

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, AUGUST 4, 1900.

TOWN TALES.

People Who "Block" Their Way

"Blocking" admissions into the Opera House, the baseball games and other sources

of amusement in St. John has for years been practiced, and pretty nearly all the devices and schemes known to the don't-pay-to-get-in class have been worked here.

Take for instance at the baseball games. As soon as the crowd commences to wander towards the B & A. or Shamrock Grounds the "beat" starts too.

Yes, sir, the plans of the man who hates to pay are not a few and it would take a person with a cast-iron conscience, a giant form and devoid of all the finer natures to be able to keep them all in the oblivion of the outside until they pay their way.

At the theatre it is the same. Fellows pass themselves off as newspaper workers,

friends of the company, relatives of the owners, or as having immediate business with someone in the audience.

That Lovely Sweet Spruce Gum. Just at present there is not as much spruce gum in town as there will be toward the latter part of September or early in October.

Dog Days. Dog-days, sweltering, sultry, sticky and sultry, are here; they commenced according to the Old Farmers' almanac, the authority on such matters, on Wednesday, July 25, and if the calendar is correct will continue until Sept. 5.

There is no such thing as settled weather in dog days. A person may go out prepared for a summerish day in the morning, come home to dinner in a rain storm,

while at tea-time it may be cold enough for a coat. Though occasionally a touch of coolness is enjoyed, the ordinary dog-day is one of great oppressiveness with a climate that wilts collars and persons with equal success.

Another superstition, believed in is that swimming during dog-days is sure to be attended with great peril. A third has to do with the moon and says that to sleep with Luna sending her rays into your face during this season is sure to produce madness sooner or later.

Though they may not believe in any of the superstitions and may not be annoyed excessively by the changeable and sultry weather, most people are glad when the worst of the dog day season is over.

Is There a Jonah Aboard. It's singular but quite true that the only baseball games played with outside teams on the Shamrock grounds this season have been hindered by wet weather.

Mugged in the King Square. The other morning a kitten wandered into King Square and for quite a while escaped the eagle eye of several of Dr. Christie's minions, who were trying at last to tidy up that breathing spot.

al of Dr. Christie's minions, who were trying at last to tidy up that breathing spot. It however was the centre of excited interest of a whole flock of sparrows, which circled round and round the surprised baby cat in a frenzy of apparent rage and fury.

the sparrows would discount any quiet Chinese conversation. The poor little cat not yet old enough to have any particular liking for the feathered family, stood frightened and amazed, while its host of besiegers hopped and flew angrily about.

Why She Broke Down. The congregation was surprised when a certain young lady vocalist broke completely down in her solo last Sunday evening.

She says while practicing her piece at home a friend who was trying to be funny misconstrued the wording of the solo into a very ridiculous meaning, and she said at the time.

"There now, I'm sorry you said that, for I'm sure to think of it Sunday." And sure enough she did. Hence her muffled laugh and vocal collapse.

What a Dressmaker Said. "What a glorious thing it would be," said a worn-out dressmaker to PROGRESS not a great while since.

while since, "if some of these fine ladies who give receptions, hold lawn parties and five o'clock teas, would only pay a little more attention to their financial responsibilities, and it need be a little less to their so-called social duties."

"Would you believe it," she said as she threw aside a gorgeous garment she was working on to rest a moment, "a lady well known in this city has owed me a small account for over two years, and all my efforts to collect from her have so far been in vain.

"Oh yes, indeed its us poor dressmakers that get all the 'scorching,' we make

their fine clothes, stay up late nights rushing their work for this tea or that reception, and after the job is delivered that's all we hear of it until months after when we start dunning. Sometimes we get our money, sometimes we don't."

The Lily Harvest is Being Reaped. Admirers of the graceful, refreshing and fragrant pond lilies are having their harvest time about now and at all the nearby lakes where the beautiful blossoms grow in any sort of abundance, people may be seen daily gathering the blooms from the midst of pads in shallow places; but all the flower-lovers don't go to the trouble of getting the lilies themselves, but instead receive frequent supplies from small boys who make a regular business of furnishing customers each season.

It's nearly always necessary to use a boat when you go lily-hunting; it can't be a keep boat for the waters are frequently too shallow for this sort of a craft but the ordinary flat-bottomed pond boat is just the sort of a carrier for the lily-seeker, as this allows you to get close to the plants even if there's less than a foot of water.

