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HALIFAX BRANCH OFFICE: KNOWLES' BUILDING, COR. GRANVILLE AND GEORGE STREETS. ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, MAR. 17.

CHANCES FOR ALL READERS.

The competition for the prize offered by PROGRESS for the best original verses excited a great deal of interest last year, and as a result there were many meritorious compositions submitted, in addition to those to which prizes were awarded.

Interesting as was the verse competition however, the scope of it was necessarily limited. Only a certain proportion of people can even make decent rhyme, a still smaller number have any idea of rhythm, while of those who can produce smooth and harmonious verse a very small number indeed can crystallize a thought into poetry.

In this country the record from 1867 to 1886 inclusive, was 225,716 divorces. And they are increasing at an alarming rate. From 9,957 in 1867, the number rose to 25,335 in 1886, an increase of 157 in twenty years.

In New York city and Brooklyn alone, last year, there were more than one hundred and fifty elopements in which one or the other of the parties was a married person.

WHAT ABOUT THE JUDGESHIP? The story PROGRESS told last week in regard to the retirement of Judge Palmer and the trouble for his position caused a large amount of discussion in this city and elsewhere.

Mr. SKINNER's stock was not above par, even among his supporters, Saturday night, and the idea was prevalent that he was so far behind that he should submit to be withdrawn from the race to avoid a distance record.

The name of Mr. EZEKIEL McLEOD, came to the front as rapidly as that of Mr. SKINNER went to the rear, while Mr. VANWART, of Fredericton, was reported as posting to Ottawa, in order to press his own claims at headquarters.

wanted the place he could have it. Apparently he did not want it, as he authorized the statement that he would not accept it "at the present time."

This seemed to augur well for Mr. SKINNER, but unless there has been a very recent change of programme, he is no nearer the bench than he was a year ago. PROGRESS had very definite information some days ago, that no appointment would be made at present, for the reason that there was no need of one.

This seems to have been the idea, and it may still be so, even though Mr. McLEOD will not accept a judgeship at a later date.

Judge PALMER made his valedictory address on Tuesday. It was a model in its way, and was to a large extent retrospective.

THE CURSE OF DIVORCE.

Is it any wonder that the statistics show a decrease in the ratio of marriages in many parts of the United States? In New York state alone, there are said to be more than four hundred cases in the courts where absolute divorce is demanded by the husband or the wife, and yet New York is supposed to have a more strict divorce law than any other state in the union.

Here are some terribly suggestive figures of the lax views of the marriage tie taken by the laws of the various states. As these laws are the embodiment of the sentiment of the people, the question may well be asked, to what depth of moral degradation may not the nation drift if the proportion is continued for the next half century or so?

Undoubtedly the most serious matter for reflection as regards the future of the people is the complacency with which such matters are viewed by those who are considered respectable people and certainly consider themselves such.

Just at present a spasm of virtue seems to have struck some of the good people of New York, and they want to apply a partial remedy for this state of things. The clear and obvious course for those who base their faith on the Bible would seem to be to follow the teachings of that Bible on the question of divorce in general, and to accept CHRIST's law in preference to the law of the politicians.

What is now proposed is an amendment to the criminal code of New York by making marital infidelity a crime in the contemplation of the law, and punishing the offender by a fine of from one thousand to five thousand dollars, with an alternative

WHAT IS TRUE CHARITY?

The Question Discussed With Instances of What It Is Not. I have an idea in my own mind that the charity which "begins at home" was not the kind St. Paul had in his mind when he declared that "Charity covereth a multitude of sins."

Charity scarcely consists either of a slice of very thick bread, sparsely covered with well scraped butter which does not reach around the edges very far, or cover the crust, which we give to the child who calls at the back door for cold pieces, or the butterless sandwich of inch thick bread with the glistly portions of yesterday's corned beef, cut in heavy slabs between, which we thrust grudgingly out to the polished but dilapidated tramp on the front doorstep.

SOME MONEY IN IDEAS.

A Chance for the Readers of "Progress." With a Tendency to Write. Two chances to earn prizes are offered to the readers of PROGRESS in the interval between now and the first of May. They are prizes for which a large number will be able to compete, without any great exertion, and without the necessity of being endowed with such extraordinary genius as a poet is supposed to have.

