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## TORCH.

JOSEPH S. KNOWLES,.....Editor.

ST. JOHN, N. B., DECEMBER 29, 1877.

1877.

The present year of our Lord is so near its close that it seems proper to glance at its story before it is numbered with the past. It would seem that with a mathematical exactness Providence allots great events to the years as they come.

The memorable things which will give this year its place in history are not many, though some of them are full of great possibilities. This, of course, is the superficial view, and it may be that—unnoticed by the world—great discoveries have been made which will entirely change the picture of the future, or unknown Shakespeare's may have been writing books which will be the Bibles of the future.

The great event of the year, the Russo-Turkish war, is too close at hand as yet to be judged of—as to its permanent effects. The present results seem to be only the aggrandizement of Russia. Nobody seems to have any faith in the pretence that the purpose of the war is, or that it will result in, any great extension of religious liberty—for, so far as outsiders can see, the Turks and Russians are about even in their treatment of those of religious belief other than their own. The probabilities at present seem to point to an interference by England, on the side of Turkey, in defence of the Indian Empire. We have not space to do more than mention the famine in India, and the fierce political struggle which has disturbed the Free Republic; nor to refer to the uneasing battle between the scientists and religious leaders—nor to the great discoveries in Africa—nor even the near-home Fishery Commission.

The over-shadowing event in our own City history, the story of which has been told over

to weariness, is too fresh in memory to be overlooked on the one hand, or need comment on the other. The grand expression of charity which it elicited from English speaking peoples the world over, the courage with which our own people set to work to repair their broken fortunes, and the persistent energy with which they have, to so great an extent, rebuilt the city, are a large recompense for the misfortunes of the 20th of June.

The New Year is a new field which the world is to enter and cultivate; let us see that our corner is well cared for.

We wish our readers an **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

## NO THOROUGHFARE.

The experiences of those who had to force their way through the throng that crowded Charlotte and King Streets on Christmas eve, must have convinced them, that one of the arts, yet to be acquired in Saint John, is that of walking conveniently in a crowded street. We are bad managers of crowds for the most part—as every one knows, who was at the Academy of Music the Sunday evening Mr. Beecher lectured, or has been at any of our public halls, when some unusually attractive entertainment was expected. A slight improvement was made, when the post office was in the Market Building and so many more people awaited the mail distribution than could be accommodated in the office, enough of an improvement to show that much more might be accomplished in the same line, if only the effort were made. The Torch is greatly interested in the crowd who from Saturday night to Saturday night, are jostled about on the streets. We would recommend that instead of the perplexing dodging which people have now to resort to in order to make their way along—that some rule of the road should be adopted. For instance the rule of "Right hand to the wall"—so that on King Street the crowd going down the northern side of the street would keep near to the stores, and that coming up near to the gutter. In other large towns some such rule, as we suggest, has been found effective. It does not need policemen to enforce it either, for let it once be begun to be observed, and the unfortunate who violates will find himself the victim of such frequent nudges and trappings that he will be glad to fall into line. We suggest but one other requisite—that is, let each wayfarer be provided with "The Torch."

## FESTINA LENTE.

Rocky Hill was in dangerous condition, for the rain had fallen on the ice—and then he had on "arctics." The Ferry-boat had just arrived at the floats, and the passengers were coming off. He had the idea, however, that the boat was just about leaving the floats, and accordingly hurried so as not to miss the trip. He hurried too much—and slipping and sliding down the hill he got such a velocity that he could not stop—until he smashed through the toll gate and rather seriously injured himself on the floats—gathering himself up, the boat left. Moral.—"The more haste the less speed."

[For the Torch.]

## IT WAS CHRISTMAS EVE.

I occupy bachelor quarters, an attic, in a house on one of the busiest thoroughfares of St. John. A large dormer window lets in the golden sun-rays by day, and a Franklin which stands in a cosy corner, warms and cheers my evening solitude with its ruddy glow. My attic has many charms—its curious corners and antique furniture have, perhaps, made more curious the curious corners in my nature, and rendered more old fashioned, my naturally old fashioned tastes. Verily, my surroundings seem to have become a part and parcel of myself. I sometimes become very grave through the influence of the terra cotta owl that from his perch by the mirror, sagely winks over my shoulder as I read or write, and again I revel among daisies and apple blossoms at a glance from "my little maid" who, with her milking pail and apron full of flowers, dances along the wall. Luncheon, as Iago, transports me to the Lyceum, (as far as its ashes!) and a faded forget-me-not carries me to a far away grave. And here is a tiny water-color flower piece, that brings little Golden Hair to my side, almost a woman now, and very far away.

But this is Christmas Eve, and I know by the sounds that come up from the streets that my neighbors, their wives and little ones, are all abroad. So I replenish my Franklin with the diamonds of Gowrie, turn down my lamp, and sally forth. Bless me! What a sea of humanity surges up to down Union, Charlotte and King Streets! To quote from two poets, (and my quotation is very brief, oh reader!)

"They are all here,"

"The grave, the gay, the lively, the severe."

Here comes little Sunshine, whom I meet so often on my way to business down town. Her eyes sparkle with pleasure and the fulness of her heart sends a rosy glow to her cheeks, for does she not carry a parcel, and does not that parcel contain a whistle for Tom, a rattle for baby, and such a beautiful doll for sister Jane? God bless your innocent heart, little Sunshine, and may it always be as spotless as it is to-night, and may very many Christmas Eves find you as happy as this Christmas Eve finds you. And here comes Smilax with a turkey in one hand and a basket of vegetables in the other. Rather late my friend, rather late! Perhaps you thought you would dine on "hamely fare" to-morrow—perhaps your purse was light—but in any event you are sure of a good dinner now, and I am sure the hearts of the little Smilaxes will be made glad. God bless them, as well as my little Sunshine—may anticipation sharpen their already sharp appetites, and may their dreams be beautiful, and may their future be less cloudy than the past.

Hold on! this man is drunk! I sincerely wish some good samaritan (less rheumatic than myself) would come along and take him home. But perhaps he has no home! Homeless or not, my heart aches for the victim of strong drink. A month ago, perhaps this man (who is now in the gutter) sincerely resolved to reform at Christmas! To-morrow, perhaps he will say, at New Year I will begin a new