

## OUR QUEBEC LETTER.

(From our Staff Correspondent.)

A winter's trip on the Intercolonial from Halifax to Quebec, although much of the really grand scenery on the way is made black and desolate by the denuded trees and the great heaps of snow that everywhere envelope the hills, the villages, and the rivers in mantles of white, is still not devoid of interest. Leaving Halifax in one of the heaviest snow storms of the season, we fully expected to be snowed in, but we had not proceeded far on our journey before the snow turned into rain; and, had it not been for an unfortunate accident at Sackville, where our engine was disabled by running into two coal hoppers that had accidentally been blown from a switch on to the main track, we should have reached Quebec on time. From Campbelltown to Quebec the train was continuously running between great banks of snow that in many places were high enough to cut off all view of the surrounding country. Nothing but the greatest energy on the part of the officials of the Intercolonial could have kept the track clear, and they deserve great credit for so quickly breaking through the blockade. More engines and cars may be needed to handle the great increase of freight business that the through grain trade has furnished, but when it is considered that the snow-fall has been the greatest for years, and that an equally severe season may never be encountered again, it is decidedly unfair to pronounce the Intercolonial unfitted for through winter business, or Halifax a failure as a Winter Port. When whole freight trains were hidden out of sight by snow, on sidings, one ceases to wonder that freight should be greatly delayed, and can only express surprise that trains could be got through at all. It was ten o'clock on Saturday evening when we reached Point Lévis, and the ferry had stopped running, so I concluded to remain until morning, rather than be victimized by crossing in a canoe. I was taken to the St. Lawrence House, which at first sight was not very inviting, but the rooms proved clean, and the bed comfortable, so that there was nothing to complain of. Before retiring, I took a walk down on the ferry wharf, and had my first view of Quebec, about which so much has been written that there remains nothing new to be said.

Sunday was a beautiful day, and I thoroughly enjoyed steaming over the river on the powerful ferry boats which crushed through the masses of floating ice as if they were card-board. A week's stay in the Fortress City has familiarized me with its many points of historical interest, but most of my time has been passed in visits to the great commercial and manufacturing establishments in the Lower Town and Saint Roch. I had no idea that Quebec was such a great manufacturing centre, until I found myself threading its narrow business streets, walking on snow that reached the second story windows, and down which slippery staircases had been cut to the sidewalks. Along St. Vallière street, and all the streets in its neighborhood, tannery after tannery, blocks of shoe factories, foundries, woollen mills, breweries and furniture factories, stretch in almost unbroken succession. Most of the buildings are of brick, and all are substantially constructed and kept neat and clean. Many of the proprietors have their dwellings adjoining, or in their factories, and so are always on hand to superintend operations and prevent waste of time and money. Their thrifty habits have made them rich; but instead of retiring and living on their money, they keep on improving their establishments and opening up new sources of wealth for their children. The furniture factory of Philippe Vallière is an interesting place to visit, and from it are turned out the finest or cheapest furniture, as the exigencies of the trade demand. His sales-rooms are very large and handsomely fitted up, and his factory is provided with the most improved machinery. St. Peter's, St. Paul's, and Dalhousie streets, with the numerous streets that intersect them, are in the Lower Town, and are the principal streets devoted to the wholesale trades. Tobacco factories, wholesale dry goods, and hardware houses, crockery, shipping, banking, and financial institutions, are closely packed together, and on every hand are to be read the names of merchants who have world-wide reputations for business push and financial strength. At 124 Dalhousie street, Larkin, Connolly & Co., the great contractors, whose pay sheet often amounts to \$30,000 monthly, have their offices, and just beyond commences the stone tidal basin that they have the contract to build. This is probably the greatest work of its kind on this continent. It will be some years before the work is completed, but it is an absolute necessity to the trade of Quebec, where the high tides and great rush of waters render it difficult to unload vessels lying in the stream. An immense amount of money is being spent on the harbor improvements, and when they are completed, Quebec should prove to be the finest river harbor in America. I visited the graving dock (which Messrs. Larkin & Co. have only lately completed) with Mr. Kimmitt, the confidential clerk of Mr. Larkin. The dock is of stone, 480 ft. long by 100 ft. wide, and the iron steamer *Titanis*, which had been wrecked on Anticosti, but floated off and towed to Quebec, was docked in it. She is a large steamer, but looked almost lost in the great dock. Not a drop of water was leaking through the iron draw-gate that closes the dock at its mouth.

