

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 1900.

TOWNSPEOPLE WHO READ.

The Free Public Library and its Hundreds of Patrons—Twelve Thousand Volumes.

Take the Free Public Library out of St. John and it is safe to say there would be open insurrection, the people would actually rebel. From the popular standpoint this institution is one of the most appreciated of all public properties, although the grant of money allowed by civic rulers each year for its maintenance would denote a lack of appreciation of its benefits by the powers that be. Only \$1,800 is allowed for the Library every twelve months—a sum which most clear headed citizens can see at a glance to be rather meagre for the carrying on of so extensive a public privilege. However when a shuffle takes place in the Council and new blood is introduced within local legislating halls perhaps such matters will receive the attention due them and St. John will take her proper place among the big cities of Canada in many respects.

There are at present twelve thousand volumes on the shelves of the Free Public Library. The range of subjects covered by these books is enormously wide and the tastes of readers are invariably satisfied. History, secular and religious; sacred and profane works, fiction by the world's authors for ages back, the poets, reference books, charts, the weekly and monthly magazines of England and America, English and Canadian daily newspapers and hundreds upon hundreds of odd volumes, which are infrequently called for, lying upon the shelves year in and year out unmoled.

All the books pretty nearly have their turn at being sent out, except the few already mentioned, although that turn may not come to a certain class of book more than once in the course of a year. Literary clubs and similar organizations in studying one particular subject make raids upon these volumes. Persons getting up lectures, clergymen, war enthusiasts and people inclined to the study of the past ages call for the heavier literature as well. But recreative reading is what the great majority of Public Library patrons seem to want and along this endless line of books the demand is never failing.

The librarian says that from one hundred to one hundred and fifty books per day are loaned, two volumes being allowed on one card to each family. Saturdays this number mounts to nearly four hundred and fifty, and at all times there are fully one thousand volumes from the Library in the homes. In order that the newer editions may go the rounds before they become stale and familiar they are only allowed to stay out seven days, while the volumes which are well known, or of some years back, can be kept out for fifteen days. Small fines are exacted for non-observance of these rules.

One need only stand near the librarian's desk of a Saturday night to get at an idea who the people are who regularly draw books. It is no particular class or creed, but seemingly everybody. Rich and poor, black and white, catholic, protestant and jew. The working man, the retired gentleman, the irreligious and the devout cleric, all fill out their little yellow slips, and returning the books they had out last; apply for more. Of course each class of reader has its favorite writer. For instance the boys never leave a single volume of G. A. Henty's famous historical war stories and such, on the shelves, Kingston's stories are greedily sought after, as are also Captain Mayne Reid's and Captain Murray's. The girls and young women present whole lists of Louise M. Alcott's works, Miss Yonge, Edna Lyall, Mrs. Craik, Marie Correll and Dr. Conan Doyle. Conan Doyle is of course very much read by the men, although the women have seemed to run particularly on his works of late. These are only a few of the most popular writers with St. John people as space will not allow any further enumeration.

One of the best features of the Public Library is its reference volumes, which are being used more and more each year. During the last twelve months this department has been more looked into by the public than ever before, and its benefits are appreciated to the limit. Among the weighty books here included are; Encyclopedia Britannica, Chamber's Encyclopedia, American Encyclopedia, Century Dictionary, American Annual etc. etc. Professional men, scholars and students in all branches of learning make particular use of these reference books.

Outside the Library itself with its thousands of books, the most appreciated de-

LIVE LOCAL TOPICS.

A Budget of Bright Breezy Items Gathered from All Over the City.

partment in conjunction is the Reading Room. Winter and summer it is never without its quota of attendants, and indeed the array of present day literature exposed for perusal is most tempting. Distributed systematically on the big tables, shelf boards and in wall files the local papers, London Times, English, Canadian and American magazines are found, fashion and art journals, scientific periodicals, literary digests, in fact all that is whole-



FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY PATRON.

some and edifying in current literature of a periodical nature. The young as well as the old are catered to in this regard and St. Nicholas, Boys Own Annual etc., are on the tables.

