

# PROGRESS.

VOL. IV., NO. 169.

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JULY 25, 1891.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

## FROM BEHIND THE BARS.

REVELATIONS IN REGARD TO THE ST. JOHN JAIL.

What Those who Have Been There Have to Say about It—A System which Belongs to a Bygone Age—Some Solid Facts from an Array of Witnesses.

Once a year, as instructed by the judge, the grand jury makes an official visit to the common jail of the city and county of St. John. Everybody, including the jailor, knows when this eminently respectable body may be expected, and everybody knows that, so far as a visitor can see, the institution will be found clean and well conducted. The effects of whitewash and scrub brushes satisfy the inspectors of one of these things, and the alacrity of the officials convinces them of the other. The grand jury makes its presentment accordingly, and perhaps adds something about the institution being overcrowded. It makes no difference what is said. The matter ends there.

The high sheriff accompanies the grand jury, making his annual visit to the holding of which he has charge. The "oldest inhabitant" among the prisoners does not remember seeing him make an official visit at any other time.

The deputy sheriff is the keeper of the jail, and resides in it. He occupies a good deal of it, in fact, as anybody who looks up at the first two stories of the front may see. He passes through the lower ward and visits the office tolerably often, but to those in the upper cells he is almost as much a stranger as the high sheriff himself. The majority of the short term men see no officials save the two turnkeys.

The greater part of the citizens know nothing about the jail. Such of them as give the matter a thought have no idea that the building is a sort of a snug haven, where hard drinkers are sent to recuperate and fortify their systems for a stronger defence against the assaults of the world, the flesh and the devil. Most of them have an idea that it is an infinitely more comfortable home than the almshouse, and there is a widespread belief that the too tender-hearted authorities deal with offenders far too kindly—that, in fact, a good many like to be sent to jail because they are so comfortable there.

PROGRESS has long had suspicion that there was another kind of a story to be told, and in order to get at the facts has taken the separate statement of a number of discharged prisoners, some of them only too familiar with the workings of the prison for years past. The fact that in all essential particulars these statements agree is pretty good evidence of their truth, and when it is understood that they were secured under circumstances which rendered collusion impossible, the evidence is stronger still. In no case did the informants suspect the object of the enquiries.

The result is the discovery that the taxpayers are maintaining a prison built in an age when it was the fashion to chain felons to a ringbolt in the floor, and conducted on a system quite in accordance with that age. It is a loathsome den, in which crime and vermin are bred with equal rapidity, and from which men go forth brutalized and degraded to become chronic offenders against the laws of God and of man.

The men who have charge of the jail are not responsible for all of this. Much of it is due to the system, which the municipality permits to continue. How far the officials and the system are to blame, respectively, the public can judge from the facts.

The best part of the jail, in more senses than one, is the outside of it. It looks like a big structure, but after taking out the residence of Deputy Sheriff Rankin and the cells reserved for debtors, very little room is left for ordinary prisoners. The numbers of the cells run up from 5 to 18, but in these are included the nearly dark condemned cell, a storeroom, four women's cells and four front cells for the use of debtors. There is also, among the remainder, a "receiving ship" for the use of the "chain gang," which means the crowd arrested on Saturday night and held for trial on Monday morning. As many as seventeen wretched captives at a time have cursed, kicked and writhed in the agonies of rum-sickness in this horrible hole during the hours when satisfied preachers told complacent congregations of man's charity and God's love.

There is therefore, at ordinary times, not more than five or six cells available for male prisoners sent from the police court, but of course some of the other cells must be pressed into service when there are 60 or 70 prisoners on hand. There have been as many as 85 there at once. At other times, however, only the common prisoners' cells are in use. Each of these is calculated to hold four persons. No one of them contains more than that number of rickety iron bedsteads, and some have less. When, as is likely to be the case in all but the dull seasons, there is a "rush" of business, six or eight men are crowded into one of these filthy, stinking receptacles of unfortunate human-

ity. Those who have no bedsteads sleep on the floor.

There is reason for the adjectives. With one possible exception, there is not a criminal cell that is not infested with vermin. Some of them are said to be literally "running away" with it. This possible exception is on the upper floor, and to the credit of the turnkeys, only men who are supposed to be clean are put in it. When it is full, the clean and the unclean have to herd together. All the cells are filthy, and those on the lower floor are indescribably so. The floors, indeed, are scrubbed once a week, and the corridors, as visitors may see are kept in excellent order. Everything looks very clean to the caller's eye, when much that he does not see is horribly dirty.

