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TEMPERATURE

as observed by HARRIS & HARRISON, Thermometer and Barometer Makers, Notre Dame Street, Montreal.

THE WEEK ENDING

Jan. 15th, 1882.			Corresponding week, 1881		
Max.	Min.	Mean.	Max.	Min.	Mean.
Mon.. 36°	25°	31°	Mon.. 20°	-4°	8°
Tues.. 26°	21°	23°	Tues.. 23°	10°	16°
Wed.. 25°	15°	20°	Wed.. 20°	-4°	8°
Thur.. 26°	16°	21°	Thur.. 10°	-10°	zero
Fri.. 18°	5°	11°	Fri.. 26°	-4°	11°
Sat.. 25°	13°	19°	Sat.. 31°	5°	19°
Sun.. 32°	10°	21°	Sun.. 5°	-14°	4°

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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, Jan. 21, 1882.

THE WEEK.

It is well to be moral. Most of us endeavour to be as moral as the exigencies of a wicked world will allow us. Still, few of us succeed in arriving at that superlative stage of morality insisted upon by the Moral Reform Union of London. These stern guardians of the proprieties are raising an objection to what they term "the nude in Christmas cards." A reviewer happened to remark that among the cards sent to him there were pictures of "airily-dressed children, and children undressed altogether." Whereupon the "Moral Reform Union" had a few specimens of these cards brought before them, and these pictures were declared as "being unfit for the holy season of Christmas." It is quite true that the costumes referred to are singularly unsuited to the season at which they appear. Still if people prefer cupids and nymphs to the old time representations of Father Christmas it is hard to see why they should not have them. One would have hardly fancied that little children in the costume which God has given them, were such unholy objects as to be unfit to grace the birthday of Him who came into the world after all—to speak with all reverence—much in the same condition as they.

A GOOD deal of sensation has been produced in the medical world by the death of a labourer at Lord SALISBURY'S house by clutching at some electric wires while in the act of falling. An ingenious correspondent of the *Court Journal* suggests that death by electricity would be a very effectual mode of administering capital punishment. Death would be instantaneous, and the pain would be very slight. But a more terrible idea as to the dangers of portable electricity is being dealt with. It is gravely stated that both murder and suicide might be effected by means of a dose of electricity without leaving any perceptible marks upon the face of the deceased. If the blessings of electric light are to be counteracted by electric murder and suicide, we may have made a bad bargain with science.

It is well that people should understand the measure of the danger both in such a case as that mentioned above and in the analogous one with which we are confronted of the danger of fire from electric lighting. Electricity can only take effect by the electric current passing

through the object upon which it acts. Thus two points of contact with the electric current must be in every case established to produce an effect. In the case of the man who was recently killed by touching a Brush machine in Brooklyn, he had been allowed to stroke the brushes with one hand, and had done so with impunity, the only effect felt being a slight tingling sensation, owing to the accidental escape of a portion of the fluid. But when, in spite of repeated cautions, he touched a second brush at the same moment with his disengaged hand, the circuit was established, the electricity passed through his body, and death was almost instantaneous. This then, in popular language, is the extent of the danger. Of course wires should in every case be properly insulated, thus avoiding the possibility of an accident, but even where insulation fails, no accidental touching of the wires will produce any serious effect, unless under the conditions named. The same remarks are applicable to the danger of fire. The real danger consists in the passing of the electricity from one wire to another, where these are placed side by side without proper insulation. This condition, encouraged by the dampness of the wood in some cases, produces within a short time heat and eventually fire. The remedy of course lies in a proper insulation of the wires, and in paying a proper degree of attention to the conditions under which they are allowed to closely approach one another. That electricity is a dangerous plaything, no one doubts. So for the matter of that is steam, and even gas. It is well however that the public should understand in a general way wherein the danger lies. Few people in the present state of knowledge sit on the safety valve of a steam engine for amusement, and it is generally understood that to leave the gas escaping all night and search for the leak in the morning with a lighted candle is an uncertain way of retaining one's hold upon this life. When such little eccentricities as that of the Brooklyn gentleman before referred to are corrected in the case of electricity, the danger will be little, if any greater, than those attending the universal use of gas and steam.

THE LOOKED FOR CARGO.

