

Topics of the Day

ABROAD.

BY SPECTATOR.

Of all things abroad that have happened recently and that would interest Young Canadians, the terrible winter in Europe is perhaps the most wonderful. For many weeks Jack Frost threw his stern mantle over the whole continent, in snow and ice, the like of which has not been known this century. The reading on the thermometers was not what we should call very low. But the people are not accustomed to it and are quite unprepared for it. They do not know as we do the science of resisting Jack Frost; of keeping delightfully warm amid icicles; of laughing at snow-storms; and of rollicking in all sorts of temperatures.

In Europe it is different, at least in many parts. Such weather as has prevailed brings everything to a stand-still. In Berlin the ice on the rivers was thirteen inches thick, and Emperor William had his soldiers parading and reviewing on it. In Madrid the animals in the Zoological Gardens have perished. In Austria the children have been frozen on their way to school. Wolves and bears have so little food in woods that they have come in to villages in quest of sheep. Trains have been completely snowed under. Rivers and canals are solid. Steamers cannot get out or in. Some are drifting in ice. Others are wrecked. Tug boats are sent about to break up the ice. Even dynamite has been resorted to in some instances. Iron plates and huge timbers have been placed across the bows of vessels to save them from destruction by large floes of ice. Many thousands of people have thus been thrown out of work, and their families are reduced to destitution.

The Thames is made into a turnpike with waggons of all sizes crossing. Skaters have an unbroken path for miles. The Hospitals are crammed with sufferers among the poor and the aged. Groups and crowds are gathered round the workhouse doors. Fires are made on the quays for the workmen, and still a stray unfortunate is found dead on the street and in bed. With no fires, no food, no work, their condition has been truly pitiful.

Then the thaw has begun to work havoc, almost as impeding to trade and to comfort as the frost itself.

YOUNG CANADIAN CALENDAR.

FEBRUARY.

1. Battle in Mohawk country between French and English. 1693
2. The English defeated at Grandpré 1747
3. Treaty ceding Canada to England 1763
4. St. Louis founded by Pierre Laclède. 1764
5. Brockville raided by Americans 1813
6. Ogdensburg taken by British. 1813
7. Union of Upper and Lower Canada 1841
8. Quebec House of Parliament Burned 1854
9. Post Office Money Orders introduced 1855
10. New Westminster B. C. founded by Col. Moody 1859
11. Railway from Smith's Falls to Perth 1859
12. Legislative Council abolished in Manitoba. 1876
13. Railway from Montreal to Quebec 1879
14. Legislative Buildings in Fredericton Burned. 1880
15. Fishery Treaty between Canada and the United States 1888

In this month's Calendar are many topics delightful to read about and to write about. For the best one column article on any of them the writer will receive a beautiful gold-plated pencil.

TO THE GOWAN.

[The English wild daisy is known in Scotland as the "Gowan."]

Little Gowan, Scotia's flower!

Whence hast thou that dreamful eye

Looking up into the sky,

Where the homeless clouds go by?

Little Gowan, modest, shy.

Little Gowan, poet's flower!

Once I took thee far away,

Planted thee where flowers gay

Smiled upon me all the day.

Yet I chose thee from the rest

(For old Scotland's sake the best),

In my book thy blossom pressed.

Little Gowan, poet's flower!

Couldst not thou thy hills resign?

Every day I saw thee pine

For thy country—thine and mine.

Wintry wind came driving past

Gusts of snow, and in the blast

Thou wert buried, rudely, fast.

Little Gowan, Scotia's flower!

April sun has brought to light

Crocuses and snowdrops white;

Where thy smiling face to-night?

Winds are wailing, sobbing low:—

"Out of reach of frost and snow

Went the Gowan long ago!"

MARY MORGAN.