Clean, respectable men, who were drunk, under the interpretation of "fly cops," have been arrested Saturday night, spent Sunday in jail, and after paying their fines Monday morning, have found it necessary to burn every article of their clothing.

The condition of some of those who have to spend months in prison may be imagined.

Since the abolition of the provincial penitentiary, the jail is a common prison for all offenders sentenced, in the city and county of St. John, to terms of less than two years. Under the administration of Police Magistrate Ritchie, police court sentences of three, four and six months, for minor offences, are so common as to excite no comment. Apart from this, men arrested merely on suspicion, may be kept here for weeks, while the police are trying to hunt up evidence against them. During this time they are shut up with thieves, toughs, tramps, and law breakers of every sort. Unless he takes extraordinary precautions, the most decent man becomes alike, degraded and dirty with such an environment. If he is not a criminal when he goes in, he feels very like one when he comes out.

The turnkeys, Clifford and Macaulay, doubtless do as well as they can under a system that gives them no chance to do much of anything, except to let in and let out prisoners. They are there to carry out instructions, and not to supply a system where there is a want of one.

The jail was built at a time when little regard was paid to sanitary science, and the municipality is content to leave it almost in its original condition. There is a wash room on the upper floor, but nothing of the kind on the lower floor. Each cell has one galvanized iron bucket, with a cover, which is emptied morning and evening into a sink on the lower floor. Over this sink, reeking with odors which ought to "knock a horse down," the prisoners on that floor have a chance to perform very limited ablutions. The cell buckets ought to be scalded when emptied, but they are not even washed. The result is that the word "dirty" fails to describe their condition inside and outside. The stench from one of these would pollute the atmosphere of the biggest hall in Canada.

There is no provision for ventilation in the cells used by common prisoners. In the summer days one of the window sashes can be taken out, and this with the open wicket in the door gives a chance for some fresh air. Anybody standing in the hall and putting his nose to one of these wickets will, however, be saluted with a blast of tainted air, from which he will be glad to retreat. At night, when window and wicket are closed, the only ventilation is a stovepipe hole, but in the winter even this is closed. Thus it is, that for twelve or fourteen hours each night from four to eight human beings are shut up in a tight room, breathing over and over again what, under the best conditions of cleanliness, would be air surcharged with foulness. All this time the horrible cell bucket is sending out its disgusting and poisonous exhalations. Every time the cover is lifted a blast of disease germs is wafted forth until it seems little short of a miracle that pestilence and death are not added to the horrors of the bastille of St. John.

Yet men live through it, though some of them die from its effects, as may be shown later. Enough are alive and at large to prove every assertion that PROGRESS has made and intends to make in regard to this abominable hole, which is supported out of the taxes of the people.

Some more of their evidence will be given next week.

### Preparing for the Opening.

It is proposed to open the Opera House on September 15, and everything is now being done with this in view. Work on the building is going on rapidly, but a great deal is being done in other ways to make the opening one of the great events of the year. Correspondence is being had with first class scenic artists, with the view of making the stage settings of a character far ahead of anything ever seen in this city; and the best dramatic company that can be procured will have the honor of giving the opening performance in the new hall.

## AN INDIGNANT PUBLIC

PROTESTS AGAINST THE WORK OF THE MEMORIAL COMMITTEE.

The Scene at the Old Burial Ground—Digging up the Coffins of Loyalists Forefathers—An Injunction Threatened, But the Work Was Stopped.

Disturbing the dead! "They are digging up the old graveyard" was the startling news that passed from lip to lip the first day of this week. "Nonsense! you must be mistaken," was the answer many a citizen gave, unwilling to credit such a story.

But it was true—too true. A gang of men were at work excavating a large, square hole in the southwest corner of the spot so sacred to thousands of people in St. John and in the province.

The mayor and a committee of the aldermen were responsible for the act. When the Young monument fund was raised the council took charge of it, and gave a committee power to act in the matter of selecting a suitable site. Without consulting the subscribers to the fund at all the committee took it upon themselves to choose a spot in the corner of the old graveyard.

Perhaps it did not occur to those gentlemen at that time that it would be necessary to have a firm foundation for such a monument, and that a good deal of excavating would have to be done. If it had occurred to them the probability of disturbing the dead should also have impressed itself upon them. All this, however, seems to have been overlooked in the instructions to the contractor, and when he broke ground he had no orders but to place the monument in that spot.

