

latter fail in his duty, there is no language strong enough to express his fault.

"We have elsewhere expressed our satisfaction at the spirit manifested by our citizens at the late public meeting, when the question was put to them, Shall the Portland Railroad proceed or not? But whilst we acknowledge that undertaking to be one necessary means for retaining to us the trade of the West, there is another object which is certainly not less important, and without which everything else that is done can be but of little avail: we mean the deepening of Lake St. Peter.

"On the 16th of May last, we pointed out the urgent necessity of going on with that work, but differed as to the best means of doing so. We suggested the propriety of abandoning all that had been done in the New Channel, and commencing at once in deepening the Old one. This opinion was confirmed by a Select Committee of the House of Assembly, who *unanimously* recommended that all further labour should be expended on the Old Channel, and proved by figures that 156 days' work would give a passage through the Lake for vessels drawing 14 feet water. Notwithstanding this, will it be believed by the country that the Executive have, since the closing of the session, stopped the works on Lake St. Peter, that the dredging vessels, scows, &c., are all snugly moored at Sorel, and that the Superintendent, Engineers, and men, are enjoying themselves or doing nothing, at the expense of the country! Such apathy and inaction on the part of the present Chairman of the Board of Works mark him, we fear, as a man deficient in the grasp of mind necessary to conduct a great work, and at the same trust with confidence for the approval of his acts to the country.

"If the Chairman of the Board cannot of himself decide on the course it is proper to pursue, why has he not long since called in the assistance of qualified engineers; and if it be objected that such persons could only be found in the United States, why cannot Government select a Board from among the Royal Engineers, who would soon put an end to the perplexity?

"We predict, when at length something is done, that it will be found a very simple matter, and will occasion surprise that ever the attempt was made to cut through sand-banks to obtain a straight channel, while there was a natural one close by capable of being improved and rendered in every way more serviceable, at less than one-fifth the expense."

#### THE CHAMP DE MARS MEETING.

Monday, the 10th of August, was an eventful day for Canada. It solved, and satisfactorily, the not very difficult but important problem whether the country was to continue in that state of supineness and want of self-reliance which have hitherto been the chief barriers to her prosperity, or, by an united and determined effort, to grapple with a seeming insuperable obstacle, and to overturn it. Public expectation was at its height—all ranks and parties had merged their more personal, political, and local feelings in the consideration of the common good,—the redemption of the stricken and prostrate commercial interests of the country, and the adoption of means to raise them Phoenix-like in greater brilliancy from their own ruin. The day was fine—the assemblage numerous, and the most pleasing, yet singular feature of the whole scene, otherwise rendered gay by the display of flags and banners, was the perfect unanimity of purpose that pervaded all ranks and shades of political party

which, "for the nonce," lay subdued, stealthily and curiously watching this unwanted union of the Lion with the Lamb. Had the spirit of a Chatham hovered over that large assemblage, met together for the purpose of throwing off the incubus of despondency and the apathy of despair, it would have traced in the far distant horizon a semblance to that dark and scarcely visible cloud which subsequently burst forth into a hurricane over that vast and extraordinary land now a mighty republic when this, although longer settled, is yet comparatively in its infancy.

It is not our intention, however, to enter deeply into a description of this truly gratifying meeting, which the very honor, if not the interests, of the country demanded should be, as it proved, numerously attended and successful in result. After the example which had been set by the citizens of Portland, it would have been little creditable in those of Montreal to have hesitated in the adoption of the course to be pursued by them, even had not a more than ordinary necessity for exertion grown out of passing commercial events. But when, even irrespective of these, the semi-monthly accounts which we receive from England, France, and indeed from all parts of the inhabitable globe, prove to us the immense fortunes that are made, the rich revenues that are derived, from speculations in the rail-road enterprise, it must at once occur to every sensible man,—be he in what class of society he may, or whatever his pecuniary resources,—that no more profitable field for the investment of his money can be opened to him. What, at this moment, is Rothschild, the King of Rail-Roads in France? More wealthy and possessed of more power (for his power is not restrained,) than the wealthy and powerful monarch of that kingdom himself. Nor are his means or his inclination to do good to his fellow-men more restricted. The rapidity with which riches are acquired in this new field of speculation, seems to enlarge the heart,—to infuse into it a spirit of generosity; and he who once, upon the Bourse or Exchange of Paris, would, millionaire as he is, have worked himself into a fever at the loss of a few hundreds of pounds, has since made many a proud but indigent family happy by bestowing upon them shares, which could be accepted, when other means of assistance would have been refused.

Surely, then, if the whole European world are united in their endeavours to procure wealth from this new and seemingly exhaustless mine, and if our neighbors the Americans, ever provident and sagacious in all that appertains to their prosperity, have found so much benefit to accrue from the Rail-road enterprise, is it not madness in us to throw from us the first and great opportunity that is afforded for sharing in the same advantages? We address not those—the many—who with spirited emulation, and a correct estimate of the all-importance of the subject, have felt and acknowledged the forcible appeals made to them on the day of the meeting, and previously through the public journals—

and among the number of these latter we may especially notice the communications made through the *Mimere* to the French Canadians,—but our remarks are intended to reach those who yet hesitate to drink pearls with Cleopatra, but rather prefer, with the inflexibility of a Diogenes, to cling to the tub which conceals from them the dazzling splendor of the meridian and golden sun.

And then how delightful, withal, when imbedded in mountains of ice, and beholding around us but one vast field of enduring snow, to be enabled, in a few hours, to reach and to gaze upon the dark blue sea, and to hear the roaring of that which reminds us we are no longer in the prison house in which we have so long been pent up; or when stern winter has departed, and the smiling face of nature dons its gladsome hue, to have it at our will to pass one day at that same sea-side, and the next on the banks of the St. Lawrence nearly a thousand miles from its source, and this at an expense so trifling as to be almost insensible.

As one of the many instances of the rapid and improved change in social manners effected by this new phase in locomotion, the increase in domestic comfort and enjoyment, the promotion of health and economy, and the hilarity of spirit consequent on the exchange for a purer air of the insalubrious atmosphere of a crowded city, we have elsewhere copied from the *London Railway Record* an account of a recent pleasure excursion from London to Brighton. Let those who hesitate about speculating in the Portland Railroad read this account, shewing how a distance of twice fifty miles can be traversed in a few short hours, affording, moreover, all the requisite time for recreation near the seaside, and all this for the trifling sum of five shillings and sixpence sterling, and then fail, if he can, to become as enthusiastic a disciple of the system as he had heretofore been cold.

In regard to this Railroad, it may be truly observed, and in every sense, that *ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*. The Portland undertaking once completed, it will be found so valuable an investment, that Canada will, like England, soon be cut up into Rail-roads, and the only difficulty then, we prophecy, will be to obtain shares—and thus will profit and pleasure go hand in hand together.

The number of signatures to the several books, since the meeting on the Champ-de-Mars, has been great compared with the quantity of shares subscribed. The amount of these, we understand, does not exceed fourteen hundred. On Saturday the 22nd instant, the meeting of stockholders will be held at the Company's Offices, No. 18, Little St. James Street, finally to determine whether the Rail-road shall be prosecuted or abandoned. We cannot but express our disappointment at the result of the canvass; and while we exonerate the bulk of the population of Montreal from apathetic indifference, we cannot, at the same time, but feel that many who possess large and valuable real estate in this city, have not come forward to sustain up this undertaking, so vitally