

in the adjoining seams is carried by cars to the bottom of the western slope. Noticing that the air was remarkably fresh, one of the young men enquired where the breeze was coming from, whereupon the foreman took us to the air shaft, at the top of which was a fan driven by steam. Here we found a current of air as fresh and cool as a sea breeze, and this, we understood, was kept up day and night without cessation. Parson Wilson, realizing that most novices at mining have a natural curiosity to know how the coal is cut, obtained a pick for us, and, with the foreman's leave, I began trying my hand as a cutter, and from the way the coal came tumbling down, and from the evident anxiety of the foreman not to have me repeat the experiment, I have come to the conclusion that, under favorable circumstances, I could earn a pretty fair living as a coal cutter. Having regained the bottom of the shaft and deposited ourselves in our cars, we were slowly drawn up to the surface, the sensation of going up hill backwards being anything but pleasant. Parson Wilson and Messrs. Reeso and Robbins, did their utmost to make this underground jaunt enjoyable to the young men from the School for the Blind, and for many a day to come the story of the midnight trip will be rehearsed within the walls of the Institution at Halifax. At the present time twelve hundred men and boys are engaged in and about the coal mines of Springhill, and forty thousand tons are shipped to various parts of the Dominion each month. The manager, Mr. Leckie, appears to be the right man in the right place. He is able, industrious and enterprising, and, under his superintendence, the mine has gained a continental fame.

C. F. F.

THE FRENCH SHORE OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

DEAR CRITIC,—Imagine five or six weeks of bitterly cold gales, during which nothing grew and fishermen caught little or no fish, and you will have a pretty correct idea of this shore up to Sunday, June 19th. Since then we have had a decided change, the mercury being oftener up in the eighties than down in the twenties.

The fisheries are now looking up, and fishermen feel hopeful of a fairly prosperous summer.

If one could judge of the profitability of the lobster business by the number of factories established in Newfoundland, then one would feel inclined to say that there are fortunes in it. If I am rightly informed, there are at least twenty factories on this shore, but, so far, the majority of them do not pack two thousand lobsters a day, and this is considered by packers to be a very small number.

When we learned that the Nova Scotian and Canadian Governments had each granted a subsidy of \$2000 to a steamboat, which was to make fortnightly trips between this coast and Halifax, we felt as if we were making one step towards civilization. But alas! it is now the first week in July, and the steamboat has not put in an appearance as yet.

But we are thankful for what we have got, and that is steam communication with St. Johns once a fortnight instead of once a month.

This coast has been visited this season by the steamships *Clorinde*, *Drac* and *Emerald*. What the *Emerald* did we do not know, but we do know that the commander of the S. S. *Drac* forced a man, who was fishing a cod, to take up the trap. Now, had this man been interfering with the French in any way, one could make some excuse for such an action, but the truth is, the man was not interfering with the French. I might mention other acts of injustice committed on this coast, but I think one instance is quite enough.

How patriotic Newfoundlanders can be content to allow the French any sovereignty over the best portion of their island, is a puzzle to me.

The commander of a French cutter, which visited St. George's Bay this spring, indulged in a great deal of loud talking. Among other things, he said the French intend to burn the settlers out of the Bay, and that next spring none but Frenchmen would be allowed to fish in the Bay. As the commander of the S. S. *Clorinde* did not say anything about the matter, the inhabitants, as a rule, consider that it was all talk.

There has been a great deal said and written about Confederation this spring, and it seems as if Newfoundland is surely and steadily drifting towards Confederation with Canada. To many it is clear that Newfoundland has nothing to lose and all to gain by entering the Dominion. But what advantage Canada will gain by such a union, we must leave for her statesmen to discover.

But I must intrude upon your space no longer. You see, reclining in the deepest shade one can find upon a hot summer's day, listening to the melodious (!) notes of an accordeon, is not conducive to very clear ideas on any subject.

Yours, etc.,

M. A.

MUSICAL ECHOES.

Many have a mistaken idea about conservatory system. It is spoken of frequently as a "class system," implying that the pupil, necessarily, is obliged to study in "classes." This is not so. Private instruction is given, and any one desiring private lessons can readily be accommodated. The great advantages of the "class system" are these: cheapness and the benefits derived from reciting before others. If four pupils arrange to divide the hour's lesson between them, each one pays in proportion; whereas, if one engages the entire time, the expense comes on that one only. This is the principal difference as regards the financial question, and any one can readily see whether class or private lessons would be arranged for, in case one cost the same as the other. Therefore, it is safe to state, while class lessons are about four times as cheap as private lessons from the same instructor, the mass of people are going to be educated in music. This being the fact, many pupils in moderate circumstances who begin the study in this "class system" are going to be found possessing qualifications

superior to others of the wealthier families, thus giving opportunities to the deserving ones in the humbler walks of life to distinguish themselves. If the class lessons could be lengthened so as to give each pupil the same time for personal supervision the private lesson consumes, then the full benefits of reciting before others would be received. There is no doubt mind voracious mind sharpens and broadens the intellect.

