

PROGRESS, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1894.

MONCTON SEES SNAKES.

A STARTLING ITEM IN A MONCTON NEWSPAPER.

Sets "Coffrey" to Thinking About its Possible Dire Consequences—An Engraving Might Get Abroad that New Brunswick's Hub was a Veritable Menagerie.

MONCTON, Sept. 19.—"A small-sized snake, about ten inches in length, was killed by a pedestrian on the sidewalk near Bishop's tailor shop yesterday."

The above item occupied a conspicuous position in one of the local papers last Monday, and as I fear that it may be the cause of a false impression with regard to our city going abroad, I take the earliest opportunity of dispelling any erroneous opinions which may have been formed since its appearance.

I know quite well that there is not a man or woman of average intelligence living within the wide sweep of territory between Petitcodiac and Painswick Junction who would misunderstand that piece of intelligence, or take it for anything more than it was worth. They would instantly grasp the fact that the occurrence, though unusual, bore no special significance, but merely indicated that the poor little reptile possessed an intelligence beyond the majority of snakes, and realizing the oft-repeated fact that "Bishop's Tailor" was the man to go to for cheap clothing, it was simply hurrying towards his shop to secure its winter outfit, before the rush began when it was cruelly waylaid and killed, dying a martyr to its convictions. I am satisfied that there is not a man in Buctouche, Cocagne, Berry's mills—ay, or even Boundary Creek itself—who does not know that snakes are not in the habit of wriggling up and down the imposing asphalt sidewalks of Main street, or twining themselves gracefully about the ornamental facades and battlemented towers of Moncton's sumptuous railway station! No! the humblest farmer in Fox Creek knows better than that! But how about the more distant centres of commerce, whose citizens have not the advantage of knowing Moncton as she really appears to those who love her: the Moncton of today bereft of the meretricious glamor thrown over her by the guide books, and standing alone in the simple brunette beauty which shines modestly through her veil of coal smoke and cinder sidewalks. How about the capitalists of Europe, and the millionaires of Wall street? Shall these men who sway the destinies of nations be allowed to think of our city as a place where buffaloes are hunted in the market place, moose stalked in the public gardens, bears trapped on the esplanade, and venomous serpents slaughtered at the very door of the tailor shops? Surely not! And yet what other impression could the intelligent reader who did not know Moncton well, obtain from that one small item of news in Monday's paper? The very simplicity of the manner in which the event was described would lead anyone to suppose that it was an everyday matter scarcely worthy of comment. True the size of the reptile was mentioned, but very casually, "about ten inches in length." Evidently there was not sufficient excitement over the matter for it to be considered worth while to obtain an accurate measurement; and the name of the person who risked his life in exterminating the poor little fugitive, is not given to a grateful public. It takes quite an amount of nerve on the part of some people to kill a snake nearly ten inches in length, and yet the performance is considered such a trivial matter in a city where such horrors are of daily occurrence that the name of the hero, like that of the architect of Cologne cathedral, is suffered to remain in obscurity.

Now I don't want to find fault, and nothing could be further from my wish than to display a spirit of carping criticism, but I am warmly attached to the city of my adoption, I have her welfare truly at heart, and I am sufficiently public spirited to shake with most bitter apprehension from the effect that small paragraph may have upon her future prosperity. I am quite satisfied that no injury was intended in its publication, but still we know that evil is wrought by want of thought, far more than want of heart, and what will be the result of the strenuous efforts, which have lately been made by our corporation and citizens, generally to increase the prosperity of Moncton if such damaging impressions are permitted to be given by our own papers to those who might in future be of some use to us?

Where was the use of our having helped ourselves to the property of the gas and water company and saddled the city with a debt of some hundreds of thousands of dollars which we can never pay and don't intend to worry ourselves with trying to pay; what booted it that we lowered the dog tax one-half, and made it possible for the humblest citizen to keep just as big a dog as the wealthiest capitalist in town by paying the modest fee of one dollar a year, if such a concession fails to bring forth the expected harvest, and is not followed by an influx of new residents, attracted to the

city by the prospect of living in a Utopia where the public debt was large enough for a place twice its size, and the tax on dogs so ridiculously small? What use is all this, I ask, when no self-respecting man is going to bring his family, or his dog either, to a city in which serpents ten inches long disport themselves in the public streets, and the one infallible remedy for snake bites is held captive in the iron grasp of the Scott Act?

