

THE TOBOGGAN SLIDE.

E. PAULINE JOHNSON DESCRIBES ITS PLEASURES AND DANGERS.

Reckless Young Canada Risks Life and Limb in the Pursuit of a Winter Sport That Takes One's Breath Away—A Vivid Sketch.



WHAT is that constituent of youth inherent with us all that yields to this witchery of recklessness, that loves a dash of danger in our pleasure making? We see it in the child who wants to play with Lucifer matches because it is told by nurse that "they are bad, and will bite baby;" it bubbles out in the school boy, who skates so near to the big yawning airhole in the ice that the brittle substance splits beneath his feet and he strides off just in time to save himself from a horrible death, or at the least, a perilous ducking while he assures his comrades he "wasn't a bit," and tries the experiment again just because the dangerous sport adds such intoxication to the otherwise uninteresting, because undeniable security of his pastime and play hour.

We see it in the man, whose friend coaxes him to drop that hazardous friendship with his old-time love, who is another man's wife now. Only to the aged whose life lies behind them does danger lose its spicy flavor, but to youth, and health, and warm young blood, oh! the irresistible fascination of risk and venture. To hold one's breath on the pinnacle of uncertainty, to feel one's pulse bound with excitement, then freeze with the horror of physical extinction. This, indeed, is the essence of life and pleasure and existence. This indeed is the essence of tobogganing.

Young Canada is wonderfully vigorous, daringly reckless as far as sport is concerned, but of all the wild, heedless pastimes in his long catalogue of physical exercise, tobogganing is undoubtedly the most hazardous.

Many a gay young life has been dashed out at the foot of the treacherous slide, many a sturdy limb snapped asunder, many a glowing cheek out and scorched for a lifetime, but still the rollicking sport goes on, each robust gamster strong in the faith that there is the one charmed existence to which mishap is least likely to occur. And after all there is little to fear if the "man at the helm" knows the track and has confidence in his own steering, but he must be strong, keen-eyed and absolutely fearless, or woe to the passengers he essays to pilot down hill on the wings of the wind; woe to his craft, and, direct of all calamities, woe to his reputation as a tobogganist.

But, like all true sportsmen, he is keenly alive to the dangers of careless and tricky practices. One can always distinguish the reliable veteran by the painstaking fashion he has of seeing that the passengers' coats, skirts and shoes are all well tucked under before the start, by his immutable law of never permitting the craft to escape the touch of his hand or foot while the passengers are mounting, and by his despic command that they "hang on whatever happens"—for fun is ended and foolhardiness begins the instant some swashbuckler thinks it very clever to go down hill backwards or standing up, or to get a crowd aboard only to terrify them by letting the toboggan creep some feet toward the chute before he tears madly after it, pitches himself on the snow, spins left him "aft," while the craft swerves from side to side with his blundering antics and an accident is barely averted. But many a terrible spill have I had where no one was to blame. Perhaps some tiny obstruction has been on the chute, perhaps some unfortunate on the foregoing toboggan has lost his tongue on the track and we had dashed over it, or a bit of our rope line had slipped underneath; aye, for less things than these have I been pitched into space, tangled up informally with the rest of the crew and landed with painful velocity in a snow-drift or ice-hole, with an infuriating mixture of tomes, matters, moccasins and toboggans atop of me, or worse to arise and see the latter sliding willy-nilly off by itself down the long, long chute, whether one must travel to recover it. But who minds an upset when there are no serious results? You scoop the snow out from the depths of your collar, from the lights of your sleeves and on you go, willing to risk it again, just for that dizzy moment of peril that hovers above you as you take the "dip," ere you skim away on the level and realize that you have a half mile tramp between you and the spot you left a few seconds before.

