The Quiet Observer

The New Oil Field.

With the discovery of oil in the basin of the Mackenzie River, a discovery which like coal in Northern Ontario, has long been anticipated, an assurance has been given that the camp may still hold out to burn. Just what the cost of keeping it lighted is an entirely different matter. The oil is of a very high quality with a high proportion of gasoline, but some further confirmations have yet to be made as to quantities and accessibility. The Imperial Oil Co. which has been the means of bringing about the discovery, and which its officials declare believe such exploration to be part of its public trust as the pioneer and premier oil interest in Canada, believes that there is a rich field in the territory indicated. If the discovery proves out the company is quite willing to build a railway or a pipe-line, which ever is the better, to develope the wells. A pipe-line over the enormous distance would cost $50,000,000. There are considerations of climate and temperature to be considered as well, but with the value at present set on oil, no obstacle would be allowed to stand in the way of securing the product of this region. Some curiosity is felt concerning the attitude of the Government towards the property as a national trust for the people. So very little is left of the public domain for those who own it that some control for the benefit of the people is expected to be established over it. The magnitude of the investment required constitutes the whole interest as specially adapted to monopoly treatment, and no doubt an equitable arrangement can be arrived at by which the people's interests will be protected.

Some Farm Notes.

An October of unusual mildness has given opportunity for the clearing up of an exceptional harvest, the only regret, a wide and pitiful one, being for the lamentable waste of fruit. Apples and peaches in tons are rotting in the orchards everywhere for want of help to pick them or containers to pack them in. Co-operation to the end that such waste shall never occur again is imperative, and fruit-growers' associations should be organized everywhere that orchards exist. The canners have been crippled by the sugar market and the shortage of cans, but are said to have an average pack. In Essex the cider mills are taking apples. In Lincoln the Grape Growers' Association has handled 75 per cent. of the crop. Potatoes are stiffening in price and traces of rot are reported. Wheat is showing vigorous growth, even the latest sown coming on strong. The mild weather has maintained pasturage in good condition with beneficial results on the milk supply. Hay runs from $25 to $30 a ton. In threshing tractors are being widely used. T. Russell, of Toronto, had a barn and the crop from 200 acres burned down, eighty head of short horns having been saved from the barn basement. It was supposed that the bearings got heated, as flames burst from the blower and set the straw on fire. The present writer while stacking straw in Scarboro township in front of the blower saw sparks issue with the straw and yelled like an Indian to stop the engine. It was found that binder twine had got twisted and heated in the blower and the sparks were coming from the twine. Another minute and there would have been flames, and the barn could not have been saved, and it is possible the men would have had difficulty in escaping.

Henry Ford's Wage Policy.

Henry Ford has probably had as much to do with the new point of view of the Labor man as any Bolshevist in Russia, and Henry is no Bolshevist but a thoroughly well-grounded capitalist. So much is the capitalist that he very early felt it to be necessary to be independent of all other capitalists. Consequently he is largely his own banker. He seems to think that economic freedom for the employer is impossible otherwise. But he is a believer in economic freedom for the worker as well as for the employer. Consequently he set a minimum wage scale that set every heart in business palpitating, the workers' with hope, the employers' with anxiety. He placed the unskilled man on the same minimum level as the skilled man because he thought every man who did an honest day's work was entitled to sufficient food for himself and his family, so that he would not have to send his children to work before they had finished their schooling, and so that he might save enough to make his old age independent. Mr. Ford does not believe in pensions or charities or hand-outs of any description. His men he thinks should have enough money in their pockets to do as they need and like, and he thinks a bath tub in a man's own house is far ahead of a dozen institutional shower-baths in the factory. This is a policy of independence for the working man, and Henry Ford has not lost by it.

Russian Soldiers in Canada.

