

A BIG DAY FOR THEM.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE AND DINNER AT THE ALMS HOUSE.

How the inmates were made happy and how they made their so-joyful times in a bleak part of the world—changes that have taken place.

A cold wind blew across the bay, the waves dashed against the rocks on the Crouchville side in a way that made one shudder, the country roads of mud and ice, over which wheels rolled with a crunching sound; the great, bleak, cheerless fields, lying idle for the winter; the old penitentiary buildings in all their weird suggestion, with the high pile fence, frost-dried and rotten, all went to make up a scene that did not tend to make one cheerful on Christmas day.

But in the great high building across the road, with its numerous windows and gaudy fire-escapes, its well kept fences and gravel walks, and young trees that gave promise of beauty in the summer, in this building lives the county's poor, where some must begin life and others end it; here all seemed bright and joyful.

In a large room, nicely trimmed with spruce and evergreens, and where everything gave evidence of comfort, a large Christmas tree reached to the ceiling. Bags of candy, tin horns, spirited looking horses made of wood, wagons with handles long as your arm, handkerchiefs, and Christmas cards, and a hundred other toys and nick-nacks made it a dazzling sight.

And they were all for the children. It was a great treat for them, many of whom, as the minister said, had never seen the like before; and to whom a walk up King street would be a wonderful experience. They thought the hour would never come when the pretty things would be theirs, and a dozen anxious little souls clustered round the door leading to the room, peeping out and daring back again when discovered, and in a spirit of mischievousness pushing each other out to the view of the visitors. And the old woman, in her eagerness, came in with courtesies, and begged to be excused, for, "I'd like to see the tree." But wasn't it lovely! The old woman thought so, and admired it in her own way.

Long before the visitors arrived the inmates had had an experience. It was the Christmas dinner. The dining room had been nicely decorated for the occasion, and in large letters of evergreen all were wished a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. At the long tables, with clean white linen, that reached from one end of the room to the other, old men and old women, young women and children, had all sat down on the backless benches, and eaten their Christmas dinner. And a wonderful dinner it was. The old man said there was fill and plenty, and "indeed they should be thankful," while the old woman in the kitchen lifted the cover from off a large pot and showed a sea of coffee that had been left over.

But now they were all back in the rooms again. In one ward a few men clustered round the stove, and here and there on the long rows of beds others sat and gazed thoughtfully around, or were doubled up in slumber. But when the ladies came in with trays of oranges, and apples and doughnuts, and with muslin bags full of candy, they arose and with a respectful bow, and thank you ma'am, a merry Christmas, took their share and looked happy.

In another room a few old women looked wonderingly around, some with children in their arms, while one rocked a cradle; and at the other end of the ward a little colored child of tender years, but wonderful lung power, made the place ring with his cries, and all the candy, oranges, doughnuts, and Christmas trees in creation wouldn't stop him.

Around the Christmas tree was the presence of all, when the visitors and inmates sang a hymn and Rev. Mr. Raymond addressed the children. And when the tree was despoiled and the little ones got their presents? Then there was tooting of horns, and little carts piled with candy and all the children's earthly belongings rolling along the floor; and consultations, and small admiration societies, that made the commissioners feel that they had not lived in vain.

It was a great event for the children. There were bright little ones, and others who were capable of doing nothing else but wonder—children who had taken their names from the streets on which they were found; who had come into the world and knew nothing of it, but had become attached to old women, who had taken them under their especial care, and who they would only too well.

Yet they all seemed happy; but not more than Chairman Knodell. To him, more than anyone else, as Mr. Raymond said, were they indebted for much that pleased them. If there is one thing more than another in which he is interested, it is the alms house, and that interest has been a great boon to the inmates. Great changes

have taken place there within the last few years. The days when knives and forks were almost unknown to the dining-room, have been almost forgotten, and the pure air and well kept rooms seem to have been always thus. The changes have been gradual and complete, and apply to almost everything within the fence which encloses the grounds, both inside and out. All the old rickety buildings of years ago have disappeared, and the space they occupied turned into pretty grass plots and gardens; and trees inside the fence will make a greater change in a very few years.

Everything is now under one roof. Large wash houses with modern improvements, well-filled cellars, and kitchens in which nothing is wanting, and all is neat and clean. Indeed neatness and cleanliness is found everywhere, in the rooms and in the appearance of the inmates.