Nowadays the most popular table in the reading room is that on which the Illustrated London News and Graphic are to be found. Everybody wants to see the South African war pictures.

Miss Martin, librarian, is really a very busy person from Monday morning to Saturday night and if she did not have the many thousand books in her care at her finger tips, so to speak, she would find herself unequal to her task at times when a rush is on.

Perhaps no person in St. John has been forced into a wider range of acquaintances than she, persons whom she meets regularly each week. Books come in and books go out again and yet practically none go astray. The system of keeping track of volumes over which Miss Martin presides is excellent and thoroughly efficient.

"SURPRISE" PARTY DAYS DONE.
This Once Popular Mode of Being Sociable a Dying Fad.

It looks as if the days of the "surprise" party and all the miseries, pleasures etc. that go along with it and follow in its wake, are about done, at least as far as this city is concerned. A long afflicted public has seemingly risen up against this mode of being sociable, especially the sterner sex, who are the bearers of the real burdens in such matters.

The winter about closing has had its quota of friendly gatherings, but the once universal "surprise" party with its "beautiful oak sideboard" or "handsome easy chair" accompaniment has not been so much in vogue. The people have shut down on it, and those who have been seized with the party fever have found that in order to insure the presence of a fair number of young men they must make the gathering a party pure and simple, with out the presentation of a costly gift; with the arrangements well ordered and carried out in a like manner. Boys and men have been so incessantly called upon for small and larger sums of money to pay for choice articles of furniture which female committees have selected, that the sociability of these gift parties is almost entirely eliminated in the male make-up, and reduces the affair to the level of a house of amusement, where one might pay the admission price and see the show; or a dance hall.

For some years now the "surprise" party has been on the throne in the line of friendly functions with the majority of people, at first starting out in a really "surprising" way, administering more or less of a gladsome shock to the invaded household,

but how sadly has this natural state of affairs fallen off! So quickly did the "surprise" idea spread that even small children were soon planning grand gatherings of the infantile clans for one another's houses.

Among the older ones the habit became chronic and fancy goods and furniture stores reaped the benefit. Whenever a few impressionable girls or young women wanted to have a jolly time in order to meet this young man, or if a few of the opposite sex thought they would like to become acquainted with that certain young lady, why for with a composite committee was formed and a "surprise" party sprung. A mutual friend was selected as the victim and inadvertently the house holders were "tipped" as to the company they might expect on a certain evening. Of course they came, that is the committee, and a host of people perhaps blank strangers to the host and hostess, who by the way have been taken completely by surprise, despite the fact that the beautiful state of household preparedness would denote otherwise; and all goes fast and furious in the amusement line till a hush falls on the assemblage and two burly guests push back some "secret panel" and extract perhaps, a mirrored sideboard. Felicitations of a time-honored and talking doll quality ensue and "in a few well chosen remarks Mr. ——— thanked those present for their kind gift as the papers say." The young ladies, whose "sheet of cake" constituted their contribution to the gift smiled and giggled, but the poor men and boys grouped about dejectedly with hands sunk deep in their pockets and thought of the "piper that had to be paid." And perhaps it was the sixth or eighth time for them this winter too.

Oil having thus been poured on the troubled waters of the household and recompense made for the loan of the comfortable home for the night the gastronomical phase of the affair looms up. Feeding lasts some time amid utmost hilarity, and then the game tables, parlor amusements or dancing is resumed. Early next morning sees the happy band dispersed, and with the departure of the last guest the host and hostess sigh with relief, look disconsolately at their upset home, oft times feel ashamed of having had a gift thrust upon them and wonder what the names of many of "their guests" were.