It is not unnatural that Canada, and especially those regions of the far West which are more particularly interested in the matter, should be looking with intense expectation for the result of the Marquis of LORNE'S appeal *ad misericordiam* on behalf of their wifeless and solitary condition. Even those who had hitherto supposed that it was possible to support a bachelor existence with equanimity, and even a sort of reckless enjoyment, have been stirred up by our Governor's appeal on their behalf; and after reading his feeling description of the misery which their solitary condition has been all this time entailing upon them without their knowledge, are resolved to be married or perish in the attempt.

The difficulty seems to be much the same as that which attends most efforts at compulsory or "assisted" emigration. In spite of the somewhat overstocked state of the marriage market at home there is still a large demand for the better class of goods. The majority of really desirable young ladies find no difficulty in settling themselves in life, and it may be doubted whether any who can afford to be particular would seek under the Marquis' escort fresh fields and pastures new in Canada.

There is little doubt but that a large amount of depreciated stock might be procured, and it would seem that it is with those ladies who can't get married at home that we are to be content out here. Lord LORNE'S story of the young lady who got more and more offers the further west she went must be taken as his opinion of the course which events will take in relation to the new cargo. The best looking specimens will find husbands in Quebec and Montreal, unless previously disposed of to enterprising bachelors in Halifax.

As the procession moves slowly westward, Kingston and Toronto, who can afford to be less particular, will select the most promising samples, while the residue still remaining undisposed of will rush to the expectant arms of the would-be Benedicts of the North-West.

It must be confessed that the prospect is anything but bright for the next generation of Manitobans, as far at least as personal attractions are concerned. The gentlemen who are engaged in opening out civilization in the far West, have many excellent points, but can only be ranked by courtesy among professional beauties. The result of an alliance between these pioneers and those ladies whose charms have not only failed to captivate the hearts of old country wooers, but who have been rejected by all would-be husbands from Halifax to Winnipeg, is awful to contemplate. The Indian is in many cases distinctly plain; the half-breed has been described as positively ugly by over-scrupulous critics, but it remains to be seen what can be done in that line by the original settler aided by the selected female ugliness of Great Britain. The Marquis has at least inaugurated an experiment for which the supporters of the theory of sexual selection should thank him. The question of how far personal qualities are transmitted will in all probability be definitely settled in the next generation, and we confidently commend the matter to the consideration of Mr. DARWIN.

THE CIVIL SERVANTS FROM A WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Sir,—There has been much said and written by gentlemen of the Civil Service about their salaries, but never a word from any of their wives, upon whom the burden of an insufficient salary generally falls. No matter how small a man's salary is he is generally pretty comfortable. He must be respectably if not fashionably dressed, for he has to appear at the Building every day. He comes home tired and expects a warm, well lighted house and a good dinner, and I believe he generally gets it. All the pinching, saving and anxiety in small matters is one of the wife's "privileges."

We suppose a man married in 1850 upon a regular salary. As our subject is the small or medium salaries we say he had £300, (\$1,200). They could get a nice comfortable house quite large enough for them then for £25 (\$100) a year, keep two servants who did all the washing, baking &c., for \$4.00 a month, a housemaid for \$3.00; between them they brought in all the wood and water, kept the cellar tidy, etc. If a man was needed to cut wood, one could be got for 50 cts a day except in harvest time; a charwoman for 25 cts, a dress maker for 25 cts. For 50 cts you could have all your stoves put up. For wood you paid \$2.00 a cord, butter generally 10 cts, never more than 15 cts a lb; eggs, from 8 to 10 cts a doz; potatoes never more than 25 cts a bushel, they have been so low as 10 cts; pork and beef from \$2.50 to \$3.00 a cwt.; flour, \$4.00 a barrel. Bakers' bread was at one time as low as two large loaves for what was then called a York shilling (12½ cts) but never more than 10 cts a loaf. A glance at the market prices of today would show how much more one has to pay for food. The Civil servant's salary has remained stationary, not unfrequently reduced, while every necessary expense has increased rapidly.

Again in the matter of dress. A lady who was not supposed to be very fashionable could visit and not be very badly dressed with several pretty print dresses for morning, and an equal number of muslins for afternoon for summer wear—both of which materials washed and wore for years, and when the waists were worn out, the skirts could be made into children's dresses which descended from child to child (as they grew out of them) till they were worn out. A couple of silk dresses for grand occasions, which in many cases were treasured remnants of her trousseau. A French merino or stuff of some kind for winter. One generally got one new dress of this kind every year; the previous year's best doing for every day for the house.

Now fashions change so rapidly and the material is of so inferior a quality that one season is apt to finish up a garment. This change of fashion is not only for adults, but for quite young children. Before a girl is five years old she will know if her dress is made fashionably or not.

