

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

Both in England and in the United States it is the invariable rule that newspapers—and especially illustrated newspapers—shall be paid for strictly in advance. It is only a matter for wonder that so excellent an arrangement has not been adopted before this by Canadian newspaper proprietors. It has frequently been proposed, but nothing has really come of the proposal. Now, however, it is our intention to inaugurate the movement. In future the News will be sent only to those who have paid their subscriptions in advance. The barren honour of non-paying subscribers we do not care at all about. Our establishment is a very large one, as large as any in the country, our staff of writers, artists, and agents very numerous, the expense of publishing a paper like this is, as may be imagined, enormous, and it would be preposterous to suppose that we can furnish the product of money, time, brains and talent without any return. The system we propose to adopt will be as follows:—Subscriptions payable strictly in advance. Each subscriber will find on the label bearing his address two figures indicating the time when his subscription expires. We use only two figures because each subscription dates, in our books, from the first day of the month in which it is received. Thus, for instance, 7-73 will indicate that the subscription is paid to the first of July next; 12-73 to the first of December next; 1-74 to the first of January next, and so on. When the subscription expires, on the date indicated by the label, unless it is at once renewed the paper will be discontinued.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Letters on business matters should be addressed to the Business Manager.

Communications intended for the Editor should be addressed to The Editor of the *Canadian Illustrated News*, and marked "Communication."

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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 1873.

THE conflagrations at Chicago and Boston, and more recently the disastrous fires at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York and the St. James Hotel in Montreal, have had the effect of awakening inquiry as to the best means of preventing the spread of fire and of saving life and property from burning buildings. Immediately after the disasters at Chicago and Boston the inquiry was pretty much confined to the first of these two subjects. The press teemed with endless letters and suggestions—most of them impracticable, and not a few utterly useless. The discussion was at its height when the Fifth Avenue Hotel horror drew attention to the utterly insufficient means of escape in the case of fire supplied in the hotels and large buildings throughout the continent. Not many days ago the importance of this matter was brought home to our notice by the destruction by fire of the St. James Hotel and the sad loss of life occasioned by the absence of proper communication with the burning building. The subject is one of the highest importance, and, we were glad to see, received all the attention it deserved. Many suggestions for the avoidance of similar calamities appeared in the daily press, the most practical of all being that offered by the Chief of the Montreal Fire Brigade, who proposed that a rope-ladder should be kept in each room in our hotels. By this means the occupant of a room would, in case of fire, be enabled to effect his escape without any difficulty, and without unnecessary loss of time. One end of the ladder being fastened to an iron ring in the floor, he would have nothing to do but to uncoil the rope out of the window and make his way down as quickly as possible. We are glad to observe that this suggestion has already been acted upon, and that rope-ladders of the kind mentioned by the Chief of the Brigade are now in very general demand. A wire ladder of a similar kind has also been constructed and undergone a thorough test, the result giving full satisfaction. Several of these ladders have, we understand, been ordered for the Ottawa Hotel, where they will be placed in the upper stories. This example should be followed by hotel proprietors throughout the whole country.

So far we have merely glanced at the life-saving apparatus for in-door use. It remains to inquire into the best manner of equipping fire brigades so as to enable them in the case of fire, to reach the flames, and to save life and property with as little delay and as little danger as possible. In this matter, as in that of the prevention of fires, we can afford to take example from the Germans, whose firemen are among the most efficient, and perhaps the best equipped in the world. We may premise our remarks by stating that in the cities throughout Germany, fires of any magnitude are of exceedingly rare occurrence. The reasons for this are three. In the first place

every new building erected must be of the most substantial structure, and built of the best materials. Frame houses are not allowed. A house owner wishing to repair must do so with the consent of the Corporation and under the supervision of the building inspector—who is invariably a master builder of experience. Secondly, every house, nay every tenement, is visited at least once a year (in the smaller towns once every three months) by the *Feuerschau*, or Fire Inspectors—also master-builders—who examine the position of the stoves, stove-pipes, &c., &c., and are empowered, when they find insufficient guarantee against fire, such for instance as defective flues—a very fruitful source of disasters in Canada—to compel the tenant to take proper measures to remedy the defect immediately. Were such a system of inspection introduced in this country we should speedily find the number of fires considerably reduced.

