

## TOWING COAL-OIL ON OIL CREEK.

The scene of our illustration on page 125, for which we are indebted to the *Ill. London News*, is in the North-West corner of Pennsylvania towards the shore of lake Erie. It is in the counties of Venango and Crawford, beyond the Alleghany river, that the Oil Region is mainly situated. Its special industry has given rise to an immense trade, which had, even ten years ago, reached the proportion of four and a half millions of barrels annually, worth from twenty-five to thirty millions of dollars. A large population has been attracted to the Land of Oil, as in other parts of America to the gold-fields; and new towns have not less rapidly grown up, such as Corry, which before were not in existence, while towns of older foundation, like Franklin and Meadville, have become great places of profitable business.

The country traversed by the railway leading to the oil-fields is characterised by some very striking and picturesque scenery. Having quitted Salamanca, where the Atlantic and Great Western line runs towards the west, the influence of the new commerce on all the surrounding district becomes apparent. The forests have fallen under the axe, and cultivated fields occupy the space once covered with thick wood. Handsome farms and immense granaries occupy the higher lands, while new cities in transition are to be seen at several points along the route of the railway. By this line the traveller will reach Corry, the point of departure for the oil regions, but which is not the usual route taken by travellers from the east. The proximity of the valleys where the petroleum is found is now evident. On the numerous tramways may be seen trains laden with black barrels reeking with the unctuous fluid on their way eastward, and other trains carrying small steam engines on the road to Oil Creek, where they will be used for extracting fresh supplies from the greasy earth. The number of these machines affords a good indication of the increasing development of the petroleum country. The sudden rise of Corry is in itself sufficient to prove what an enormous influence the new commerce is destined to assume. A few years ago the site of the town was a thick wood, where not a single house was to be seen, and with no sign of civilisation except the new railway which crossed it; now it is a city, full of activity and bustle, with 4000 inhabitants, all hard at work in the staple industry by which they are seeking to become rich. The creation and growth of the place are solely due to the first operation known as "striking ile." One immense refinery deals with something like 300 barrels of oil a day, and is situated close to the roadway. On the other side are deposited vast piles of barrels of petroleum waiting to be taken away by the trains of the Oil Creek branch railway line and dispatched to their various destinations. The people of the town are so completely absorbed—so steeped, as it were—in petroleum, that they have no leisure for any pursuit unconnected with the ceaseless industry of the place.

The railway from Franklin to Oil City runs along the bank of "French Creek" — the American meaning of the word "creek" being a stream which debouches into a larger stream, so that the creek is, in fact, navigable for barges and flat-bottomed boats even in its shallows. The aspect of the country is very pretty, not unlike that of the Thames at Reading. Of course the occasional appearance of tall poles and stages for machinery show the locality of the oil-wells, and both here and on the banks of "Sugar Creek" the barrack-like sheds are the principal signs of habitation. It is at Franklin, an old town, with its Fort Venango, which guarded the French border in former years, that the sales and transfer of land are completed and most of the business done; but Franklin is not the capital. Oil City is the real capital, seven miles higher up the Alleghany, where that river receives the waters of Oil Creek. The voyage can be made on the stream by means of the "petrolia" steamers, which are crowded with greasy passengers but the journey takes two hours, because of the rapidity of the current, while the return voyage can be completed in forty minutes.

Our Illustration is a view of Oil Creek or River, with the long six-horse waggons conveying barrels of petroleum oil across its wide and shallow fording-place

The Rice Lake Railway bridge is making satisfactory progress. The contractor is making every necessary exertion, and the bridge will be open for traffic next summer.

## THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA.

Once more an attempt is to be made to drain this pestilential tract of country, which contains about 3,900 square miles, or 3,000,000 acres. Independent of the indelible associations with which it is connected, and the glorious deeds of which it has been the theatre, its appearance produces an extraordinary impression on the mind of the beholder. Silence and desolation are around. A space extending from Otricoli to Terracina, above sixty miles in length, and on an average twenty in breadth, between the Apennines and the sea, does not maintain a single peasant. You look in vain for a ploughed field, a sheaf of corn, or even a house. There is nothing to indicate the present existence of man, but his former existence is marked by the tombs which line the road, and the gigantic remains of aqueducts striding across the plain, which once brought, and some of which still bring, the water cool and clear from the fountains of the Apennines to Rome.

Dickens thus graphically sketches the scene:—"An undulating flat, where few people can live, and where for miles and miles there is nothing to relieve the terrible monotony and gloom. Of all kinds of country that could be possibly lie outside the gates of Rome, this is the aptest and fittest burial-ground for the Dead City. So sad, so quiet, so sullen; so secret in its covering up of great masses of ruin, and hiding them, so like the waste places into which the men possessed with devils used to go and howl, and rend themselves in the old days of Jerusalem." But though a curse seems to have fallen on the country, as far as man is concerned, it is far otherwise with the powers of physical Nature. Vegetation springs up yearly with a vigour undiminished, since the days when Cincinnatus guided his plough through the fields of his Sabine farm. The herbage is so rich that the herds of savage buffaloes and cattle which pasture the district, are unable to keep it down, and the greater part of it becomes rank. The prolific powers of nature are still more marked in the Pontine Marshes during the hot months, when the air is so laden with poison that it is dangerous, and felt as oppressive even by the passing traveller.

It was not thus in former times. The Campagna, now so drear and desolate, was once thickly inhabited, an historical fact of which its numerous ancient cities are alone sufficient evidence. The Pontine Marshes were inhabited by thirty nations. The freehold of Cincinnatus, the Sabine farm, stood in the now desolate plain at the foot of the Alban Mount. We read that so rich were the harvests, and so great the agricultural treasures to be collected in the plains round the Eternal City, that for two hundred years and more after the days of Romulus and Remus it was the great object of their foreign wars to gain possession of it. It is certain also that at a later period the vicinity of Rome was deemed insalubrious, for Cicero describes its site as "locum in regione pestilenti salubrem", and Livy, speaking of the mutiny of the Roman garrison of Capua, in the year of the city 113, says that among other grievances they complained of having to fight in the pestilential marshes round the city. Strabo says that in his day the insalubrity of the air was confined to a few places in the neighbourhood of Ardea and the Pontine Marshes, and it is well known that during the first three centuries of the empire, the Campagna was studded with numerous villas, as their ruins still attest. At present it has returned to the state of abandonment and consequent insalubrity mentioned by Cicero and Livy, and this evidence proves that the air of the Campagna has differed at different periods. It has been healthy when peopled and cultivated, and insalubrious when comparatively reduced to a desolate wilderness, so it would seem that its healthiness or the contrary depended on its population and cultivation. We must seek for the active causes of the unhealthiness of the Campagna in its low level, in consequence of which it must, without proper drainage, retain the stagnant waters that fall in rain, that descend in torrents from the hills in the vicinity, or escape from the ruined aqueducts in the quantities of animal and vegetable matters decomposed on its surface during the hot season, in the evaporations from its marshes and morasses; and, perhaps, in its proximity to the Pontine Marshes, for it is recorded that in the days of Trajan it was the opinion of many persons that Rome itself, although forty miles distant, was affected by the Pontine malaria. We learn from Gell's "Topography" that in the time of Theodosius the Campagna was a desert, and Gregory the Great expressly says, "The lands are depopulated. No one