Another possible basis for the widely-spread story during the war of regiments of Russian soldiers having been transported through Canada from Siberia to the French front, has been discovered. The Russian soldiers were a very persistent fiction. Ever so many people saw them—or thought they did, or said they did. Even in Britain stories were current of great bodies of men landing in Scotland from Russia and coming by rail south for France. An origin of this story was suggested by the assertion that when many train loads of great, massive soldiers had passed through a certain place in England, some bystander asked where they were from. The reply was: "From Ross-shue," in gutterals which the auditor translated into Russia. The Canadian legend may have originated from rumors of the treasure now described as having arrived in Canada from the far east on a Japanese warship, which, being transhipped in mid-ocean to the Canadian cruiser Rainbow and carried across to Ottawa may have suggested Russian soldiers as on their way. The money was put on a train disguised as a silk train with special express cars. On each car was $9,000,000 in gold. The utmost precautions were taken, and the doors of the cars were never opened when the train was at a stand-still. On three subsequent occasions sums totalling $217,000,000 were passed through Canada in this way, making $262,000,000 altogether. Then the Bolshevists took hold and made an end of Russia.

Flammarion Condemns Mediumship.

Camille Flammarion is one of the most notable of the psychic researchers of Europe. By-the-way, why do the Toronto newspapers misspell psychic as physchic? The correct way is easier. Flammarion is the author of much literature on this subject which so markedly holds the attention of the world at present. His standing as a man of science and his long experience therefore render his opinion valuable, and his recent declaration that intermediary communication with the "spirits' 'of the dead is an unreliable method. This disposes of most of the spiritualistic claims, while it is in agreement with ancient testimonies, and his profound philosophies of the east which have dealt with the subjects. It leaves the belief in human immortality unassailed, and strengthens the Tennysonian view that "spirit with spirit will meet." In discussing the report that Edison proposed to telephone for spiritualistic communications, Flammarion said it seemed to him that smallest human brain, or the brains of any living creature, dog or cat, would be more sensitive than any mechanical medium. "In our heads, within our skulls," he declared, "we already have the instrument which enables us to communicate with the dead. No human invention will ever surpass it. We don't know how to use it yet. But that will come in time." It is the assertion of all Oriental metaphysicians that such sensitiveness and susceptibility to the impression of the finer thought forces of the universe is the result of high morality ,purity of life, temperance and self-control. Such development has nothing in common with trance mediumship, the communication and revelations of irresponsible psychics and the vagaries of those who pursue such things through curiosity or self-interest. Only the pure can approach the realm of purity, and other realms are not desirable as regions with which to be allied. The least of the vices these lower influences awaken is an insistent egotism, characteristic of the psychic world.

Coffee Bavarian Cream.

Put two cupfuls of rich milk, or part milk and part cream, in a double boiler to scald, when hot add half a cupful of freshly-made, very strong coffee. Beat yolks of two eggs with half a cupful of sugar until light and add to the milk and coffee. Soak a third of a box of gelatine in half a cupful of cold water for an hour; then dissolve over boiling water and stir into the custard and cook and still until it will coat a spoon. Remove from the fire and turn into a basin and set in ice water and let cool, stirring occasionally, then as it begins to stiffen stir in the whites of the eggs beaten to a stiff froth and half a pint of whipped cream. Turn into moulds and place on ice. Let stand for three hours.

A JEWEL IN THE ROUGH

"How can she like to come here alone?" exclaimed Stephen, with a shudder. "I wonder she is not afraid. I'm surprised she has not come to some harm long ago."

Talbot smiled to himself inside his fur collar and said nothing. The girl's absolute fearlessness was the point which he admired most in her character, and the immunity from danger seemed in her case, as in others, the natural accompaniment of it. Fortune is said to favor the brave. Misfortune certainly seems to spare them.

"I think this is the place," said Talbot at last; and they stopped before a large but old and dirty looking cabin. It was sunk beneath the usual level of the ground, and reached by some crooked, slippery steps. At the foot of these steps was a sort of yard, which you had to cross before reaching the cabin door itself. What was in the yard, or what its condition was, it was too dark to see; but a sickening smell came from it as the men descended the steps, and the ground seemed slippery or miry in places above the frozen snow. The windows of the cabin in front gave out no light whatever, but that there was light inside, and very bright life, was evidenced by that which burst through the chinks all over it.

"I shouldn't wonder if I stumbled over a corpse next," muttered Talbot, as he slipped and almost fell in the darkness on a slimy something under his feet that reminded him of blood. They got up to the door and tried the latch. It would not yield; then they thumped on it with their gloved fists.