Mrs. Knodell has also had a great deal to do with the happiness of the inmates. She is a constant visitor at the institution, and her interest in it seems only equalled by that of her husband. Another well-known gentleman is Rev. Mr. Raymond, who was on hand on Christmas day with a good contribution, and cheering words. Ex-Mayor and Mrs. Thorne were also among the ladies and gentlemen, who by their presence and kindly words, and interest in the poor, helped to make them enjoy the great holiday of the year.

Everywhere in the building during the afternoon, the absence of that restraint and dependence which is generally found in inmates of such an institution, was noticeable. They seemed to be as much at home as such people could be. In Mrs. Cunningham they have a matron who is fully acquainted with all their wants, and in whom they seemed to place implicit confidence, while the vim Mr. Wood, the superintendent, put into the work of trimming the tree was ample evidence of the interest he takes in the institution.

Year after year sees little change in the number of inmates, but in winter there is always a greater number to care for. There are many faces out there now that are familiar around town in the summer time; some of them industrious workers whose inimitable are too great for winter weather, and others whose love for freedom, or something else, makes the city with all its privations preferable, while the weather is warm.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN THE MARKET.

Looking Out for the Inner Man and the Man with a Roll of Paper.

Cold winds, frosty windows, hard bare ground, and a general crispness, kept the crowds off the streets on Christmas eve. Indeed, Saturday night lost none of its laurels this year, for those who did venture out went home early, and at nine o'clock the number of hurrying people on King and Charlotte streets, was not large for such an occasion. But the cold snap had its results. It sent the fowl up and off—up in price, and quick sales before they got up past the reach of everybody. During the afternoon turkeys, geese and chickens were heaped up on all the stands, and the place was crowded. Walking from one end of the market to the other did not seem to make the prices any lower, although scores tried it, and nearly every one left with a fowl of some kind, until in the evening buyers seemed few and far between, and the gleeful countryman who had "only one left and then I get off for the night," stayed there longer than might be expected. But instead of row after row of geese and turkeys, piled one on top of the other, the attendants pointed to single layers of wings and legs, and seemed in no doubt as to what would become of them on the morrow. The poorer classes had not come along yet, they said, and they would create a havoc with what was left. As it was, one was in constant danger of running into the greasy breast of a goose in the hands of a man bound for home, while others piloted them out of the crowd at an elevation that might soil a tall man's hat, but nothing more.

Yet, for Christmas, there was very little excitement in the market, until one old gentleman who had been celebrating the event of the year, began to make some. He got in the middle of the crowd at the head of the market, and began to spread himself. He flourished a weapon above his head which everybody, including the policeman, mistook for a shellalah, and got from under. When it was discovered that the weapon was a roll of paper, there was a laugh all round.

Schooner Men Dancing.

There was a dance in one of the boarding houses on the water front, Christmas Eve, and everybody within a block knew it. The police could not help taking notice of the fact, and had to quiet things down a little for the benefit of all concerned. There were about eighteen schooner men on the floor and two women. Everybody had a good time, but would enjoy themselves better, if it had not been for the police.

HE'S AS WHITE AS SNOW.

THE MAGISTRATE EXONERATES COVAY, AS WAS EXPECTED.

An Innocent Man Who Did Not Want an Investigation—How some People's Opinions Differ in Regard to Several Things. The Antics of Capt. Rawlings.

The most amusing incident in the whole Covay investigation was the magistrate's judgment. It would have done credit to any known humorist.

His conclusion not only exonerated Covay, but found him "not guilty." Truly, a remarkable ending to a remarkable investigation.

The delay and hesitating which preceded the investigation have a double significance now. It was, perhaps, only natural that the accused should have some reasonable time to prepare his defence. He obtained the time, and even the most doubtful will acknowledge that the defence was carefully—very carefully—prepared. It was, in fact, a coat of swearing, and the party that swore the hardest seems to have come out the best.

This much can be said for Mrs. Woodburn's story, it has always been the same. Notwithstanding the delay and the many interviews and cross-examinations, her story regarding the charges against Covay has never varied. It was corroborated from many sides, and stood a firm wall against all evidence, except that of the accused, until the "truthful Rawlings" was put on the stand with his wonderful book. It must be remembered that this book was a private record—not a public one—and that Capt. Rawlings was scouting about the country after the circus lakirs when Berchall was transferred to Lower Cove. The captain returned and filled in his little book from hearsay to come up now as evidence in this investigation. Rather remarkable!

