

# How a Big Railroad Keeps Xmas



THE SNOWSHOE CLUB AT THE CHATEAU-QUEBEC

hide that fact, she did not succeed altogether. Then on Christmas morning there was handed to her from the tree, a great big life-size doll, contributed by a first-class passenger. That marked a new epoch in the little girl's life. After that it did not matter that she could not hold wonderful meddles in the sand pit with the other children, or play shuffle board. It was her first doll, and she was perfectly happy.

Up in the first and second cabins there are equally stirring scenes. Under the influence of the day there is a general disregarding of the conventionalities. There are games of all kinds. At dinner time in all three cabins the tables groan under the weight of the turkeys, and plum puddings, the fruits, nuts and candies with which they are loaded. In the evening there is a big concert. It is really remarkable the amount of high class talent that is present at these functions—actors travelling between the two continents, amateur and professional singers, expert pianists, entertainers, and occasionally small companies of theatrical players. Outside the wind may be



The Grand Bounce Canadian Snow Shoe Club

By the year of 1825, if you take up a daily paper of December 25th, you may possibly see a dispatch from the city of "Nowhere," reading somewhat like this:—

(Canadian Associated Press Dispatch.)  
Nowhere, Dec. 24th. — Leaping lightly to the Engineer's seat at midnight last night, Santa Claus grasped the throttle of the big locomotive and quickly the huge special train hurried itself into the dark night carrying with it joy and the Christmas spirit to the people the wide-world over.

Very possibly you may see a dispatch like the above, but of course there is also a possibility that you won't, because in the first case it is more than likely that after using them for so many years, Santa won't want to give up "The Big Sleigh and the eight tiny reindeer," and in the second case, it is just possible that with the big traffic over the railways at Christmas time that even such a very important personage as Santa Claus, couldn't command a special train.

Naturally Christmas is just about the busiest season with a big railway. Not only is there a big freight and express movement but the passenger traffic jumps into big figures. Everybody has a desire to visit the old home at least once a year, and at Christmas, when the snow is on the ground and the spirit of doing and giving is in the air, the desire takes root, grows and wildly materializes. There is a wild packing of suitcases, a hurried scurrying to make the "last purchase," and then there is a rush for the

made up and dispatched within an hour and the station officials get their boots half soled and work harder and later than before. Everybody is going "home." The station is filled with a conglomerate assembly. Over there the fair Co-ed and the Varsity Captain of class '14 scan the pages of the time-table. They are going home to spend the holiday in Cushionville. To the right is the small shop girl who lives at Yorktown, just twenty miles out. She got off an hour earlier than usual to catch the train. On the left a fat man puffs a big cigar and coldly glances at the raging multitude. He wants you to think that he is not at all excited at the idea of getting home. He appears disinterested, but all the same the chances are ten to one that he is thinking of that rocking horse with the real mane that he shipped home to his grandson yesterday. Over there, touching elbows with a matron of sixty, is the young dry goods clerk going back to father and mother on the farm. On all sides are school marmas, students, clergy, laborers, clerks, college professors, young maidens, maiden aunts,—all with beaming faces and prominent parcels, and all waiting for the grinding of the wheels and the clang of the bell, that will announce that they are off on their Christmas journey.

The freight and express traffic on a great railway at Christmas time is enormous. There was a time when the greater part of the C. P. R.'s freight and express traffic was from

a big railway there are thousands of Christmas dinners to serve, and there are all sorts of Christmas celebrations to prepare for. At Christmas time we happen to know that the C.P.R. orders the turkeys and plum puddings, etc. for its Christmas dinners by the thousands. When the morning of the 24th this year comes into view all of the company's sixty-seven steamships will not be in commission, but there will be a sufficient number of them out on the broad bosom of the ocean to render necessary the preparation of enough meals to make the figures look pretty large. Then there are the guests at the C.P.R.'s seventeen hotels to feed and the passengers in

and toy balloons, and occasionally, too, some big, jovial passenger from the first or second cabins will "dress up" and play Santa Claus. Not until the presents are all in their places and the preparations concluded, are the small children of the third cabin allowed into the sacred presence of the tree. Then when the doors are thrown back and the treasures displayed, what a happy giggling and romping there is. For some of them it is their first real Christmas. A couple of years ago on board one of the Empresses there was coming out from Liverpool, a father and mother and two small children. Life had been a failure in England, and the family was on its way to Canada to make a new



Getting the Bobs to the top at Ste. Agathe Que.

sic and another Christmas Day goes all too soon.

At Montreal it is becoming the fashionable thing for society to take the railway up to Ste. Agathe for Christmas Day. Here is situated the only bob-sleighing course on the American continent. This is a new sport for Canada, but it is one that bids fair to outlive even the toboggan. The sleighs are built on the same lines as those used in Switzerland. The runners are braced far apart and the hood at the front slopes back towards the steering wheel. On a course like that at Ste. Agathe these sleighs travel at an enormous speed—a mile a minute being often made, when the slide is in good condition. It is an exhilarating sport this, and on Christmas Day the scene at Ste. Agathe is a gay one.