I am afraid there will be disastrous results yet from that item, and I should not be surprised any day to hear that a party of English officers from one of the regiments at Halifax had arrived in town, and were staying at the Brunswick Hotel, their object being to shoot big game from the post office steps, or even that a train of immigrants were camping on the common preparatory to taking up claims on the fertile lands of the athletic grounds.

Worse still, the bulls and bears of Wall street, already referred to, may possibly hear of the matter and refuse the loan which will shortly be required to pay for our latest plunder—the water works, on the ground that bonds issued by a snake-infested city would scarcely be good security, and decline to assist us in any way until we either found a second St. Patrick to rid us of our enemies or strewed the principal streets with rough on rats, which is, I believe, warranted to be efficacious in destroying snakes, as well as rats.

Thus have our brightest prospects been imperiled, and our future prosperity jeopardized, by a few thoughtless words, hastily penned by a great man who doubtless never stopped to think how much harm may be done by one small paragraph in a widely circulated newspaper.

Of course there is just one chance for us—one hope that we may escape the consequences of that rash act, as by a miracle, and that is the remote possibility that neither the speculators of Wall street, the officers at Halifax, nor the intending immigrants from the older centres of civilization in Europe, may see the Moncton daily papers; but that is so slight a hope to build upon, that I have thought it best not to take it into serious consideration, but to endeavor to save the credit of the city myself, even as Paul Revere saved his countrymen, or the mist of Brezeng saved her native village. Hence this brief explanation, which I sincerely trust will have the desired effect.

GEOFFREY CUTHBERT STRANGE.

While the grounds of Balmoral are not indiscriminately open to every one, yet it happened a year ago that a party of Americans tramping over the hills came suddenly upon an elderly lady sitting alone before a table and writing rapidly. "Tell me, madam," said one, politely lifting his hat, "are we far from Balmoral?" "You are on the grounds now," said the lady, "and I greatly fear you are trespassing."

Visions of Highland cruelties flitted through the heads of the party and they trembled, for they thought of trespassing a serious thing in Britain. They respectfully announced their intention of getting into the public road at the first opportunity. There upon the lady wrote a line and handing it to them said, smiling, "Here is a safe conduct if you meet a bailiff." They walked off pleased with the stately courtesy of the charming old lady, and unfolded the "pass" to read, it possible, her name. "Victoria R." was all the slip contained.

The Witch Tree of Nevada.

A most remarkable tree grows in Nevada, and is called by the superstitious Indians the witch tree. It grows to a height of six or seven feet, and its trunk at the base is about three times the size of an ordinary man's wrist. The wonderful characteristic of the tree is its luminosity, which is so great that on the darkest night it can be seen plainly at least a mile away. A person standing near could read the finest print by its light. Its foliage is extremely rank, and its leaves resemble the bay tree in shape, size and color. The luminous property is due to a gummy substance, which can be transferred to the hand by rubbing, together with its phosphorescent light, while the light on the leaf disappears. The luminosity is thought to be due to a parasitic growth. The Indians will never approach it even in daylight, with such superstitious awe do they regard the mysterious light.

A Conscientious Magistrate.

A magistrate of a Liverpool court recently had the odd experience of trying himself for an offence against the law and inflicting on himself a heavy penalty. A number of names of persons charged with allowing their chimneys to be a fire, through neglect of cleaning, came before him and among them was his own name. He was the only magistrate present and the clerk said that he could fine himself and suggested that if he inflicted double the usual penalty justice would be met. The magistrate promptly fined himself to this extent and caused a smile in court by lecturing another offender of the same batch for his carelessness and warning him to be more careful in the future.

