

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1900.

TOWN TALES.

About This Winter's Furs. How fast the seasons change. Why the dry goods and furriers stores are already exposing next winter's furs for sale and many are even at this early date making their selections in order to get just what they want, and buy of the choicest. Furs have become more popular in the last five years than ever before and the variety is larger. Furs come from every country on the face of the earth to supply Canadian women with warm, comfortable garments for the cold weather, and it is said that the fur-bearing animals are becoming scarcer and scarcer.

This is sad news, for what in the world should we do here in New Brunswick without them. There would be no pleasure in winter at all then, and we should all have to shut up shop and go south 'til the robins nest again.

'Twelve million animals are killed every year to furnish us with furs,' said a fur drummer to a PROGRESS reporter on Wednesday. 'Some of these fur-bearing animals, like the sea otter have been almost annihilated, and the beaver has disappeared from all but the most distant regions. Statistics show a constant increase in the supply of furs, but this does not mean that there are more fur-bearing animals in the world. It signifies simply that under the impulse of the greater demand and better prices more persons engage in hunting and trapping the animals.'

'Every animal that has hair on it is hunted today for its hide. The lion as well as the rabbit the monkey as well as the cat, the fox as well as the seal, the bear and the otter, animals of the polar region and those that live near the equator, mammals and amphibians.'

The muskrat furnishes the largest, then the opossum. Skunk and true marten are next in importance. The marten is found largely in Canada and the northern part of the United States, and so are the polecat and ermine. Fox skins are sold in very large numbers, 250,000 having been used in 1898. But there are all sorts of grades among the foxes. The common red fox is of least value.

The blue fox and silver fox are most valued. The blue fox is sometimes almost as white as the snow on which it lives and at other times of a darker color. It is this second kind which is most largely sought for. Last year the best specimens of blue foxes were sold for as high as \$1200 each. But the famous silver fox is greatest of all, for its dark skin is liberally sown with white hairs. It is found mainly in the ex-

treme North, near the Arctic Ocean, in Alaska, Labrador and Siberia, and besides it is very rare. Some specimens of this fur have been sold during the last year for \$1700.

'After the first fall of snow, about the middle of October, the fur hunters bury themselves in the forests, taking with them two dogs, who drag along the sleigh loaded with the necessary supplies. These consist of some blankets, ammunition, traps, sometimes a tent and very little provisions. They rely chiefly upon the animals slain for food.'

'After laying the traps—a work of no small trouble and labor—the hunter must be ever on the alert, for the wolf is ever ready to rob his traps of any animal caught therein, and the hunter doesn't like to catch furs for wolves.'

Everybody Eat Oysters Again.

September is here and the epicure who has been abstaining from his favorite oyster dishes is rejoicing for the bivalve will once again come into prominence at all sorts of spreads. Popular superstition says that oysters should be eaten only during the months of the years which have names containing the letter R. Therefore, during May, June, July and August, lobsters are tabooed both by the avowedly superstitious as well as by those persons who scorn the so-called silly sayings, but nevertheless follow them to the letter.

Here in St. John, as is the case with all good things, the oyster is ever popular; in fact, according to the dealers they are in greater demand than any other variety of sea food. Everybody eats oysters occasionally, while in some homes seldom a day passes but that they are served in some dish or other.

Fish stores and restaurants here sell oysters all the year round but though there is more or less of a call, the sales are very small compared to the records made in the months which are properly in the season. Though the summer oyster is palatable and indeed highly acceptable in the absence of the delicious varieties that are sold at other times in the year, there is a marked difference between those sold in the warm weather and the oysters which begin to arrive as soon as the R months start in.

It's not so much the taste, dealers say, that distinguishes the summer oyster from those on sale in the season as the looks; the warm weather oyster is of a dark color that is far from attractive and presents other appearances that are a little better than repulsive. These qualities are of course foreign to the bivalves which are devoured during the cooler months.