The best toboggans are constructed of hickory, and measure anywhere from five to eight feet in length, exclusive of the curl at the bow, which should not roll about eight inches. The fastest craft are built in slate between four and five inches wide, bringing the total width up to about seventeen inches, and the thinner the wood the better. Some builders run small wooden rails along the edges from stem to stern, just sufficiently high for the fingers to grip underneath, but in any accident the brittle wood is liable to snap and splinter, which is exceedingly dangerous to the passengers. The better way is to run a rope very taut and strong through small staples screwed into the crossbars, and it has the advantage of being much easier to "hang on to," as it gives slightly at every "jump" and never jars the hands.

The cost of a toboggan runs from \$5 upward, but a very neat one built of Indian black hickory, with a thick handsome cushion lined firmly in place, may be had for \$10 or thereabouts.

One can soon become an expert at running the craft. You have but to "sit" "Turk fashion," and as close as saildines, leaving a foot's space at the stern, upon which you grip one knee as you start the load, and the side ropes with both hands, kneel high enough to admit of your chin just skimming the shoulder of the person directly in front of you, and "let her go!"—taking your free foot as a rudder, of which the slightest touch on the track will bend your craft into obedience, but your foot must be absolutely free, swinging and unobscured, or command of your craft is lost.

Of course if you are a lady, the fewer the more the better, and unless you are so fearless and sturdy minded as La Cenci, you would be wiser to reserve some space for yourself if you intend to start than the meager above mentioned feet. But you soon get accustomed to a short allowance of room, for some way or other there always seems to be space enough for just one more on a toboggan, and then you dash down on the few inches left you and away you go, caring little for the snow

spluttering and whirling about your ears, as you plow through drifts, and scale the "hump" with a flying leap, for most of the sliding in Ontario is done on snow, which, though slippery enough in itself, is not nearly the fun which one can get out of it in the Lower Provinces, where they turn a hose on at the top of the chute until the entire track is veneered with a thin stream of water which congeals in ice almost instantly in an atmosphere that often drops to thirty degrees below zero, and over this crystal track I have bounded more than once at the rate of a mile in thirty seconds.

Like all other winter sports, tobogganing is seen to perfection in Montreal. The slides are owned and managed by the respective snowshoe clubs, and each endeavors to rival each in speed, accommodation and hospitality. At carnival time the slides are a sight worth crossing the continent to see. One fete I attended, the Montreal Club had a slide well-nigh perpendicular, the descent of which came nearer making my hair stand on end than anything I ever experienced, for it is constructed by nature, and, like all her works, transcends the most cunning artifice of man. Down the long, steep slopes of Mount Royal, that lifts its huge bulk behind the curious old French-Canadian city, the two gleaming tracks of ice look like silver wires suspended in midair, with a gray, cobwebby something, winding up alongside, which a nearer view reveals to be a staircase. This and a few yards of particularly abrupt "shute" are the only artificial adjuncts required to perfect the most precipitous slide in Canada. The double tracks are separated by a ridge of ice, a little above a foot in height, so that two toboggans can with safety race each other, from start to finish, a distance of three-quarters of a mile, at the end of which you are quite willing to dismount, considering the fact that the atmosphere always tarries at zero or thereabouts, and your mad flight through such air leaves you as nearly frozen solid as humanity can be and yet live.

The first trip I took on this slide was a revelation to me as far as sport and speed are concerned.

Throngs of merry-makers crowded the stairs and encircled the bottom, chattering vivaciously in French and English, laughing, jesting, trifling, and all awaiting with utmost good humor their turn at the slide, down which every second or two whizzed a daring little craft with its light-hearted crew, that disappeared for an instant under the first dip, arose on the second, vanished again, then slipped straight and swift down the long, narrow path, out of sight. Before us stood seventy-nine people, by actual count, all with toboggans upturned on the stern end to make room for those behind them—never an impatient word, never a hostile, never a pushing to get ahead or a rude, ungallant word. In all my life I have never witnessed such a brilliant well-bred throng.

