

Side Shots at the Show.

One rainy day—and that the last—was all that the weather had to say against the exhibition. The result was an attendance within a few hundreds of 60,000 or an average of 6,000 people a day. This is considered good for St. John but it is not what the friends of the annual fair would like to see it.

From this standpoint the show was an undoubted success—the crowds of people were in themselves the most interesting feature. How keenly these who had an opportunity to stroll around and watch the different types of men and women enjoy themselves can hardly be told. "I came to see the crowd not the show," was a frequent remark from those who were paying their second and third visit to the grounds. And truly the throng was well worth seeing. One day the folks from Nova Scotia poured in by steamers and trains and they owned the place while in the city; another day it was the North Shore that camped out on the grounds and made up their minds that they could stand the 24 hours that it took them to travel from and to home and enjoy all the sights. Western New Brunswick, St. Stephen and Fredericton, to say nothing of points between St. John and Amherst each had their excursion and the capacity of the railroads was taxed to the utmost. When it was possible to come and see the big show for about a quarter of the usual return fare who would not take advantage of the opportunity?

There were many different ways of spending cents and dollars at all parts of the grounds. The fact that a first investment might only be a cent on the automatic weighing machine was no indication of what was to follow. It was curious how many people were anxious about their weight. Parents with their children afforded them a cheap bit of amusement when they placed them on the platform and a copper in the slot. The next stop might give them a free cup of coffee—which depended upon whether the supply was short or not—but then the candy and ginger ale booths that were next encountered relieved both the monotony and the pocket books. To the left one might indulge in literature in the shape of a pretty illustrated book and on the right a stock of glass ware might be had—plain or colored—with initials or names or any inscription engraved upon it "while you waited." Then the talker with the pens, the artist who could cure a headache in two minutes with an electric shock or refund you double the charge—one cent—to say nothing of fortune telling and palmists booths: all these were the introductions to the visitor in the space between the main entrance and the exit which led to the show grounds beyond.

There the voices of the rivals side shows made a lively din. Slater and a number of others had secured space and they had canes and umbrellas, jack knives and what not for the people to throw rings at. If the rings went over a cane or a knife the same belonged to the thrower but the margin of chance was very largely in favor of the man who ran the show. To stimulate competition at the finish dollar bills were hung on the jack knives and the rings were decreased in size. Six throws for five cents was the cry and many a poor chap peddled away his small change on the chance of making a "bone."

Strong lusty fellows from the farm found great attraction in wetting a way at a spring post which when hit in the right way sent a small weight to the height of 28 or 30 feet and struck a gong. Ten cents for three blows and when the gong sounded three times in succession the striker got a cigar. Oh these cigars! The money that this enterprise brought to the owner was astonishing. The sound of the gong striking was always drawing a curious crowd and then a small assistant was busy when no one else was handling the matter, showing the strong young men how easy it was to send the weight up to the gong.

Opposite these "gift artists" a young man and woman took turns, one doing the mind reading act and the other showing cards with cards. Of course the pack was for sale afterward—only five cents—and there were seven or eight cards in the envelope.

This was almost as bad as "Kelly," the

medicine man who was a perfect talking machine—His "Now folks" could be heard at all hours of the day and his scheme was almost too bare faced to take in anybody. But audacity, and a certain amount of ready wit and persuasive eloquence are all that are necessary to draw the dollars from the pockets of lots of people. Kelly was an artist in these respects. He gave away a belt that cost but a few cents—and that much—and then to all holders of the belt he would sell a bottle of medicine for a dollar. The bottle was simply a two ounce vial filled with a dark colored liquid and what it wouldn't do in the way of cures could be told in a very few seconds—according to Kelly. He drew comparisons between some of the ills in the human family to loathsome diseases in brute creation and the way the dollars found their way into this grip when he got his audience worked up was a caution. He made enough money to last him all winter and have a start in the spring.

The merry-go-round was the delight of the children and a great money maker. There is no doubt that it took in as many dollars as amusement hall while the big crowds were present.