One of the causes which bring about deterioration in the oysters on sale in the summer is the removal of the beds by the planters from the warm shallow places to cold deep water to prevent spawning. The planters do this to meet the demand from the summer resorts and say that bivalves are not injured by the process. Epicures as well as scientists, however, say that the check injures the health and wholesomeness of the oyster.

What a Telegraph Operator said.

In a general conversation the other evening when a number of convivial friends were exchanging experiences of one sort and another, one of the party, a telegraph operator in one of the two local despatch offices, spoke most interestingly of his "listening" to the great news centres talking to one another.

"During the night hours particularly," said the operator, "this plan of passing away the time is most interesting. It often occurs that some of us are idle, so by throwing open our receiving instrument we can hear the gossip of Europe, or latest war news, passing through from the North Sydney end of the big Atlantic cable."

"Then we can hear the big American and Upper Canadian cities ticking back to North Sydney, in fact the everlasting tick-tick from all corners of Canada and United States constitutes a one-sided "conversation", as delightful as it is unique. But it soon gets an old story."

A Stuttering Bridegroom Caused Excitement.

There was a curious experience at a wedding in the northern end of the province the other day. The bridegroom had an impediment in his speech, and as he was nervous he stammered awfully through the service. When, however, it came to the most important part he stuck hopelessly at 'will' the result being that the

bride was in agony and the congregation bursting with a desire to laugh while the rattled man was bogging over the W. At last the officiating clergyman began to consider seriously whether it would not be better to reckon the word by the intention than the speech, and proceed with the service, when the bride's agony broke out in an impromptu—'Oh, do say it John, do say 'I will' do say it, John," she wailed, and the unexpected shock had the desired effect. The word came out with a jerk, and the service proceeded. The bride was undoubtedly right, however, for if the bridegroom had not said "I will" he would have had an excellent weapon in domestic rows.

Pretty Nearly as bad in St. John.

'One day while I was hustling along Lexington avenue wid me hansom,' said the New York caddy, as a smile lighted his face, 'a pedestrian, as they calls 'em, starts to cross in front of me and is knocked down and rolled to the curbstone.'

'Hello! Are you kilt?' says I, and I holds up and looks down at him.

'Not at all, sir,' says he as he rises and bows to me as nice as you please.

'Then are you much hurted?' 'Only a bruise or two, thank you kindly.'

'Wid that he limps off and I drives on. Half an hour later, over on Fifth avenue, a galoot saunters out in front of me and is knocked down and run over by two wheels.'

'And phwat's the matter wid you, me laddybuck?' says I as I comes to a stop. 'Kindly excuse me, sir,' he says as he stands on his feet and bows to me like a lord.

'But ain't you the chap as I runs over on Lexington avenue half an hour ago?'

'The same, sir, and I'm begging your pardon for the trouble I'm making.'

'Wid that he walks away wid the marks of the wheels showing on his body, and I drives on. I goes down to the arch and across to Madison avenue and up again, and it isn't over twenty minutes before me horse knocks somebody down at a crossing and I feels the kerridge go bump! bump! I stops and looks around, and a man gets up from the wet pavement and bows to me and says: "Really now, but I beg of you to

overlook me carelessness.'

"Whoop! says I, 'but it's you again! Didn't I run over you on Lexington avenue?'

"Thanking you kindly, but you did."

"And on Fifth avenue?"

"It's true, begging your pardon."

"And now, it's the third time?"

"It is, sir," says he, as humble as you please, 'but I'm a man as is willing to do the right thing. Here's a couple of dollars for your trouble, and if I puts you to any more it's five.'

"And off he goes with a limp in both legs and six muddy wheel marks showing like rings around his body. And I did not see again. There was a man for you sir—there was a man as was a man and a gentleman, and I only wish that I could meet the likes of him a dozen times a day!"

There not quite as bad as this in St. John, but look out for them at the Grand Union Hotel crossing on Mill street.

We've all Seen There Ourselves, Eh Men?

'There's a man over there waiting for a car who at this present moment wishes the earth would quake and swallow him, I'll bet dollar to doughnuts,' said the observant bystander at the foot of King street, Labor Day mornin'.