In an incredibly short time our turn came. They tucked me well into the bow, packed three others on behind me, down on one knee flopped our agile steers, and we were off—slowly, slowly at first, with a subtle, deadly sort of movement, like the waters creeping fatefully to the brink of Niagara; then with a quick, sharp flash down the "shute," and we whizzed through a world of light to the crest of the first dip.

"Hang on now!" was all I heard from somewhere aft of me, and the next instant we dropped, down, down, a screaming abyss, while the lights flashed by like the teeth of a comb, and we sped along something like horizontally again.

"Look out, now, and hang on; we're going to jump the second dip!"

Hardly had the words reached my ears before the toboggan leapt four feet into the air, struck the track, flat as the proverbial pancake, about fifteen feet beyond, and careened madly, wildly onward, slacking gently and reluctantly a half mile further on. The instant we stopped staid



JUMPING THE DIP.

atms assisted us to scramble out of the way before the next toboggan came crashing down. I had not time to think of that headlong plunge, of my frozen brain, of my hands strained with their desperate clutch on the ropes. The big, steers' hooves, the girls with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes were drinking hot, savory beef tea. They gave me a large bowlful, which I swallowed gladly while they told me a story of an American who had taken his first trip down the previous day.

"I would not have missed that ride for a thousand dollars," he remarked to the gallant young Montreuil who piloted him.

"I'm glad you like it," laughed the latter, "get warmed up now and we'll try it again."

"No, thank you," replied the visitor, "I would not take that trip again for \$10,000." Nor would he, despite all coaxing. "For," said he, "I have a wife and children in Baltimore—and they need me."

On the return tramp I thought of the Chinaman, who when asked what he thought of tobogganing, said: "It's just swin-r-r!—walkee backee millee." But that same walk back is what puts the life into you, that warms every particle of your body to blood heat, that sends young life and vigor bounding through your veins in a way that defies cold and danger, and intoxicates you into the state of pick and icelessness requisite to repeat the whirlwind ride.

E. PAULINE JOHNSON.

Will Carry Russian Convicts.

An ocean-going steamship, first-class, in general construction, but fitted below with small iron cages for the accommodation of her passengers instead of state-rooms, is building on the Clyde, and is to be launched in a very short time. It was contracted for by the Russian government, and is intended for the business of conveying convicts. The vessel is of about six thousand tons. No secret is made of her character, or as to who her owners are to be.

Scriptural Authority for Advertising.

A reverend gentleman, who has charge of the advertising of a prominent religious weekly, was recently asked what scriptural authority he could find for his occupation. "Oh," he replied, "that is easy enough. Advertising is not only a scriptural authority, but is of very respectable antiquity as well. If you will look in Numbers, xiv, 14, you will find Balaam saying, 'Come, now, and I will advertise.' And Balaam is in Ruth, iv, 4: 'And I thought to advertise.' Advertising is no modern thing."—New Orleans Picayune.

SANICHAIR, A WOLF BOY.

ROMULUS AND REMUS OUTVALLED AND OUTDONE.

A Human Babe, Lost in India's Woods Is suckled by a She-Wolf—Now Under a Minister's Care With Signs of a Drawing Intellect.

A recent mail from Secundra, Northern India, includes a letter from the Rev. A. H. Wright, superintendent of the orphanage at that place. Mr. Wright has under his charge at this institution Sanichar, the noted "wolf boy" of India, over whose history wolf men have profoundly pondered. The reverend gentleman's last letter contains some very interesting information about Sanichar, the results of whose early associations have caused them much anxiety.

Sanichar is the child of human parents, lost in his babyhood and nurtured by a female wolf. He was first seen by a party of hunters who were in pursuit of a wolf in the unfrequented jungles of Bulandshah. They came upon him suddenly while he was sunning himself upon a rock near a cave. The strange little creature, with a face covered with matted hair, naturally amazed them. A closer survey showed him to be a child about five years old. Instantly he had taken fright, scampering off on all fours after the flying wolf. Both sought shelter in the cave. Being afraid to penetrate into what they knew to be the lair of a wild beast, the men decided to report the occurrence to the magistrate of the district, who immediately gave directions that a fire be built at the mouth of the cave and the inmates smoked out.