Crowds of the curious and the anxious flocked to the spot every hour of the day and some hurried away again, unable to stand the outrage that was being perpetrated. The day was far advanced when the workmen themselves paused. They had feared from the start that they would disturb bodies if they had to excavate any depth, but they worked along for the first two feet without troubling themselves about the matter. Shovels and picks were going, when all at once a pick wielded by a strong hand crashed through a rotten board and went down without resistance for a couple of feet, apparently through empty space. That was enough to call a halt. Their fears had been realized far sooner than they expected, and a little work with a shovel soon disclosed the fact that a coffin had been broken into.

The news spread and the crowd gathered. When the writer passed the spot at six o'clock there were some hundreds of people scattered about. Some of them stood in little groups discussing the situation; others who gazed curiously into the hole glanced at the narrow opening in the coffin then turned away with a sickened indignation feeling that was indescribable. Some men and women were so agitated that they could not speak about the affair, but all were as one in their thought that the act was an outrage and should be stopped.

But that was only the beginning. The next morning before many people were about the workmen were at it again and the digging continued. A dozen coffins were unearthed and torn from their resting place. The sight that met the eyes of the people when they gathered about the spot was such as to arouse the keenest anger. There was no longer any doubt about it. Fortunately the rain began to fall in torrents and compelled the workmen to do what no city father had ordered—desist from the work.

"Where is the mayor?" asked some. "Why does he not put a stop to this business?" "Who is responsible for all this?" asked another. And so from mouth to mouth went the queries. Men and women who had turned away in sickened disgust the evening before, came again the next day and hastened from the sight. Others were not so sensitive. Groups of boys chased each other around the heaped up embankment now trodden almost as hard as rock by the feet of thousands of citizens. When the rain fell the place became thick with mud, but even that did not prevent the people from climbing upon the ridge. Water poured into the huge hole and collected in pools about the coffins and the loose boards.

By this time the workmen had begun to break away the coffins and the bones and remains had to be put aside. For this purpose an old *poor house coffin* was brought to the spot, placed in one corner of the hole and as the remains came to light they were pitched carelessly into this pauper receptacle, which was of the roughest kind, painted a dark color.

The excavation was by this time about four or five feet deep and fourteen or fifteen feet square. Those coffins that were partly decayed were broken into pieces and thrown in one corner. Just above where they were placed there was the whole side of a large coffin exposed. In digging down the laborers had come so near it that it was really shaved by their

spades and not an ounce of dirt was left on the side. There were many other evidences of the large number of bodies buried in that vicinity. In half a dozen spots could be seen the ends of coffins which were disclosed by the shovels of the men. In another spot a coffin was cut right through by the workmen who picked up the loose bones and tresses of hair and threw them together in the poor house box.

Policemen hovered around the scene during the day, and occasionally drifted near the spot during the hours of darkness, not so much on guard as with the usual curiosity. Doctors came from all quarters of the city to see what they could see and learn something if possible. Old men clustered around and speculated as to who were buried there, calling to mind the early days of '40 when men were cut down with ship's fever and many found an unknown grave. Two citizens rushed to the spot at one time, hearing that the lots of their ancestors were being disturbed. They found that they were mistaken and went away again.

Meanwhile some person complained of a stench which arose from the place, and orders were given to throw lime into the hole. A cask of lime was brought and distributed freely. This act seemed to arouse the indignation of the people, and it is a wonder that the workmen were permitted to remain as long as they did.

When the early hours of Thursday morning—before the dawn—arrived, a few men gathered around the excavation quietly and began to fill it in. They meant business, and would have succeeded in doing what they set out to accomplish, but for the police. They arrived on the scene and the volunteers disappeared. A conflict with the police is not desirable, but many contended that the officers had no right whatever to interfere. Work, however, was not resumed by the contractors the next morning, owing to the pressure brought to bear upon the Young memorial committee. Perhaps the fact of threatened injunction by Messrs. Macaulay had something to do with the cessation of work. At any rate, the ground was filled in Thursday evening.

Where then will the monument be placed? asked one. PROGRESS suggests the site of the old band stand on King square. There could not be a more prominent site, or one that will please the people so well. This will be also free from the objection of Mr. Nelson, Young's uncle, who preferred that the monument should not be placed where it could be seen from his store and remind him daily of his nephew.

