

Montreal Company* has 2783 in operation. An additional 147 miles are in course of construction. It has four miles of submarine wire, and at the head office the average is 750 messages a-day; its stock is at 15 per cent. premium, and for some years it has given 10 per cent. to its shareholders.

Canada has as yet had no time to devote to literature and the arts. She has so recently passed out of a condition of hard struggling 'for the dear life,' that she has not as yet thought of the merely ornamental part of it. She has many able writers; but their topics are generally local, or at any rate Canadian; and though many say what they have to say in a nervous, business-like way, they evidently prefer matter to style, and write like business-men in a hurry—as they are. As Macaulay says of Milton—'there is no elaborate imitation of classical antiquity, no scrupulous purity, none of the ceremonial clearness which characterizes our academical Pharisees.' The author does not attempt to polish and brighten his composition into the Ciceronian gloss and brilliancy. The newspaper press absorbs most of this kind of talent; and as in other parts of America, a man cannot receive a letter from England or tramp fifty miles through the bush, without writing to the editor of his paper to tell what his friend says, or what sort of land he saw on his journey. A good, sound education is almost universal, at any rate among the native-born Canadians; almost every man can read, and every man who can read takes in a newspaper. These of course, as water finds its own level, assimilate themselves to the tastes of their subscribers, and where each depends for advancement on his own acuteness and acquirements, everything in the way of knowledge is acceptable, whatever be the subject. Such curiosity is of course little likely to stop short at the narrow limits of its own affairs. A friend at New York to whom I complained of the non-arrival of an expected letter from England, jokingly told me to make my mind easy, for that I should

shortly have an opportunity of reading it in the pages of the *New York Herald*, with asterisks, substituted from motives of delicacy (!), for vowels in the proper names. I do not mean to imply that curiosity runs so high as that in Canada; but it is strongly developed, nevertheless. In one point the Transatlantic newspapers have a decided advantage over the English—want of matter to fill up corners never causes enormous gooseberries to ripen for the occasion; two-headed calves are unknown. Instead of these marvels, stray spaces are filled up with little stories, such as the wits of the *New World* are alone able to indite. What we term humour is almost unknown; the jokes all turn on some ludicrous exaggeration of phrase or laughable situation.

Here is one from a Southern paper, as I need not say. A negro recounts the 'smart' dodge by which he purchased his freedom:—"Well, now, I used to be a mis'able nigger—one of the mis'ablest kind; and I just got so pce-owerful weak that I couldn't do nuffin but jist lay in the garden and make shift to eat up the sarse' (garden sauce, *Ang.* vegetables), 'so I had to 'suade missus to trade me, I was such a mis'able nigger. Says I, "Missus, I've got a hundred dollars; you'd best take it, 'cos I ain't no good at all." So she did. Oh! this nigger was cheap at that; guess I realized 'bout nine hundred dollars on that nigger!"

Could any but an American have dreamed of a man making money by purchasing himself under his market price?

Here's another:—"Mr. C—, of our city, was turning out of the yard in a trotting wagon, with a span of fine young horses. Team took fright—ran up against the gatepost, upset the driver, and started off at the rate of 2.40. "Quick!" shouted C—, as he scrambled up, to a friend who had witnessed the accident; "quick, what will you give for the carriage *as she runs!*" "Sixty dollars." "Done." Scarcely had he spoken, when a smash on a stump by the roadside destroyed the hopes of the hasty speculator."

* *Montreal Herald*.