The latch was drawn back by some hand inside, and the door opened just wide enough to admit them, and was pushed to again. Stephen and Talbot found themselves in a crowd of loiterers inside the door, who apparently took no notice of them beyond a sodden stare.

It was a long, low room that they entered, so low that it seemed to Talbot the ceiling was almost upon their heads. The atmosphere was stifling, evil-smelling beyond endurance, and so clouded with tobacco smoke that they could not see the further end.

A long table covered with greeen cloth took up the centre of the room, and all round the walls were ranged smaller ones. The place was full when the two men entered; all the space at the centre table was occupied; the side tables were filled, and men standing up between blocked the way up the room. The windows at the end were barred and shuttered; not a breath of outer air could enter. The cheap lamps nailed at intervals along the grimy walls were mostly black and smoking, adding their acrid fumes to the thick atmosphere. There were very few women present, some painted, worn, unhappy-looking creatures, hovering like restless phantoms round the tables where the thickest crowds were—that seemed all. Stephen looked round on every side with haggard face and anxious eyes. She was nowhere near the door, and after a hurried survey of all those lower tables they forced and pressed and pushed their way toward the other end. At last they caught sight of her. She was sitting at a small table, with her face turned toward the room, intent upon the game. Her cheeks were flushed with excitement. She had flung her fur cap aside, and her ruffled black hair lay loose upon her forehead. The collar of her bodice was open and turned back a little from her round white neck. She looked, with her soft young face, like a fresh flower dropped by chance into this evil tainted den. Talbot gave her a keen scrutiny as they approached, and understood Stephen's infatuation. As for Stephen himself, his heart went out to her, and he was filled with a bitter self-reproach and sudden resolutions. His love and his darling! How could he have let her go. He would take her away in safety at once. He would not hesitate again.

When they reached the table they saw there was a large stake on the cloth between the two players. Her companion was a youngish man, seemingly a miner, dressed in the roughest clothes. Neither looked up till both men were close by them and between them and the lights. Then Katrine raised her eyes and started violently as she recognized them. Her face flushed deeper, and her eyebrows contracted with annoyance. Stephen went round to the back of her chair and laid his hand on her shoulder.

"Come away; oh, pray, come away," he said in an imploring tone. It was all he seemed able to articulate.

"I'm just in the middle of a game," she answered petulantly. "You musn't interrupt me."

"But it isn't safe for you to be here."

"Stuff! I used to be here every night before I married you!"

A death-like pallor overspread the man's face as he heard. He could not believe her, could not realize it. Had she indeed been here night after night?

"Why do you come here and interfere?" she continued, pettishly, looking up from Talbot to his companion. "I always have such luck, and I'm likely to lose it if you worry me."

The young miner set back in his chair, thrust both hands in his pockets, and stared rudely at the intruders. He did not mind the interruption as much as she did, since he was losing, and had been steadily ever since he sat down to play with Katrine, and doubts and angry questionings of his opponent's methods began to stir in his dull, clouded brain, as toads stir the mud in some thick pool.

"You ought not to be here at all," said Stephen, hotly.

"Well, why shouldn't I make money as well as you?" returned the girl, quickly, with a flash of scorn in her dark eyes, and Stephen whitened and winced.

"Haven't you made enough for one night, in any case?" interposed Talbot, quietly.

"Yes, I think I have," she answered, with a glance at the glistening pile on the cloth. "I'll come," she added, suddenly, "if Jim's no objection. What do you say, Jim?" she asked, looking across to the young fellow, who had been a sulky, silent spectator of the whole scene. "Shall we quit for tonight?"

"If you give me back my money," he answered. "That's mine," he said, pointing to the pile. "It's my money, gentlemen; she's been winning all the evening."

"Yes, I always do have luck," retorted Katrine "I told you so when we began."

"You may call it luck—I don't," muttered the miner, his face turning a dusky purple.

"And what do you call it?" returned Katrine, white with anger in her turn at the insinuation, while Talbot, who saw what was coming, tried to draw her away.

"What does it matter? Come away; leave him the money."

No one in the room noticed what was going on in their corner. The others were all too busy with their own play, absorbed in their own greed; besides, squabbles over the tables were of such common occurrence, they ceased to excite any curiosity.