Anniversaries, when not too frequently celebrated are apt to be joyous occasions, with gifts an appropriate accompaniment, but it looks very much as if the played-out "surprise" party has been vetoed.

INORRIGIBLE "MAG" SULLIVAN.
St. John's Champion Woman Offender and Her Long List of Misdoings.

Margaret, or commonly known as "Mag" Sullivan, added another to her long list of appearances in the city police court in the early part of this week. His Honor fined her \$100 or six months jail, along with two friends of hers, for keeping and being an inmate of a habitation with somewhat of a shady reputation. Despite the severe cross-questioning test to which the police were put by the irrepressible Margaret the Magistrate imposed the penalty, and the Sullivan domicile will for some time remain in that solemn stillness which periodically pervades it. The cheery voices and welcome smiles which have intermittently brightened it will be for several lunar phases hence wasted on that adamant walls of the stone structure opposite the Burying Ground.

"Mag" Sullivan, the central figure in the trio, is perhaps the best known offender of her sex in St. John. Her career has been long and somewhat varied. Now close upon the three score mark in age, she moves about with exceptional agility and talks in short, pertinent sentences denoting a keen wit. Her worst offences have been those similar to the charge upon which she was recently arrested, and her antics when in the power of strong drink would fill a sadly amusing book. Police records for nearly twenty-five years back give her name a place with unflinching regularity every month or so, and like the brook, policemen may have come and policemen may have gone, but "Mag" seemed to go on forever. A new generation of "oops" appeared, another Chief and different judge, still the indomitable South Ender sallied to and from the penalty-paying institutions with the utmost unconcern, as a business man would attend to his banking obligations.

Crime and its attendant disgraces were to her real life, she seemed to know no other, and today she lies in jail as old as the majority of grandmothers, silver-haired and intelligent, but sin-blackened, devoid of the least refinement, the ruin of what might have been a useful life.

Starting out as a base woman "Mag" Sullivan was more than once snatched from her life of shame and degradation by philanthropic people and employed in their homes as a domestic. At keeping house and the various duties included in the care of the average good home she could not be excelled, but the worse influences got the upper hand and ever since she has been a denizen of Sheffield street, keeping a small beer shop; a resort for the lowest class of people. Sergt. Watson of the police force, now a very old man, says he remembers arresting Margaret Sullivan over twenty years ago, shortly after the fire, for parading Sheffield street with an apron full of stones breaking in all the glass she could see. She said she was showing her disapproval of the manner in which the now famed street had been rebuilt after the big blaze. The police court officials of today know something of "Mag's" dexterity in throwing missiles, remembering the day last summer when she bounced into the court room full of liquor and carrying a bag of apples, which she started in to throw at the Magistrate, Clerk Henderson and others, throwing out the tid-bit of information as she did so, "everybody takes their hat off to me."

The frequent leniencies shown this incorrigible woman by His Honor in hopes that a helping hand, some sound advice and her own better judgement would bring about a change in her, seemed only a waste of good nature. And today her distorted face, unkempt habit and sinful ways mark her as the unsoftened woman she really is.

New Ships.

Two years after the destruction of the battleship Maine, in Havana harbor, a new battleship bearing the same name was ready to launch. This fact may give an idea of the rapidity of construction of the ships our navy. Yet the launching of a ship—and especially of a ship of war—is far from being the completion of it. Two years may elapse before the new Maine goes into commission—that is to say, before the flag is run up at her stern, and her officers and crew go aboard of her.

Almost at the same time that the Maine was ready for launching, the new battleship Kearsarge went into commission, and was ready to take the seas in the service of the country. Its history illustrates the deliberation with which great war-ships must be built. The Kearsarge is one of three sister battle-ships—the other two are the Alabama and the Kentucky—the keels of which were laid in 1896, and which were launched in 1898. The Kearsarge is the first of them to go into commission, nearly four years after work was begun upon it.