Everyone who has ever been a lilying knows that the blossoms are little better than worthless unless picked with long stems. This necessitates a good deal of ducking on the part of the picker and therefore it is advantageous to have a companion to handle the oars and incidentally ballast the boat while you reach far down amidst the stems with bared arms.

Professional pickers, and these are principally small boys, gather their daily supplies before daybreak for this is the time when the blooms are most open and beautiful. As the sun rises, the blossoms begin to close and by night they are as tight as a ball. As evening commences however, they open slowly but never do they look as handsome as just before the sun appears at dawn.

A small camera is exhibited in a King street shop window and beside it a sample of the picture the wee kodak is capable of taking. The picture reveals the rotund person of a well known editor in town. Nearby is a card with this inscription, "Loaded in Daylight." Onlookers wonder which it meant, the editor or the camera.

UP IN A BALLOON.

Aerial Artists Say the Work is Not Very Dangerous.

Ballooning may not pay as well as mining, but it is a more lucrative calling than writing poetry for publication, and not so dangerous as some people think. It requires nerve, sobriety and confidence in the parachute; the rest, so says an aeronaut in the New York Tribune, is easy.

We will imagine that the balloon has been inflated, the ropes cut and the aeronauts safe in the basket. After that the show usually consists in going up some two thousand feet, and then making the jump with a parachute.

The parachute hang at either side of the balloon, and are not great umbrellas, as many people suppose, but resemble more closely the upper part of a balloon, with a lot of ropes terminating in a trapeze bar. They are all cloth and rope, with no ribs. When one of them is expanded it is about nineteen feet in diameter.

When the earth has disappeared and the sound of the music has died out, one man pulls the parachute on his side into the basket, gets on the bar and swings himself off into space, and there he hangs. A few seconds, in or above the clouds. Then he pulls a rope which operates a knife to cut a string by which the parachute is held, and then he drops.

He falls about three hundred feet before the rush of air opens the parachute, and when that happens the resistance is so great that he rebounds about forty feet. That is the time to hold on, and keep your teeth set and your wits about you. After he rebound the parachute goes down slowly in a zigzag course, and lands the aeronaut with about the same force as if he had jumped from a height of six feet.

Coming down to earth is a great sensation. The descent lasts from five to eight minutes, and is, always, no matter how often one has made the trip, at least interesting. If one has the good luck to come down near the place he went up, one of the first sounds that he hears is the toot-

ing of the band, and the tune is usually the same; so that, going up and coming down, the last and the first sounds are, 'Up in a balloon, boys.'

Sometimes there are exciting incidents connected with getting back to earth.

"I had a strange experience once with a new man," said the aeronaut. "We made the ascent all right, but when it came time to jump, the new man wanted to back out, saying he was afraid. There were two things to do: to remain up till the balloon cooled off and then come down with it, and by that means spoil the show, or to make the fellow jump; and it did not take me long to decide which to do.

"He had a life-line about him, which would hold him on the parachute even if he slipped off the bar, so I told him to move over on the outside to balance the balloon. He got out on the bar, never suspecting what would happen, and when I made sure the life-line was all right, I cut the line by which the parachute was held, and away he went back to the ground.

"I watched him as he went down. I shot up, and when I reached the earth myself, I found that he had landed all right. He had made the leap many times since then, and has learned that there is not so much danger as he had fancied."

As to compensation, an aeronaut gets two hundred and fifty dollars for an ascension, and one hundred dollars a day when he gives a week's performance. When he has a month's stand the price is much lower, but the pay is always good. And besides this, there is the satisfaction of being a hero in the towns where he shows.

How Machinery Multiplies Power.

The report of United States Commissioner of Labor Carroll D. Wright for 1898 on "Hand and Machine Labor" sets forth some very interesting facts. Aided by machinery, 4,500,000 men turn out a product which would require the labor of nearly 40,000,000 men if produced by

hand. In America the advantage derived from machinery is about twice as great as in Europe, so that the actual population of the United States is equal in productive power to 150,000,000 Europeans. With labor-saving machinery, one generation of men can do the work of four or five generations of hand-workers.

A Dangerous Kite. A thirteen year old boy at Cateau, France, while flying a kite, had a startling and really perilous adventure.