Those who were in the court room could not but be surprised at the conduct of Rawlings while the trial was in progress. He said what he pleased and in what way he pleased and was not rebuked. Although witnesses were supposed to be excluded from the court all or nearly all of Covay's witnesses were hanging about the court room during the entire trial. This may be all right but it does not bear the stamp of fairness.

The opinions of the people on this matter cannot be mistaken. They have come to their own conclusion and while another may triumph at present, their turn will come.

The police troubles can have but one end. Such men as Rawlings, Ring and Covay will have to give way to better men—to officials the people can have some confidence in. This is simply the beginning of the end. The utter powerlessness of the people to control any part of this important branch of the city service has been impressed upon them with greater force than ever before. In the very near future the proper demand for the appointment, or at least the control of the men that they pay will be made. If the present government will not grant such a demand, they will make it when there is a change. It must be granted some day and the sooner the better.

One of the most remarkable things in connection with the Covay matter was that a man so innocent and free from guile as Covay was made out to be, should have remained under such charges for months without demanding an investigation. On the contrary, he and his friends tried to shirk an investigation in every way, and what their action was when it was forced upon them is well known.

It is also amusing to consider the differences of opinion of Magistrates Ritchie and Jones in their estimation of the witnesses for the defence. Mr. Jones did not have such an exalted opinion of Capt. Rawlings as the grand jury did, according to Mr. Carleton, but then it was not taken into account that Mr. Jones' honest opinion could only cost the truthful captain \$3, while the same opinion expressed by the grand jury would help to send him to Dorchester for what was, in the case under consideration, not as serious as it might have been.

Besides, Mr. Jones probably knows more about justice than he does about law. Which makes quite a difference.

Caught a Reporter, Too.

A rather good story comes from Fredericton in re the latest "capture" of Chief Clark. It appears that after Detective Roberts located the criminal, the chief accompanied them to the Police Magistrate, and afterwards tried to hunt up the correspondents of the St. John evening papers. One of them was to be found, and naturally the dispatch which came over the wires contained the chief's story of the capture. The other correspondent had, however, sent his dispatch an hour before and placed the credit where it belonged. Both accounts were printed in last issue of PROGRESS. It seems to be as necessary these days, for a policeman to capture a newspaper man as it is to cage his prisoner.

THEY WOULDN'T GO IN.

Excuses Made in the Ante-room Before the Council Met.

The mayor was a long time in getting the council together Tuesday afternoon, notwithstanding the fact that all the aldermen were in the vicinity of the council room. The following verbatim report of what took place before the meeting opened explains everything:

In the ante-room. Enter Ald. Kelly, who swings his "bow" around from the open fire, where Ald. Tufts is trying to burn the leg of his pants, "Well, Ald. T., what do you think of the Covay investigation?"

Ald. T.—To be candid with you, Ald. K., I consider we have every reason to feel extremely gratified to discover that we have one saint on the police force. There is now hope for it. I think we ought to canonize him.

Ald. K.—(walking towards the window)—Say, boys, haven't we got a quorum yet?

His Worship—Come in, gentlemen, I want to open the council.

Ald. R.—I have got to wait here to see a friend.

Ald. Ch.—Hold on till I finish my smoke.

Ald. McC.—Your worship, I am just filling my pipe.

Ald. Chr.—I am expecting to hold an inquest on Leary.

Ald. B.—I want George to move that stove up to my end, before I go in.

Ald. A.—Stockford is warning some bricks to place under my desk.

Ald. T.—I am waiting for Chief Clark's latest.

Ald. Blk.—I have got the grip, and want things warmed up before I go in.

Ald. S.—I have just arrived your worship and want to get a shin-heat. Take these other fellows n, they are pretty well cooked.

Ald. P.—I have been in twice already—let somebody else take a turn.

Ald. Lockhart—O, give a fellow time to get his coat off.

His Worship—Well, gentlemen, I can't sit up there and freeze all day.

Voices—Put Ald. C. in the chair.

His Worship—Now, gentlemen, this will not do—(Enter two ald.) ah! here is the rear guard and Blatcher. We are saved!

He Got His Money.

Newsboys are good collectors. Their methods are sometimes very unlike those ordinarily in vogue, but they are perhaps more successful. A Prince William street merchant has this opinion, and so has his clerk. The boy who leaves a paper at the establishment every day collects his twelve cents weekly, but last Tuesday there were twenty-four cents due him. He called and demanded payment from the clerk, but was told to get out of the store. He didn't go. He said he would tell the "boss," and when the latter came in did so. But the "boss" seemed to hold the same views as the clerk, and the boy did not get his money. He wasn't discouraged, however, but proceeded to make life a burden to all in the store, until he was forcibly placed on the sidewalk. Then he took up a position on the door step, and was ordered away. But he did not go. He stayed there until one of the clerk's brought him out twenty-four cents. Then he departed.

