

PEOPLE AND PLACES

VANCOUVER is able to show eastern cities some things by way of respect for local history. The Carnegie Library Museum there contains enough western historical souvenirs to tell the story of discovery and development in the West without a single line in a book. Here may be seen the portrait of Simon Fraser and of Captain Cook; complete collections of old Hudson's Bay forts of the earliest period; characters in that great drama—men and women of the early time, the way-makers; picture of the first white woman born in British Columbia; Captain Vancouver also—the doughty, God-fearing mariner who explored Vancouver waters and left a name to the island and city, is there in all his pious glory. Afterwards comes modern history; the makers of politics in that land; members and premiers. More interesting yet is the representation of the trade routes; the old pack trains; the wheel-barrow pack train from Yale to Barkerville—and a hundred other things which show that in the matter of estimating and glorifying the deeds of the pathmakers in the land, the city of Vancouver has much to teach the cities of the east.

S.T. THOMAS, Ont., however, is strong on historical matters; not having a large museum or such a wealth of history and geography to draw upon, the local historians and annalists of the Talbot Street settlement have formed a society which has done a great deal to preserve the memory of the regime of old Colonel Talbot, the dictator

he was appointed to the position of botanical and entomological expert at the Experimental Farm in Ottawa. Mr. Fletcher belonged to half a dozen botanical societies and wrote extensively upon subjects that are rather neglected by the average Canadian.

TWELVE lives in five days, from October 30th to November 3rd inclusive, is the death toll on the National Transcontinental, between Ingolf and Dryden, a distance of one hundred miles. At this rate last winter's record will be trebled, and the cost of the new cross-continent road will have to be recorded in human lives as well as dollars and cents. Investigation has proven that all the accidents that have occurred are due to causes which may be classified under one of four heads, namely, the employment of incapable men in handling dynamite; the probable use of an inferior grade of dynamite; the lack of proper facilities for thawing dynamite; and general carelessness in the handling of deadly explosives, the result of too great familiarity. The recent loss of twelve lives in five days was due to one or more of the above mentioned causes. The report of the death of two men on Parsons' work near Vermilion Bay on October 30th, was the first intimation that the winter's list of casualties had commenced, and although it was expected that reports of deaths singly and in couples would be received every few days as the season progressed, no one was prepared for the terrible hap-

interests of humanity, draw forth some action. The Transcontinental Railway is a national work. The nation is made responsible for these fatalities. Canada has a Department of Justice with the fullest possible facilities for investigation of such conditions and the department will doubtless make a move in view of the list of appalling accidents.

THRILLINGLY weird was the experience of a St. John citizen one night last week. Just about to go to sleep this citizen and his wife were startled by a strange noise in the room; a flitting of nocturnal wings with a cold swish-swish that quite decided the citizen, who was not much on natural history, that if the thing wasn't a bat it was surely an owl. So he got out of bed and started a battle with the creature. First thing he got hold of was a hair brush which he hurled at the swishing object with such force that he missed his aim and the brush fell upon the bed, whereat the woman in the case screamed and tried to hide beneath the clothes of the bed; but in so doing the brush managed to wriggle inside and the bristles of it coming in contact with her arm made her certain that the beast which her husband was chasing had got into the bed. By this time the citizen had brought the pillows into the line of fire; with one of these he managed to bring down the flying beast. The swish of the wings ceased and the light was turned on.

"Well, wouldn't that jar you!" said the man



After the Explosion—From a photograph taken on the N. T. Ry, just east of Kenora, where so many fatalities have occurred.



The Explosion—An unusual picture taken on the N. T. Ry, showing the tremendous force of each blast.

of a century ago. The Elgin Historical Society is one of the liveliest things of its kind in Canada. Next year in all probability there will be a celebration in that part of the country to commemorate the opening of the famous Talbot Road, the once military highway, which has as much historic value in that part of Canada as the old stone Roman roads in England. Of course interest in this sort of agreeable research is kept up largely by a few people, chief among whom are Judge Ermatinger and Mr. James Coyne, both long members of the society and both historical enthusiasts without superiors anywhere in Canada.

THE recent death of Mr. James Fletcher has removed a man who knew more than any other in the country of the world of flowers and insects—a realm in which he happily wandered. Mr. James Fletcher was not a statesman; he never had anything to do with making history in the House of Commons; he was never in newspaper head-lines; but he spent his life studying the insect and plant life of Canada. Not so much as a poetic enthusiast, perhaps, but more of a practical man who while he saw the beauty of insects and flowers was able to trace the intimate relations between the same so as to discover things of great practical benefit to farmers and fruit growers and horticulturists. He was born in Ashe, Kent County, England; coming to Canada in 1874 he entered a bank; two years later entered the Parliamentary Library in Ottawa. Soon afterwards he was made honorary entomologist in the Department of Agriculture, and in 1887

penings of the following Tuesday when ten men's lives were sacrificed. The first accident was a straight case of an explosion in a thawing-house. While this class of accident is not infrequent, it is not as common as the premature explosions out on the work, which in many cases can be indirectly traced to the thawing-house. One of these two victims was thawing some dynamite, the house being heated by the usual wood stove, while his companion was chopping wood outside. The explosion wiped them both out of existence. The exact cause will never be known, and although it may have been due to a spark flying out upon a stick the probable cause was an explosion of the gases formed by the drying dynamite.

The accident north of Dryden is without doubt one of the worst in the history of the road. Here were seven men toiling contentedly at their work and the next moment without an instant's warning were hurled into eternity, their bodies buried under masses of rock which it took hours of superhuman effort to remove. The morning of that same day three more lives were snuffed out north of Ingolf. The men were drilling and the point of their drill evidently struck the base of an old hole, the full charge of which had not exploded. The contact of steel with dynamite is always fatal. The fact that all the dynamite in the old hole had not exploded, itself points to a defect in the explosive, and most likely it was not thawed out when the shot was fired and so remained a menace to life.

These incidents should on behalf of the labourers on the National Transcontinental and in the broader

who was not up to much on natural history.

"What is the horrid thing, dear?" asked the woman.

"Nothing but a confounded moth!"

The moth, however, was a Canadian Giant Moth, and is now one of the decorations in the window of a St. John barber shop.

WINTER wheat in Ontario adds nearly eighteen millions of bushels to the aggregate yield of more than a hundred million bushels in Canada. At the same time, the banner province produced more than a hundred million bushels of oats. Wheat is no longer even a staple in Ontario agriculture. It really doesn't matter vitally whether the Ontario farmer raises wheat or not, except that winter wheat makes good flour, especially when mixed with spring wheat from the West. Mixed farming and the raising of stock has turned acres into hay and roots and ensilage corn that used to be devoted to wheat. In the old days the farmer worried the liver out of himself trying to get twenty-five acres of land plowed for fall wheat. If the weather was dry and the land was hard the farmer got about ten acres in by the first week in September and hardscrabbled in ten more by October; half of it got heaved by the frost; weeds and chess grew on the vacant places; and half the rest of the crop got rust and shrunk before threshing time came. But the farmer understands better how to raise wheat now, in a time when he has managed to find out that wheat is no longer the main source of revenue.