Whenever possible, travellers through the Rocky Mountains at Christmas time try to arrange to spend December 25th at Banff. Banff is an ideal place to spend Christmas Day. Here is the whole big Canadian National Park spread out before one. The park is beautiful in summer, and it is no less attractive in the winter. The towering mountains all around give an air of seclusion and at the same time they suggest that the little village of Banff has been placed there for the sole purpose of pursuing winter sports. And what sport it is. One can drive around Tunnel Mountain, with the whole valley spread out in the foreground. One can explore on skis the course of the Spray, and pass beneath the snow of Mt. Rundle. One can rush madly down the slopes of Mt. Sulphur on a toboggan, or tread on snowshoes the mazy paths of the woods.

Even on its trains running on Christmas Day the C.P.R. endeavors to keep up the spirit of the day. In the sleeping cars in the morning the colored porter wakes you with a



The Start at Ste. Agathe Que.



THIRD CLASS PASSENGERS PLAYING IN THE SAND PIT ON BOARD THE EMPRESS' XMAS MORNING

station and the train. December is the time when the big rush on the railways first starts, and from then until the last sad obsequies are said over the dead body of the old year railway station officials and sleep are only on the faintest of speaking terms. Long special trains "puff, puff" their way out of the big stations. The colored porters go about on the run, the transfer men work overtime crowding Christmas parcels into the Express cars. The mail men in the post office cars take off their coats roll up their sleeves and sort with twice their ordinary speed. The train dispatcher stops going home for lunch, the station master likewise, and then as the December 25th draw nearer, things buzz faster and faster. The man in the information bureau, who ordinarily answers anywhere from 2,000 to 3,000 questions per day, now answers 4,000. Extra cars are added to the regular trains. New trains are

East to West, but with recent years the traffic from the West to the East has steadily increased. This is owing to the great influx of new settlers into Western Canada. The great majority of these new settlers, of course, came from Britain, and at Christmas time they send home to their relatives and friends numerous presents. During the days preceding the sailing of the last Christmas boats the freight and express matter is forwarded from the West to Quebec and St. John in a perfect flood, and of a varied and interesting nature are the presents sent to friends across the Atlantic. Talk to Canadian railway men and they will tell you that the presents, which are perhaps the most popular with the new settlers are the "souvenirs" of life in Canada,—miniature snowshoes, toboggans, etc. These are transported from Canada by thousands at Christmas time. But it is not the increased passenger and freight traffic alone that causes the hustle and bustle in railway circles at Christmas time. On

the dining cars, and altogether the figures are startling. Christmas is always a festive occasion on the Company's steamships. Over night Santa Claus and his invisible minions work wonderful changes in the appearance of the boats. When the morning of the twenty-fifth dawns, great streamers float in the breezes from the mast heads. Gay bunting and flags "flap, flap," from the lines and the big liners look quite captivating in their holiday clothes. During the day on shipboard, there are sports and concerts and dinners and everybody, from the captain down to the smallest passenger, in the third cabin, joins in the celebration and is happy. First of all, there is a Christmas tree. Christmas Day would not be complete without a tree, so the passengers in the first and second cabins club together, and give the smaller children in the third cabin the lime of their lives. The big tree droops under the load of presents. Everybody contributes something, toys, bundles of all sizes and shapes. There are dolls with real hair, and that open and close their eyes. There are toy rubber elephants that squeak in the most "unobtrusive" fashion when poked in the right spot. There are toy aeroplanes, toy automobiles,

start. One of the small children was a small girl six years old, who, owing to an infirmity, was unable to join in the play of the other third cabin children. It was loneliness sitting there all alone all day long, and while the little maid did her best to

blowing a small gale, but inside the ship, there is warmth, gaiety, and the true Christmas spirit. At the big railway hotels life on Christmas Day is just as gay as on the steamships. At the Chateau

Frontenac, at Quebec; at the Place Viger, at Montreal; at the Royal Alexandra, at Winnipeg; and at Vancouver and Victoria the fun runs high. Perhaps there is no hotel on the continent that is quite as renowned for the festive spirit which pervades its halls at Christmas time as the Chateau Frontenac. The old city of Quebec is wonderful at any time, but at Christmas it is especially entrancing. This is the day when the gay snow-shoe clubs gather at the Chateau. All day long they tramp the parks and country of Quebec, gathering in the evening at the Chateau, tired, but with ravenous appetites. The Chateau is the centre for the festivities for the whole city. From here set out the parties for the toboggan slides. From here go the parties to the skating rink and the curling rink. From here leave merry highligh



Bob Sleigh Race Xmas Morning Ste. Agathe Que.

parties, the bells on the cutters ringing a drowsome song. In the evening there is more fun. There is a big dance in the ball room, where guests from the Chateau mix with their friends from the city. The hall is decorated with thousands of flags for the occasion, the big grate fires send up the open chimneys showers of sparks from the Yale logs, the orchestra plays dance mu-

hearty "Merry Christmas to you, you!" When you enter the dining cars you will find there a special menu for the occasion, and the car is nicely decorated with evergreens and bunting. That's the way it is throughout the whole C.P.R. system. It is a big railway, but it is not too big to enter fully into the spirit of Christmas Day.



XMAS BALL AT THE CHATEAU-QUEBEC