It is a well-established fact that institutions can accomplish more than individuals. A combination of capital enables provision for much better facilities than can possibly be made by single individuals. Music schools afford free advantages in proportion to their magnitude. Lectures, concerts, recitals, etc., form some of the strongest links in the chain of Home Study. Take away from foreign institutions these features, and what remains to induce Americans to study abroad? Have not our metropolitan cities already these features?—*Etude*.

Dr. B. W. Richardson, the eminent health authority, says:—"It is one of the points in life to get music into the home. If a doctor visits a sick child, and is told that it has been singing, he knows that an advance has been made in the health of that child. We associate the idea of singing with mirth and with health, and whenever there is a family that cultivates music, and that is fond in the evening of passing the time away by the singing of delightful songs and hymns, that family is a happy and a good family. Let all the nation be a singing nation, and we have direct evidence of a happy nation."—*American Musician*.

Patti declined to sing in Baltimore one night for \$3,000. We should be willing to sing three nights for that amount. It is quite probable that in less than ten minutes the audience would be willing to pay us more than \$3,000 to stop, if there was no other way to put a quietus on our vocal efforts.—*Norristown Herald*.

ORIGIN OF "THE OLD FOLKS AT HOME."—Once over the bar at its entrance from the Gulf the Suwanee River holds its way with a deep current, in places of forty feet, far up through the forests of the best hard pine in the State. It is the Penobscot of Florida. It has some good land upon it where plantations have heretofore been made, but after a while generally abandoned. The dark river has, too, its romance as being the place which gave rise to a melody which, like "Home Sweet Home," the affection of the heart will never let go. For it was here that a French family in the time of Louis XIV. came over and settled upon the Suwanee and made a plantation. After a while the father and mother and all died, save one daughter, who, disheartened and desolate, returned to France, and there wrote, adopting in part that negro dialect which she had been familiar with on the plantation in her girlhood, a feeling tribute to "the old folks at Home" in their graves in the far-off country.—*Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle*.

PATTI—Adolina Patti has a penchant for autographs, of which she has a fine collection. At present the diva prefers Henry Abbey's autograph to all others. She likes it on a check before she goes on the stage every night.—*Indicator*.

The Russian opera, "A Life for the Czar," is not popular with the Nihilists. What the latter desire is a something quite the contrary for the "autocrat of all the Russias."

THE NEW TELEPHONE COMPANY.

Telephones have now become such invaluable means of rapid communication between business men, and are such great labor savers to the household, that the public hails with delight any extensions of the system, and demand the best and most accurate service. It was with the determination to meet this demand that the Nova Scotia Telephone Company was organized, and their first endeavor has been to perfect telephonic exchanges in the thriving towns in the Province and connect them with Halifax, thus providing our business men with one of the most invaluable mediums of extending their commercial relations. They have first turned their attention to Truro, Londonderry, Amherst, Pictou, and New Glasgow, and the poles are now placed between Halifax and Truro, and in a very short time all the places mentioned will be in direct telephonic connection with the city. They have introduced a new telephone, which has many points of superiority over the Bell telephones now in use, and by its aid stations 250 miles apart are clearly and distinctly communicated with. Believing in the old adage that "competition is the life of trade," the company are now about opening an exchange in Halifax, and, as a result, the Bell Telephone Co. are already awakening from the lethargy their long monopoly has given them, and are stirring themselves by unusual exertions to hold their old subscribers. That the mere mention by the new company of their intention should have such beneficial results, proves the necessity of a competing line, and as their subscribers will have the benefit of their country lines, we predict that their Halifax business will be very extensive.

Wishing to give the public the most authentic information about the new company, our reporter waited upon Mr. John R. Bothwell, one of the directors, at his office on Prince Street. Mr. Bothwell was out, and while awaiting his return, a gentleman in the office explained the points of superiority in the new instrument, one of which was on view. One great improvement lies in the fact that the vexatious ringing up of the central office, necessary in the use of the Bell telephone, is entirely done away with. The operator at the central office has the telephone always at his ear, the tube being attached to a sort of head gear, which the operator dons, thus holding it in position. The number system only is used, each subscriber being given a number, which is placed opposite his name in the company's