

A CANADIAN WINTER.

[F. J. HOGAN.]

THE winter season in Canada might not inappropriately be termed a medley of enjoyments, inconveniences and beauties. The inhabitants of more salubrious climes, where are throughout the year

"Extended in succession gay
Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between,"

know little concerning our Canadian winter, and evidently care little to court the experience. The foreigner, as a rule, prefers the quiet scenery of some romantically beautiful spot, to the sublime sights and phenomena to be alone witnessed in northern latitudes. The Frenchman would undoubtedly express his strong admiration of Italy's verdant dales and golden skies, and would speak in terms of rapture of "Fair Killarney" where

"Angels fold their wings and rest
In that Eden of the west,
Ever 'Fair Killarney,'"

but would decidedly prefer remaining at the neighboring hotel supping his café to the exertion required to see the magnificent splendor of the Alps decked in winter garments. Tourists visiting Canada, at the first noticeable change of atmosphere, immediately complete arrangements for leaving us, nothing loth to escape the seemingly galling fetters of the winter king. But the traveller leaving our fair country at such a time loses a golden opportunity to study the habits of our people, to witness the natural splendor of the season, and to participate in those numerous health-rewarding pleasures which serve to make this period of the year the happiest, and most enjoyable to a race whose bold defiance of the elements is a true index of their national character.

Of the numerous amusements intro-

duced for national winter diversion, skating is one of the most popular, and very deservedly so. I believe our cousins across the border should be credited with the honor of introducing the exercise on our continent. In the political parlance of the day, it might be very truly asserted, that Brother Jonathan has admirably succeeded in making Canada "a slaughter house" for his popular out-door exercises. Daily we see on our rinks crowds of delighted skaters gliding swiftly along—gentlemen ensconced in their long ulsters, cutting fantastic figures on the bright blue ice—ladies, whose crimson cheeks and lustrous eyes attest their enjoyment, moving gracefully over the stream's winter carpet—all keeping time to the sweet strains of a waltz floating idly through the keen crisp air.

In the evening the skaters have again assembled in greatly augmented numbers, for it is the night of the Carnival. The rink is brilliantly illuminated; characters of every historic period, gorgeously attired, pass before our gaze. See! here is Mary Queen of Scots, chatting so animatedly with the King of the Cannibal Islands; there Santa Claus is mysteriously conversing with Old King Cole; the Doge of Venice is flirting desperately with a Swiss Peasant girl; and Mathuselah is teaching Old Mother Hubbard how to skate backwards, which accomplishment the good old dame does not properly appreciate, the result of twice ignominiously falling. A crowd is clustering around John Chinaman, who, mounted on a bench, is declaiming vociferously. The "swell of the day," accompanied by the "girl of the period," are noticeable among the group. A moment afterwards they move away, disgusted with