### Let Them Have the Evenings.

The shoe clerks want shorter hours, and seem determined to get them. All the uptown store-keepers have agreed to close at seven o'clock in the evening, but four north end dealers have refused to join them, although three of the four are quite willing to do so if all the shoe stores are closed. One north end dealer, however, absolutely refuses to close up in the evenings, and the other three seem to think that they cannot afford to take a holiday while this store remains open. The clerks have long hours, and say that there is not enough business done after seven o'clock to warrant their staying in the store all evening. The leaders in the early closing movement have been very active, and are appealing to the trades unions to keep them. The millmen's union passed a resolution to the effect that they would patronize the shops that closed early, and similar resolutions will be put before the other labor organizations.

### Suggest Another Name.

There are two High streets in the North End, and the people who live on them are painfully aware of the fact. Mistakes are continually being made, and the person who starts out to find a resident with this ambiguous address will probably have plenty of exercise before he arrives at his destination. On both streets the name is nailed up in black and white on the street corners, yet one is off Portland street and the other on Fort Howe. This "coincidence," however, is not so bad as one that was remedied when the names of the streets were put up. Before that time there was a Brook street out near Haymarket square, and another near the police station. To people living on this street "quick delivery" was something very uncertain.

### What Will Come Out of It.

There is a very well defined rumor based upon seemingly reliable authority, that a prominent police official has recently not only winked at gambling, but participated in the game—poker—played in a liquor saloon, after hours, in which he was one of the losers of a "pot" of \$100 or thereabouts. It is simply the beginning of the end.

### Good on Any Page.

Each and every advertising page of PROGRESS is of equal value. Some advertisers have their preference, but all are beginning to see that every page is interesting. The announcement of the trustees of Turner & Finlay appears on the 11th page near this week.

## AND THE BAND PLAYED

WHILE THE AUDIENCE DREAMED OF WEALTH AND HAPPINESS.

The Progressive Benefit Order, its Supreme Officers and the Citizens' Band—The Free Show at Good Templars' Hall at the Expense of the Order.

Nothing will draw a crowd like a brass band. All good managers recognized this, and no amusement enterprise is complete without "music by the band."

The organizers of the Mystic Seven overlooked this part of the programme when they called a meeting, and their efforts to benefit suffering humanity were of no avail. They only got a dozen or so people to listen to them, and left the town in disgust.

Whether the supreme officers of the Progressive Benefit Order profited by the experience of the opposition concern, or whether they have had the same experience themselves, cannot be said, but in either case they know more about the business. They recognize the fact that people do not think it worth while to listen to fairy stories when there is no other attraction. So the supreme officers of the Progressive Benefit Order engaged the Citizens' brass band. But the music was like the jam in the turnover—there was more dry pastry than palatable jam.

Nevertheless a large audience spent a very enjoyable evening. The band played; the speakers spoke; the applauders applauded at suitable intervals, and the giddy girls in the middle aisle chewed cream chips till their teeth ached, and probably dreamed of gum drops in the happy future when everybody will belong to the Progressive Benefit Order, and reap the rich rewards obtained by multiplying 50 by nothing and making 100.

Supreme President Thos. Davey is a philanthropic looking gentleman of the John Wanamaker type, while Supreme Secretary Archibald had a blonde moustache and a remarkable knowledge of the manner in which great newspapers are conducted, which would have led one to believe that he had been manager of one of the great metropolitan dailies, had he not volunteered the information that he was a printer and had worked at "the case." Both gentlemen wore attractive badges, and were backed up by the band.

The Progressive Benefit order is much the same as the other endowment societies whose methods have been exposed in PROGRESS. It has been running about fourteen months and the president and secretary have drawn several thousands of dollars in endowments. This information was given by the supreme secretary, who hoped to make more money next year, if the 44,000 people who now belong to the order do their duty and bring in more members. In his opinion the man who has not three friends who could be induced to join the order, is not fit to live. And unless every member brings in three more there is no hope for the order, for as soon as new members stop coming in the chances for getting endowments vanish.

The secretary's address was remarkable for what he neglected to say, and the audience anxiously awaited for more music by the band.

This entertainment was ample evidence of the fact that the promoters of these endowment societies will stop at no expense in order to catch "suckers." But more information on this point was learned at the meeting. The order is empowered to make three assessments each year, besides the regular assessments, for the "maintenance of the order." One assessment has been made this year already, and the secretary felt sure that no more would be necessary. He has more confidence, however, than those who have watched the progress of these societies and their methods. In many places they have become a craze; more of them are being organized every week. All point to the success of the Iron Hall in offering inducements to join, but it can readily be seen that the societies that are being organized today have not the opportunities to prolong their existence that the Iron Hall had. It was among the first in the field, and when it started "the last man" was a long way off. But "the last man" is coming closer every day.

