

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, MARCH 17, 1900.

## ST. JOHN REPORTERS.

What the People Think of Them and What They Really Are.

There is a class of people who look upon the members of the newspaper profession with a certain amount of awe and a peculiar brand of respect. They seem to imagine that everything clever, all that is knowing and discerning is summed up in even the humblest reporter. They take his word for authority, they dilate upon his "knowledge" of the questions of the hour and feel privileged if they are thrown into his or her companionship on any occasion.

On the other hand some consider the life of a news gatherer fully as servile as it really is and look upon the ill-paid knight of the pad and pencil as at everyone's beck and call, a runabout to satisfy their desires, to see their names in print. Then again there are those who appreciate the "power of the press" and treat its representatives accordingly, while still another division of people think the life of those working on the daily and weekly journals one endless ecstasy, a round of pleasure with freedom to attend this entertainment or that fete, and reach unmolested the innermost circle in every important public event.

As far as St. John is concerned none of these above conclusions are correct and yet there is a degree of truth in them all. To be successful in getting at the interesting items of everyday life in this city a reporter has first to know the town and its people real well, especially the people. The more friends he has the better and as for systematizing his work that comes with experience. Living in an atmosphere of alertness and ever ready for some new happening of note a "new hand" soon becomes imbued with what professional journalists call the "news instinct"—the ability to discern items of worth from the hum-drum of life, to throw aside the chaff and retain the wheat. In the larger cities this "instinct" is more especially found in the news editors, who use it to its fullest capacity and send their reporting staffs after the "stories" assigned them.

Many of the best newspaper men in the United States today are St. John boys, whose training in all branches of reporting here at home made them particularly proficient, and superior to many "specialists" across the border. Among these St. John boys are the Bodens in New York, Dr. Oscar Watson of the Associated Press; R. G. Larsen, N. Y. Herald's Boston man; Geo. McLean, Worcester Telegram; the late millionaire newspaper owner, Medill of the Chicago Tribune; A. R. Fenwick, lately appointed managing editor of St. Paul Globe; "Tom" Dieuaid of the New York Sun, "Ern" McCready of the New York Herald; whose famous 24-hours "scoop"—the destruction of Cervera's fleet—over the other Yankee papers made him a shining star, and many others which could be named who are holding positions of lesser importance, but all earning "real" money.

Wandering back to the subject of the St. John reporters of today, what a friendly, good-natured lot they seem to be. While not infrequently the morning dailies "scoop" one another most unmercifully and in the evening the—gets to the windward of its contemporary in a most important news item yet the friendliness of the reporters on each remains. Very little, if any "swapping" of news takes place between the scribes, except perhaps when a man from each paper has to cover the same assignments of work in which a friendly arrangement is arrived at whereby one reporter handles one "story" and his confrere the other—a time as well as labor saving arrangement. But this more particularly occurs with the morning paper reporters, or at least it did up to a short time ago when the rivalry became appreciably keener and taking their cue from their editors the pencil-pushers became a little more wary of one another. However on the whole the denizens of "Newspaper Row" (Canterbury street) are a jolly lot of fellows, hard-worked, generous, always ready for a good time, making their none too easy life the brighter by brotherly interchange of good feeling.

But as to the class of people referred to at the outset, those who think the reporter a walking encyclopedia, if they only knew how often the news-gatherers on the local papers are fooled by practical jokers and others during the course of the year they would alter very considerably their opinions as to their keenness. Every fellow in the business has his quota of good stories to tell about himself when in a convivial mood and not a

## LIVE LOCAL TOPICS.

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

long time since the following paragraphs were spun at an impromptu "smoker" in one of Newspaper Row's favorite haunts.

