

FALL OF THE MONTMORENCI SUSPENSION BRIDGE—MELANCHOLY LOSS OF LIFE! SEVERAL NARROW ESCAPES!!

At a quarter to nine o'clock on Wednesday morning, the new wire suspension bridge, erected by the Turnpike Trust over the Falls of Montmorenci, parted from its western anchorage, and instantly went over the falls, carrying with it three passengers and a horse and cart. The following particulars we gathered at the scene of the catastrophe.

The structure having been delivered over by the contractors, for traffic on Monday week, the old bridge, a short distance higher up, was closed from that date, and all passengers were compelled to cross by the suspension bridge. On Wednesday morning, at the hour above mentioned, Ignace Cote, a farmer of some means, coming to market with his wife Angelique Drouin, had got half-way over the bridge. They were both on foot, Cote being alongside the cart, and some fifteen paces in advance of his wife. A young man named Louis Vezina, aged 15, was returning from the baker's to his house, (the first on the east side of the bridge) and had got nearly across. Mr. Louis Cloutier, a farmer of Chateau Richer, was about to cross from the east end, but his horse being startled at the sight of a winch on the bridge, he was awaiting the arrival of another cart behind him, in order to follow it. He had hardly turned his horse's head, when a terrible clanking of chains, as they slid over the summit of the western piers, warned him of the fall of the bridge, and immediately afterwards he saw the opposite end of the structure swing into the river, and as quickly carried by the heaving torrent over the precipice, and all upon it thrown headlong into the abyss beneath!

Another farmer, named Lepine, of the parish of Auge Gardien, was within a few yards of the fatal spot, and had another moment elapsed, would, like the two others on the opposite side, have been hurled into eternity. He had almost reached the west entrance of the bridge when he was driven back, terrified by the sudden and violent crashing of the iron bands, as they broke right and left of him first on the north, and then on the south side of the road, tearing apart, with a noise like thunder, the masonry and timber that surrounded them.

Paul Paradis, a workman employed on the bridge, was standing on a ladder at the top of the north-west pier, when the cable slid past, and miraculously escaped being drawn over with the wreck.

The present appearance of the remains of the bridge, enables us thus to describe the accident, as it seems to have occurred. The seven iron bands connecting the north cable with its western anchor, started above one of the joints, on a level with the surface of ground, and just above the masonry, where we should imagine the greatest strain might have been expected. There being but a single anchorage at each chain's extremity, the separation of the cable supporting the bridge on its north side, left the whole strain depending on the south pier and wires, with a side as well as downward pressure from the summit of the tower. Nothing but a pyramid could have stood this unexpected side-pressure, without displacing the cable that ran over it. It therefore can surprise no one, that the south cable, with the rapidity of lightning, also parted from its anchorage, carrying with it en masse all the upper part of the tower. The bridge was thus upheld only at its eastern extremity, and that placed but a few feet from the pitch of the cataract, is so that the greater part of the platform, with all the tackle and woodwork attached was instantly washed, down the fall, hanging from the opposite bank, where it still holds, its greater portion submerged about the centre of the fall.

It is said, that the unfortunate lad who was washed over, was soda clinging for a time to a portion of the wreck, but the rapid demolition of the woodwork by the superincumbent weight of the falling waters, had equal power to loose his last grasp for life. The fall of 40 feet, after the second

cable had snapped, would probably alone have proved sufficient to dislodge any of the passengers and so near the brink! their destruction by the current was from that moment inevitable.

Strange to say, although the cart and the body of the horse were found the same afternoon, about half a mile below the falls, the bodies of the passengers have not been recovered up to the last advices. Rumor has it that, of four persons drowned over the falls, within the memory of the present generation, none were ever after seen. The man's coat and part of the woman's dress and a parcel of wearing apparel, that they were bringing to their child, at school in the city, floated round to the Beauport beach.

The masonry of the north tower, from which the first cable started, stands like the two eastern towers, uninjured. But the saddle [the technical name for a diminutive but solid iron carriage on four wheels, on which rested the highest part of the cable] remains on the brink of the tower.

