

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1894.

## BENEATH THE SURFACE.

HOW A PERSON FEELS WHO GOES DOWN INTO A COAL MINE.

Continuation of the Story of a Cape Breton Exploration—The Reason Why of Certain Things—How They Seek Coal in England and in This Country.

A colliery is an ancient institution—much more venerable than people suppose—and its workings appear to be instinct with some heroic sentiments for a great coal-mining country is invariably occupied by a great people. Down thro' fathoms of stone, shale, clay, and conglomerate the shaft descends to a dimly illuminated network of galleries, headings, crosscuts, main roley ways and dups, where once the sun shone and rain fell, ere Adam delved and Eve span. The flowers, shrubs and ripples of the mimic waves are there, although in fossil shape, and the spreading roots of some monarch of the prehistoric forest still confuses the clinging earth. It is Nature—and left behind in the cycle of the ages. Still, altho' constrained by Divine laws to hasten on Nature with magic, and thoughtful powers has transformed that which she must leave, into a commodity indispensable towards which all things were even then tending—the age of civilized man—that is coal.

Into this coal, into this Tampei of nature I then descended and stepped out into the darkness through which trains of cars rumbled to the distant rooms. First we glanced over the stables, warm, roomy and as comfortable as any urban mews. The animals were of course distributed throughout the workings of the mine at that hour; one or two invalids however chewed their hay in reasonable contentment, a cat dozed placidly on the bran box and a stallion diligently scoured the harness of the idle steeds. Thence to the furnace room.

The ventilation of pits is always an important division in the science of mining. In earlier days English mining engineers worked their pits by what is termed the rule of thumb methods, i.e. a shaft was sunk into the coal and the coal worked "outbye" as long as the men could breathe. When the air failed the pit was stopped and a new shaft sunk. The lordly Saxon is not proud of such reminiscences, but it is good for us, proud and arrogant as we are apt to become we masters of the world, it is good for us to remember that we didn't even know once how to mine coal. By degrees matters improved and the furnace was adopted. A large fire always creates a draught. This is necessary in the pit, so the practice of constructing a huge furnace at the bottom of the shaft was initiated and all the foul air being thus drawn out the men were able to penetrate further in.

The reader, may imagine the result of this, however, in the shaft itself. Smoke, sulphurous fumes, gases and foul air all poured out of the shaft down which the miners descended in swinging baskets to their work and the spectacle to a stranger was horrible and even terrifying. So thought at least the Russian Grand Duke Alexander who visited Waldsend, that old and famous site of the coal mining efforts of the Romans. The Roman anxious to learn something of the science of mining, was conducted by the proprietors of old Waldsend to the shaft mouth, clad in an old suit of clothes which would have made the ladies of the Neva use smelling salts. By-and-by a basket suspended by a common hempen rope rose out of the gloom of the vomiting smoke. "Get in, Your Highness," said the guide. "What! in there?" ejaculated the brother of the reigning Czar. "Certainly, Your Highness," said the official with a smile. The Roman reached forth his hand towards the surging rope, drew back and with a "Faugh!" which only a Russian can utter, exclaimed, "Never! Why it is hell itself." No doubt he told the tale with many an expressive gesture to the imperial court of the Neva, who would of course thank God like the Pharisee in the Temple, that they were not as this other man—John Bull.

This disgraceful state of affairs was of course remedied as mining progressed and the sinking of another shaft called the "up-cast" shaft permitted the discharge of all noxious acids etc., into the atmosphere without damage to the miner. The two shafts are now termed both in England and Cape Breton, the "intake" or channel through which the fresh air descends also used as the winding shaft out of which the coal is drawn and the "Up-cast" described above, in which the pumps are placed, also used as a means of exit in case of accident.

In the pit in which I found myself there is only one shaft. Some distance from the bottom the furnace is constructed; a drit or tunnel is driven from the roof of the pit to a point near the top of the shaft, while under this system is of course made the channel of exit for all the smoke, gas, acids and vitiated air. This should not be because the "banksmen" who must remain on duty all through the shaft to take the full cars off the cage and place the empty tubs in position for the down trip receive the whole emit of the pit into their lungs. As for the miners, I daresay they have

themselves to blame it through constant descending and ascending they suffer in health for another means of exit and inlet is provided for them in the "slope." By means of the slope the men can walk into the pit, avoiding the shaft but miners like sailors are careless so they prefer to suffer.

Medical testimony unanimously condemns the passage of the men through such a shaft and in due time I have no doubt the irregularity will be abolished. From the furnace I proceeded to my work at the face and entered my room. The rooms of a colliery are the parts from which the coal is "won." In low seams the coal is cleaned out by the "longwall" method of mining, which pretty well resembles the mowing of a wheat field in the completeness of results, but in higher seams this method is not commonly practised, owing to the danger, difficulties and expense of supporting the roof. Mr. ——— however, the gentleman who guided me—the coal owners of Cape Breton would not term him a gentleman, but he is a gentleman, one of nature's, Mr. ——— then initiated the system of effecting a compromise between the two methods of working and drew his seams thirty inches wide, a most excellent and economical system of mining a rather friable coal which has been adopted with more or less modifications in other parts of the island.