As he draws nearer, the assessments "for the maintenance of the order," will be made, and the secretary told how they would be used. With 44,000 members the assessment would amount to \$88,000. Half of this would be taken to send 400 organizers out at salaries of \$20 a week, and there could be but one result—an increase in membership that would carry the order on for another while. And in this is summed up the whole secret of the order—to keep bringing in new members. The promoters of the order have this in view when they organize as many lodges as possible in one place. Every lodge has a president and secretary who are paid officials and the amount of their salaries depends on the number of members in the lodge. This will naturally bring a state of activity that

would be impossible in one large lodge with one set of officers.

It is the activity that keeps the order afloat, but when the suckers get thinned down, as they undoubtedly do in a shorter time than is probably imagined, the order must sink, and sink very deep.

But the argument is put forth that even if the members do not receive large profits, but are assessed to the full amount of their endowments, that they will save money, which would in other cases be spent, and that workmen could not save money in any other way. Neither can workmen afford to lose money in that particular way; and lose they will, in a dishonest speculation.

The table on the ninth page of this issue shows the standing of the different endowment orders in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Nothing more is needed to show that they are frauds of the most transparent kind.

Anyone who contemplates joining an order of this kind should read carefully Mr. Stickemall's circular on page four.

The following extract will be of interest to the members of the order of Unity in this province:

"The 'Order of Unity,' one of the Massachusetts assessment endowment concerns ruled out of several states, and the true inwardness of which we exposed at some length several months ago, has lately attempted to find dupes in Sherbrooke, when it announced by cheap handbills that Carl W. Kimpton, 'supreme secretary' of the order, would hold a public meeting on July 9, to present the beauties of the scheme of getting something for nothing. A correspondent writes of the failure of the attempt, through the exposures made by himself and other level-headed citizens. This concern collected during 1890 over \$23,000 for "expense fund," and paid in benefits only \$13,920. — *Insurance and Finance Chronicle*.

### THE PRICE OF CITY 4 PER CENTS.

Montreal Takes \$50,000 at 97—St. John's Offer Much Lower.

The city four per cents are not bringing par in large or small lots.

There were something over \$80,000 worth to be disposed of two weeks ago, but this has been reduced to about \$30,000 worth.

The bankers or brokers in this city were not disposed to handle them at anything above 93½ or 94 per cent, but the treasury board went outside and succeeded in getting 97 for a lot of \$50,000 in Montreal. Part of this amount, \$4,500, has 20 years to run, and the remainder, \$45,500, are redeemable in 40 years.

The chamberlain thinks that the bargain cannot be called bad in any sense of the word, considering the state of the money market.

Most citizens will agree with this view of the case, and they may also hope that investors will continue to think as favorably of St. John city bonds. If the present council hold the ribbons much longer, however, the animals are apt to get fagged. The pace, lately, has been a terrific one, and the free use of the whip lately is an indication of the feeling. The next expensive move is the fire alarm system: ordinary citizens cannot discover much that is out of the way in the system, but the Chief Engineer, Mr. Kerr, and some others have had it on their brains for some time, and will not be content until it is done. Local electricians say with confidence that the present system is as complete and effective as there is any necessity for. The new system, however, requires a contract, and that seems to be in its favor. The council's inclination toward contracts is remarkable. For appearances sake, at least, there should be some sort of a public tender asked for.

The tax bills will make their appearance next week. They are all ready and will be a surprise party to a good many people who take no interest in civic matters, except when they get their tax bill.

### He Couldn't Serve the Papers.

The residents of City Road had plenty of amusement one day this week. It was furnished by a constable and a lady with Micawberish proclivities. The constable wanted to serve papers for her appearance at the city court, to show cause why she did not pay certain debts. But the woman was evidently used to such proceedings, and the officer found that he had a difficult task to perform. He knocked at the street door until he was tired, but getting no response he went away, only to return and knock again. The woman saw him, but did not go to the door. On the contrary she sat by the window reading a morning paper, and when the constable asked her what was "the latest," she told him, but when asked to open the door she was not in such good humor. The constable was persistent, and stayed for an hour, with frequent walks around the block to keep his courage up. He could not serve the papers, however, and the object of his search witnessed his departure, from her front window, with a satisfied air, while the crowd which had become interested in the proceedings, felt sorry that the show was over.