"Why, what's the matter with him," asked the other man rather puzzled.

"Well there's a whole lot the matter with him," answered the discerning fellow "and it's he himself who imagines the eyes of all St. John are on him."

"Did your wife ever do any clothes pressing for you?" continued the bystander.

"Ever press your pants?"

"Look at that poor fellow. He's well dressed, but bless me take a squint at those trousers—there he's turned round, see?"

"Don't you notice how there pressed?" That time-honored mistake of economical womankind, she's pressed them on the sides instead of the front and back.

"Ha! ha! ha! he looks like a square rigged ship doesn't he?" Poor fellow, no wonder he looks abashed and worried. He going to take this car coming, go home; perhaps raise a row about that pressing job, and swear off letting his wife ring in the old economy cry every time he wants his clothes fixed, and take them to a tailor for shaping."

About the smartest thing some people ever did was to be born rich.

A HARD CLIMB.

The Perilous Feat Performed by a Mountain Climber.

Climbing a mountain twenty-three thousand feet high is no child's play, as the party that, with Mr Fitz Gerald for leader climbed the great mountain Aconcagua found to their cost. Mr Fitz Gerald, in his recent book, 'The Highest Andes,' gives an account of his experiences in this, the first ascent of the mountain. Aconcagua is situated on the frontiers of Chile and the Argentine Republic. Mr Fitz Gerald is an American, known for his explorations among the mountains of New Zealand. Three Englishmen shared his exploits upon the present occasion. Of the six Swiss and Italian assistants, Matthias Zurbriggen was the leader.

The great difficulty was the cold experienced at a high altitude. The party ascended eighteen thousand, seven hundred feet to a camp chosen by Zurbriggen, but after one descended to a lower level. Although the temperature was not unusually severe, the minimum recorded being one degree Fahrenheit, men actually sat down and cried like children.

On December 30th—midsummer in those parts—the party again went to the high camp, and next day tried to reach the summit. It looked so near that they thought it could be reached in five or six hours. An hour after starting, however, Zurbriggen's face became very white. He protested that he felt well, but acknowledged that he was so cold that there was no sensation whatever in his feet. He tried dancing about and kicking his feet against the stones.

As frozen feet are one of the great dangers in mountain climbing, the leader began to be alarmed. He had the guide's shoes taken off, and set the porters to rub his feet. To the horror of all, it was found that circulation had practically stopped. Snow and brandy were used for rubbing,

and all to no purpose.

It began to seem as if amputation would be necessary. But gradually sensation returned, and with it such intense pain that the rubbing could hardly be borne. At last the boats were slipped on again without being laced, and Zurbriggen, supported between two of the party, was assisted down the mountain.

Next day three of the party, including Zurbriggen, made another trial, but were unsuccessful. Sickness and giddiness attacked them, and they were obliged to lie down from sheer exhaustion. Coming down was almost worse than going up. Fatigue and numbness constantly caused them to fall. A terrible depression took hold upon them, and no one cared even to speak. Their one desire was to get down to the camp.

It was not until the sixth attempt that one of the party, the guide Zurbriggen, reached the summit. He went forward when the others were obliged to descend. Mr Fitz Gerald says:

"I shall never forget the descent. I was so weak that my legs seemed to fold up under me at every step and I kept falling forward and cutting myself on the stones. I do not know how long I crawled in this plight making, for a patch of snow in a sheltered spot. On reaching it I lay down and finally I rolled down a great portion of the mountain inside."

As I got lower my strength returned, and the nausea disappeared. I reached our tent about five o'clock. Zurbriggen arrived an hour and a half later. He had gained the summit and planted an ice-axe there, but he was so weak and tired that he could hardly talk. A month later two of the party got to the top and found the ice-axe.

Experience taught the explorers that there was only one position of rest in these high altitudes. Sitting or lying down caused a relaxing of the muscles of the

legs, which acted disastrously when the ascent was resumed, for the lower limbs seemed to have lost power, and after a step or two were racked with a dull aching. The only position of rest was to stand with the legs apart, the body thrown far forward the hands grasping the head of the ice axe, while the forehead rested upon the hands.