This was done with good effect. Presently a large female wolf made a dash for liberty, scattering the burning embers in every direction. She was closely followed by the boy on all fours, as the hunters had first observed him. He got over the ground with astonishing swiftness and was captured with great difficulty. He his and scratched with the ferocity of a wild animal, which he was in all respects except his human form. He had lost all the attributes of his race, could not stand erect and did not possess the power of speech. A subsequent acquaintance proved that he had only the "appetite of an animal."

He would tear raw meat to pieces and gnaw bones as ravenously as any beast. He lapped water in the same manner. At first he was put in an enclosure, like any dangerous creature. Here he lay curled up in a corner all day, but as soon as night came he began to prow around, seeking freedom and gnawing whatever came in his way.

The magistrate who received him applied, after an interval of a few weeks, to the English missionaries to relieve him of his charge, which they did. Sanichar happened to arrive at the orphanage of Secundra on a Saturday, and from this circumstance he was named Sanichar, the native name for the day. His benefactors now devoted themselves to humanizing him, but for a long time their efforts were without success. The clothes they put upon him he would tear into shreds and fling from him.

He persisted in eating his food from the floor, picking it up with his mouth, and viciously resented all attempts to make him sit up and use his fingers. But by and by his intelligence dawned. He submitted to wearing clothes and learned to walk erect and eat like a human being. He became very docile and obedient, and as he grew older seemed to understand all that was said, but made no attempt to acquire speech himself. He lost all desire for uncooked food as well as all disposition to escape. He has been taught to do a little work, but never has learned to like it.

Sanichar is not considered an idiot by those who have him in charge, although his forehead is very low and his eyes retain their wild and restless look. Being brought up amidst religious surroundings, it has been a matter of interest to learn what comprehension he has of a hereafter.

That he thinks and reasons is evidenced by his actions after the death of one who had shown him kindness and to whom he was much attached. At the funeral, as the body was lowered into the grave, he gazed beseechingly at the mourners as if he would wring from them some understanding as to what it all meant. By signs they tried to make him understand something of the mystery of death and future life. They were afterwards satisfied that he comprehended, because when sick himself he lay down and feigned death a moment, then pointed to the earth as his grave and moved his hands heavenward.

He is strong in his personal likes and dislikes and can easily make himself understood if he is hungry or wants a cigar, of which he is very fond. Sanichar has now outgrown his boyhood and is supposed to be more than twenty years of age. He is 6 feet 2 inches in height and is naturally very awkward in his gait. He has a peculiar manner of lifting his feet when walking, and swings and jerks his arms as if he depended upon them to assist him in locomotion.

It is much to be regretted that, with his gradually expanding intellect, he has never learned to speak. That he received rough treatment from his brute companion is demonstrated by the scars on his body, as well as two marks on his face which were evidently severe bites.

SUCKLED BY A WOLF.

The theory as to how he came into the possession of the wolves is best told in the words of the Rev. A. H. Wright himself. In the letter before referred to he says:—"The only theory which can account for this freak of nature is that a wolf carried him away when sleeping in the open air during the hot weather. Its maternal instincts—perhaps it had lost its own offspring—did the rest. There are many here who remember his being brought in, and the wild, untamable character of Sanichar at first."

And now the question arises, had he never been rescued from his wolf associates would he have remained entirely upon the level of the wild beast of the forest? His benefactors were undoubtedly all that way when he was captured, and for a long time he chafed savagely against his state of bondage. Freedom and the depth of the jungle were all he sought, and human presence was hateful to him.