Although the cold of Quebec is much severer than that of Halifax, it had no effect upon the massive masonry, and this fact should forever set at rest the arguments raised against the stone graving dock in Halifax. The Messrs. Larkin & Co. have a very fine plant of machinery, and their dredges and steam derricks are as large and powerful as the world can produce. The same firm constructed the graving dock at Esquimaux, B. C., and have contracts in all parts of the Dominion. The dock is on the Lévis side of the river, at St. Joseph, some two miles below, and is almost opposite the famed falls of Montmorency. Anyone that imagines that Quebec is going to lose its commercial advantages without a struggle, will be convinced to the contrary, by noting the great improvements that are now fast advancing to completion. On visiting some friends of Mr. Kimmitt, we found them most

painfully excited. On election night, Nicholas Hart, one of their relations, a young man of about 22, suddenly disappeared, and no trace of him could be found. Foul play was suspected, but no proofs could be adduced, and his disappearance had been almost forgotten by all but his relatives and personal friends. On the day of our visit, his rubber had been found near the river bank, on the ice, and its identity fully established by something that had been sown in it. As no one would be likely to wander in the direction where the rubber was found, the suspicions of foul play were greatly strengthened, and the authorities should certainly do all in their power to unearth the mystery, and, if possible, bring the guilty parties to justice.

## QUEBEC BRIDGE.

I am glad to be able to report to the people of Halifax, who are as much interested in the completion of the Quebec bridge as are Quebecers, that the bridge is now almost certain to be speedily built. I called on Mr. A. I. Light, the well-known civil engineer, and as the representative of THE CRITIC, was cordially received by him. He has completed plans for a cantilever bridge, to cross the narrows some four miles above the city, and has every confidence that the work on it will soon be begun. A photograph of the proposed bridge shows that it will be one of the handsomest structures of the kind in this country; but in order to give some idea of its great size, I will give the principle dimensions:—

Total length of structure .....	3,460 feet.
“ “ steel superstructure .....	2,800 “
Total width .....	108 “
“ length channel span .....	1,550 “
“ “ in clear .....	1,442 “
Clear height .....	150 “
Maximum depth .....	258 “

The channel span of 1550 feet is the second longest in the world, being only exceeded by the Forth Bridge.

Sir James Brunlees, the celebrated English engineer, is associated with Mr. Light as consulting engineer, and Thomas Claxton Fidler as assistant engineer.

Mr. Light has devoted much time and study to the proposed work, and his plan or design, backed up by such an eminent authority as Sir James Brunlees, is now beyond adverse criticism. Mr. Light's intimate knowledge of the late Joseph Howe, and his pleasant anecdotes of prominent public men, make a visit to him unusually pleasant. That he will succeed in building the bridge, I have no doubt; and in his work he is being ably seconded by the talented editor of the *Chronicle*, and also by a prominent merchant here.

I have been stopping at the Blanchard House, as cosy a little hotel as there is in Quebec, and the very place for business men to patronize. Capt. Pelletier is the proprietor, and maintains the same strict discipline amongst the servants as he did when in command on the quarter deck. His wife is a superior housekeeper, and ably seconds him in keeping everything scrupulously clean, and the table well supplied with properly cooked food.

ADIOS AMIGO.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

## ODDS AND ENDS.

M. Pasteur's Necrology, "revised and corrected to 4th February," now adds up to 65.

The crowning marvel of photography is its power of manifesting what is invisible to the eye, even assisted by the telescope. Its application to astronomy is, therefore, of a value undreamed of a few years since. It has for some years been employed on those great celestial mysteries, the nebulae, with, in some instances, the result of affording a strong presumption that astronomers are actually witnessing the condensation of gaseous masses into suns. The manner in which "the photographic eye of science" is able to delineate that which the human eye is incapable of discerning is so interesting that it may well be briefly explained:

"Of the long range of radiations coming from highly heated matter, the sun for example, only a small portion falls within the power of the eye." Beyond the extreme violet on the one hand, and beyond the red on the other, visibility fails; but in the latter case the feeling of warmth enables us to know that the radiated influence of a hot body is upon us. And, although the ultra-violet and ultra-red cannot directly stimulate the eye, they can make themselves known by their effect on salts of silver, their photographic power. This effect was at one time regarded as exclusively inherent in the ultra-violet portion of the spectrum. Captain Abney, however, succeeded in bringing the ultra-red within the power of the photographic plate, and has, Mr. Proctor believes, photographed a kettle of boiling water in the dark by means of its own radiation.

Photography, also, not only confirms the classification of suns made by Father Secchi from ordinary spectroscopic observation, but leads to further pregnant suggestion of the deep meaning of what we are, by these two scientific appliances, enabled to witness. Roughly speaking, the great suns which lend themselves most readily to observation, range themselves in three classes—the white or bluish-white, of which the magnificent stars Sirius and Vega present themselves as the splendid examples—the yellowish-white, like Capella, whose spectrum is almost absolutely the same as our sun's—and the reddish stars like Arcturus.

The pregnant suggestion is this, that color indicates age, consequently, vigor passing to decay. Thus there may have been a time when the solar spectrum presented only the typical lines which still distinguish that of Vega; and there may, and probably will, come a time when "the lecturer,