

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Excuses for Drinking.

Some drink to make them wide awake,
And some to make them sleep;
Some drink because they merry are,
And some because they weep.

Some drink because they're very hot,
And some because they're cold;
Some drink to cheer them when they're young,
And some because they're old.

Some drink to give them appetite,
And some to aid digestion;
Some, for the doctor says it's right,
And some without a question.

Some drink when they a bargain make,
And some because of loss;
Some drink when they their pleasure take,
And some when they are cross.

Some drink for sake of company,
While some drink on the sly;
And many drink, but never think,
About the reason why.

—Alliance News.

WINTER SPORTS IN CANADA.

The Montreal Ice Palace was the first ever tried in the New World. The building was made of blocks of ice, forty-two by twenty-four inches, each block weighing five hundred pounds, and the whole structure containing forty thousand cubic feet of ice. Its dimensions were about ninety by ninety feet, with rectangular towers at each corner, and a central square tower one hundred feet high. The blocks were "cemented" together by snow for mortar, and then water was pumped on from a hose, and the whole palace made into one solid piece, so that you couldn't separate one block from another without sawing them apart. The Ice Palace was the most beautiful sight I ever saw in sun-light or moon-light. By the electric light it reminded me of what Charles the Fifth said of Antwerp Cathedral, that it was worthy of being placed under a glass shade. I went on top of the mountain and looked down at the thousands of lights throughout the city, and at this glowing structure in the middle. It was like fairy-land.

Tobogganing is the nearest thing to flying one can find. One couldn't live long if he kept going at such a speed. The toboggan is made of two pieces of thin bass wood, about six feet long and two feet wide, bent up in front like the dashboard of a sleigh. It has cross pieces of wood for strength, and long, round sticks at each side, and is all clasped together by cat-gut. The Indians make them, and use them to carry the game they shoot over the snow through the woods, and the Canadians turn them into use for pastime in sliding down hills. The toboggan is so light that it doesn't sink in soft snow like a cutter, and is so smooth on the bottom that it goes down hill like a shot, especially when the hill is slippery.

My first experience of tobogganing was on the back part of Mount Royal. The mountain was thus named by the discoverer of Canada, when he first saw the St. Lawrence river and the landscape from its summit. The tobogganing slide here is purely an artificial one. It is a big structure of logs and planks made in an inclined plane, up one side of which there are steps, and down the side beside it a smooth, ice-covered slide. There is room on top like a little platform upon which you settle yourself on your toboggan. To tell the truth, there's no danger on proper hills. A man sits behind and steers with his foot.

The sensation is exciting. You lose your breath as the snow dashes up into your face, and you have all the feeling of going on the road to a regular smash-up, but before the smash comes, your sleigh eases off as gently as it started, and you get up and want to do it again. If you stand to one side of the slide, and see a toboggan whiz past you like a shot, and see the frightened faces of the strangers who are having their first try,



INSIDE THE ICE PALACE.

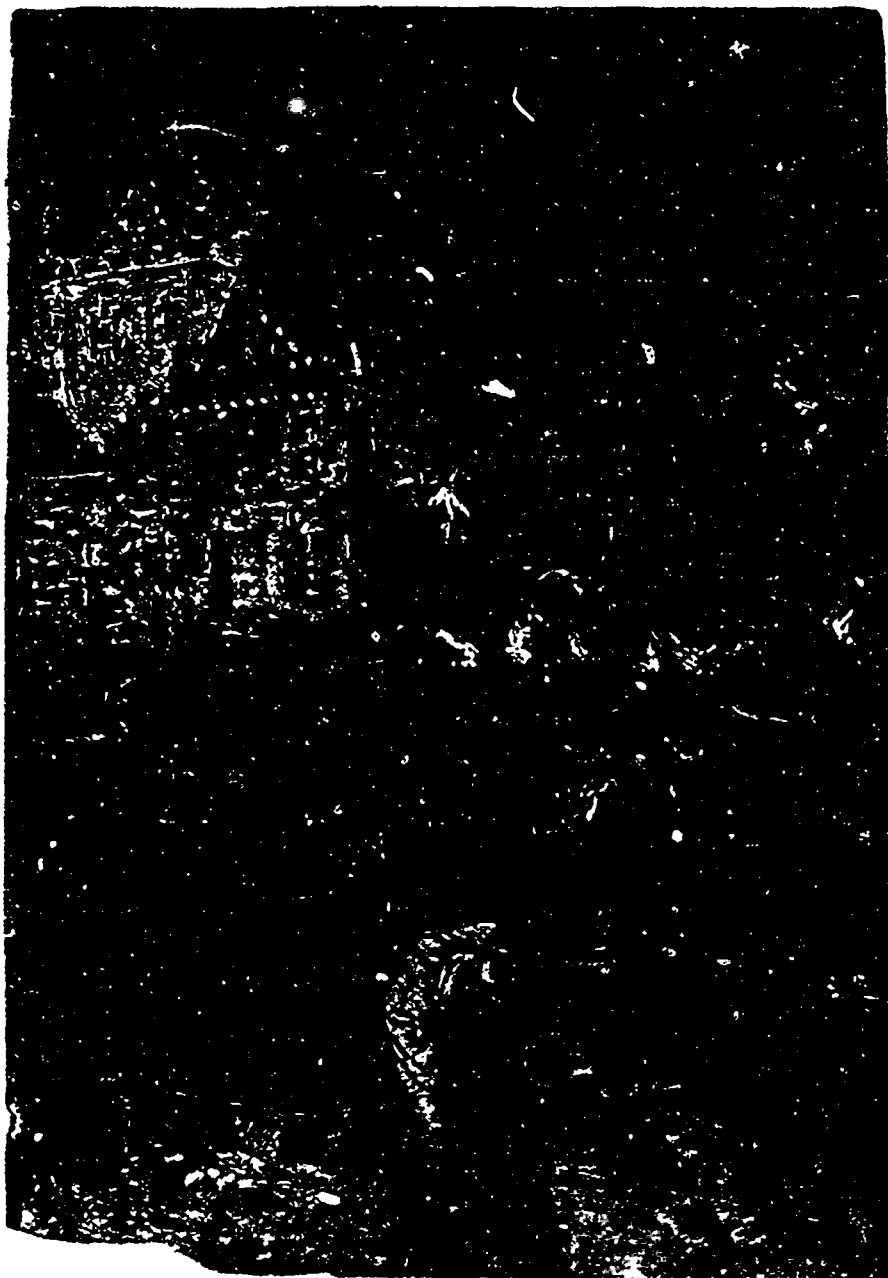
you feel as if you were looking at a group who were going to destruction; but by-and-bye you see them coming up hill again laughing at their fears.*