Jumped For the Highest Wager.

In the 'History of the West Branch Valley' Mr Meginness tells the story of Marcus Huling's famous jump.

Huling was walking along the river bank when he suddenly became aware that he was pursued by Indians. Realizing that his only hope of safety lay in flight, he ran with all speed toward the precipice at Blue Hill but the Indians rapidly gained on him.

Driven to the edge of the frightful precipice, with the savages yelling in his rear, he determined to jump preferring to die in this manner rather than to fall beneath the tomahawk.

Seizing a large overhanging branch of a tree, he leaped over the brink and landed some ninety feet below on a shelf of rock, unharmed! From this point he jumped forty feet farther into the river, and escaped with only a dislocation of his shoulder.

The savages were obliged to run round for a mile and Huling had time to make his escape. It is supposed that the branch broke his fall, and saved his life. Huling, on being asked about it, replied:

'I jumped for a greater wager. I jumped for my life!'

A Bird Story.

A charming story of an incident connected with the great fire in Chicago is told in one of our exchanges, a family living near the lake shore had a large number of pet birds. They had built an aviary, a long narrow room with glass windows reaching from ceiling to floor. Passers-by often stopped before the house to watch the

pretty creatures fluttering about, to hear their songs or to see them bathe.

One afternoon in the week of the fire a cloud of fluttering wings moved wearily up the street. Presently these birds, most of them canaries, caught sight of the aviary with its happy denizens. Straight towards the windows they flew, some of them against the glass itself.

The ladies of the house were quick to take in the situation. They hurriedly shut their own birds into a compartment of the aviary, and then threw the windows wide open, retiring from sight that the spent travellers might feel free to enter.

After a few minutes, first one and then another flew inside, where they settled down, panting, grateful for rest and safety. I was some time before they attempted to eat for bathe. After the strangers had eaten of the bird seed and rested, the other birds were allowed to enter, and it was delightful to hear the chorus of songs which arose when the home birds and the strangers met.

This incident is vouched for by one of the ladies who was a witness to it.

The Palais de la Femme.

All Americans visiting Paris this summer are prone to make comparisons between the current French fair and the Columbian exposition at Chicago, and the consensus of opinion seems in favor of Chicago. Undoubtedly the present World's Fair excels in certain artistic details, as of decoration and statuary, but it falls short in grander features and effects.

Judged solely by its Woman's Building, as compared with the splendid structure dedicated to the interests of American womanhood at the Columbian fair, the exposition of 1900 sinks into insignificance. For while the Palais de la femme, on the Champ de Mars, is a graceful little structure, it contains nothing of interest save in the matter of dress and toilet. Of the higher education and development of the

sex it gives no indication, and indeed, for the most part, it has thus far been given up to theatrically performances of the lightest character.

France has produced many noble women of the highest abilities; but as evidenced by the present Palais de la femme and what is in it, the great majority of French women of the present generation are still engrossed chiefly in matters of personal adornment, and have not become much interested in those more serious questions which stir women in the United States.

Wrong Conclusion.

'Well, remarked a loungee at the railway station in a college town, the day after commencement, 'I know of course, that's what she is, but I should hardly have expected her to label her trunk so.'

'What do you mean?' asked another loungee.

'Don't you see?' rejoined the first, pointing at the letters 'S. G. G.' conspicuously marked on the large trunk standing on end at the edge of the platform. 'That means "Sweet Girl Graduate".'

'My name, sir,' austere replied a dignified young woman standing near, 'is Sylvia Gale Gibson.'

There was no further conversation concerning that trunk.

While They Wait.

'Ici on parle toutes les langues,'—all languages spoken here,—the legend which may be seen just now over many Paris restaurants, is not altogether misleading. Says the London Chronicle:

A visitor recently remarked to the manager of a restaurant which made the above comprehensive claim:

'You must have a great many interpreters here.'

'Not one,' was the reply.

'Who, then, speaks all the languages?' 'The customers, monsieur.'