We cannot at present venture, in so serious a matter, to pronounce as to who are or who is responsible for the awful result of this casualty. True it may be that before compelling the public to cross, the Commissioners took due care to ascertain that the contractors did all that was required of them, and the engineer planned with materials that stood full test elsewhere. But it cannot be hidden, that the destruction was openly foretold several days prior to the accident, and rumors of the insecurity of the structure passed from mouth to mouth, whilst the people were forced against their will upon the bridge, and not allowed to pass any other way. More than ordinary solidity and precaution are necessary in a country, where the melting of six months' snow is accompanied by the severest frosts, which no power can control. Without desiring to impute blame to any person undeservedly, we have a duty to perform in demanding on the part of the public that a searching and impartial inquiry be at once instituted, to ascertain the cause of the structure's giving way, if the result be alone of service in the ensuring the safety of future enterprises of the kind in Canada.

Thousands of people visited the falls on Thursday by land and in boats. The road to Beauport has, we dare say, never before presented so animated a scene as since this sad event. The cost of the bridge was £9,000. If the cables be recovered £2,000 may rebuild it.

A BLACKGUARD PUNISHED.—A night or two ago, a gentleman and lady were standing in Broadway, New York, not far from the St. Nicholas Hotel, in waiting for a stage when a ruffian came up and seized the lady by the lower part of the dress and poked his nose into her face at the same time. Her protector did not resent the insult with proper spirit, for fear of getting into an ugly brawl, but a gentleman near, who witnessed the conduct of the blackguard, took the matter into his own hands, and pursuing the fugitive across the street, came up with and punished him severely.

It is now stated, that the immense quantities of wheat purchased at Chicago, Milwaukee and other points at the West, last fall said at the time to be on account of the French Government, were in reality bought for parties in Boston New York, &c., who will realize a loss of something near a million of dollars! Millions of bushels were purchased, and the prices paid were considered as high at the time, the purchasers expected to realize an immense profit.

A young man named Cudworth, aged nineteen, who resided in the western part of New York, died recently from the effects of a rye straw which he swallowed when about a year old. The straw was found lodged in the right lung, where it is supposed to have remained eighteen years, and by its constant irritation of the lung, to have caused death.

REMARKABLE ROBBERY.—The Royal plate of Great Britain was recently stolen under singular circumstances:—Notwithstanding the prompt and vigorous inquiry which has been made through the various police offices and other sources, not the slightest clue has been obtained that might lead to the tracing of the stolen plate, or the means by which it was taken from the wagon. The robbery was effected in the space of five minutes, while the five men employed to guard the plate were standing in front of the bar drinking a pot of beer, which Bailly, the guard, paid for. It is supposed, that the thieves were well acquainted with the means used for the removal of the Royal plate, and that they may have been in the habit of following the wagon with a cart, looking out for any chance that might occur on the road, either by the men stopping to drink, or any other circumstances which would admit of their taking advantage of it.

A RELIGIOUS MURDERER.—A late narrative of travels in Russia contains the following illustration of religious fervour in that country:—A lady, on leaving a private party in St. Petersburg, at a rather advanced hour in the morning called a droshke, and having given directions to the driver, the latter proceeded toward her home, as she thought, instead of which he drove her to a rather deserted part of the city, when he suddenly turned round and cut her throat, the sable-lined cloak in which she was enveloped having excited his cupidity. Having divested her of this, he dragged the body to the brink of the canal and threw her into it. He then folded up the cloak and laid it on the seat. On his way back to his stand, he was hailed by a gentleman, and, however reluctant, obliged to take him as a fare. The gentleman not only noticed the cloak, but, touching it, found his fingers stained with blood. He said nothing till he reached a police station, where, having ordered the driver to stop, he gave him into custody on suspicion. The gentleman happened to be the husband of the lady, and by the light recognized the cloak as belonging to his wife. The tragedy happened during Lent, when meat is forbidden. The man confessed the crime. The murdered lady had a little basket with her, which contained a pie. Having been asked by the commissary, why he had not eaten the pie? "How could I think of eating the pie!" replied the assassin, "it may contain meat, and"—devoutly crossing himself—"I am, thank God, a good Christian!"

