

becomes shorter. At Toronto it averages but little more than three weeks, and still further south and west, only a few days. Occasionally winters pass without any sleighing. Temperature is the controlling cause of the existing differences, but not the only one, for on the east side of Lake Huron the mild temperature does not prevent the west winds—elsewhere dry—from gathering moisture from the open waters of the lake and depositing that moisture on the land. The sleighing season over much of the Huron and Georgian Bay district generally lasts nearly three months.

The winter, unfortunately, is not so steadily cold over the whole Province as it is in the eastern and northern parts, where only occasional thaws occur during the height of the season. Over southern and south western Ontario, in most winters, thawing and freezing weather alternate every few days or weeks, and temperatures of above fifty degrees are reached. In several sections, the normal temperature of mid-day in winter is several degrees above the freezing point. The winters differ in different years. Sometimes ice and snow are absent: ploughing is even carried on in December and January, and in the warmest parts, flowers have bloomed at mid winter in the open air, and butterflies, snakes and frogs have made their appearance. The coldest year on record in Ontario closed with a day on which a temperature of seventy-one degrees in the shade was reached.

Notwithstanding, however, the drawbacks experienced in the warmer sections from the shortness of the sleighing period and the too frequent mildness of the atmosphere, the winter season everywhere is bright, pleasant and comparatively dry. Owing to the southern latitude of the Province—almost the entire population living further south than Lyons in France—the winter days are much longer than in Britain, a fact, which contributes to the cheerfulness of the season.

SPRING IN ONTARIO.

Spring is almost banished from the cycle of the seasons in Ontario. In the warmer parts it begins sometimes in March; sometimes not till the beginning of April. In the colder districts it bursts forth suddenly in the beginning of the latter month and snow and ice disappear in a fresher of imposing character. Vegetation commences suddenly and progresses with a vigor surprising to people from Britain and Western Europe. The Ottawa country in which the winters are severe soon becomes as warm as South Western Ontario. Everywhere the beginning or middle of May ushers in the summer, and temperatures of eighty degrees in the shade and sometimes ninety degrees, or even higher, are experienced.

A LONG AND BEAUTIFUL SUMMER.

The Ontario summer is scarcely surpassed by that of any land. The regular storm rains cease almost entirely from May till September, leaving vegetation to be refreshed by the brief but copious showers which fall in huge drops during the thunder storms which are grand and impressive in a degree unknown in Britain. The skies are Italian in their beauty, of an intense blue and of seemingly immeasurable depth. Sometimes day after day passes of uninterrupted serenity and unclouded azure—more often the blue is intermingled with huge piles of fleecy clouds towering to an immense height and displaying an inexpressibly glorious cloudland, through which the sun sets with a magnificence rarely approached even in Italy. These sunsets more than atone for the short-