

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 1900.

TOWN TALES.

A Freak in River Craft.

The passengers on the steamer *Hampstead* thought they were going to enjoy some excitement on the down trip Monday morning last, but they were disappointed. When the steamer was about in the middle of Long Reach a small unfinished steam yacht was taken in tow. The odd-shaped craft was yet to receive her engines and boilers and bobbed about on the water like a cork. Her house seemed like a tenement building on so small a hull, with windows as large as the windows in a big passenger steamer. In shape and as far as proportion were concerned it looked very like a toy Noah's ark and one thoughtful passenger remarked the marine oddity would make a fine coffin for somebody if it was put in commission. Soon after the *Hampstead* got under way after the hitching on it was with the greatest difficulty the new craft was kept on even keel. It reeled over until the keel was almost all out of water and more than once threatened to drown its solitary occupant like a rat in a trap. After a while the freak was tethered to the side of the steamer, but there it "kicked up such a fuss," as the yachtsmen say, and "chewed away" so hard at the bigger boat's planking, that the captain finally decided to cast it off, in order to ensure against any mishap to the small boat, injury to his own craft, and further to make sure the steamer would arrive in Indiantown in time with her boatload of business men. The steam yacht will hardly prove much of a success in its present design, although it is said its rural builder was engaged three years in its construction.

A Cat-Ridden Locality.

Residents of certain streets in the East End who have only recently been suffering from a plague of giant rats are now complaining of the overstock of cats in the neighborhood, brought about doubtless by the army of vermin which the felines practically exterminated; now the housekeepers are trying to find some way to get rid of the pussies which up to within a week or two were considered well nigh sacred on account of their success in putting to death the monster cheese eaters. While the plague of rats, was making life miserable for everybody, it was not supposed that too many cats could be secured for the neighborhood and successful mousers were imported from all parts of the city. While the rats lived, the cats could have their own way and nothing was considered too good for them. As the rats began to gradually disappear, so the kindly feeling towards the sharp clawed slaughterers began to lessen until now, instead of being the pets of every household, the cats are regarded with hatred and are subjected to treatment which has never before been accorded heroes and heroines.

The cause of this revulsion of feeling is not so much that the vermin has been practically exterminated but rather that the cats have too much leisure now. From time immemorial it has been a custom in the cat tribe to hold nightly carnivals when there is no mousing to be done and in accordance with this well understood canon of the gigantic family, the East End felines, since their vacation commenced, have been holding these assemblies with regularity, which even their worst enemies cannot fail to admire. Considering the fact that there are between 100 and 150 houses in the district which was formerly plague stricken and that there is from one to a half dozen cats and kittens in every house, it is not to be wondered at that there is an over supply of the tiger domestics in that part of the city. As stated all these cats attend at least one of the nightly meetings and are on hand for daytime conventions, as well. On account of the number, it is impossible for them all to meet in one place so several assemblies are held each evening. One of the favorite spots for these informal gatherings is a summer house in an Elliot Row garden. Judging from the numbers which have been present the past week this particular place must be an especial favorite. A chorus of cats all vocalizing at one time, no matter whether the selection be of an operatic or oratorio nature, produce more or less noise and it is because of this noise which commences [shortly before midnight and continues until daylight, that these particular East End residents have determined upon a campaign against cats.

According to the leaders in the move-

ment to expel all the mousers from the neighborhood, it has not yet been decided what method will be adopted. Some prominent residents are in favor of an onslaught with revolvers, air guns, tincans, or any other missiles at a pre arranged time, while others, whose nerves have been so badly shattered by the nocturnal noises of the felines meow advance deportation or expulsion by kindlier means. If something is not done to reduce the number of cats within the near future, either by the cat owners, or those persons who are anxious to treat the animals humanely, those who have suffered most say that they will petition the city council to place a bounty upon the pets for a stated period of time that a least a part of the East End tribe may be done away with.