The Kearsarge, like the Maine, perpetuates a name honored in American naval history. So do many others of the ships now in the navy: the Philadelphia, the Massachusetts, the Boston and the Chesapeake.

So many new war vessels of one kind and another are now building that the number of officers and men of the navy will have to be almost doubled in order that they shall be manned. It is evident that a naval career is to be open to many Americans in the not distant future.—Youth's Companion.

I told May that her voice only needed cultivation and advised her to go to Prof. Von Donnerblitz.

THE SEQUEL TO THE STORY.

Of the Killing of the big Elephant Witnessed by Mr. C. B. Robertson of this City.

Many of the readers of newspapers will remember an account printed recently—copied from a London newspaper—of the killing of a keeper in the Crystal Palace by a big elephant and the killing of the brute afterwards. Mr. C. B. Robertson of the firm of Daniel and Robertson of this city was an eye witness of the attempt to kill the animal first by poison and afterwards by express rifles. The London Spectator gives some interesting facts that come out at the inquest on the man killed and says that the evidence in favor of the elephant could not have been more clearly put. Mr. Sanger, its owner, admitted that the animal had once before killed a former keeper; and he gave the facts which led to the death of the second. The first man had been discharged by Mr. Sanger fifteen months previously for gross brutality to the animals. He came back and asked to be employed again. This was granted, and he was taken on, not as a keeper, but as a laborer. The very first time he went into the stable the elephant, though it was quite dark at the time, instantly recognized the man's voice and at once crushed him to death against the stall. That the creature had acted only in a panic of horror at the reappearance of a tormentor was so well established at the previous inquest that it was retained in the menagerie. It was exceptionally docile, and was taken through towns and villages all over England.

Why then did he kill the second keeper? Because this man, after his Sunday dinner, declared that he would "pay out" the elephant for striking him with his trunk. He actually took a lance, one of those taken from the Arabs in the Sudan. (Those who have seen the trophies taken from the Mahdi's followers will realize what a horrible weapon this was.) Followed by another keeper also armed with a lance, he proceeded to "prod"—i. e., pierce the chained elephant. The tortured creature after backing as far as it could, "at length rushed forward to escape the lance, broke its chains, threw down the keeper and trampled on him." If the elephant had been a man, and had been put on his trial afterward, would it be too much to anticipate that the verdict would have been one of justifiable homicide? All these facts, it is worth remembering, were sworn to on oath.

The Irish Leader.

The leader of the reunited Irish party in the House of Commons stands for the principle that Home Rule cannot be worked out through political alliance with English parties. This was Mr. Parnell's policy. Mr. Redmond, his most faithful followers, has clung tenaciously to it and has forced his Irish associates to adopt it. Mr. Redmond is a serious man, dominated by a single idea—that the Irish members must keep out of English politics and fight their battle on their own lines. When a majority of his associates, led by Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Dillon and Mr. Healy, were willing to follow Mr. Gladstone and the English Liberals, Mr. Redmond was obstinate and became the champion of Mr. Parnell's policy.

The chief of a minority group who would not vote with the English Liberals has now become the leader of a reunited Irish party. A great part of his strength is drawn from the fact that he represents the original Parnellism, which was in arms against both English parties.

Mr. Redmond is a tall, portly Irishman, with an air of determination and defiance. His melodious voice is under perfect control, and while he is less fluent as an orator than many of his associates, he is a powerful speaker. Like Mr. Parnell he is without humor, but possesses solid knowledge, practical common sense, and the courage and tenacity of a bulldog. In all these traits he resembles Mr. Parnell.

The Irish party under Mr. Redmond's leadership will break off the alliance with the Home Rule Liberals and act independently. It will await the next general elections in the hope that the English parties will be evenly divided, and that the Nationalists as a third group will be able to force Home Rule upon both.

A Long Felt Want.

Customer: "Have you felt slippers, young man?"
Shoemaker's apprentice: "Yes, ma'am. But I haven't for a long time now."