

ST. JOHN. N. B., SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 1894.

JANUARY, 1894.

CORONERS AFTER CASH.

HALIFAX DOCTORS GET REVENUE OUT OF INQUESTS.

The Brisk Competition in the Race for Cadavers—How One Fatality May Be Made Productive of Several Investigations—The Jurors Who Serve at a Shilling Apiece.

HALIFAX, Jan. 18.—There is at least one "public service," which is carried out in this city, is far more of a public scandal than a public benefit. The great majority of the coroner's inquests in Halifax city are little else than a farce, held mainly that the doctor may get the municipality's money, really under false pretences. The reference is not to coroner Weeks, whose remarkable court was described last week. That coroner, with all his faults, does not as he himself would say, take "blood money" by the holding of unnecessary inquests. Fully 90 per cent of the coroner's inquests held in Halifax are absolutely useless except as a means of putting paltry fees into the pockets of the man holding them, a fact on which the public is perfectly agreed. But as in the case of many another abuse press and people seem disinclined to speak out plainly about it. They would not dare to mention the offenders by name.

The coroners of Halifax who held inquests during the year, and the approximate number of cases is given in this table.

Dr. Hawkins, 20; Dr. Finn, 12; Dr. Somers, 6; Dr. Crawford, 5; Dr. Weeks, Dartmouth, 4; Dr. Almon, Halifax, 1; Dr. McMillan, Sheet Harbor, 1; Justice of Peace Morrison, 1; Justice of Peace Shampson, Hammond's Plains, 1; a total of 51.

There were probably half a dozen other inquests which have escaped enumeration here. It is safe to say that not once in ten cases was an inquest necessary or demanded by public opinion. In 90 per cent of the inquests, as already stated, the only reason for holding them was that the coroner might get his fee. It is a bold statement to make, but any one who has not thought of it before and who will look over the list of inquests and examine the circumstances, will arrive at the conclusion that the assertion is perfectly true without wearying PROGRESS readers with a tiresome enumeration of instances in detail where no disinterested man would say an inquest was necessary, but where the coroner greedily held it all the same, a glance at another aspect of the matter may prove equally convincing.

The population of Halifax county is pretty equally divided between city and country—some 38,000 in Halifax city against about 31,000 in the rural districts. The proportion of inquests is nothing like that; in fact, only three or four inquests were held by coroners outside the city and Dartmouth, while over 50 were held in the city and Dartmouth. Crime and misfortune doubtless are greater in the city, but it is unreasonable to suppose that it is in the ratio of 50 to three. The county has to pay the bills, though, and over \$600 was taken away from the all-too-small road moneys last year to go into the pockets of two or three young Halifax doctors who have been made coroners, and who insist on holding inquests on every possible occasion, and with the flimsiest of reasons for their procedure.

It would not be a hard matter to prove that most of the inquests held in this city are conducted solely that the coroner may get the fee. It is a paltry sum that is paid, but it evidently comes in acceptably now and then to the coroners. The law allows the coroner \$10 for an inquest, out of which he has to pay \$3 to his constable and jury. Every inquest thus means \$7 clear for the coroner who holds it. Besides that, \$5 is allowed the doctor who gives evidence, who is also supposed, it called upon, to make a post mortem examination without extra charge. Seldom is the post mortem made, but always is the \$5 paid if the medical man is in court only for a minute or two. To show how anxious are some of the coroners to make the \$7 an inquest gives them, one needs only to see how they hustle to get to the body first when a death from accident, or other sudden cause is reported. Either the coroner or his lynx-eyed constable is quickly on the spot, as it drawn there with the rapidity and certainty of the needle to the pole. Scenes have been witnessed here, all too frequently, of coroners or their constables striving with each other in undisguised eagerness for the possession of a body, not only for the undertaker to get the work of interment, but to obtain the case for the coroner whom the constable represents. This rivalry went so far, on one occasion, that after coroner Hawkins had begun an inquest, another coroner, Dr. Somers strode into the court-room, and openly claimed the right to hold the inquest, charging that his jurisdiction had been trespassed upon; that he had been unfairly deprived of his case by the doctor who was at work taking evidence. It is not often, indeed, that the struggle for the inquest between two coroners goes as far as that, but it is a frequent occurrence for

the contest to be keen, though carried on quickly, the doctors who are anxious to exercise their judicial powers in holding "coroners quest" are none the less determined and persevering in their race for the chance to do so—and to pocket the \$7 fee.