The first of these prizes will be of five dollars in cash to be awarded to the writer of the best and brightest letter on any current topic. The test of merit will be the fullest expression of idea in the most comprehensive form, and the length of any letter must not exceed 300 words.

The other prize of Five Dollars will be for the best original story of personal adventure, based on actual occurrences or otherwise, in which the best narrative is told in the clearest and briefest form consistent with the presentation of the event in a way to interest readers everywhere.

In every instance a nom de guerre must be signed. In this special instance the real name of the writer need not be sent, as the matter submitted will be judged purely on its merits.

The beautiful girl gazed into the face of her lover with eyes moist with tears. Her snowy chest heaved with emotion, and in a choking voice she cried, "Henry, my darling, forgive me if I cause you any pain." Remember always that I love you devotedly; but I am about to do something desperate. My soul yearns over the thought, and I feel I must do it. My very life depends upon it!

A Shattered Idol.

The beautiful young girl answered not, but rising majestically from the velvet cushions, she glided swiftly across the room, and with bosom that still heaved convulsively, and with fingers that trembled with the unwonted excitement, seated herself at the piano, and in a melodious voice, only rendered more thrilling from its tone of suppressed emotion, struck the keynote and began to sing "After the Ball."

PROGRESS wants two or three good pushing canvassing agents to work in the maritime provinces, collect and solicit subscriptions. Sufficient salary guaranteed to make it worth while applying for. Satisfactory commission on all business over a certain amount. Apply at once stating particulars, what canvassing experience you have had, if any, also references, to PUBLISHER PROGRESS, St. John, N. B.

Father Collette's picnic at West Quaco, on Easter Monday, will undoubtedly be the first of the season. It will differ from summer picnics because it will be held in Sweeney hall, but as regards music, meals and light refreshments nothing will be wanting. The festivities will begin at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

FOUND IT IN HIS MAIL.

A comic opera manager recently found this letter in his mail: "Dere Sir—I wright to you to see if you could take me on the stage you do take girls to learn at the back I will try to learn quick I am very good at learning I can jump about like fun do have me on for I do love it it is so nice. I am 17 age a Irish girl will you send for me to see what I am like I am a joly girl I will be very glad if you will let me know as soon as you can please. Sally no obiect I am tired of upstairs work I am real joly and can learn quick I never did singing but I can holler like samm Jones and I can jump round prity smart."

MILINERY SHOW DAYS.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 19th, 20th, and 21st of March, and following days, we will display our annual importation of Paris and London Milinery novelties. LE BON MARCHÉ, Halifax.

ADVOCATING A ROUND DRIVE.

To the EDITOR OF PROGRESS.—As the season is now opening in which we may look forward to the influx of summer visitors fleeing from the oppressive heat of southern cities, it seems to me our advantage to seek as many ways as possible in which our city and its suburbs may be made attractive.

BIT FROM BUTLER'S JOURNAL.

Concerning Martin Hussell. At no time since we started the Journal have we been so hard up for money as at present. The sickness of our mother has prevented us from getting out in the country to do any trading, which together with the expense incurred in hiring help to any appreciable extent.

Fore-cast of the Legislature. The N. B. Legislature will soon open for business with a flourish of trumpets and all the tom foolery of a military guard and the discharge of cannon.

SUNDAY IN THE CAPITAL.

About as sad a sight as we have seen for some time was a well known resident of Regent street, lying on the sidewalk last Sunday in a state of beastly intoxication.

ST. GEORGE.

March 14.—Mrs. Hugh Douglas entertained most pleasantly on Friday evening a party of friends at tea those present were Capt. and Mrs. Mahoney, Mrs. Cullip, Mr. and Mrs. Milner, Mr. and Mrs. Wellington Douglas, Mr. Gies Johnston and Mr. Gideon Wetmore, (Deer Island).

FOOTSOE FAGIN'S LATEST IDEA.

When the cook opened the door to the timid knock of the perpetetic without she found him meekly waiting. "Good morning," he said. "Have you an old Sunday school book about the house I could take?"

The cook was knocked plumb speechless. "A Sunday school book" she gasped. "Yes, miss," he replied. "What in name of goodness do you want with that?"

"You see, miss, it's this way" he said in explanation. "When I was a little boy

VERSES OF YESTERDAY AND TODAY.

