

TOBOGGANING.

THE NEW WINTER SPORT INHERITED FROM THE INDIANS.

Scenes at One of the Fashionable Slides. The Costumes—The Toboggans, and the Improvements Yankee Ingenuity Has Made in Them.

[Special Correspondence.]

NEW YORK, Jan. 27.—Our Canadian neighbors have long held a monopoly of the sport of tobogganing. We were compelled to be satisfied with the glowing accounts which reached us of the exhilarating effects of a drop of a few thousand feet down one of their celebrated slides. Last season a slide was in use at Saratoga Springs, and one in Vermont. This winter they have been announced as being in full swing at various points, the most notable one being at Orange, N. J.

The group of Oranges, or the five villages bearing that name, are located on an undulating plateau, about eighteen miles west of New York. The inhabitants are chiefly New York business men, who make it their first duty to look after their own health and that of their families, for which reason they choose to live in this suburban place the year round, rather than risk the effect on health of the confinement of city life. For this reason outdoor sports are cultivated extensively in Orange. Then, beside the original settlers of the place were a New England colony, so it is not to be wondered at that they would take kindly to any sport that had the prestige of being popular under the British flag. For in Orange English manners and customs are held to a more reverential observance than in any other town in this country.



THE SLIDE AND SURROUNDINGS.

The expense of constructing and maintaining the slide is tremendous. A slide 1,004 feet in length, floored with spruce boards laid lengthwise, was built from a hillside to the valley below. A cozy little cottage has been fitted up as the "Essex County Toboggan Club house." The track is an undulating one, but with a descent sufficiently rapid to enable a toboggan, under favorable conditions, to go over the entire course in fifteen seconds. A rate of twenty-five miles an hour is considered mere sloth's progress. The track averages four feet in width, and is guarded by eighteen-inch side guides flanking outward. At the top is a platform, from which the toboggans, carrying from two to half a dozen persons each, are started. The steerer sits in the rear, using one or both feet as a rudder.

I had thought that only one thing necessary to perfect the sport would be an endless cable, worked by steam power, that would haul the members and their toboggans to the summit. I soon found, though, that the principal enjoyment is said to be in the journey up the hill again, and that the young folks would rebel if anything was done to curtail it. In fact, many of them would not mind if the walk were just a little longer. Of course, it made considerable difference whom I talked to on the subject. There was one young lady who said the walk back was very tedious, but she did not appear to have the monopoly of any special escort.

The costume adopted by the club adds greatly to the picturesque of this gay groups who congregate daily at the slide. The ladies wear blanket costumes, in gay colors, with fur caps and "clouds" on the head, and moccasins on the feet. The gentlemen wear the club colors red and blue, made up jauntily in warm woolen stuff, and crowned with the customary toque or hood cap. Then there are numerous guards, hired to keep everything in order. They were dressed in scarlet flannel, and lent much to the gorgeness of the scene. The president of the club wore the most elaborate costume, made up of violet blue and stunning red.

Along the sides of the course were stakes at regular intervals, carrying brilliant flags. At night torches flamed at the top of the stakes, and these, with immense bonfires, lent a grandeur to the scene that is never to be forgotten.



A TOBOGGAN AND SECTION.

The engraving shows how little there is to a toboggan after all. These toboggans look as much as possible like long, broad strips of pasteboard, with one end rolled upward, and with little railings running along the side.

Instead of being pasteboard they are made of thin strips of hard wood, lashed together with thongs instead of nails or screws, and rubbed as smooth as glass underneath. The Canadians have been using them ever since they were taught their use by the Indians, but it remained for us Yankees to immediately improve on the ones handed down by the aborigines. This improvement was made at Saratoga last season, and consists in rounding the bottom of each sliat instead of keeping it flat, so that it is chiefly the lowest portion of the curve that bears on the ice. The result is a tremendous gain in speed.

A still further improvement was made in the toboggan at Saratoga this season which brought the speed up to about seventy-five miles an hour. This rate was found to be too dangerous, and the use of this style of toboggan has been forbidden. Considerable ingenuity has been brought to bear on the construction of slides. The one in use at Albany was designed by an architect and cost about \$1,000.

The cost of these costumes vary from \$30, upward. To a slight figure they are a decided improvement, but to a corpulent one the effect is sometimes very ludicrous. They look as much like Polar bears as anything.