The savage murder and suicide by which three lives were sacrificed, is yet fresh in public memory, everybody knew how the triple tragedy occurred. In a case like that it was certainly right that an inquest should be held, but it was not at all necessary that there should have been three separate inquests. Yet that was what coroner Hawkins demanded. He held an inquest on mother on child and on murderous father. One would have answered every purpose, or at most two would have sufficed. But it one only had been held the fee for the coroner would only have been \$7; it two \$14, whereas by holding three inquests he pocketed the round sum of \$21.

At Chocolate lake some weeks ago, four children, while skating, fell through the ice and were drowned. One inquest only was needed, but Hawkins insisted on four, one on each child. He got them, and pocketed the \$28 like a man.

A glaring case of an attempt at this kind of extortion under pretext of holding inquests is furnished by Coroner Somers' conduct after the wreck of the Dorcas and Stewart at Three Fathom Harbor last autumn. Twenty bodies were washed up on the shore some 25 miles from this city. Dr. Somers proceeded to the scene. He held an inquest and a verdict in accordance with the facts was rendered. Did Somers charge the \$10 for one inquest and traveling expenses at 5 cents per mile? All the twenty victims shared the same watery grave, and the circumstances of their death were identical. Ah no, he did not but sent in a bill for \$200, as if he had held an inquest on each body. Payment of the amount was refused on technical grounds, the single inquest fee only being tendered the much surprised doctor. He would not take the amount, and has made all kinds of threats to sue the county for \$200. The coroner was told to go ahead and collect if he could. He has not yet started on his lawsuit and there the matter stands—\$10 waiting Dr. Somers when he calls for it, but no more,—just at present.

There is another remarkable thing about those inquests held by coroners Hawkins, Finn and Somers. They are always held on the bodies of poor and friendless people, not on the rich and well-to-do. That looks like disinterestedness in behalf of the poor man; but it is not. The rich man is influential enough effectively to say to the coroner: "I don't want one on the body of my relative or friend who lies dead; everybody knows how it happened." In nine cases out of ten no inquest will be held under such circumstances. But in nine cases out of ten if it were a poor man the inquest would be held that the coroner might pocket the fee, in spite of the protestations and pleadings of the stricken friends.

The abuse of the coroner's powers has been observed by the municipal council, and they have tried to have the law amended, but so far without success. A bill with the following provision was sent to the legislature last session by the council, founded on the Ontario law, but it was thrown out:

"No fees shall be claimed by any coroner in respect of an inquest, unless, prior to the issuing of his warrant for summoning the jury, he shall have made a declaration in writing under oath (which oath may be administered by any justice of the peace or commissioner for taking affidavits in the superior courts, and shall be returned and filed with the inquisition) stating that from information received by such coroner, he is of opinion that the deceased did not come to his death by natural causes or from mere accident or mischance, but came to his death by violence or unfair means, or culpable or negligent conduct of others, under circumstances requiring investigation by a coroner's inquest."

The municipal council will not give up without defeat, but another attempt will be made this year to secure protection from other officious or penurious coroners.

Then the peculiar personnel of coroner's juries in Halifax is a standing disgrace, the fee paid to the nine men who generally serve is 20 cents each. The majority of the juries are made up of men waiting at the street corners to be sworn in, that with the 20 cents pay they may have the price of a couple of drinks. Generally they can sign their names. The qualification of such men to ascertain the cause of death is nil; and the coroner knows it quite well but the men chosen answer the purpose.

Big Deal in Sandwiches.

A novel bet was recently made by a Cuban, who was a constant visitor to one of the Paris boulevards—the wager being for one thousand francs—that the head carver would not cut and make two thousand complete sandwiches in twenty-four hours. The carver won the bet easily, accomplishing the feat in nineteen hours and forty minutes, demolishing twenty-two bams in the operation. This huge mass of sandwiches was divided among the principal hospitals of Paris and the environs.

WHAT SCIENCE CAN DO.

SOME OF THE WONDERS WROUGHT BY MODERN SURGERY.

Putting a Knife to the Human Brain—Other Operations that Were Once Thought to be Impossible—What Has Been Done in Artificial Limbs.