The kite, twenty seven inches long, had reached a great height when a thunder storm was seen approaching. The boy at once began to haul in his cord. The kite, however, was still one hundred yards or so above the earth when there came a brilliant flash of lightning. Young Janti was thrown into the air, made two or three somersaults, and fell ten or twelve feet away.

The kite had attracted the electric fluid, which followed the cord, as in Franklin's famous experiment, and descended into the earth through the boy's body. Wonderful to relate, the lad was not killed.

After awhile he arose and made his way home, trembling and crying. The nails of his left hand, which had held the string, were turned blue, as if by a terrible bruise, while the fingers were burned and covered with blisters. Besides this, his face, was bruised considerably by his fall. The kite string was burned in two by the discharge, and the kite flew away to parts unknown.

The Cape Nome Gold-Fields.

The black sands containing gold which are spread along the shores of Norton Sound, near Cape Nome, Alaska, are said to differ from similar sands found on the coast of California and elsewhere, because they show no indication of having been transported by streams of water. The flakes and nuggets of gold that have been found at Cape Nome are not water-worn, but sharp and angular in outline. A widely accepted theory is that they have been transported from a great distance by glaciers, their original source being yet undiscovered.

REMARKABLE KNIVES.

Boys are Becoming Luxurious in Their Choice of a Pocket Knife.

It was once the ambition of the small American boy to possess a "two-bladed knife." The jack-knife which he found regularly in the toe of his stocking on Christmas morning, and as regularly lost before the Fourth of July, was always a single-bladed affair with a brown wooden handle. It served well enough to hack off a pole to fish with, but was not adapted to fine and delicate whittling.

Nowadays the humblest small boy's jack-knife has at least two blades, and many boys have three bladed ones—a big blade at one end, with a small one for fine whittling, and a nail blade at the other end. Such is the onward march of elegance and luxury.

Now and then, too, one comes upon one of those astonishing objects of manufacture—a knife with a great number of blades, files, corkscrews, scissors, forks, pinners and so on.

Sheffield, England, is the great source of these curiosities in cutlery, as well as of cutlery in general. Once the best knives were made in London, and then Sheffield was a poor and insignificant place. But by dint of cultivating the virtues of poverty, Sheffield became the seat of the knife making industry, with a reputation for excellence of products above all other centres of manufacture.

Now most excellent knives are made in the United States, and at the present rate of advancement, both in quality and reputation, the large importation of English and German knives is likely to come to an end.

English workmen are still very clever in making curiosities of the sort just alluded to. A knife known as the 'Norfolk knife,' made at Sheffield, and containing ninety-five blades and instruments, no two alike, has been shown at several English exhibitions.

This knife cost nine hundred pounds sterling. On its large mother of pearl handles are carved representations of a bear

hunt and a stag hunt. The blades are all etched with pictures of some kind—Windsor Castle, Westminster, the queen and so on.

This was long the greatest wonder of its kind, but it has now been greatly outdone. A giant knife, made by the greatest of Sheffield firms, contains as many blades as there are years in the Christian era. No two blades are alike, and each blade closes with a spring into its haft or handle.

Photographed Stars Vanish.

Dr. Isaac Roberts, whose beautiful photographs of nebulae and star clusters are well known, gives a somewhat startling account of the manner in which the images of faint stars and nebulae disappear from photograph plates. On one of his plates, in 1886, he counted 403 stars; the same plate in 1895 showed only 272 stars, the images of 131 having entirely disappeared. This leads to the suggestion that leads to the suggestion that celestial photographs, in order to be of permanent value should be immediately reproduced by some process yielding pictures not subject to change.

Finding a Very Ancient Ancestor.

The blue coral is known as one of the most isolated of living animals. It has been described as the only species of its genus and the only member of its family, 'with no close living relations and no known ancestors.' Recently, however, Prof. J. W. Gregory has discovered in the British Museum what he believes to be an ancestor of the lonely blue coral in a fossil coral of the Cretaceous period, called Pelytremacis.

Best Form of Instantaneous Shutter.

According to Monsieur Sigriste of the French Academy of Sciences, the only thoroughly scientific shutter for instantaneous photography consists of a slit moving rapidly across the sensitive plate. But to obtain good results the space between the plate and the shutter should not exceed one tenth of a millimetre, and the edges of the slit must be sharp and carefully beveled to exclude reflection.