Sometime ago I noticed a paper read before the Nova Scotian Mining Society by a gentleman who referred to this system of working the coal in a manner which admitted of only one conclusion viz that it was his method. It is not so however, it was not his method and here I may say in parenthesis that gentlemen who read papers before Mining Societies in Nova Scotia should take care that the papers are worded clearly, so that the public who are anxious to pay honor where honor is due may know and understand actually and indisputably who originated an important idea. The cases in which these oversights of the readers of important papers before Mining Societies occur are few and perhaps inadvertent but it may be that a little more care would result in doing a little justice to men who bear the burden and the heat without recognition. Flinging down surplus picks, carefully depositing my lunch in a safe spot and fixing the little lamp in a niche of the coal I lay down upon one side down in the slush composed of small coal and the drainage of the mine I commenced undercutting under the critical eye of the rugged yet gentle miners who assembled in astonishment to see the adventurous and white handed Londoner dig coal.

C. OCHILTREE MACDONALD.

## DO NOT GO WEST.

Advice from a Man Who is Posted on the Question of Making a Living.

SWIFT CURRENT, ASSA., Jan. 25.—To those who have the western fever let me say, leave the Canadian North West alone for a while.

I will give a few facts which I hope will be of some benefit to the boys down home. In the first place you can obtain better wages in any occupation you may be engaged in down east, than you can either in Manitoba or the Canadian North West.

The wages paid throughout Manitoba and Eastern Assiniboia during harvesting &c., are from \$12 to \$25 per month. In many cases you are compelled to sleep under hay or straw stacks. Or, if the moss back is willing, in his root house or granary.

Now for the thrashing outfits. A full thrashing gang consists of about 14 men. They all bunk in a caboose smaller than any of the small shanties down home. If you want a mixed assortment of Manitoba gray backs come next fall and join one of the thrashing outfits and be convinced.

I will here say that hundreds of working men in Manitoba are cheated completely out of their wages every year.

I will make no comments on eastern Assiniboia, only that outside of the small towns on the C. P. R. it amounts to nothing.

From Swift Current west as far as Kincoast, which is a first class stock country, the C. A. C. & C. Co. carry on business. They employ from 25 to 30 men the year through, the most of whom are imported from the old country.

At Maple Creek and Medicine Hat there are a few cattle and sheep outfits, which will employ about 30 or 40 men the year through, and in Southern Alberta from MacLeod to St. Marys, work can be obtained with some of the cattle outfits during haying time, which generally lasts for about four months, after that roll your turkey.

In Northern Alberta, between Calgary and Edmonton, a country that is just being opened up work is impossible to get. Now let me say, that from five years experience in Manitoba and the Canadian North West, that outside of the C. P. R. and a few incorporated cattle outfits in the west it is almost impossible to obtain permanent work at fair wages. Today, hundreds of good men are working in the west for 50 cents per day and many are working for their board.

I trust that the above facts which are only eye openers, may be of some benefit to the boys down east.

Stay in old New Brunswick and you will never regret it. W. C. J. B.

## LYING SEEMS NATURAL.

CHILDREN SEEM TO LIKE FALSEHOOD BETTER THAN TRUTH.

Astra Tells About the Mendacious Tendencies of Humanity in the Abstract—The Faculty of Lying as a Fine Art—Temptations of Every Day.

I wonder how many of us, members of the great human family, are capable of describing any given occurrence exactly as it happened, or repeating, a story, a piece of news, or even an item of gossip, exactly as it was told to us? Very few I am afraid; and the touching story of the small boy who saw hundreds, and hundreds of cats on the back fence of his family domain, and then was forced to desert his strong position and admit that the legions of cats consisted merely of "Our Tom, and another cat" contains a moral we might all take home to ourselves, and should serve for all time, as a warning to those who are inclined to draw the long bow: because that boy was obliged to fairly wallow in the waters of humiliation and take off ninety-eight per cent of his very sensational local, and the same fault awaits all other vendors of startling but unreliable news, whenever they are found out, which is certain to be pretty soon, and after that they are scarcely to be believed, even if they only tell you that it looks like rain, or it is just half past four o'clock.

Anyone who reads the reports of trials in the laws courts, and compares the statements of the different witnesses, cannot fail to be greatly impressed by the varying accounts which will be given of the same event by three or four people who may have witnessed it and the great thought which will arise in most minds is how judge or jury ever manage to arrive at any definite conclusion at all when there is so much that is contradictory and confusing in the evidence, whether the prisoner is being tried for murder in the first degree, or merely for stealing a pair of second hand boots.