The wonderful progress made of late years in the science of surgery, and the hitherto unlooked and almost unhopd for results, would have astonished and dumb-founded our earlier surgeons, clever as they were in their day, says an English paper. There were many matters which to them were sealed books; matters which, in spite of their learning and dexterity, were, they felt, not within the human probability of accomplishment. These remarks are especially applicable to the surgery of the head and brain. They felt they were treading on too dangerous ground to attempt much beyond the operation of trephining. The idea of attacking that delicate and important organ, the brain, would be certain to end in disaster, but what appeared to them impossible is, in our day, to our modern surgeons, a matter of almost, if one may say, everyday occurrence.

The progress of science has, as it always will, opened up new fields of observation and research for the benefit of the world at large, and surgery has advanced with as great strides as other branches of science. What to our forefathers was a sealed book is to us an open page.

This has been brought about greatly by the practice of vivisection. Humanitarians and those who are opposed to this practice do not rightly appreciate the great benefit to mankind that has accrued by the study of disease in the lower animals in the hope that increased knowledge of the origin and location of maladies, with special reference to the brain, might thereby become applicable to the human economy. This result has been proved satisfactorily.

Only five or six years ago an operation was undertaken by one of our leading surgeons for the relief of symptoms which strongly indicated that a certain portion of brain matter was affected. During the course of the operation it was found that exactly as the symptoms indicated, so a tumour was found which by its presence caused the marked objective characteristics. The result was entirely satisfactory, and the patient, who before the operation was subject to constant epileptic attacks and paralysis, was completely cured. Such an operation is a triumph of skill, and shows to what a high standard of excellence the study of disease and its remedy has reached.

Whole tracts of brain matter are now removed, either as the result of accident or operation, and by proper care and treatment the sufferer will recover with what is more remarkable, his functions unimpaired. It is when the nerve centres themselves are attacked by disease that the crucial point is reached. Present investigation shows that they cannot altogether be touched with impunity, although, as a matter of fact, within a very recent date an operation was undertaken for the relief of symptoms attacking one of these nerve centres. The result was amelioration, but not a cure, but even that is astonishing in itself when we regard these centres as vital to our existence.

It is not by any means that the brain alone has benefited by the advance of surgery. There is not, with very few exceptions, any organ in the human economy that cannot now be reached and either removed or its condition so rectified that the sufferer is relieved from his distress. This is especially applicable to operations upon the abdomen. Skilled as our earlier surgeons were, yet they did not reach the heights of modern exploration and daring.

Certainly allowance must be made for the advance side by side of means whereby these operations can be performed. Antiseptics, which in earlier times were not understood, enable the surgeon nowadays to undertake difficulties with a much diminished death-rate.

Most human beings are supposed to have two kidneys, and yet some have only one. The other has been removed. The individual, instead of being an invalid and a chronic sufferer, is enabled by that operation to take his place again in everyday life, and his days are prolonged.

The stomach, again, is another organ that is attacked with impunity by the modern surgeon. Cancer, that band of existence, it detected there, is removed, with a prolongation of days. We have not yet reached to a true understanding of the origin or cause of that trouble, yet no doubt a time will come when even that most terrible disease will be radically dealt with.

The bad liver, that evil inheritance of the Anglo-Indian, the irascible gouty individual, and the cause, as is popularly considered, of most of the "ills that flesh is heir to," can also now be successfully operated on. It is no longer forbidden ground. Five years ago the first operation took place for the removal of gall stones, and a few months after an abscess was removed, both with excellent results. The spleen, which in earlier times was thought too far removed for interference, has now been operated on with entire success. Every year does surgery advance her triumph for the good of mankind.

The nose is an organ that has attracted the attention of surgeons both in our own day and in older times. Ingenious and complex plans were made to replace that prominent feature, it destroyed. The older surgeons certainly accomplished much, but their latter-day confreres by their skill have reproduced noses in such a manner that they would not be recognized from the originals. The writer has seen more than one individual so operated on; the result being an organ of which the owner might well be proud, and in all probability a better shape than the one lost. One in particular can be called to

TO THE LADIES OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

Four years ago we introduced the first mid-winter special sale of Ladies' White-wear, the phenomenal success of which has led us to make it an annual sale each year during the months of January and February.

It is most particularly in the FIT of our garments where we claim to hold the palm. Our many years of experience in catering to the requirements of the ladies has benefited us in the selection of shapes and sizes which are sure to give satisfaction, the great majority of our garments being cut after New York or Paris patterns, and are made CORRECT IN SHAPE, FULL LENGTH AND SIZE.