"I sha'n't," returned Katrine, shaking herself free.

The oily, smoky light from above fell across her face; it seemed to bloom through the foul, dusky air like a rose.

"It's my money—I want it."

"Yes, by cheating!" shouted the miner, forgetting everything but the approaching loss he foresaw of the shining pile.

"You lie!" said Stephen, hoarsely. "She has not cheated you."

The miner staggered to his feet, and before any of them realized it he had drawn his pistol and fired. His hand was unsteady from drink and rage, and the ball passed over Stephen's shoulder and went into the wall behind him. Talbot tried to draw Stephen to one side. The miner, blind with anger, half conscious only of what he was about, and drawing almost at random, turned his revolver on Talbot. Like a flash Katrine interposed between them, and Jim's bullet found a lodgement in her lungs. She had fired also. The shots had been simultaneous, and the miner fell, without a groan, without a murmur, forward across the table, carrying it with him to the floor. The gold pile scattered among the filthy sawdust on the ground. Katrine sunk backward into Talbot's arms, and her head fell to his shoulder like that of a tired child falling to sleep.

In an instant they were surrounded by an eager, inquiring throng. All the tables, with some few exceptions, were deserted; the players all crowded up to the end of the room, and Stephen and Talbot were carried back to the wall by the pressing crowd. Some of the men raised the body of the miner; he was dead. The people pressed round, and one glance at the set face told them. A momentary awe spread among them, and the men who had raised the body carried it to a bench and laid it there. Stephen, pallid as the dead man himself, looked round in desperation on the staring crowd.

"Is there a surgeon or a doctor here?" he asked.

Katrine heard him, and raised herself a little in Talbot's arms—he was standing against the wall now. She turned her eyes toward Stephen and stretched out her hand.

"It's no use, Steve, dear," she said. "I'm done for. Don't worry with a doctor. I shall be gone in five minutes."

(To be continued.)

JUST BOOKS

"The Prairie Mother," by Arthur Stringer, author of "The Prairie Wife."

It may be well to state at the outset that, although this romance has its setting on a prairie ranch in Northwest Canada, it has nothing in common with the usual Western adventure tale.

Mr. Stringer very early in the book develops an unusual domestic situation. The outcome might be guessed at, but the guess would as likely be wrong as right. The principal characters are four: Duncan Argyle McKail, of Casa Grande Ranche; his wife, Chaddie; his English cousin, Lady Alicia Elizabeth Newland, and Peter Ketley. The story is told in the form of a diary kept by Chaddie, which begins soon after the birth of her third child. The two other children were twins, and with their coming, McKall had transferred the valuable Casa Granda Ranch to his wife's name. Later he had speculated in land and had not only lost his own capital, but also £7,000 intrusted to him by Lady Alicia for investment. Discussing the disaster with his wife, McKail remarks:

"But there's one thing I want you to remember. If I got deeper into this game than I should have, it wasn't for what money meant to me. I've never been able to forget what I took you away from. I took you away from luxury and carted you out here to the end of Nowhere and had you leave behind about everything that made life decent. And one thing I've always wanted to do is make good on that overdraft on your bank account of happiness. I've wanted to give back to you the things you sacrificed. I know I owed you that, all along. And when the children came I saw that I owed it to you more than ever. I want to give Dinky-Dink and Poppsy and Pee-Wee a fair chance in life. I want to be able to start them right, just as much as you do. And you can't be dumped back with three children to bring up, and feel that you're doing the right thing by your family."

To which Chaddie replied: "The things that make life decent, and the things that we carry away in our own immortal soul. The homely old things, like honesty and self-respect and contentment of mind. And if we've got to cut close to the bone before we can square up our ledger of life, let's start the carving while we have the chance. Let's get our conscience clear and know we're playing the game."

Lady Alicia had announced her intention of coming for the winter to try the Canadian climate. Chaddie insisted that Casa Grande be handed over to her, "bag and baggage."

