

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. IX.]

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 16, 1889.

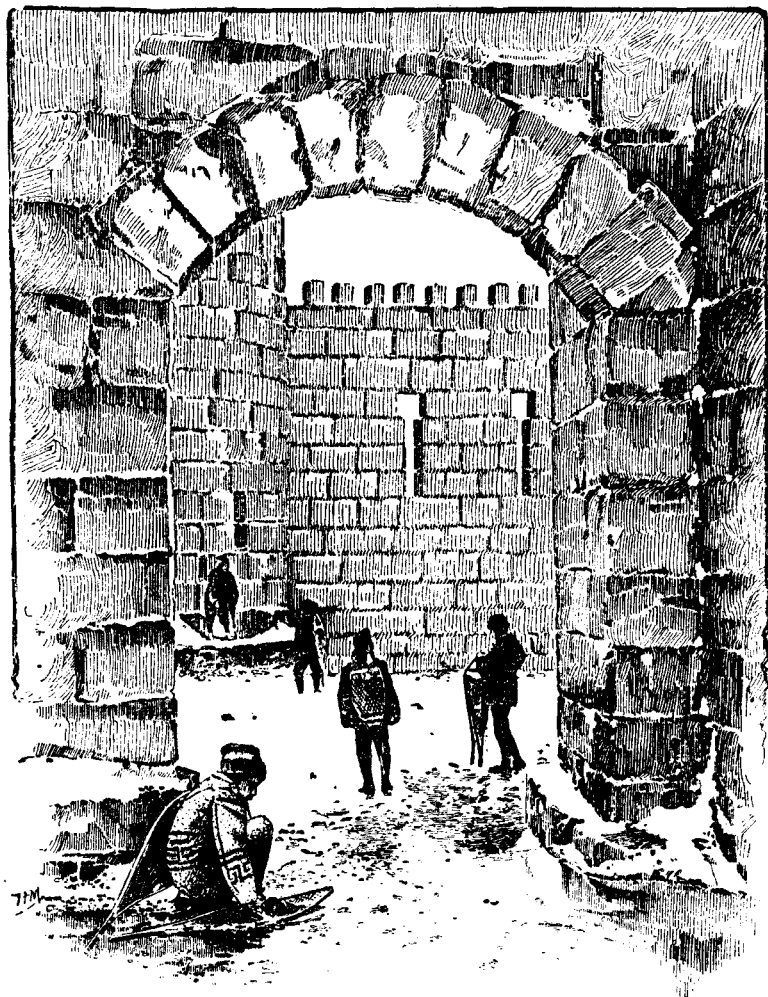
[No. 4.

THE LIFE OF A TORONTO STREET ARAB.

TALE OF A SHOE-POLISHING MERCHANT.

HANDICAPPED at fifteen with an injured spine, a humped back and an abscess! Father, mother, sisters and brothers dead! Not a friend in the world, but many a youthful persecutor. I met him late one night when walking hurriedly along Front Street, and thought I was alone until a shrill, childish voice drew my attention to the little overbent figure trudging eastward with an old fiddle protruding from beneath an arm and a boot-black's kit slung over the other shoulder.

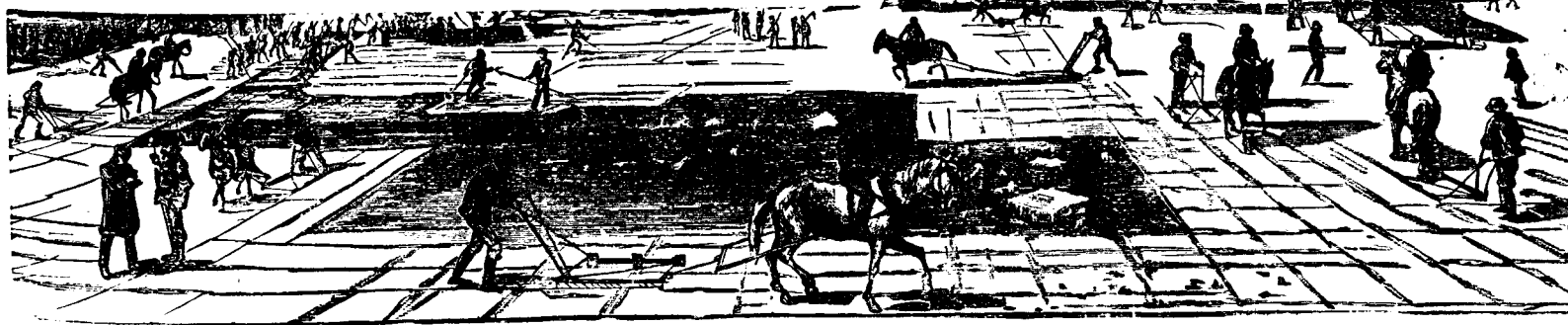
"Black yer boots, sur!" My name? Higgins. Aleck Higgins. Been a workin' the wharfs to-day. Hard work? Yo' bet it is, 'cause my back hurts me when I gets tired, and I've got a sore on my side too. No, I hain't got no father or mother. They both died in Muskoka, where we used ter live. Yes, I've got a broken back. Tumbled off some steps when I was a little feller about ten years ago. I came to Toronto three or four year ago and made some money by singing in the saloons. Can I fiddle? Yes, sir, and I sings too. Like to hear me sing "The British Cavalier?" I used to sell papers too, but a feller gets stuck on 'em sometimes and loses money, but a chap can't lose on blackin' boots 'cept when a cust'mer won't pay or beats me down to 5 cents instead of 10. I make about 50 cents a day, 'cept when its rainy. A box o' blackin' lasts a hull week, and this ere kit only cost 30 cents. I has a hard time though, mister. The big boys sets on me 'cause I'm humped and can't help myself. So I goes off by myself. Where do I live? At the News-boys' Home. I'm just a goin' there. Guess I'll have ter hurry, as we have to be in by nine o'clock. Oh, we lives high there. Get a bed and breakfast for 10 cents and a dinner for 10 cents, too. We boys that goes to St. James' Sunday-school gets a big dinner on Sunday—oh, we gets fried taters and beef and cabbage and lots of good things. When I don't make much I goes without any dinner. Save money? I put \$5 in the Savings Bank last month, and just bought a suit of Sunday clothes with it. Yes. I was in the Sick Children's Hospital for a year, but they said they couldn't do anything more for me. You remember those little tin soldiers I had last Christmas when you were at the hospital. Well, I gave 'em away to



INSIDE THE ICE PALACE.

THE ICE PALACE.

IN Montreal, St. Paul, and some other northern cities, it has come to be the fashion to build an ice palace. The ice is ploughed and sawn into blocks, as shown in our lower cut, and then built into glistening walls which, by the electric light, flash like diamonds. A more sensible use of the ice is to store it away in ice-houses, shown on the bank, and thus have winter's treasured coolness to refresh us in the heat of summer.



THE ICE HARVEST.