussian Uhlán, and a new volume of ballads chronicling his exploits in this line will soon be published. The new ballads will be annotated with occasional remarks explanatory by Fritz Schwackenhammer, *Olim Studiosus Theologix*, now Uhlán Freelancer and Secretarius of "Captain" Breitmann.

It is stated that in the Antarctic seas there are sea weeds which have stems about twenty feet high, and with a diameter so great that they have been collected by mariners in those regions for fuel, under the belief that they were drift-wood. They are as thick as a man's thigh.

A Spanish author, Carlos Rubio, writes from Madrid: "Since my return from banishment, I have sought to live, as I did abroad, by labour—that is to say, by my pen; but literary labour, however honourable as a profession, is at present in Madrid, and in fact all Spain, confined to editing novels, retailed at twopence each."

There has been a discussion in England as to the value of acorns as food for cattle. Some persons say that they are poisonous, while others estimate the acorn crop in that country this year as worth more than a million sterling. The fact seems to be that acorns, dry and ripe, are very valuable food for swine and sheep, taken in moderation.

THE "LOST ART."—Under this heading, a Chicago journal calls attention to the subject of asphalt pavement. The Romans, it is well-known, succeeded in manufacturing a pavement which has proved almost imperishable, and it now appears that the Western Athens lays claim to a similar discovery. We learn that there is on exhibition in that city an "imperishable asphalt pavement," which is said to be impervious to water, unchangeable under the action of the elements, elastic, hard, smooth, free from dust, tougher than granite, easily handled, and taken up, desirable, and which can neither rot, burst, nor shrink; which, above all, is cheap. It consists of lime and asphalt mingled in proper proportions. It is made up into blocks, and is laid more easily, it is said, than wooden pavements.

EDUCATIONAL QUESTIONS.

(Prize Questions and Answers: Dedicated to the London School Board.)

(From "Punch.")

- Q. Who was Zero?
- A. A Roman philosopher, who played on the fiddle while inventing the Thermometer.
- Q. State what you know of Plutarch.
- A. He was King of the Infernal Regions, married Porcupine, and subsequently re-wrote the Heathen Mythology.
- Q. Who was Theodolite?
- A. A native of Alexandria, and a Christian historian.
- Q. Give a short account of Abelard.
- A. He was a solicitor who refused to go to the Crusades. His partner was Heloise. They were both buried together.
- Q. How many Graces were there?
- A. Nine.
- Q. Mention them in order.
- A. A Grace before dinner, a Grace after, and Grace Darling. That's three. Three Graces of Canterbury, York, and Dublin. That's six. A Grace of the Cambridge Senate, a bad Grace, and a good Grace. That's nine.
- Q. How did Shakspeare make use of Niobe as a simile?
- A. He said she was like a large theatre, "all tiers."
- Q. When does a Russian Serf have a real holiday?
- A. When he gets a knotting.
- Q. Who were the Nestorians?
- A. They were followers of Nestor, one of the oldest and wisest Greeks of his age.
- Q. State what you know of the Marionettes?
- A. They were heretics living in Syria.
- Q. Do you remember any Vegetarians in the fourth century?
- A. Yes, certainly. They were a party among the Ariens, just as the Vegetable-Maro-nites formed a distinct sect among the Maronites.
- Q. Who was the founder of the last-named sect?
- A. Publius Virgilius Maro, after whom they were named.
- Q. Who was Hero?
- A. A Heroine, beloved by Neander, who wrote his Church history, and was then drowned out bathing.