In addition to our regular stock we have secured about FIVE HUNDRED SAMPLE GARMENTS, including Ladies' Night-gowns, Chemises, Drawers, Skirts, Corset Covers and Combinations—new garments made for this spring's trade and containing all the latest novelties in Embroidery and Lace Trimmings. PRICES RUNNING FROM 25c. to \$6.00 A GARMENT, WITH NO TWO ALIKE. In this space we cannot enumerate all our prices, but the following may give you an idea of the range in each line:

Table listing prices for Ladies' Nightgowns, Chemise, Drawers, Skirts, Corset Covers, and various sizes (Slender, Women's, and Out-size). Prices range from 25c to \$6.00.

Manchester Robertson & Allison, St. John

mind: it was a most excellent Roman type. From the rest of the individual's countenance the inference was that the departed, proboscis was of the type known as "pug." The impression left upon the writer was that the nose was almost too good for its surroundings.

The larynx containing the organ of voice is sometimes, although rarely, attacked by malignant disease. This has been at times partially removed, and about twelve years ago on the continent was for the first time entirely extirpated. The result, however, at that time was not so successful as could be desired. Since then it has been repeated with better results, but at best it is a most serious affair. Our late great specialist in the throat, Sir Morell Mackenzie, was not altogether an advocate in its favor.

Transfusion of blood from a healthy individual to one who requires this life stream is another advance in surgery. It was a few years ago introduced in this country, if the writer's memory be correct, by an Italian surgeon. The writer witnessed the operation, performed by the inventor himself before a large number of English surgeons.

The result in this particular case was entirely successful. In the writer's opinion the one who gave the blood ran more risk than the patient, and was certainly to be complimented both upon his sacrifice and courage.

In cases when from some cause or other there has been loss of bone in one of the limbs, accompanied heretofore by the loss of length and usefulness of the part, surgery has now stepped in again in the endeavor to make up for that deficiency, and with most excellent results. Bone-grafting, as it is termed, consists in the introduction of that tissue in a healthy condition. In process of time it has been found to have filled up the vacant space, and the limb restored in length and symmetry.

One of the most interesting recent cases was that of nerve-grafting. Hitherto it was held that once a nerve was destroyed, or by some reason a portion removed, it did not regain its normal condition, and, consequently, the muscle or part supplied by that nerve was afterwards rendered useless. Efforts have been made from time to time to remedy this, but with unsatisfactory results.

A few months ago the first case of successful nerve-grafting was announced. A portion of a healthy nerve was fitted on to the injured nervous cord, and after a short time it was found that where formerly there had been loss of power, the movement returned, and eventually the whole impaired limb was restored.

With the advance of surgical skill we have corresponding results in the treatment of deformities. Arms and legs can now be made artificially of such ingenuity that to the casual observer there appears no deformity at all. Individuals who hitherto were rendered useless from all outdoor healthy exercise can now ride, row, cycle, and generally participate in all those occupations enjoyed by their more favored brethren.

Queer Notions About Waves.

It was formerly held that the commotion of the sea was owing to the serpents which St. Patrick had imprisoned in a box when he cast them out of Ireland.

The Arab sailors believed that the high seas off the coast of Abyssinia were enchanted, and when they found themselves among them they recited verses which were supposed to subdue them.

The Persians believe that the waves of the Persian Gulf are caused by air entering caves which have subterranean outlets under the ocean.

But one of the most curious beliefs of all—one closely akin to a certain ancient Oriental school belief—is that of the South Sea Islanders. According to their notion, the rolling of the sea is caused by a "thunder god." In old times this "thunder god" killed the chief deity of the island and was confined under the ocean as a punishment. His rolling with rage causes the waves.

Struck a New Scheme.

The editor of a Western paper is a genius. He proclaims it in an editorial: "We have struck a new scheme," he says. "On the green shade we wear over our eyes when reading proofs or grinding out copy, we have printed: 'I am very busy.' When a man that we don't care to talk to comes in, so that he can see it and take the hint; but when the other kind of a man, a good fellow, comes in, we push the shade up over our bald spot, where he can't read the legend, smile benignly at him, and open the conversation by asking him for a cigar."

Traded With a Professional.

Jack—"What did that horse cost you?" Tom—"It cost me all the respect I ever entertained for the man I bought it from."

Want an Ulster? Here it is; tough or fine or both—warm anyway.