An evening paper reporter exhaled a cloud of cigarette smoke and confessed that he had been the butt of a wild goose chase not a week ago. Somebody told him that a relative of Lord Roberts, the British commander-in-chief was living in the North End. Not given to chasing after "special stuff," as he termed it, he nevertheless felt that under the existing circumstances the discovery of a relative of "Bobs" right here in St. John would be a newsy bonanza, and consequently a "bouquet" for himself, so he started out after the yarn. For two hours he confessed to having scoured the highways and byways of Indiantown, finally locating no less a personage than Robert Roberts, the pile driving contractor of Cedar street. Mr. Roberts said it was a little joke he was having with some of his friends and that was all. The joke was on the eager newspaper man as well and as much as he tried to laugh it off his hilarity did not seem quite natural.

Another evening paper reporter in a complaining sort of a way told how a woman in a swell locality had telephoned several times for a reporter, to call and see her, finally addressing the city editor to this effect by note. Expecting some kind of a newsy item the reporter at once called, in a busy hour too. When ushered into the parlor the lady appeared and started forth to dictate to him, first enquiring if he wrote shorthand, a "to-let" notice. The exasperated scribe came nearly forgetting that as a reporter he was automatic, so swallowing a whole bunch of sarcastic words, he left hurriedly, stating as he slipped out the front door that he would send the office boy around for the "ad." in the morning.

A weekly paper devotee blushingly acknowledged that a woman fooled him "good and good" not more than ten days ago over the telephone wires. She 'phoned him that a ship loaded with hens had just arrived in port and was docked near her home, stating name and place. The hens she said were for South Africa and there was a "good story" in them. Busy and all as he was the paragrapher hustled to the scene directed in order to hurry the item into print for it was near the day of publication. The ship and the hens were not forthcoming, nor did a prolonged search of all the wharves produce anything but roars of derisive laughter as the object of search was made known. That write-up is still at large and so is the feminine practical joker, who shortly after anxiously enquired if the hens which were "to lay for Kruger" had departed.

That juvenile reporter, who wishing to be quite chatty at a social function, asked the dignified dame if she enjoyed "tripping the gauntlet," is still in newspaper work but in a country town, so is the lad of items who persisted in stowing 20,000 tons of freight in a steamer of 9,000 tonnage at Sand Point, to say nothing of a reporter who thought 500 pounds the ordinary weight of a deer, in one of his gunning articles. Bogus murders, fake suicides, interviewing intended husbands and prying into household affairs furnished a lot of amusing incidents at the gathering of scribes but space curtails the repetition of them now.

### A Dance Hall Dive.

St. John is not a very big city, but it has its full complement of "tough" people and tough places. Among the resorts of this kind lately instituted is a dance hall in a new building on Mill street. Pretty nearly every night lately "de gang" has held a dance there, although, there have been no extended press notices of these social functions. An accordion takes the place of an orchestra and the order in which the terpsichorean event is carried out is unique. The "gents" are not compelled, according to the bohemian etiquette which governs these gatherings, to remove their hats, and even indulgence in the succulent weed with its attendant bespattering of the floor, is tolerated by "de lydies." A French dancing master could learn lots by a half hour's visit here, for truly the conceptions of the

all that is graceful in the entrancing mazes of the most popular of dances, are many and terrible. The half stooped, catch-as-catch-can, "tackle," with pump handle arm movement seems to be the favorite. Outside of the sardine sandwiches, crackers, cheese, lager beer, and frequently something more stimulating, which invariably go to make up the "running" supper, there are other features of interest to the dancers. One of the chief ones is the supreme effort every body has to put forth to keep from parting with their rubbers, overshoes, coats and hats. The nightly "haul" in this regard would half stock up a second hand store, and buy a good many drinks for the light fingered strategist. One fellow told PROGRESS he had lost a pair of rubbers, a pair of overshoes and an overcoat in this den since it started. Drunks are thrown down stairs and out into the street almost nightly, fights have occurred, in which the "gentler" sex have participated, but still the merry hops go on—and in,—but no police interference has yet occurred.