According the McKails migrate to the run-down Harris ranch, and start anew. Lady Alicia arrives with her English maid and eleven trunks and takes possession of Casa Granda. She also takes possession of McKail; an estrangement between him and his wife follows. Comes into the picture and into Chaddie's life Peter Ketley, a young man from the East—splendid type. From this imperfect outline it will be seen that the author has set the stage for actions which bode good or ill for four people.

The turnings of the plot must be left to the reader's discovery and enjoyment. Mr. Stringer's public is accustomed to expect good work from his pen and we venture the opinion that in "The Prairie Mother" he has surpassed himself. In Chaddie McKail, with her saving pride, her courage and loyalty, and her inflexible will toward the right, he has drawn an appealing portrait.

Destructive Earthquake.

One of the most destructive earthquakes in the world's history was that which occurred in Yeddo, in the year 1703, when 190,000 people were killed.

According to statistics collected by the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, there were in British Columbia, in 1918 44,130 horses; 50,965 milch cows; 195,165 other cattle; 45,291 sheep and 39,805 swine. There was an increase in every class except that of horses, where there was a decrease of 16,574 as compared with the number given for 1914.

The receipts of the Provincial Government of New Brunswick during the year 1918 amounted to $3,667,805, being $30,951 more than the expenditure.

In the Motor World

When the leather fan belt develops considerable slippage it is probably because the rough side of the leather is against the pulley surface. The smooth side of the leather has a much greater traction adherence.

Whenever your car has suffered a bump of any kind, a crash against the curb or anything of that sort, the wheels should immediately be tested for alignment, as a bang of this kind is quite enough to force them out of correct alignment, which will lead to excessive wear.

Batteries should never be tested with a screw-driver as it causes a great drain on the batteries. It is always best to use a hydrometer and if the liquid reads 1,275 to 1,300 all is well. If it gets down to 1.200 have the system looked over by an expert.

Throwing the ignition switch to "off" position and then leaving the kegs in place, does not insure the car from theft. Always make it a rule to take the keys with you no matter how short a time you are leaving the car unguarded.

When the tires are being inflated in a public garage the figures on the gauge on the tank should not be accepted as strictly accurate, because this gauge usually registers about twenty pounds more per inch than is in the tire, since it takes that amount of pressure to open the valve.

If you have detached wheels remember that metal parts may rust. Occasionally, when you change a wheel, cover the metal contact surface with grease, otherwise the detachable wheel will no longer be a detachable wheel.

When the car owner is confronted with the condition of excessive oil consumption and no reasonable explanation is forthcoming, it is well to suspect the rear crank shaft bearing. Looseness in the fit of the bearing permits the oil to work out and materially increases the consumption.

From the man who wants to get maximum mileage from his tires, the habit of using a spare tire to afford regular changes, beginning at the right front and progressing around the car, is a valuable one to form. In this way each tire nets a week's rest in four, during which time it should be gone over carefully and have any cuts and abrasions vulcanized.

The continued use of rims that have become bent or badly dented will invariably cause rim cutting, which means the end of the casing's usefulness. Another error is to neglect to keep the valve stem and stay bolts tight. When this is not done, water will get into the casing on wet roads and cause no end of trouble.

If in a hurry to stop a spring from squeaking pour a little kerosene over it, guiding the oil down the sides with finger so it will run in between the leaves. Wipe off the excess. Pour cylinder oil over the springs the same way, then shake the car, so the oil will be drawn in.

Never add acid to a storage battery. If the solution is weak is means that the acid has entered the plates and the battery needs recharging. Adding acid will sulphate the battery and ruin it.

When the motor shows any tendency to labor on driving upgrade on high gear which has been provided for just such a purpose.

A self-lubricating bushing for a spring bolt can easily be made by drilling, say eight holes, each 3-16 of an inch in diameter, through a new bronze bushing. These holes are packed with graphite when the bushing is in place. Then by removing the spring bolts every six months and repacking the bushing with graphite.

COTTON PICKING BY MACHINE IS PERFECTED

It looks as though science had at last developed a machine that would displace human hands in the cotton field. The machine above is the development of a cotton-picking devise invented 20 years ago by Angus Campbell, a Scotchman, and is being used successfully, picking 1200 pounds of cotton an hour, which equals the work of 60 men. It has cost about one million dollars to develop the apparatus to its present state of perfection