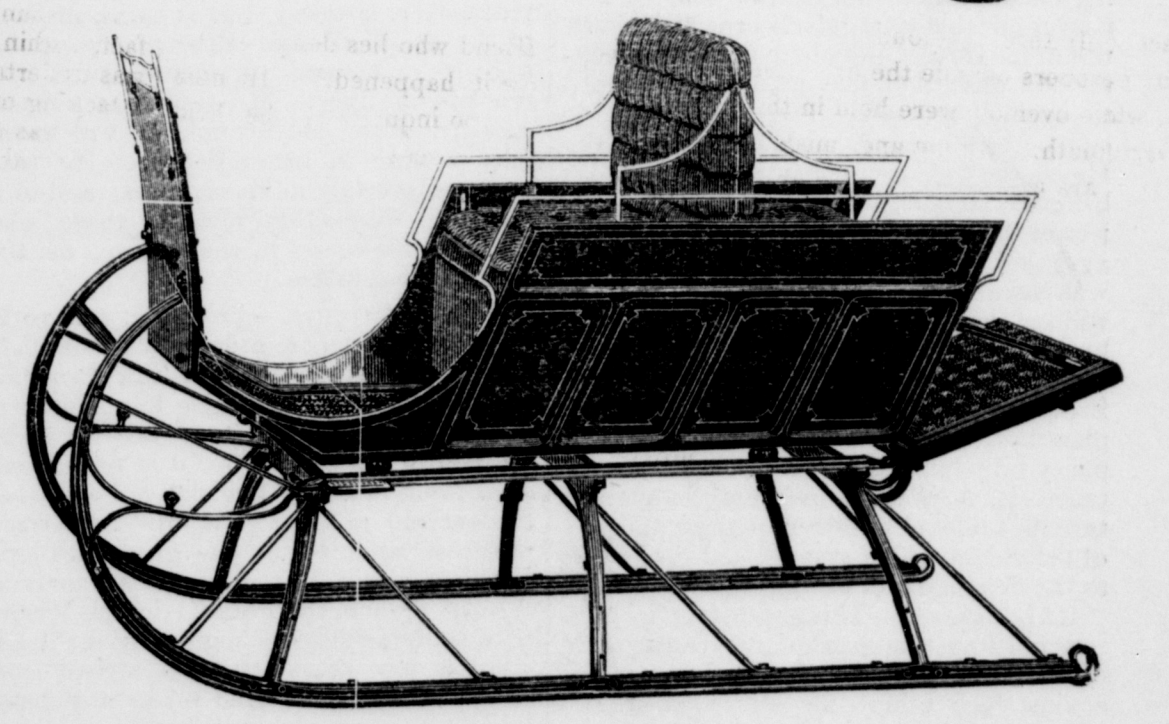
Want your money back? Here it is;—everything here that belongs to a good store.

Don't think an Ulster has got to be ugly just because your last one was.

\$6.50, \$7.50, \$8.50.

OAK HALL, KING ST., THE CORNER OF GERMAIN, SHOP. SCOVIL, FRASER & CO., ST. JOHN.

The Gladstone Sleigh.



If You Want a Nice Comfortable and Stylish Family Sleigh this Winter do not get any other than a Gladstone. For prices and particulars write to JOHN EDGECOMBE & SONS, Fredericton.

BARCAINS IN HORSES AND CARRIAGES.

Messrs. Edgecombe & Sons, of Fredericton, announce that they have the following horses and carriages for sale.

3 Shetland ponies with harness, etc., complete; one Sir Galahad's colt, 4 years old, bay, kind and good; a set of 78 brand new carriage to be sold at 25 per cent less than usual prices, phaetons, Gladstones, Concordes, Piano boxes, Corbin top buggies. A full rent styles of open and closed carriages at 25 per cent less than usual prices.

HAWKER'S CATARRH CURE

PERFECT POSITIVE PAINLESS CURE SAFE SURE SIMPLE

EFFECTUALLY CURES CATARRH, COLD IN THE HEAD, CATARRHAL HEAD-ACHE AND DEAFNESS, INFLUENZA, ETC. Sold every where. Price, 25 cents. Mfg. by THE HAWKER MEDICINE CO., Ltd., St. John, N.B.

A Pure Breath is an Added Charm Many a beautiful form and face loses its charm in an impure breath. Catarrh does not choose its victims, the innocent babe, the beautiful and wretched maiden, and the manly lover alike fall victims to this offensive and foul plague. Hawker's Catarrh Cure will positively cure the most aggravated cases of Catarrh, restoring to the breath its pristine sweetness and removing all its disagreeable and unhealthy symptoms. Sold everywhere only 25 c. nts. The children's favorite—Hawker's Tolu and Wild Cherry Balsam.