This description gives some idea of the outside features of the show—the money makers and the takers. There was on wheel of fortune and no long maned horse. Even the two headed calf and such questionable attractions were absent this year. In the main building the phonograph could be heard here and there; attractive young ladies sold baking powder and candy and one booth was devoted to some Chinese wares and the kissing bug. This latter was quite an ingenious contrivance and from the governors and supreme court judge to the curious young girl proved a great surprise. Two ladies fainting when they examined the small envelope and one old gentleman was so tickled with the shock he got that he got half a dozen for as many young ladies and mailed them on the spot! It would hardly be fair to describe the "bug" as that might spoil the sale—if there are any left.

Messrs. McClaskey had the candy selling privilege and they must have done well. Their advertisement was a splendid one, their booths attractive and their goods put up in a tempting fashion. It is unnecessary to say that they were good.

Two workers in gold were in opposition and many maidens carried away their name in the shape of a brooch.

The gong of a fire alarm would tell the people in one of the galleries that Sam Ritchie's show—the panorama of the St. John fire—was in operation. And Sam's description of that great conflagration was one of the features of the representation.

Currie's business college always provides good music in connection with its booth. This year two travelling Italian musicians—father and daughter—helped to complete their programme. They were a tists on the mandolin and when not in the booth many a dime, quarter and half dollar did they win from the pockets of the people in the hotel offices. The girl was pretty and persuasive and could give pointers to the champion Salvation Army lass when it came to passing the collection plate.

The daily press has described the exhibits and PROGRESS has no need to touch them but those who were unable to attend the big fair will get a better idea of what was going on by reading something of what was happening "on the side."

GOOD OLD CUSTOMS PASS AWAY.

And the Cigarette and Skit Dance Figure in Some Entertainments.

St. John is learning some of the arts of entertainment practised in larger cities. The good old methods of making guests at home and indulging in the harmless dance or whist or music to make the time pass pleasantly seems to be passing away in certain select cities and more daring efforts are made to satisfy those present.

This is not at all recent but has been progressing gradually until now. Some hostesses are vying with each other in the startling character of their entertainment.

If the account of one of them that has been received by PROGRESS was print-

ed it would no doubt create a sensation but no particularly good purpose would be served by doing so. The ladies who were present—and there were only ladies there—were not forced to remain and if they could not enter into the spirit of the entertainment it was not necessary for them to remain.

In Boston they used to tell a story of a daring Mrs. Jack Gardner to the effect that she entertained her intimate friends with the assistance of the popular dancers of the day and that nothing approaching those private performances was ever seen on the stage. There are no professional representatives of the ballet to be had on call in St. John but it is understood that some young ladies know the sizes of the dance and can if they wish entertain their friends and companions. But then there is no harm in that, not nearly so much as in smoking cigarettes because the latter injures the health while dancing strengthens the muscles and gives grace to the loveliness. But sad to say there are more ladies who have the fad or the habit of smoking cigarettes than of dancing. And it is said that the demand for these finer grades of cigarettes is on the increase. It has always been considered too bad that young men and boys were indulging in cigarettes, but to learn that the habit is spreading to the gentler sex will astonish and shock many people. It is not general by any means and yet but the same good of jettions that many people had to cigarettes once, seem to have vanished now.

A LADY MANAGER.

A Canadian Woman's Unique Field of Work.

A unique woman visited the city this week; unique, however, only in the matter of profession. She is a theatrical manager and one of America's very few in that particular occupation. Progress sought her out and the pleasant chat which ensued revealed a lady of particular brightness and one upon whose shoulders might easily rest the responsibilities of guiding the fortunes of a dramatic combination.

Mrs. McLeod is a lady perhaps thirty years old, and according to her own tale has been six years in the managerial business. She seldom acts and has no nom de theatre; in fact she intimated as much that her histrionic abilities have never yet set the world ablaze. But she certainly has tact and ability in the more realistic department of the theatre; that interesting part where stage money gives way to real duceats and hero and villain alike, peek into the box office expectantly.

