

Freezing and Starving.

MONTREAL, Dec. 21.—Full reports of the blizzard which began Sunday and only ceased Wednesday are now coming in. The most serious consequences are reported from lower Quebec and back villages out of the line of railway travel. The summer had been bad for farmers, and the crops were so meagre that much distress was felt. It only needed a storm just like the one past to cause the most wide spread distress. In the small villages back of Quebec and below that city many families are suffering this early in the winter for the actual necessities of life. Farmers are killing off their live stock, and those who have none to kill, have sent a piteous appeal to Cardinal Taschereau and Premier Mercier for relief. Several instances of freezing to death are reported.

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CLIMBING.

Once these hills that I have gained Seemed like towering mountains tall; Now in the evening, sunset stained, My weary soul doth find them small. Before my sight to Rights rise, Most blissful and towering up sublime; But in the sky life's daylight dies, And, is it worth on while to climb? Lie down, O soul, and be content; Behind the hills do lie, all low, Of level, dull accomplishment; Beyond the eternal stars still glow. —Bennett Bellman

ON THE PATH BELOW.

I reached Burton's in the mountains beyond Bristol, late in the evening, having as usual, tucked about my trail. The cabin stood just off the road, and all around it was silent and dark. It has always been a wonder that his dogs did not attack me. He had three, and they were as cross and crabbed as old bears. They came running down the trail to meet me, growling and barking, but as soon as they came up they made friends. They were playing around me when I stood in front of the cabin and called: "Hello! you! Hello! Hello!" In about a minute a voice answered: "Who is yer, an' what's wanted?" "Stranger in search of lodgings." He seemed to doubt it, for he made no immediate reply. After a long minute I heard a woman arguing: "I tell you he must be all right. If he wasn't them dogs would hev devoured him!" "Well, come in!" called the man, and I stumbled along to the cabin to find him in the half open door with his rifle in his hands. My explanations soon satisfied him, that I was all right, and he struck a light, piled some blankets in a corner and said: "Stranger, that's the best lop I kin fix ye off hand. Jist tumble down and doan' worry about nothin'."

I was soon fast asleep, having nothing to keep me awake. Right in the heart of the grim old mountain—among people whose faces I had only glanced at among men who settle their disputes with knife or bullet—entirely at their mercy and in their power if they wanted to rob or kill—and yet there was no cause to be afraid. When you are the guest of a mountaineer you are safe. Next morning I found the family to consist of husband, wife and three children. The oldest of the three children was a boy of 12, who had killed his bear and was a dead shot. As soon as I had looked around me I knew that a distillery could be found near by. After breakfast Burton pumped me for a few minutes, sized me up in his mind as "O. K." and said: "Come up with me and see the boys. And I want to tell you that we're bin expecting visitors fur the last two days, an' we may hev a scare befo' night."

"What sort of visitors?" "United States chaps arter our still. They've had a spy in yere trying to locate it. We saw him twice yesterday." There were three other men at the still, which was hidden away in a dark and rugged ravine, approached by a footpath which could be ambushed at every rod. All the corn was "toted" on the men's back over this path, and the kegs of whisky were slung to a pole and carried between two men. The still was perfect, but small, and in the five or six months it had been in operation the men had not made the wages of mechanics. I asked one of them how long since he had had a five dollar bill, and he squinted his eyes, counted his fingers, scratched his head, and finally replied: "Wall, stranger, you may remember the battle of Stone River?" "Yes."

"A right smart ago, wasn't it?" "Yes; twenty-five years ago." "Wall, jist arter that fight I had a five-dollar bill, and that's the fust and last time." What money they made by illicit distilling went for boots and shoes, clothing of the plainest kind, tinware, tobacco and tea. One of them had had three pounds of brown sugar in his house within a year. The others had not had an ounce; one had not tasted tea, coffee, sugar, wheat bread or fresh meat (outside of wild meat) for over two years. The still was about a mile from the house.

If any stranger came by the trail one of the dogs was sent with the ravine with a piece of cloth tied to his neck. Half way between the two, as I discovered later on, was another path intersecting. This came out of another ravine, and was used by the men only occasionally. The boy was stationed at this intersection to watch both paths and give an alarm if danger threatened. It was about 11 o'clock in the morning when he came running in and said: "Spy coming, pop!"

Then an instantaneous and terrible change took place in the bearing of the men. We had been lying about at ease, every man seemingly having a heart full of kindness, but this announcement started a blazing fire in every eye, set every jaw, and I could see desperation in each face. It needed no handwriting on the wall to tell me that the spy would be wiped off the face of the earth without compunction if discovery threatened. Burton beckoned to me, made a signal to the others which they understood, and we climbed up the rugged face of a rock, ran for a quarter of a mile over broken ground which was well wooded, and then suddenly halted at a spot overlooking the second path and high above it. Burton made me a sign as he crouched down beside a large rock, and cautiously approaching I looked down into the ravine and saw a solitary man—the spy. He was coming up the path. If he passed the spot where we were stationed his scent alone would locate the still. "Click! Click!" "Good heavens! but you are not going to shoot him!" I whispered to Burton as he cocked his rifle. He half turned to look at me. His face was as hard set as iron. "For the sake of earning a few dollars he would see us starve!" he replied. "He knows his danger. Let him pass this rock and I will shoot him!" I dared say no more. Burton was desperate and determined.