Greatness Thrust Upon Him.

"Here's somethin' great—simply great!" exclaimed the street fakir, as he blocked the path of a portly citizen. "I don't doubt it," was the reply. "But I belong to the class of people, sir, who object to having greatness thrust upon them."

ARE THE SCORES BOGUS?

HALIFAX OFFICERS ARE CHARGED WITH DISHONESTY.

By the Officers of a Rival Battalion—63rd Rifle Officers Assert that the 66th P. L. F. Officers Deliberately Falsified the Target Practice Returns Sent to Ottawa.

HALIFAX, Sept. 20.—The 63rd Halifax Rifles and the 66th P. L. F. are two militia battalions of Halifax which latterly spent a considerable portion of their time watching each other. To use a slang expression—they don't trust each other "worth a cent." This is not as it should be. Esprit de corps is a good thing, but it is possible to carry it too far, and soldiers should be above taking anything approaching to an unfair advantage, while no corps should think another capable of doing so.

But the fact is that here in Halifax the rivalry between the 63rd Rifles and the 66th P. L. F., has carried the officers of those battalions beyond the mere "suspicion of unfair advantage" stage. Dishonesty in the making up of returns to the government is not publicly alleged, but it is privately asserted by the officers of the 63rd regarding their brethren of the 66th. The former have no hesitation in stating that the annual target practice returns of the latter battalion were falsified last year, in order that the 66th might secure a better place in the efficiency report than the Rifles. Last year the 66th were given the second place in efficiency of the whole Dominion force, while the Rifles came third.

Several elements enter into the competition for efficiency, rank, etc., which are taken into account, but a very important factor is the returns from annual target practice.

As already stated many of the best officers of the 63rd have not the slightest hesitation in privately asserting that the 66th officers last year deliberately falsified the target practice returns of their battalion, and sent in a set of bogus figures in order to secure a better position for their regiment than they otherwise could have secured. 63rd men say that a careful examination of those returns will show a scandalous manipulation of the figures before their transmission to Ottawa, and that the intentional inaccuracies or changes are apparent on the face of the returns. Your correspondent has carefully worded these charges made by the 63rd. He assumes no responsibility for them, merely assuring Progress that they have repeatedly been made and that he knows who have made them.

Here is proof that the 63rd Rifles fear a repetition of the 66th officers, conduct this year, and the facts speak for themselves. The 63rd had their annual target practice last week. The Halifax papers were ready and anxious to publish the scores made by the companies, but for the first time in years the figures were withheld from the press. The list of prize-winners appeared, but not a single score of the company target practice was published. The omission was so apparent as to cause remark. The explanation is not far to seek. It is, in short, that the 63rd officer determined the scores should not appear in print, and the 66th be not enabled to go one better, if it suited them, and make the scores they should forward to the militia department higher than the 63rd figures. That is the reason, and the only reason, the 63rd scores have not yet been published.

Whether the 63rd are just in their suspicions, or whether the 66th are capable of doing what they have been charged with doing, is not the purpose of your correspondent to show. The fact that such charges are boldly made is merely stated. It is a remarkable condition of affairs that such serious misconduct should be alleged and it would seem to be proper food for thought by General Herbert. He must have perfect confidence in the 66th, for he has recently increased the battalion's establishment to 668. More than 100 recruits have already been secured to fill up the ranks to the new strength.

In this connection it is a well known fact that some years ago the rivalry between companies of the 82nd Charlotte town, in the matter of company target shooting, was so great that deliberate efforts were made to secure false signals from the markers by the respective companies. This was a matter merely between the companies. In this 63rd-66th rivalry things are, if the facts are as stated, much worse, for the returns to the government are falsified in order not only to secure the triumph of one battalion over another, but to give it a fictitious supremacy over nearly all the other corps in the Dominion.

How a Count Bluffed an Editor.

An editor once called on General Boulanger's right hand man called Count Dillon, and made an urgent demand for a rather large sum of money to save his journal from ruin. After fully explaining the affair, he assumed a despairing look, and said in most dramatic tones, "In

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PRESENCE OF MIND.