IRISH ITEMS.—The Banner of Ulster states, that extensive preparations are going forward in the northern province for the cultivation of potatoes, and, now that so much practical experience has been gained in this branch of agriculture, it is anticipated, that the next crop will equal that of the past year. "Nearly 1,000,000 acres were planted in 1855. The crop was a full one, with very few cases of disease, and the quality superior to any raised since the year of famine. The class of seed potatoes offered at market is excellent, and we understand, that the amount of damage sustained by the stored crop during the winter months is comparatively trifling. Great care was taken to preserve the potato throughout the season, and at present, the quantity held in the hands of farmers is much above the estimates of former years. Prices continue highly in favour of growers."

CANAL ACROSS THE ISTHMUS OF SUEZ.—This great enterprise, which, for many years, has seemed too visionary a project to be seriously entertained, is likely to prove not only practicable, but to be actually realized. The commission of engineers and scientific men whom the Viceroy of Egypt appointed to examine and determine upon the practicability of uniting ocean to ocean by this means, have made a report, in which they declare, that the canal could be built on nearly a direct route from Suez to the Gulf of Pelusium, with a branch to the Nile. The cost is \$6,000,000, and the construction will take six years. "It is estimated, that a saving will be made in distance between the respective places and Bombay, as follows:—

Constantinople, 12,000; Havre, 8028; London, 8550; Liverpool, 8550; New York, 7317; New Orleans, 8178. More than one-half the distance is abridged between the principal ports of Europe and Asia by the proposed canal. This single fact shows its immense utility to all nations, as well as to Egypt and Turkey, and will secure for its projectors the best wishes of the civilized world.

THE GREAT COMET.—Astronomers, it is said, expect the appearance this year of the comet of 1856, called Charles V. and so named from having, according to some historians, caused that monarch to abdicate and retire to the convent of St. Just. It is the identical wandering star, some say, which appeared in 1264, in 1905, and in 683. Its return was fixed for 1848, but it did not answer the call, frightened, perhaps, as a monarchical comet, by the eccentricities of that epoch. The new calculations of the savans do not, however, admit of much doubt as to the present nearness of its visit.

NOVA SCOTIA IRON.—In the Illustrated London News of the 19th April, there is a drawing of the monster Mortar recently cast at Liverpool from Nova Scotia Iron. The size of this enormous piece of ordnance may be estimated in some measure by the weight of the casting in which some 30 tons of the metal were employed, the weight of the piece when bored and finished being 14½ tons. It is expected that with a full charge of 40 lbs. of powder, the range of this gun will exceed 7000 yards;—the weight of each shell being rather more than 5 cwt.

Under the head of Naval and Military news in Bell's weekly Messenger of the 19th April we notice, that "the immense Mortar cast at Liverpool from Nova Scotia Iron was tested on Monday, in the presence of the Select Committee, at the Arsenal Marshes, Woolwich, and the result was satisfactory."

The superiority of the Nova Scotia Iron was some time since brought under the notice of the House of Commons by the Clerk of the Ordnance. Subsequent trials by the Proof Master at Woolwich have, we learn, more than confirmed that superiority, the tensile as well as transverse strain which the Iron bears being nearly double that of British Iron, and considerably surpassing that of any other Iron brought in competition with it. Its capability for making steel of the finest quality, is said to be equal, if not superior, to that of the best Swedish Iron.

An orator perspiring freely, in a husky voice said—

"In short, ladies and gentlemen, I can only say, that I wish I had a window in my bosom, that you might see the emotions of my heart."

The newspapers printed the speech, leaving the "n" out of "window." He was taken somewhat aback when he read it.

TRAINING OF TREES.—The Editor of the Horticultural Review says:

"Trees with low heads do bear sooner and better, and will bear longer than whipstocks and bean-poles. In our prairies, low headed trees are the only ones that can hold up their heads, or hold on their fruit. They are naturally shaped Fruit Bearers, and they are miserably unpopular with that class of purchasers who "know more about trees, than the men who raise them." This is a most important subject; and fruit growers will never repent but once, if they prune their trees up high. Like most tyros we began so, too; and it had inflicted one perpetual sorrow upon us. The low tree is healthier, not subject to the affections of the bark or insects, not injured by winds, the fruit is easier gathered; in fact, every reason is in favour of low growth. We now try to form a head, not higher than three feet from the ground, for apples, letting the branches grow out.