Born in the Queen City of Canada, Toronto, Mrs. McLeod feels proud of her Canadian nativity, although her money-making must have as its centre the great American metropolis. Here she dabbles in the play market, buying a share in the new production or selling her rights to some other popular piece. When the "Bachelor's Honeymoon" was put upon the market she bought a half interest, and it was from her that W. S. Harkins rented it or his productions here and elsewhere. Then again Mrs. McLeod had a great deal to do and say about who should and who shouldn't use the genuine "My Friend From India" also seen here. At present she holds a whole bunch of rights to many of the best pieces produced in the United States to day.

She has three or four of Belasco's best and newest works; her stock company puts on Rostand's "Cyran de Bergerac," "The Fatal Card," "The Sporting Duchess," "The Wife," Hall Camie's "The Christian," Barrie's "Little Minister" and several others of the best book of plays and melodramas available.

At present Mrs. McLeod's company of players are awaiting her orders to assemble in New York and start out for the first time on an eastern Canadian tour, coming as far as St. John and Halifax, perhaps. It was to arrange dates here that she came to this city. Her mind did not seem to be very favorably impressed with St. John as a show town, especially in winter, so unless she can get the dates she wants in October she will not bring her company this far. While Mrs. McLeod's players are a new and talented lot this year, yet her combination last year and in former seasons included Geo. Nash, who used to play "leads" with Oglia Nethersole, Joe J. Herson's brilliant son, Rose Coghlan's husband and others. It will be decided later whether the McLeod Co. will visit St. John or not.

Events of City Life.

The rumor that was given currency to by a Sydney newspaper to the effect that Mr. Willis of the Dufferin intended to abandon hotel business in St. John and buy a hotel in Sydney has caused a good deal of comment and not a little surprise.

The prospects of Sydney are strikingly alluring and this must be the reason for Mr. Willis' change of location since there is no doubt that he has made the Dufferin one of the most successful and popular hotels in Canada.

When questioned about his proposed change he was laughingly non-committal but some say that he intends to make the change as soon as he can conveniently do so.

Others however, scout the idea—perhaps for no other reason than their disinclination to see a hotel man who has met with success and given St. John another first class hotel leave the city.

The improvements that have been made in the house since Mr. Willis became proprietor have been so numerous that it is not worth while speaking of them here, but it can safely be said that the Dufferin has almost been built over. Some months ago it was stated that negotiations were on foot for the purchase of the hotel and the ground from the owner, Mr. C. M. Bostwick, but the latter's terms were evidently not satisfactory and the matter was declared off. If it had been purchased the plans for the enlargement and improvement of the house were such that the Dufferin would not have taken second place with any house of the size in Canada.

Sydney presents great opportunities to the man of enterprise and a good hotel well managed will be one of its necessities. Mr. Willis has been there two or three times this summer and there may be more truth than fiction in the rumor that he has decided to throw in his lot with those who will help to bloom this great centre of coal and iron and the industries that naturally spring from their association and proximity to a great harbor.

TO MAKE A MATCH FOR VAIL.

Representatives Expect to go to Halifax Tonight for That Purpose.

It seems a little late in the season to begin to talk about boat racing and yet four gentlemen expect to go to Halifax this evening with the idea of arranging a match between Harry Vail and some one of the Halifax oarsmen. Their commission is a broad one for, according to the talk of the leader in the movement, they do not care just who the match is made with, Lynch or Brennan. They have confidence that Vail can win from either of them.

The latter is in the city at present from Gagetown and this has no doubt given an impetus to the movement. The impression of that reputed interview printed in the Halifax papers last fall has been obliterated partially and, strange to say, in spite of what was said at that time there are a few men to be found in St. John who are willing to back their faith and their interest in this good old sport to the tune of a few dollars. It is only fair to Vail to say that he denied ever having said what he did to the Halifax newspaper man but again it is equally fair to the latter to note that he was sure Vail said just what he printed.