One woman who has been particularly annoyed by the revellings of a smaller party of cats, has adopted a method for relief which up to the present time has proven successful. She has armed herself with a big supply of iron clad torpedoes, the noise-makers which small boys use on the glorious war-news occasions. Now when the cat's assemble beneath her window or on the roof adjoining her house, she immediately bombards the assemblage with the torpedoes and thus far they have proved highly efficacious, though some of the neighbors are still wondering why they dream every night of fireworks and war victories and wake up with the booming of guns in their ears.

The Engravers are Joyous.

Perhaps you have noticed the change and perhaps you have not, but this year in connection with all the fashionable weddings the proper way of having the invitations gotten up has been strictly adhered to. Firstly, the latest and smartest invitations have undergone quite a change. They are engraved, but the uninitiated may be excused for thinking they are printed, so closely does the small perfectly plain lettering resemble printer's work. "The honor of your presence" is no longer first choice, as it has been in use so long. "Invite you to be present" in the newer and more correct form.

The Scriptural Way Failed.

"I don't know what to make of that boy of mine," said the fond father, who is always talking about his son, getting his friend in a corner where he couldn't escape. "When I went home last night my wife told me that he had been fighting with one of the neighbor's boys and need a talking to; so I summoned him and said sternly: 'What have you been doing, son?' 'Fighting,' he answered shortly, looking me straight in the eye. 'So I see,' said I, looking him over. 'He's bigger than I! he flashed, with a ring in his voice. 'Who?' 'Jimmy Jones.' 'So you have been fighting with Jimmy Jones?' 'Yes,' he said. 'Son,' said I, sternly, 'have you forgotten what I said about fighting?' 'He hit me on the cheek,' shouted my boy, with kindling eye. 'Oh, son, son,' said I, 'don't you know what the Bible says about turning the other cheek?' 'I remembered it, pop—honest, I did—and turned the other cheek, but instead of hitting me there he smashed me on the nose! Say, pop, wasn't that a foul?' 'It looks like it, son,' said I, trying hard not to laugh. 'That's what I thought,' he exclaimed as quick as wink, 'so I sailed in and licked the stuffin' out of him. 'Tan't no use, pop interposed the boy quickly, forestalling my remarks, 'he has been to Sunday school just as much as I have, and knows the proper thing to do as well as I do!'

Now what could I say to that, exclaimed the fond father, beaming with satisfaction. 'We had a dreadful time over the \$95 we made at our bazaar.' 'How so?' 'Half the women wanted to pay it on our church debt and the other half wanted to buy our clergyman a wheel.'

That Prophesied Fire in North End.

That woman in the institution presided over by ng-ton and which is situated just beyond the bridges, will hereafter have to hold her peace in the way of prophecies. Her big Strait Shore fire told of "exclusively" as the dailies say nowadays, in *PROGRESS* a few issues ago did not show up on Monday, although the *PROGRESS*-reading public, which is all over town, were on the qui vive for it, and even the fire department took extra precaution to be good and ready should an alarm be rung in from the "fated" district.

Somehow or another the prophets must have gotten her planets and other prophetic machinery mixed up, or perhaps she was suffering from a slight cold in the head, and her foretelling of a fire in St. John was only an obscure and delayed vision of the Ottawa-Hull conflagration, or a too soon disclosure of something direful to yet happen in our beloved city by the sea. At anyrate the big blaze was very much out of evidence on the day it should have arrived, and while the people generally, including insurance companies, are 'reaching a little freer, there are actually a lot of people who are disappointed.

For instance, there is the furniture man the carpet merchant, the general furnishings dealer, the builder, the mortgage shark, the dissatisfied property owner, the householder with a \$1000 policy on his \$500 worth of chattels, and many others who could be mentioned. All these were counting their unatched chicks and some families were really planning the spending of their insurance money in brand new up-to-date goods, which they hoped would establish for them a little "tonier" reputation and make them the envied ones of their poor relations. Their hopes however went down with Monday's sun.

Delayed housecleaning can now be done in the fated district, that woman on Strait Shore didn't have to visit her aunt with her family on the day of the prophesied fire, and perhaps that local insurance agency will reconsider the application of those Adelaide street women for renewed policies who were refused a few days before the 18th. Among the firemen there is great jubilation, while the insurance men generally are considering the purchase of a loving cup for the business-booming woman with second sight proclivities.