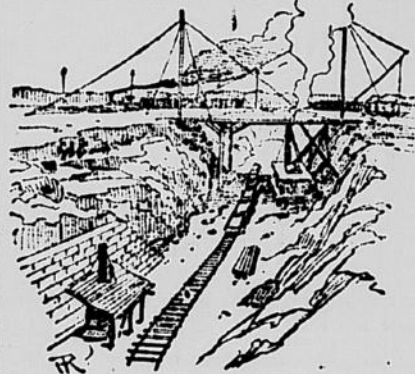
ALL READY TO START.

The above gives an idea of a party about starting, but a picture of the same party a few seconds after they had started would simply be a streak of beautifully blended red and blue. The writer thought that a trial of a toboggan trip down to the valley would enable him to describe it, but he got down there so quick that he hadn't time to collect his thoughts. It was delicious, of course, to be sandwiched in between two such lovely girls as those that patronize the Orange slide, but then that wasn't what I was thinking of. The feeling when we got going was that we had nothing under us to speak of, and the thought that entered my head was the disaster that would follow if the little there was should wear through. I had slid down cellar doors in my time and this was the nearest I had approached it since, and it brought back instantly a reminder of old time consequences. To describe the sensation of speed is utterly impossible, you simply hold your breath and the toboggan rail and feel the wind rushing past, and in a few moments you are there. If the sport is favored by many such winters as the present one it will not be long before each little town will boast of its own toboggan slide.

S. H. HOGAN.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 27.—The subject still agitating railroad circles is the entrance of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad into New York city via Staten Island. The only way of approach seemed heretofore to be through Jersey City. But it will seem a strange fact to many of our readers that every foot of the Jersey City water front is already owned by railroad companies, which are, of course, hostile to the entrance of the Baltimore and Ohio.

There are many who will welcome the Baltimore and Ohio to New York. To get there it was necessary for this popular road to build a new line from Philadelphia to New York. The picture shows the work at Gray's Ferry road, Philadelphia. At the point named the new line crosses the Schuylkill. Here is a long cut, tunneling under Gray's Ferry road. The cut at its deepest is thirty feet. The Baltimore and Ohio line passes under the Pennsylvania Railroad bridge and through the grounds of the arsenal and naval asylum. It also cuts the grounds of the old Harmer mansion, where Thomas Jefferson lived when he was secretary of state. In Philadelphia proper another tunnel leads the road under Twenty-fifth street to Pennsylvania avenue.



THROUGH TO NEW YORK—THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO.

The Baltimore and Ohio company had the greatest difficulty in getting the right of way through Philadelphia. Money and influence sought to stop them, and was for some time successful. The road at length has become too big a thing to stop, however, and now it goes through the Quaker City.

In connection with the Staten Island end of the line, our readers will have noticed the name of Mr. Erastus Wiman "bobbing up serenely" in the newspapers with considerable regularity of late. The greatest effort of his life was his argument before the committee of the two houses of congress in favor of bridging Arthur Kill. This is the name of the strait between Staten Island and New Jersey over which the drawbridge of the Baltimore and Ohio is to pass. Being a matter between two states the consent of the United States government is necessary to accomplish the scheme. Mr. Wiman's argument was a marvelously able and brilliant one, and will call



ERASTUS WIMAN.

attention still more to the rising railroad king, Hon. William Walter Phelps made the opposing argument.

He started in life a poor country boy. He was born in Peel county, New York state, in 1834. His parents removed to Toronto, Canada, when he was very young. He never had any education except what he got in the public schools, and that closed early. But by sheer force of brain and will he made his way in the world. He chose the printer's trade. As an apprentice he was an earnest, steady worker. He showed the same vim that he now manifests in the larger walks. From being a compositor he took the management of a commercial news room.

He founded a comic weekly, and met his fate like a man.

Then, having recovered from that blow, he entered R. G. Dun & Co.'s commercial agency, as their Montreal manager. This was in 1860. In every enterprise in which he was engaged, except the comic weekly, Mr. Wiman enlarged the business, and attracted attention to himself by his energy and remarkable ability. This brought him at length to New York. He it was who made the move to unite the Western Union telegraph lines with those of Canada.

After that he was attracted to Staten Island. He is as good a fighter as worker. He crushed opposition before him, even that of men much richer and more influential than himself. He first made himself owner of the ferry line between New York and the north shore of Staten Island. Next he became president of the belt railway around that island. He has done much to develop the resources of the old island, though they do say he ought to lower the rates of carriage to New York. Doubtless this will be done when the Baltimore and Ohio road comes to stay. But all must admire his fate like a man.

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