### Who Is Champion?

There seems to be a diversity of opinion in sporting circles as to whom belongs the title of amateur skating champion for the Maritime Provinces, Bart Duffy or Billy Merritt. These were the two keenest rivals in Monday night's events at Victoria Rink, Duffy winning the quarter mile, the half mile and one mile events, while Merritt walked off with the eighth mile, the two mile and the hurdle race. The conditions for fast time could not have been better, and in one event the half mile, it is said Duffy broke a Canadian record by his time of 1.21 1/5. At anyrate both Duffy and Merritt were skating to the limit of their ability, the latter using his head to vastly better advantage than the ex-car conductor. This was particularly true of the eighth mile and two mile events. There is no doubt about it but Merritt is



W. H. MERRITT.

the best ice track general in the business down this way, and at Montreal a couple of seasons ago he demonstrated this quality when up against the best men in world.

Merritt and Duffy each won three firsts

and two seconds, so in a matter of points they are quits apparently. It is quite true that Merritt was handicapped as to the general result by his falling in the quarter mile event, when in a promising position, and just starting to spurt in a flash finish, but to balance this the Duffyites claim the genial "Billy" did not do his share of pacing in the two mile event. Another questionable matter from a spectators standpoint was the finish of the half mile sprint, which appeared to nearly everybody who saw it as a dead heat, but Duffy was awarded it. Hagan, Walsh, Daley, Dalton and others made warm company for the two principal flyers above mentioned. Parker who has defeated all the above named skaters did not race for reasons stated in PROGRESS last week, but is seeking matches with the champions individually.

### The Magistrate's Daily Audience.

Now that the biograph is being made use of in scientific matters and students of natural history are finding it of especial value in reproducing scenes and objects as they in reality appear PROGRESS would venture to suggest that a moving picture machine be set going in the local police court some Monday morning, for it would certainly be of value to those who make facial peculiarities a study, as well as serving in future years as a historical record. Last Monday was no exception. Long before His Honor took his seat the space outside the rail was crowded. There were the usual delegations from the hop beer-shops and low down pool dives, the red faced thug with his characteristic black Kossuth hat, the lazy loafing crowd, whose theatre is the police court on such occasions, drink bums, money bums, tobacco bums and accosters of every kind. Their bleary eyes and hardened faces at once stamped them. A few other spectators were not frequenters of the court, but interested perhaps in one or more of these cases to come up on that particular morning. Inside the rail the court officials, constables, reporters and others were seated and standing, also the prisoners on the bench. Not infrequently has Magistrate Ritchie delivered sound sense talk to these court loafers and has cleared the room of them, but like the cat they never fail to come back after awhile. His Honor has a keen eye and retentive memory and does not soon forget a man who has been brought before him, so seeing many of these in the daily crowds, especially Monday's, he naturally gives out some unsugared pills of admonition.

### The Jail Is Full.

There are at present fifty-one prisoners in the jail on King street (east). This is the largest list of "boarders" the big stone house has ever had during the winter months, which speaks none too well for the morality of this far-famed "city of churches." The usual number of worthless vagabonds, who as soon as the cold weather arrives commit some depredation in order to be sent to jail until the mayflowers appear, are still hibernating, under the faithful watchcare of Turnkeys Cunningham and Clifford. The other prisoners are old offenders, impecunious drunks and a batch of petty criminals.

### Not Wind Enough.

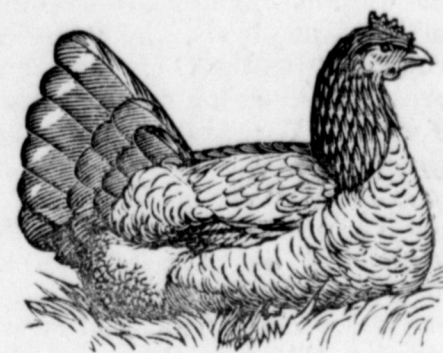
Anyone who knows by experience or reputation the sort of weather which usually prevails around that promontory of west Cornwall called the Lizard, where in 1898 the Mohegan was wrecked, and where last year the Paris went ashore, will appreciate the following from one of S. Baring Gould's books, concerning the district or peninsula of Menage: There is a single windmill in the district. The story goes that it was once rumored that a second one was about to be constructed. The miller was concerned. He went to see the man who was supposed to be responsible for the scheme.