A Busy Little Craft.

Among all the river craft the little steamer *Hampstead* appears to be just as busy as her capacity will allow.

Every afternoon at four o'clock her own peculiar whistle blows and she swings into the river from Indiantown. Then from Dunn's mill in Grand Bay to Wickham about 35 miles away she calls at pretty nearly all the landings to accommodate passengers and discharge freight, and still she reaches her destination in remarkably good time. The sail in the twilight of early evening is certainly a treat. By four o'clock the next morning steam is up and the trim little steamer commences her return trip at 5, retracing her course with fleetness and reaching town shortly after ten.

The Versatile River.

Some days the noble St. John river is as versatile in its general aspect as a purchasable newspaper about election time. It was the writer's privilege recently to witness this beautiful stream of ours under three different lights, it might be called. The first was about three o'clock in the morning when the half depleted moon cast its silvery sheen all about and trailed along the placid river like a rivulet of quicksilver. The next time, about three hours later, the moon and even the newly-risen sun had been shut out by an impenetrable veil of fog, the land article of course, not the special Halifax blend we receive in town here. Now the air was cold and misty and nary a bird could be heard chirping his "good morning," so dull and depressing was the general aspect, but not an hour later Old Sol had gathered himself together for a masterly effort, which had its effect in dispelling the grey muggy pall, and in flying squadrons it flew greatly

routed. Then the gracious enlivening rays of the earth's heating apparatus poured down upon the countryside and all was brightened as if by magic. The wooded parts were soon vocal with song birds and even the tiniest ripple sparkled with delight. Blue sky grotesquely and picturesquely broken up with snowy clouds made the upper regions a study, while the view below in the fresh, invigorating air, was an eye feast.

Nova Scotia Doctors Are Angry.

The suit of the Provincial Medical Board against Jos. Bond for alleged violations of the Act respecting the practice of medicine was tried with a jury, which found for the defendant. Most of the acts proved were outside the period of one year before action, which can be brought only within that time; and the jury evidently found the remuneration given to the defendant to have been given as a pure gratuity. Hon. A. MacGillivray for the Medical Board, C. E. Gregory for the defendant.—Antigonish Casket.

This is the finale of a long standing law suit between "Dr." Bond and the Nova Scotia physicians, who tried to have the defendant stopped from practicing in among them. Bond professed to have a sure cure for cancer, and indeed it is said that several people throughout the Annapolis Valley attribute their present health and absence of cancerous growths to the burning treatment as administered by him. Still the physicians considered him a faker and a quack the same as the New Brunswick medicos did the osteopathy disciples about a year and a half ago, so Bond was dragged into a law suit by them with the above quoted result.

What The Donkey Did.

An English singer, Clifford Halle, used to tell how an audience, almost ready to weep, was suddenly made hilarious.

A funny thing occurred in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, when I was travelling through that country as a baritone singer. The town is rather provincial, and the poundmaster never considers that he has any duties to perform.

The hall where I sang was in a part of the village where donkeys, goats and other domestic animals hold most of the available space. The night was warm and the main entrance was left open to let in fresh air.

I had sung two or three numbers, and was announced to render a ballad well known in that part of the world, entitled, 'Thou Art Passing Hence, My Brother.' It is full of sympathy and feeling, and as the audience seemed to be alive to my work, I did my very best. The orchestra was reasonably good, and I had the audience pretty well under control.

The conclusion of the song contains the words, 'Brother, brother,' and just as I reached them and my voice was dying away, and everybody seemed spellbound, a donkey stuck his head in at the door and brayed 'Ye-haw-w-w! ye-haw-w-w!' as if in answer to my words.

The audience went into convulsions, and the applause I anticipated was turned into howls of mirth. We had to stop there and conclude the programme. The violinist went all to pieces, and walking up to me with his bow in his hand, said: 'I say, Halle, if you expect to make a success of this South African tour, you must keep your relatives away from the front door!'

Specious Reasoning.

A man who is old enough to have rheumatism is fortunate if he is still young enough to turn his disability into a joke.