Men say: "Why follow the fashions?" They forget that their tailors make their clothes fashionably; so without their taking much thought they are all right. The labour again falls upon the wife. She knows the agony it is to children to be laughed at at school if their clothes are not the proper thing, and she to save them pain works day and often late into the night to have them appear respectable among their schoolmates.

The sewing machines seemed at first as if they would prove a blessing, (and so they are) but before they were cheap enough to be within a poor private person's means, frills, tucks, knife plaiting etc., had come in which gives us just as much labour as the plain hand-sewed dresses gave before.

The tight skirt is no saving in material, for has it not all to be cut up for those horrid plaitings. A dress can rarely be made over now. Machine work is harder to rip out, and when that is done one finds that it is really not worth the trouble of making up again.

It is the same with underwear. Cotton or linen does not wear as it used to do. A good set of underclothes would wear for years. The same with table and bed linen, it has to be constantly replenished.

Food has increased in price, but not as much as labour. We pay one very inefficient servant what we got two for twenty years ago. She would wash or bring in water or wood. Now both must be under cover if not in the house. A man must be got for lots of things that a woman servant did formerly without being told.

If a tradesman is needed to do any odd job, he works so slowly and charges so much that things are really allowed to fall to pieces, one dreads so the price of having them repaired in time.

If the stoves have to be put up the same pipes never do. Something has to be sent for to the shop. The bill comes in something like this: Putting up two stoves \$2.00; altering one pipe 75 cts; 1 new elbow 75 cts; 1 key, 50 cts; 3 new pipes 75 cts. You may thank your stars if it is not more.

A labouring man charges \$1.00 a day; a charwoman from 50 to 75 cts; a dressmaker the same. In fact, everything is increased except the salary of the Civil servant.

His house costs him double, so do his taxes. As his family grow up his expenses increase instead of diminishing. The increase of salary lags far behind.

If the Civil service is to be composed of men of education and therefore holding a certain social standing, they ought to be given a sufficient income to keep that position without their lives being a burden to them in the anxiety to do so without running hopelessly in debt, or bringing the service into discredit by living beyond their means and thereby making other people suffer instead of themselves. One may be asked: Why remain in the service if it is so poorly paid?

The answer unfortunately is, that a man who has for many years been in a Government office is no longer fit to battle for bread with the young and strong in other professions.

He has resigned the great prizes of life, in trade, in banking, in public works of utility, in professional life, in the political arena. They may make riches and renown for themselves, he is content with a smaller reward for his labour. But it is cruelty to rob him of the little competency on the promise of which he entered the service, and after he has drudged many years to secure it, believed he is working at least for a certainty, if a small one. The fluctuations of prices and neglect of rulers renders his remuneration mockingly uncertain. In any other employment, if a man does his duty he has a gradual promotion as those above him are removed by death or otherwise. It is not so with him. He may have a man young enough to be his son and in every way his inferior, popped over his head. If the latter has friends in power he is put in whether he is fit for the position or not.

There have been several attempts to improve the salaries. A recent one ended in the members of Parliament and Ministers increasing their own allowances *permanently*, but only voting a certain sum to be distributed among all the officials as a temporary *bonus*. This was continued for two or three years only, and just when people had learned to look upon it as their due, was discontinued, salaries shrunk and debts grew in proportion.

Another ostensible improvement was "The Superannuation Fund" (which by the way was taken out of their incomes without their consent) to form a fund to give a man a percentage on his salary if he lived to a certain age, or was considered to be no longer fit for his work by the "powers that be." No provision for his wife and family if he died before that age, or in fact for them at any time.

We suppose a man dies at forty years of age leaving a wife and a number of small children. The money taken from his salary for the Superannuation Fund might have paid for an insurance policy, which his wife could receive at his death, and though the interest of such a sum might be a mere pittance, still it would keep her and her children from starvation.

As it is, she receives two month's salary, and if she has no private property of her own is then penniless.

It is not very long since whenever a civil servant died, some friend went round with a subscription list begging for something for his widow. Fancy the feelings of a gentlewoman to know she was actually a pauper.

To do away with this in a measure, the Civil servants among themselves got up a Mutual Benefit Society, each paying a percentage according to their salaries to the widow of any of the members who died. This is an excellent thing in its way but is another item sometimes felt as a serious one out of their salaries.

Why is the Superannuation Fund not extended to cover these contingencies?

Another source of shrinkage of salaries of Civil servants, is that they are the people to