The German system of training for firemen is also worthy of imitation. The great secret of the success of the German fire brigades lies in this. The firemen proper form a body of professionals, who have made their business a daily study, and have passed through an arduous course of training which perfects them for the dangerous duties they have to undergo. The great feature of their training is the course of gymnastics to which they are subjected, and which is rigorously kept up at every fire station. Every day the brigades turn out for drill and gymnastic exercise, and once a month in every city the men give a public exhibition. A model house is erected, and the firemen go through the various manoeuvres that they might be expected to undergo in the case of a conflagration—some of them of the most dangerous character. The results of such a training are only what might be expected. When the fire-alarm is sounded the brigade hastens to the spot. There is no confusion, no crowding, no undue hurry. Each man has his own duty assigned to him, and attends to that and that alone. The street is kept clear by the police, assisted by the volunteer firemen, enrolled among the younger men of the city, who also attend to the protection of the property rescued from the burning building. Thus unimpeded by any pressing crowd the men are able to attend to the work in hand without hindrance. One party, specially detailed, devote their energy to extinguishing the flames; a second to saving life and property, to which end they are supplied with ample apparatus; and a third compose the salvage corps.

Of the apparatus employed by the fire brigades in Germany a very fair idea may be obtained from the illustration given on another page, a full description of which appears in the usual place.

The benefits of the German system are too obvious to need any remark. There are only two points upon which we must especially insist. In the first place the German firemen are well paid. They are taught to look upon their calling as a profession to which it is an honour for them to belong, and one which remunerates them sufficiently to allow of their devoting their whole time to its study and practice. In the second place, as we have already stated, they are kept up to the mark by a regular course of drill which especially fits them for the duties before them, and which is continued during the whole time of their connection with the profession. Were these systems adopted in Canada, beneficent results would soon be made manifest.

There is yet another matter upon which we might touch while in this connection. We prefer, however, merely to cite two parallel cases, leaving it to our readers to draw their own deductions. Some twenty-five years ago the Royal Theatre at Stuttgart—a town at that time of perhaps 55,000 inhabitants—was burnt down, with great loss of life. The citizens at once took steps to avoid a recurrence of such a calamity. An indignation meeting was held, at which the Fire Department was condemned as inefficient and badly managed. No blame was attached to the firemen, the whole of the responsibility being laid at the door of the city authorities, who were charged with being wanting in public spirit and careless of any interests but their own. The re-organization of the Fire Department commenced at once. New engines and other apparatus were provided, a serviceable corps of firemen was enrolled, and an amateur body, intended mainly as a salvage and police corps, was formed by the private citizens. The system also was changed. A master-builder was appointed Chief of the Brigade, and a series of daily gymnastic drills was instituted at every station. By-laws were passed regulating the erection of houses built of inflammable materials, the storing of powder, and the position of match and varnish factories. The result of such energetic measures soon became apparent, and to this day the Stuttgartens owe to the citizens of that time their comparative immunity from fire.

The second case is a parallel to a certain point only. In the largest and wealthiest city in Canada a fire breaks out in an hotel, also attended with loss of life. An outcry is raised, and an indignation meeting called. The meeting has very little result beyond the passage of a few empty resolutions. The Fire Committee demand an appropriation of \$25,000 for the purchase of suitable equipments for the Fire Brigade, adding that without that sum they cannot place the brigade upon a proper standing. The Corporation reply to the request by granting an appropriation of \$15,000, and there is an end of the matter. A few days after a man who was manufacturing fireworks in the heart of the city is killed by an explosion. We feel that comment is unnecessary, and make none.

THE MAGAZINES.

The *Overland* comes to us filled with information respecting the Pacific Coast and the Western slope of the Rocky Mountains. There are in this month's number four articles of this nature, viz.: on the Agricultural Capacity of California, the most valuable of them all; the seventh of a series of interesting papers on the California Indians; Cape Horn in 1704, being a translation of a letter by the Jesuit father Nyl; and a pleasant sketch entitled "A Geologist's Winter Walk," the flavour of which, however, is much injured by our ignorance of the locality described. The second paper on Napoleon III. will be read with interest. The writer has evidently carefully studied his subject, and succeeds in giving us a valuable contribution—brief as it is—to the history of the last two decades. He is an unsparing critic, but evidently so thoroughly free from national prejudices that his criticisms are entitled to the utmost respect. Every sentence he utters breathes his strong belief in his hero, whom he defends with the utmost vigour. With the exception of *Ultrava*, of which the seventh instalment appears in this number, the fiction is very much below the ordinary standard. A semi-scientific paper on the Pectens or Scallop Shells possesses the double attraction of being brief and containing readable and interesting information.