An Awful Catastrophe Averted By a Chairman's Self-Control.

One of the "sights" of Philadelphia, fifty years ago, was a magnificent Chinese museum, whose treasures, collected by Mr. Dunn, a magnificent merchant, were displayed in a building erected on the site on which now stands the Continental hotel. Over the museum was a long narrow upper room, about thirty-five feet high. It was a public hall, used for lectures and concerts, and with it was associated a most remarkable instance of presence of mind. A correspondent of the London Spectator tells the thrilling story.

In the central part of this immense auditorium were collected one evening about three thousand persons. At about nine o'clock, the manager of the building came to the leader of the meeting, white with fright, and told him that the floor had sunk nearly a foot, and that in a few minutes more the tenons of the joists might be out of their sockets.

The floor would then fall through onto the Chinese museum, and the walls, sixty feet in height, would collapse and be precipitated, with the roof, upon the assembly. The leader explained to the person whom the audience expected next to hear, that by addressing the assembly from the end of the hall, he could withdraw the company from the sunken part of the floor to where the front wall strengthened the joists to bear the weight of the people.

The reply to this that his own family were in the audience, and that he must get them out first. "You shall not!" said the leader; "a hint of danger, a rush and we shall all be under the fallen walls and roof. Five minutes' delay may kill us all together." As a boy in the audience I well remember my surprise at seeing the leader suddenly appear at the far front of the room, and tell the people that they would next be addressed from where he stood—the organ loft. As the audience turned and moved to the front, the floor rose six inches.

The people were entertained partly by an impromptu sentimental song in a voice without a quaver, in the very face of death, and as soon as practicable they were quietly dismissed.

Not a single individual in that great assembly was aware that, by the presence of mind of one man, an awful catastrophe had been averted. The imagination sickens at the thought of what would have been the consequence of a panic and sudden alarm by the failure of the courage of this man.

I am confident that, excepting the speaker referred to and the manner of the building, no one outside the immediate family of the man whose courage prevented this catastrophe has known the whole story till now.

The terror of those minutes before the crowd was moved and the floor rose toward its level, was such, that he never, even in his own family, alluded to the scene, though he lived for forty years afterward.

Sign Language.

Tammas Wood kept a general store in the little Scottish village of T—, and did a surprising trade, mainly on the credit system. Tammas's education had been sorely neglected in the past, and the keeping of books would have been a mortal terror to him had he not invented a special set of signs and symbols that carried him along wonderfully. A day came, however, when looking through his principal ledger, Tammas made the alarming discovery that one Peter McBrew, the village publican, owed him for a long-standing cheese. So bundling up the precious book, he hied across to see about it.

"Cheese!" repeated McBrew indignantly. "Man, why I never had a cheese tree ye in a' ma days."

"Oh, but ye had, ma man," persisted Tammas, "for see here," and he pointed out a large moon-like object in his ledger. "Well, well, Tammas, I had nothing like that, unless it was the said big grun-stane." "Hang it, man!" exclaimed Tammas excitedly, "that's just it. I clean forget to put a hole through it."

A Woman Solves the Tramp Question.

A Kansas woman who has been elected police justice of her city has adopted a novel solution for the tramp problem. The first tramp who was brought before her for judgment was sentenced to two baths a day for ten days, and to hard labor on the stone pile, with the order that he be fed if he worked and starved if he shirked. The prisoner survived the ordeal, but now the first question a tramp asks on approaching a Kansas town is whether the police judge is a man or a woman.

ADVICE TO MOTHERS.

Dr. Lachapelle, the eminent French specialist on Diseases of Children, states in his work, "Mother and Child," that with the exception of

Dawson's Chocolate Creams I never subscribed or recommended any of the many worm remedies offered; as most of them contain mercury. From analysis, Dawson's Chocolate Creams contain no mercury. I have no hesitation in recommending them to my readers: they are effective, and being in the form of a Chocolate Cream, very palatable, and require no after medicine.

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