Since last fall Vail has been in the States training college crews and his success with those he had in charge has led to the belief in some quarters that he may be selected as the trainer of a crew of one of the older colleges, perhaps Harvard, but this is not too sure a thing. He has been in Gagetown for some time and says he is in such shape that a fortnight would make him ready to race. He appears to have lots of flesh however and his friends would be willing to give him more time than that.

William Cathers, Ora P. King, H. Ervin and Vail himself will likely start for Halifax this evening to make the match. They are willing to make the stakes \$300 or \$500 but want the race to take place on the Kennebecasis about the middle of October. There is no better course than that on the Kennebecasis but at this season of the year any water is apt to be rough. The course in Halifax is no more exempt from this than that in St. John but the races took place there last year and turn about is fair play. Vail was fortunate enough last year to get a boat in

Halifax that suited him first rate and he is under the impression that he can do so again this year. At any rate it is too late to get one built and if he cannot be properly boated it is of no use for him to race.

If the match is made he will train at Gagetown up to a few days before the race and put in the balance of the time at Newcombe's, which is handiest to the course.

HE PLEASED THE OLD MEN.

A Pretty Italian Girl Who Could Coax Her Smiles Into Quarters.

The charms of music have been written and talked of for all time but when the combination of music and a pretty face and charming manner is present then there are few who can withstand them. This was proved during the week when a pretty Italian girl appeared in the lobbies of the hotels with her father and began to play on their mandolins. They knew how to play and the child of sunny Italy knew how to smile. How the old and young men did cluster around her and how readily did they dive into their pockets when she passed her little silver collection plate after a selection or two.

Quick and ready at repartee the young girl always had an answer on the tip of her tongue for anything said to her. It did not take her long to get to know her best customers and she had names for a few of her elderly admirers, such as "Poppy," "Sweetheart" and so forth. They didn't mind it a bit—rather seemed to like it and willingly contributed a quarter or a half for the occasional chuck under the chin she would playfully give them in passing.

They were only strolling musicians but they made lots of money and wanted as good as the town afforded. Three dollars a day each was not too much for good rooms at a good hotel but they were too late for that. The miniature silver tray that the girl produced from her chateleine and presented to her audience rarely had a copper placed in it and if by chance one was placed there it was dropped at once in the bag—the example was too bad for those whose contributions were to follow.

ADD LANE AND THE SHOW.

What He Thinks About the Grounds and Their Opportunities.

Ald. Lane of Halifax was in the city this week taking in the show and as chairman of the amusement committee of the Halifax exhibition getting what pointers he could from the specialities here. He spent a few days very pleasantly but he did not arrive at any satisfactory arrangement with Mr. Sanborn or with the manager of the Japs, which was another feature of the show here. The latter wanted something like \$400 for the Halifax engagement which was considered high, but as the Japs had to return to Three Rivers before going to Halifax the additional railway fares would have been considerable. Mr. Lane was much impressed with the situation of the grounds here and said they had nothing like the natural advantages in Halifax for scenic effects, but he was also of the impression that our space was cramped and that the most was not made of the location. According to his idea—and in this he agrees with many others—if the fences were moved out and the boulevard and part of the ground back of the grand stand included, there would be a chance for a half mile trotting track, without which an exhibition does not appear to be complete in these provinces. They have found it so in Halifax though there they charge an additional admission for the races. How it would be possible to do this on these grounds is not easy to see.

Grocers' Picnic Receipts.

The statements given to PROGRESS last week regarding the grocers' picnic receipts and expenses seem to have been slightly astray—probably because they were given off hand. The treasurer says that the amount paid for tickets was \$392.80 instead of \$300 and as this sum represented adults at 25 cents and children at 20 cents there must have been nearly 1,700 carried on the trains on that day. The bands cost \$80, not \$100, and the grounds were settled for at \$30. In all \$410 was paid to the railway, \$18 being paid for freight of the provisions.