The scientists have here a field for investigation, but the "wolf boy" lives on, oblivious of his remarkable personality and unable to comprehend the interest strangers evince in him. Another of the clergymen interested in his welfare writes of him:

"I think visitors are at first disappointed in him, having expected to find him

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"C. I. Hood & Co., Lowell, Mass.: "Beginning in February, '92, I was very sick for two months. Slowly I got better but was confined to my bed. A physician said I had a

Pelvic Abscess in My Side.

After an operation I did not improve, the abscess continuing to discharge even more freely than before. In two months time three operations were performed and tubes inserted to carry off the impurities, but all in vain. Finally it was decided that my life depended upon another operation and that I must be removed to the hospital. About three weeks previous to this I had noticed an advertisement in the Daily News of a case where Hood's Sarsaparilla had cured a boy somewhat similarly afflicted in Trenton, N. J., and I decided to give it a trial. When the time decided upon for me to go to the hospital arrived I had been taking Hood's Sarsaparilla about two weeks.

I Was Getting Better

and the abscess had already begun to discharge less freely. I felt stronger and had a terrible appetite. Previous to this I had given up to die. When I had taken the second bottle I was able to sit up and accordingly I was not taken to the hospital and the final operation was deferred. Now I have taken six bottles and the abscess has entirely healed. I am well and go every where. My friends think it is a miracle to have me restored to them again so healthy and even younger in looks than before my sickness.

I Feel Better Than Ever

I did in my life and weigh over 130 pounds, the heaviest in my life. I do a big day's work and am gaining in strength every day. My mother worried and worked herself almost sick in caring for me. She has since taken Hood's Sarsaparilla and it has done her much good. We praise Hood's Sarsaparilla to everybody, for

I Know It Saved My Life.

I am 27 years old, and a stranger to look at me now would not think I ever had a day's sickness. Even the doctors are surprised at the success of Hood's Sarsaparilla in my case. Mother and myself continue to take the medicine regularly and we earnestly recommend Hood's Sarsaparilla. Mrs. MOLLIE WENDT, 388 West Eighteenth Street, Chicago, Illinois.

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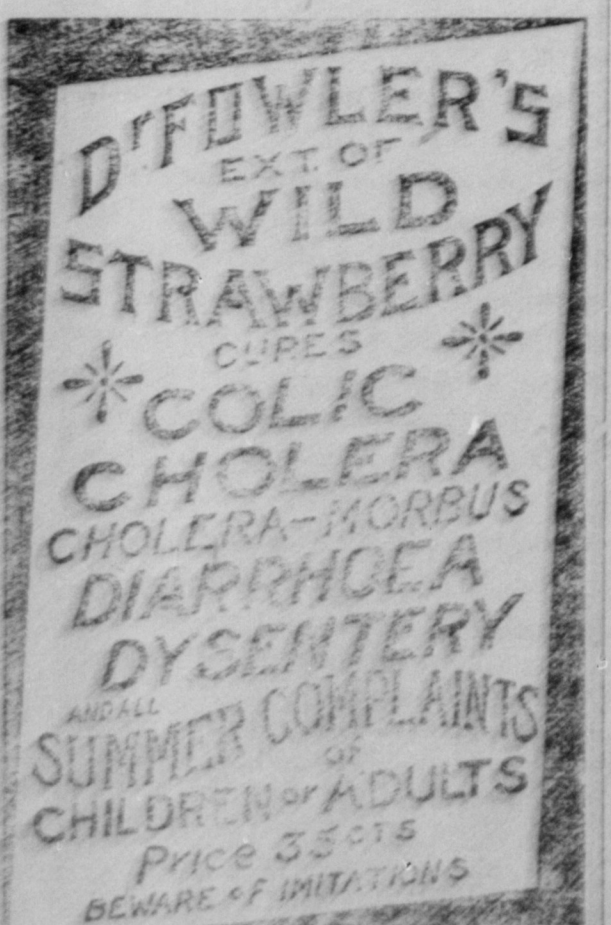
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