The Montreal Tobogganing Club has a splendid series of slides a short ride from the Windsor. The inauguration night

* The Chinese description of a toboggan ride is very graphic—"Swish-h-h!—walkee back half a mile-a."

was magnificent. The hills were lit up all along the route with torches stuck in the snow banks at each side; and a great lot of lanterns and locomotive headlights illuminated the ground, while at the foot a huge bonfire was kept burning, into which they threw coloured powder.

What a city Montreal is for sleighing! No sloppy roads one day and hard ones the next. No wheels to-day and runners to-morrow. A constant jingle of bells



THE ICE PALACE, MONTREAL, INAUGURATION NIGHT.

and quick trot of horses, and all kinds of sleighs, rough and handsome, little and big. On the civic half-holiday, there were over two thousand sleighs in the procession in which the hackmen joined. After the drive, we stopped at McGill College gate and saw the snowhoers start to run to the top of the mountain and back, a distance of about three miles cross country. They think nothing of running to the Back River, eight miles; and they go to Lachine and back, or some other place, every Saturday, about twenty miles, just for the sport of the thing. It was great fun to see some of the most eager fellows going headlong into the deep snow when they tried to pass those ahead.

Snowshoes are of Indian origin, made of light ash, bent to an oval, and the ends fastened together by cat-gut. The interior is then crossed with two pieces of flat wood to strengthen the frame, and the whole is woven with cat-gut, like a lawn tennis bat. An opening is left for the motion of the toes in raising the heel in stopping out. The netting sustains the weight of the body, and the shoe sinks only an inch or two, and when one foot is bearing the weight the other is lifted up, and over and onwards. The shoes are fastened to the moccasined feet by thongs of deer-skin. In the evening of the inauguration of the Ice Palace, everybody came to Dominion Square where there was every sort of light but sunlight. The Ice Palace looked like glass; and I never saw anything so beautiful as when they burned blue, green, crimson and purple fires inside. By and-by the procession of fifteen hundred men appeared in club uniforms, each carrying a lighted torch in one hand, and discharging Roman candles from the other. After going around the Palace, the procession headed for the mountain, went up the old snowshoe track, and returned down the zigzag road, singing as they swung along,

"Tramp! tramp! on snowshoes tramping.
All the day we marching go,
Till at night by fires encamping,
We find couches 'mid the snow!"

From the city below the sight was picturesque. The long, serpentine trail was seen moving in and out, and twisting like a huge firesnake, while the Roman candles shot their balls of fire into the air. It was a grand and wild sight to see them coming back. A snowstorm had set in, and the flickering lights, the costumes, the sturdy, steady tramp of the fellows made one think of a midnight invasion by an army.

"BIBLE FIRST, PAPA."

"About forty years ago, a Christian man sat at his fireside in Philadelphia. Near by him, playing on the floor, was his only child, a beautiful little boy. It was early in the morning. The day's work had not yet begun, and waiting for his breakfast, it may be, the father took up the daily paper to read. The boy at once climbed into his lap, snatching away the paper, exclaiming, 'No, no, papa! Bible first—Bible first, papa!' That lesson, taught by a little child, was probably a turning point in the life of that man. Death soon came and tore away the sweet little preacher, but his morning sermon was never forgotten. The business man, in his loneliness and sorrow, went forth to do his work for Christ. 'Bible first, papa,' was ever ringing in his ears. It became the motto of his life. He was exceedingly prosperous in business. Wealth accumulated, business increased, friends multiplied. But uppermost in that man's heart was the precious word of God. He read and studied it. As teacher and superintendent in the Sabbath school, he taught it. He did more than this; he practiced its precepts."

The gentleman referred to was the well-known locomotive engine builder, Matthias W. Baldwin, of Philadelphia. Would not the child's cry, 'Bible first!' be an excellent motto for every Sunday-school teacher in the land?—S. S. Times.