That Unstained Ermine. Ha! there's a vacancy, The Judge in Equity Ill health cites as a plea And so hath gotten. At last hath gotten

Permission to resign: So now he may confine His talents to that line Of trade, called cotton, Good, home-made cotton.

Theo' 'tis a heavy cross We'll bravely bear the loss, Of this judicial Jinn, Like patient sinners, Yet hopeful sinners;

For on this tract of earth Which gave "His Honor" birth, By Jove there is no dearth Of legal skinnery, Snaive, clever skimmers,

And hence, two candidates Are anxious that the fates Or Sir John and his mates Should make them fixtures, Tho' moving fixtures.

Upon the bench, whence each, Like the ex-judge, can teach, Trade principles, and preach Great moral strictures, Mind, moral strictures.

If C. N. gets the start 'Tis obvious, vanwart To move extremely smart Must then determine, Soon must determine.

For Charlie to the green, Or William's orange sheen, Or any tint will lean To clutch the ermine, The unstained ermine.

If there's a wild scrub-race To see who'll fill the place With equitable grace And legal genius, Keen, subtle genius;

But from the one who'll be Judge in iniquity, Or so called equity, May Heaven screen us, Defend and screen us, St. John, March, 1894.

THE NEW MOON.

A gem suspended in the West, The crescent new, the Turkish crest, Demands from all admiring gaze, And for our God a song of praise For all His works, beneath, above, Kept by His power, His goodness, love.

As that bright gem grows and expands, Lighting the night in many lands, What beautiful scenes delight the eye, Spread out beneath the soft sky, The landscape bright, the placid lake Where paths abound, which lovers take, The moon and drifting clouds, as seen, With tree and shrub and grasses green Reflected in the mirrored stream, A picture show like fairy dream.

And where the snowy mantles rest, On hill and plain and mountain crest, And ice has bound with solid chain The flowing stream, the pond and lake, Till spring, bright spring shall come again, And by many rains their fetters break, What sparkling beauty is revealed By the pale moon's enchanting light, A while by drifting cloud concealed, Emerging brilliant to the sight.

A brighter gem beyond the sky, Invisible to mortal eye, Sheds forth the beautiful light of grace, The spirit pure and holy peace, O spotless Lamb, dear Saviour blest, Who bore the cross, the Christian crest, Shine thou in every contrite heart, And faith and hope and love impart.

A Dream at Nazareth.

I entered Joseph's shop; and there stood Christ; A lad of seventeen with auburn hair; Falling in graceful folds his neck, While at the bench he worked with ardent will. His form was lithe and nimble, and each stroke Of mallet or of plane might well provoke The admiration of a well trained eye. O, how I watched him; as he moved about! Afraid to speak, as I might be in doubt If it were He whose name I knew so well. I waited, to approach that I might ask: If it were He to whom God gave the task Of teaching all mankind the way of truth; But then I shrank from asking such a youth A question of so grave import as this.

He paused; I then advanced to where he stood, And as he cast his eyes of liquid brown Full into mine, I never shall forget That keenness and that mellowness divine, Which gave to them a lustre all their own. O blessed thought! I knew at once 'twas He!

"You think it strange that I should handle tools; But is not this the discipline that binds One into sympathetic touch with those Who have to bear life's daily goads and strings?" Pearls do not deck the crest of any wave But lie deep down in ocean depth serene; Nor will they come to light unless brought forth By him who knows their preciousness, I ween.

A Child's Hope.

"A better day is coming"— Thus sang a weary child, Whose fevered brain could not restrain Thoughts which seemed running wild; And while with breath grown weaker, She faltering sang her song, Of girded night and holy light, In conflict with the wrong; Prophetic seemed her singing To watchers who were nigh "The welcome dawn will hasten on This coming by and by."

Sad is it when the reason Seems to have lost control, But may not they whose thoughts thus Have peace within the soul? This thought, at least, gives comfort, That memory should recall The promise sweet, the song so sweet, And that she sang it all. For now that she is hidden Within the spirit veil, We know the days lived to God's praise Have peace which cannot fail. Though like the night our sorrow, We raise no hopeless cry. Our loved one will watch that dawn More welcome by and by We'll try to live more truly Each added waiting day, 'Till from heaven's bright, the morning light Shall drive the gloom away." K.