I am really afraid the bulk of evidence goes to show that a love of exaggeration is part and parcel of human nature, and too strong a habit to be readily overcome even when it is not a natural weakness. It is true that the bend of the twig indicates the inclination of the tree then, one only has to study the development of the infant mind to find how early the exaggerating instinct shows itself in the young of the human race. Almost as soon as baby learns to talk he begins to tell wonderful stories of things which have happened to himself and adventures by flood and field, of which he has been the hero. He is so utterly unreliable that it is scarcely safe to believe one word he speaks, and ten chances to one, when he informs you, with every sign of distress, that a big pin is sticking into him, the moment you begin searching for the pin, he will laugh gleefully and consider that he has perpetrated an immense joke upon you. He does not mean any harm, poor little soul, it is only his wonderful imagination which not being under the control that holds it in check with older people, runs away with him and leads him into all sorts of wild statements. It would be most absurd to suggest that a baby of three years old should be punished, or even reproved for a fault of which he is perfectly unconscious, and which, if the child is judiciously managed will never really amount to a fault at all, but it is just the lack of judicious management at the right time which develops the imaginative child into the untruthful boy or girl, who by and by grows up into such a confirmed adept at stretching the truth that no one who is at all well acquainted with his or her little peculiarities ever dreams of attaching much importance to anything they may say.

And yet there are few things easier than to teach a little child the importance of truthfulness, and the habit formed in early childhood will become almost stronger than nature itself and outweather many a storm of temptation and manly hour of weakness. I know just how difficult it is to resist the temptation to improve upon the truth, "to gild refined gold, and paint the lily" by touching up a story, colouring it literally and supplying just those details which seem to be lacking, and I can fully appreciate the artistic pleasure of "painting things as they ought to be not as they were" and making a really brilliant story out of materials which were useful as suggestions, but so badly prosaic in themselves as to be scarcely worth the trouble of relating while the amplified version really repaid the care which had been expended upon it and possessed the merit of being at least founded upon fact.

I ought to know something about the above mentioned difficulty, for I have been endowed by nature with a leaning towards hyperbole which would have been invaluable to me if I had started out in the role of a novelist, and which—quite outside of ourselves—has stood me in good stead as a journalist, so my imagination is sometimes difficult to keep within the proper limits, and I can sympathize with people who like to adorn the truth a little. But at the same time I have tried to keep my eyes open while I have been passing through the world, and I have seen what a very dangerous gift it is; because who can perpetually slight the truth in small and unim-

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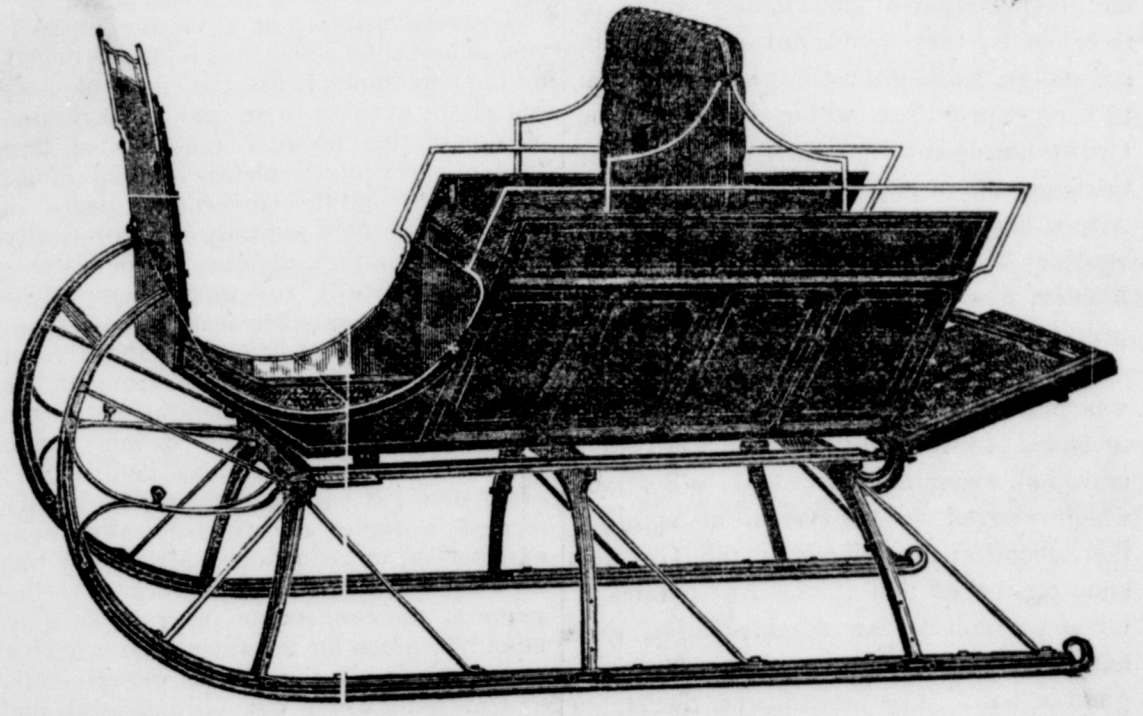
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