The *Canadian Patent Office Record and Mechanics' Magazine* is a new candidate for popular favour. As its name implies it is devoted entirely to mechanical and engineering developments. It is divided into two parts, the official and the unofficial, the former containing a record of the inventions patented at Ottawa, accompanied by diagrams, and the latter consisting of original and selected articles, many of which are profusely illustrated. The form of the *Record* is that of an ordinary monthly magazine. The number before us contains thirty-two pages of reading matter and forty pages of official information. The subscription for the twelve monthly parts is fixed at the low figure of one dollar and a half.

A welcome visitor indeed is the *Atlantic Monthly*. Its pages are invariably filled with sound, healthy mental pabulum of the highest order. In the number before us Mr. Parton continues his admirable sketches in a paper on the exploits of Edmund Genet in the United States, which lacks none of the attractions with which he knows so well how to invest his subjects. Robert Dale Owen, whose papers form a remarkable feature of the current number of this magazine, gives us another chapter of autobiography in which he relates his early impressions of Thomas Clarkson and the then Grand Duke, afterwards Czar, Nicholas of Russia, the latter of whom paid a short visit to the writer's father in 1816. Interesting papers on the Symmes Theory of the Earth and Frederick Chopin will attract respectively the scientifically and musically inclined. A fourth chapter of "A Chance Acquaintance" rather unpleasantly develops the hero's character, whose priggishness becomes perfectly unbearable. We wait resignedly the end, however, as we suppose everything will turn out well; we only trust that he will not in time be endued with all the virtues under the sun. Even a prig is preferable to the gold-like characters fiction-writers are now so fond of turning out. "Marjorie Daw," a charming little story in the epistolary style, is the only other remarkable feature in the fiction department. By the way, apropos of "Ruby," when are people going to stop writing "stories of the war." The war has been rather overdone lately, and it would be only charitable to give it a rest, and allow patient readers a brief respite. There are several poems in the number, none of which takes out fancy so much as the Scandinavian story of "St. Olaf's Fountain," next to which we place Celia Thaxter's "Beethoven."

[Written for the *Canadian Illustrated News*.]

THE LOUNGER AT OTTAWA.

NO. III.

THE ORATORS.

"It's a great school; a great school," said Boulter the other night as we smoked our pipes, speaking of the House of Commons. "It's a great school." "That's so," said Mouldes, who is labouring under a bronchial affection and gets thinner every day. "It is a great school, and Sir John is a great school-master." It is remarkable. I have tried to get at the philosophy of the thing, but how it is that Sir John has endeared himself so intensely to so many of the men who sit behind him, I cannot make out. It is a species of hero-worship. Leaning over the gallery I have noticed the Premier rise from his seat, look round him for an instant, step over to some one of his followers, and after a short conversation, have the said individual the happiest man in the world. Evidently nothing of moment passed between them, but the very fact of Sir John patronizing him, sent a glow of pride and satisfaction through his heart, which came to the surface and manifested itself all over. This influence cannot originate from any superiority the knight possesses as an orator. In my estimation he lacks the very first elements of true oratory, earnestness and originality. When engaged in a debate, the impression left on one's mind is, that he is not so much labouring to meet the arguments of his opponent, as to blind his followers behind by his specious platitudes. He seems thoroughly to understand the nature of the material he has to deal with. He is quick to appreciate effect, and oftentimes have I seen the leaders on the opposite benches, look vexed and annoyed, when he has knocked to pieces the whole effect of a long and laboured argument, by some happy stroke of wit or sarcasm. True, it might not have the slightest bearing on the case; perhaps some mere personality,—but then it told. His followers would roar; Boulter would guffaw, and you could see that old Mouldes was saying to himself in his gleeful gloom "Sir John agin' the world, gentlemen—agin' the world." But sometimes Sir John does seem to get earnest; the righteous indignation appears to boil right over with him; but still it is not that earnestness lighted up by conviction—which not unfrequently displaces a Cabinet; but rather the earnestness which one sees manifested by the drover occasionally when he roars and