"I say," mate, be ye goin' to set up another windmill?"  
"I reckon I be. You don't object?"  
There's room for more nor one."  
"Oh, room enough! But there mayn't be wind enough to sarve us both."

## MONDAY IN THE POLICE COURT.

Master Strayhorn's Leghorn—"Little Assyria" Before His Honor.

Mrs. Strayhorn of Main street, N. E., a Jewish resident named Rubins of the same locality, a small boy and a brown leghorn hen were the principals in a serio-comic sketch in the Police Court last Monday. His Honor, Officer Greer and a man named Fitch played minor roles. It appeared that Mrs. Strayhorn's boy is an enthusiastic hen fancier and last summer had as many as eleven feathered beauties, which he prized very highly, although his parents considered them a bother and a nuisance. But by degrees the flock grew smaller until about a week ago only two were left to keep the patriarchal old rooster company. On Thursday night the two hens were securely locked up, but Friday night only two appeared for housing. Where the other one had gone was indeed no mystery, for both Mrs. Strayhorn and Fitch saw Mr. Rubins of next door chase



THE HEN.

the frightened egg producer all over the yard finally lugging it off. Suspicions were at once aroused as to the fate of the other hens, and Mr. Strayhorn being away in New York Mr. Fitch took it upon himself to defend the title of the hen and called at Rubins' door to ask if a mistake had not been made. Rubins said it was his hen, but the Strayhorn lad identified it as his, nevertheless the Jewish neighbour held on to it and said he was going to have his Sunday's (Saturday) dinner off it. This, Mrs. Strayhorn thought was going too far, so the hen was arrested and the parties concerned appeared in court. Mrs. Strayhorn told a straightforward story apparently, backed up by Mr. Fitch, while Mr. Rubins the clothier, talked considerable also, at last assuming a very much injured air, and desiring the case if necessary, carried to the Privy Council of England in order to prove his innocence. He said he bought the hen from Mr. Moreland, the milkman, but his story was not favored by the court so very wisely and in a friendly way the Magistrate suggested that he (Rubins) consider the whole affair a mistake. This he was not disposed to do however. His good name had been impeached and he intended fighting the case out. Odds were against him and when Master Strayhorn boxed up his leghorn again and carried it out of the court the case was thought to be at an end. While it lasted the affair was very amusing. Mrs. Strayhorn, a clever-headed ladylike person pleaded her case admirably, but the sight of the boy with his beloved hen hugged close to his bosom, as he stood in the witness box, the grizzled features of Mr. Fitch close by, the gesticulating Hebrew and grinning audience, was one warranted to make one laugh good and loud. Mr. Rubins has since become very angry and says he intends carrying the case further, as Mr. Moreland is said to have identified the hen as the one he sold him. Perhaps perjury proceedings.

That same morning "Little Assyria" was in Court. "Little Assyria" is that part of Brussels about opposite the Baptist church where all these swarthy rug peddlers and pack agents live. Suffice it to say the whole population of this people were either inside the rail or spectators when the charge of assault preferred by one Raphael against Charlie Thomas and a fellow named Joseph, was thrashed out. The prisoners got clear, but not until a tornado of foreign language had swept the big room, during which his Honor had his heart and hands full in keeping the run of things. The plaintiff, a fellow with a deep bass voice was not in the least backward, but pushed his claims vigorously. The witnesses, however, were all against him, including a woman who had to do her testifying through an interpreter—a bright lad, whose familiarity with the judge caused not a few smiles. The snapping black eyes of the Assyrian host, and their distinctive features, reminded one of the Midway Plaisance, the "couchechouches" dance, and other things suggested by the sight of this class of foreigners.