Her Pleasure Cut Short.

There was more excitement out than usual at a party given recently. One of the young ladies invited is under the care of a guardian, who objected to her accepting the invitation. But the pleasures of the dance were too strong for her, and she decided to go. A coach was engaged and the young lady left the house unseen, and was driven to the party. She was enjoying herself immensely, when another coach arrived containing her guardian, who had discovered her absence from the house. They both went home in the one coach before the party broke up, and left a little flurry of excitement behind them.

A Touching Children's Service.

There was a touching and glorious children's service in St. Andrew's church last Sunday evening. For weeks the children of the Sunday school had been preparing for the event, which went off so very successfully. This fact was due very largely to the painstaking efforts of Miss Homer, under whose direction the children practised. The special address was delivered by the Rev. Mr. Macneil, and this was the touching part of the service. The story of the birth and life of the Saviour was told in so simple and direct a manner, that every child could understand it. Progress wishes that it had the space to print every word of it, but since it has not, it must be content with this plain acknowledgment.

He is at the Palace.

Price Webber had bumper houses this week, and he has decided to stay over for a few nights more. He has the best company on this trip that he has ever had in St. John.

TWEEDIE'S LATEST MOVE.

A DISMISSAL AND A CABINET SHUFFLE.

Are What He Proposes—Some of the Government Favorably Inclined, and Others in Opposition—The Particulars of The Plan—Outlined by Mr. Tweedie.

The preliminary fuss in matters educational has started right in St. John. At present writing it is doubtful whether the bright and fresh countenance of the bland alderman from Stanley ward will adorn the school board or whether that political veteran, Dr. Travers, will again warm a chair at the school meetings.

Mr. Connor assures his friends that he will come out on the top, while the *Telegraph* and *Globe* speak out in fear of such a catastrophe. It may be mentioned in this connection, that the morning and evening liberal organs have begun to agree. The powers behind the editorial pen of the *Telegraph* changed hands a few days ago, and this is the first result.

It is not a matter of much consequence to Progress whether Ald. Connor or Dr. Travers is honored. Only let it be one or the other quick. If the fatal hanging-off process is again undergone there will be another split in the local party and that would indeed finish it. The chances are that Ald. Connor will come out on the summit. The recollection of the York election and the drats made upon the monied supporters will probably arise before the eyes of the appointing power and it may be recollected that the other candidate "had no money to spare" at that critical period.

The York election will, however, have other effects beside this, and Progress imagines they will be of a more serious nature. The chief of the educational department at Fredericton needs no praise from anyone. His work speaks for him and after that the teachers of the province will raise their voices for him. He is fortunate in this and takes a greater pride in his work in consequence. He is unfortunate in having those about him, nearly connected, who are bitter opponents of the existing government. While that is his misfortune and beyond his control some members of the government have resolved upon revenge and propose to make him the sacrifice.

Behind all this there is a brilliant deal—one of those political masterpieces that could only emanate from the participating turncoat and schemer of the Northumberland deal—Mr. Tweedie to wit. While he may not be forcing the first move—the dismissal of the chief superintendent of education—so strongly as some others, Mr. Wilson, M. P., for example, he is ready to make the next brilliant move upon the chess board.

There is to be an election in Westmorland, and judging from past majorities and present appearances the chances for the government candidates are not as brilliant as they might be. Candidates, good ones, at least are scarce, and the exigency of the government in this respect is Tweedie's opportunity.

The present provincial secretary, according to the views of Mr. Tweedie, would fill the bill for chief superintendent of education. He is a man of literary gifts, has a degree from the university, and has been in leading educational positions. "Why, then," asks Mr. Tweedie, "should not Mr. Mitchell be a good man, for the vacancy caused by Crockett's (forced) retirement. That will give us the portfolio of provincial secretary to offer to Mr. Henry R. Emmerston to contest Westmorland with. The result cannot be in doubt. We will gain two men in Westmorland, and satisfy the York sore heads who are clamoring for revenge."

That, in short, is Mr. Tweedie's scheme, as outlined to a representative of PROGRESS in Fredericton this week. In justice to Attorney General Blair, president of the council McLellan and Hon. P. G. Ryan, it should be said that they do not look favorably upon the move, but opposition to their colleagues in this matter is a dangerous thing.