We looked down at an angle of forty-five degrees on the spy. You could have told that he was a spy by his actions. He had the gait of an Indian bent on a surprise. He looked about him like one who expected the whistle of a bullet at any moment. He came slowly on. Could I signal him? No! He was not looking up, but around him. Coming—coming—coming—advancing at a steady pace towards the dwelling of Burton. He already had

It was my heart pounding away like a pile driver. It would be murder. I would be accessory. If I dared to shout

—to— Thank God! Was it the fall of a fragment of rock up on the mountain side, or the hoarse call of the great buzzard poised above us which made the spy halt in his tracks? Ten feet more and a finger will press the trigger. He peers this way and that—he looks up and around—he starts to advance, but halts again. Is some one praying for him—has he a guardian angel who whispers a warning?

It is two minutes—two minutes which tick away so slowly that they seem to be hours in length. I lean against the great rock almost gasping for breath, while Burton has his eye on the sights and his finger ready to pull. It is a tangle on the threshold of death. It is a pantomime at the entrance of a grave. "Go back! Go back!" I entreat in mind to the spy. The removal of his hat, wipes his brow and is evidently anxious. "If you value your life go back!" I would fain say.

He looks around him like one who feels danger in the very air. "You'll hev to advance! Heer and heed the warning!" The warning reached him by that mysterious channel which the human mind has not fathomed. I saw him start in fear, and then, seeming entirely against his will, he turned short about and almost ran as he hurried up the path and out of sight. "He'us has got off this time, shure," said Burton, as he rose up and let the hammer of his rifle down. "You would have killed him!" I asked. "Dead as this rock!" "It would have been murder." "Then let he'us keep away from yere!" —M. Quin in Detroit Free Press.

A "Women's Hunt" in Bengal. A society of Bengal of the Royal Asiatic society of Bengal a description was given of a peculiar custom among the aboriginal tribes of Ranchi, a group of hamlets in Chota Nagpore. It is known as the Era Sendra, or women's hunt. On the present occasion the object was to expel the cholera demon, and it is usual when any great calamity overtakes the land for the women to dress themselves up in men's clothes, arm themselves and go out to hunt, not in the jungles, but in the nearest villages east of them. They chase pigs and fowls, and everything they kill is theirs. They also levy blackmail from the heads of the villages for the purchase of liquor. The villagers cannot prevent the slaughter of their animals, but the head men generally compromise matters by giving the huntresses a pig and paying a small sum. Toward evening the hunting party retires to a neighboring stream where they cook and eat their meat and drink the liquor. They eat nothing after this meal, but bathe and return home. Men are not allowed to accompany them on such occasions, and they conduct themselves for the time being in a very masterful and masculine manner. They are decked out in coats and all the finery they can borrow from their husbands and sweethearts, and they flourish their spears, axes and sticks, beat their iron drums, shout, sing hunting songs and dance just as the men do. The ceremony begins in the west, and each village that has been visited goes out on a similar excursion to its neighbors, but always to the east. By this means it is supposed that the evil spirit is safely conducted out of the district without offending its dignity. One village near Ranchi is an exception. It is called Mahadev, or devoted to Mahadev, and there the Amazons are not allowed to enter, as it is supposed to be under the special protection of its patron saint. If cholera appears there it is because the Mahadev is offended, and he must be propitiated before it can disappear.—London Times.

The Ancestry of the Pen. A manufacturer of gold pens, in speaking of the ancestry of this writing instrument, which is said to be mightier than the sword, said: The earliest mode of writing was on bricks, tiles, oyster shells, stones, ivory, bark and leaves of trees, and from the latter the term "leaves of a book" is probably derived. Copper and brass plates were very early in use, and a bill of feoffment on copper was some years since discovered in India bearing date 100 years B. C. Leather was also used, as well as wooden tablets. Then the papyrus came into vogue, and about the eighth century the papyrus was superseded by parchment. Paper, however, is of greater antiquity, especially among the Chinese, but the first paper mill in England was built in 1586 by a German at Dartford, in Kent. Nevertheless, it was nearly a century and a half—namely, in 1713—before Thomas Watkins, a stationer, brought papermaking to anything like perfection. The first approach to the pen was a stylus—a kind of iron bodkin—but the Romans forbade its use on account of its frequent and even fatal use in quarrels, and then it was made of bone. Subsequently reeds pointed and split, like pens of the present day, were used, and in time they were replaced by pens of steel and gold.—New York Telegram.

The Lace Leaf Plant. The lace leaf plant is chiefly found in the rivers of Madagascar, but it is difficult to find, as it grows best under water. The root is something like a potato, and is roasted and eaten by the natives. The leaves are of different colors, from the light green and yellow of the young growth to the darker shades of the old. The largest leaves are a foot long, and are delicate mesh work, the center and edges forming a skeleton on which the threads are supported. Looking down into the water where the plants are growing the leaves are said to look like a spread of magnificent lace in brown, green, olive and gold. They thrive well in greenhouses, only requiring a wet soil and damp, warm air, but the trouble of securing them makes them a rarity.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

A Foreigner's Property Rights. An alien who may come to this country intending to become a citizen as soon as he can be naturalized, upon making deposition to that effect before any officer authorized to take proof of deeds, shall be entitled, after taking out his first papers, to acquire real estate. Certificate of such deposition is filed in a book kept for such use in the office of the secretary of state. The person so acquiring real estate may sell, assign, mortgage or dispose of it in any manner for the ensuing six years as if he were a native citizen, but he cannot lease it. In case of his death within the six years real estate he regularly acquired falls to his heirs, but he is ineligible as if he

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Table with 2 columns: GOING WEST and GOING EAST. Lists train numbers and times for various routes.