A minister met a parishioner, says Forward, and asked him the usual question: 'Weel, John, how are you today?' 'Gey weel, sir, gey weel,' replied John, cautiously, 'if it wasn't for the rheumatism in my right leg.'

'Ab, weel, John, be thankful; for there is no mistake, you are getting old like the rest of us, and old age does not come alone.' 'Auld age, sir!' said John. 'I wonder to hear ye. Auld age has naething to do with it. Here's my ither leg just as auld, and it's quite sound and soople yet.'

The number of ladies who buy Magnetic Dyes all over Canada surprises even ourselves—of course they give splendid results.

How Plays Have Affected Some St. John People.

During a conversation the other day between a party of theatre-goers, including several of the "days of Lanergan" ilk, *PROGRESS* listened to a budget of funny incidents which were said to have occurred among the audience at performances attended by the relators. Among them were the following:

It was in the old Mechanics Institute when that time-tried and fire-tested amusement house was the vehicle for all that was good, bad and indifferent in the theatrical and operatic worlds, as far as St. John was concerned. The play being put on was one of those blood-curdling melodramas of the "Darkest London", or "The Two Orphans" brand and already the deep-dyed villain was getting in his work. It was that familiar harbor scene at night with the old desolated wharf and lighted buildings on the other side of the water. The heroine was there all affrighted and in compliance with the arch-plotter's decoy note, and a pin would have sounded like a ton of brick had it fallen in the audience. An old man in the front end of one of the balconies was rivited to his seat with eyes dilated as with stealthy tread the bad man in the cast crept up behind the trembling woman about to throw her into the tide. Then the old fellow in the upstairs seat jumped to his feet and reaching over the rail shouted at the top of his lungs, 'Look out there Miss, the—of a— is right behind you!' So earnest was his warning that the actress forgot and turned round, which threw the villain entirely off his "lines" and the curtain had to be rung down. The old man was quite proud of his coup and of the reception the "gods" gave him afterwards.

Another incident was related, almost a parallel to the one just told, but the man in this case was not enjoying the luxuries of a balcony seat, his was in the gallery of the Institute and when the time for the killing of the just and unjust arrived in the highly dramatic piece he became greatly excited and with one leg over the gallery front shouted, 'Blood, blood to the hilt!' and prepared to climb down to the first floor, presumably to share in the general carnage.

A sailor was in the Opera House gallery once when "The Two Orphans" was being put on. His English love of fair play backed up by that characteristic pugnacity of the fighting Briton, made him one of the most interested spectators, despite the fact that he had only recently looked upon the amber colored beverage when it was very amber. The elder and murderous Frochard was about to carve his initials in the fleshy makeup of his lame brother, when the burly Jack tar leaped from his high-up seat and called out, "Old on there cripple, I'll be down thea right off and 'elp yer whallop that chap!" And he started to go downstairs but the second floor ushers stopped him.

"Don't you do it!" advised an excited country youth to the virtuous hero in a melo-drama one night in the Opera House when the dark-souled fellow on the programme sought to catch the guileless one in his trap with a tempting offer.

Frequently the "top of the house" is heard to shout out, "Let him up, there!" when a duel or fistie fight is in progress, or ejaculate their disgust or approval in the tersest vernacular.

Then again the pathetic side often draws forth a lot of remarks as well as copious tears. The little Eva dying scene in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is a sure winner in this regard, and the time when a big fellow in the front row of the Opera House balcony was greatly stirred was related by one of the reminiscent party. This man, who is yet working about town, had a small supply of the ardent tucked delightfully away and was in that mood in which his emotions could be easily played with. His sobs and cries could be heard all over the theatre as Little Eva passed peacefully away for the fifth time that week, in fact one of the ushers was forced to tap him on the shoulder and tell him that if he could not bridle his grief he would be allowed to give it vent on the other side of the building. His reply was, 'I ca-n't help it, I'm a fa-th-er, my-y-y-se-ll, boo! hoo! hoo!'

Lots of other funny occurrences in the two local theatres were related, but the old excuse—no space.