Again, the Charlotte county vacancy caused by Mr. Mitchell's acceptance of the chief superintendent's position might possibly be filled by Mr. Mills, a strong opposition candidate, and even with a portfolio Westmorland may not lead as easily as Mr. Tweedie thinks.

These are some of the obstacles in the path of the move. It is not made yet and it may be postponed, but still the people may as well know what is going on.

All Editors and Commissioners.

And now the Moncton *Times* has a "commissioner." He was sent to Bellefleur to write up a murder case. In former times, reporters used to do this work, but that ubiquitous individual, now bids fair to become as extinct as the dodo.

They Want Snow.

The cold weather and bare ground has been hard on the livery stable men. "Out the road" looked like anything but Christmas, while keeping the horses sharp shod sends the expenses up.

MR. NEVILLE IS HEARD FROM.

He Does Not Enjoy Fair Criticism, and Answers it With Insolence.

That not-to-be-criticised wandering minstrel, Mr. Arthur Neville, has been heard from. He does not write to PROGRESS, but to a near friend of the lady whom he thinks conducts the musical department of this paper. Mr. Neville evidently does not know that any person may conduct a department in a newspaper and yet not write all that it contains. With his limited information as to the identity even of "Tarbet," he objected to the statement that the correspondent heard Joachim. He may as well be assured that the writer knows from his own personal knowledge that the correspondent who criticised his performance has been abroad, and, no doubt, has heard Joachim. More than that, Mr. Neville, the correspondent is one of the few persons in St. John complimented by you in PROGRESS office as being "able to write a musical criticism." Progress trusts that this statement will settle a disputed point for all time. There is more than one contributor to the musical column of PROGRESS, but the paper employs one person to overlook the department.

To return to Mr. Neville's letter. It could not have been written by a gentleman, and the writer is satisfied that it was not. Perhaps it is just as well for him that he is away from St. John. His objection to fair and honest criticism reveals his greatest weakness. Any artist who has confidence in himself, cannot be afraid of just comments on his work.

A Trap for Young Girls.

A curious story comes to PROGRESS, which bears, however, the stamp of truth upon it, and shows just how dangerous it is, sometimes, for young girls to travel alone. Not more than a few days ago a young lady boarded the St. John train at Truro, en route for Boston. She intended to remain all night at some quiet hotel in this city and take the morning train for Boston. In some way, just boarding the train, she was introduced to a young man who is known in St. John very well. He represents a reputable house and has all the appearance of a gentleman. The young girl evidently thought him one. He was very courteous and attentive during the journey, and when the train stopped for lunch she was persuaded to step to the railway restaurant and get something to eat. A few minutes later she discovered that the train had left and that her new friend was laughing at her. She was forced to wait for the midnight express. When she boarded it her heartless escort followed her, and she was forced to tell her story to a gentleman in the next seat, who undertook to see that she reached a reputable stopping place.

Lots of Registered Letters.

Christmas always makes a stir in the post-office lobby. This year it has been crowded all the time. It was as hard to get at the stamp office window, as to reach the Institute ticket office on first nights when there is a brass band on deck, and all the other departments have been equally busy. But the registered letter office was the great point of interest. Every one who went there expected something. And judging by the heaps of mail, there could not have been many disappointments. Three times as many money letters passed through the window during the season than on ordinary days, most of them coming from the United States, from former St. John boys and girls, who think of home at Christmas times. The registered letter mail from the city was also heavy, but the most of it went to the country, probably from the boys in the city who did not get a chance to go home for the holidays.

He Wouldn't Hold the Stakes.

There was some fun in the city court, Saturday, over the timidity of a constable and recklessness of two lawyers who had a case before the judge. The case had been postponed from day to day, and when the evidence was at last all in, both lawyers were so confident of winning that they were willing to bet on the result. And they did. The stakes were \$1 a side, placed in the hands of one of the constables of the court. But the constable began thinking, or was reminded, of the views of the court on such transactions; how he had condemned betting last season when the base ball fever was raging, and on other occasions. He thought he might get into trouble by holding a bet made right under the judge's nose, and got rid of the money as quickly as possible.

Hire a Policeman and get Billed.

The gallery gods seem to have a mortgage on the Institute, which is as annoying as mortgages usually are; but in this case it is the dear public who pay to see the play and not to hear a lot of noisy gamins talking and quarrelling while the performance is going on. Isn't the gallery large enough to hold one of the new policemen?