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FRIDAY, JANUARY 5, 1877.

OUR NEW YORK LETTER.

THE BROOKLYN HORROR—POLITICAL—GRIEVELY—FASHIONS—THE COMPROMISE—BETS.

NEW YORK, Dec. 8, 1876.

THE TRAGEDY AT THE BROOKLYN THEATRE.

Last Tuesday night, the Brooklyn Theatre was burned, during the progress of a play, and over three hundred people lost their lives. It seems incredible that so many could die in so short a time, but the ghastly fact cannot be denied.

The Theatre is a building one hundred and fifty feet deep, by 70 wide, in the centre of a block, with a passage leading from Washington Street, perhaps 20 feet wide. The stage is 50 feet deep, the lobby in front is twenty, leaving on the ground floor 80 feet, which is seated.

The stage is filled with the most inflammable material imaginable. The "flies" are short curtains of canvas painted in oil, to represent skies or clouds or what may be required, mounted on the lightest pine wood, and the "wings" and the "flats" are also painted canvas, on the lightest possible frames, and it must be taken into account that almost the entire space back of the curtain, except that shown to the people when it is raised, is filled with scenery of different plays, stacked up, which makes the "behind the scenes" of a theatre a magazine of combustibles, almost as dangerous as a powder house.

The Southern men are more reasonable than the New New Democrats, and are much less inflammatory in their talk. What the hotspurs may do in the south, of course no one can tell, but the class that come here are anything but fire-eaters.

The whole city is in mourning, and a general gloom overspreads it. I saw the bodies at the Morgue, and where there was enough left of one to show anything, it was noticeable that they all died with their hands before their faces, as if in effort to ward off the fate that was overtaking them.

A more ghastly sight—a more absolute nightmare than the smoking ruins of the theatre and the Morgue presented—human eyes never rested upon. Of course the people are nervous now about their theatres, and are investigating. Out of the ten or a dozen principal places in the city only one or two are found to have even decent means of escape in case of fire.

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POLITICAL.

Hayes is certainly elected, and the people breathe freer. The relief from the chance that the general government would be delivered over to the unrepentant rebels of the South and the Plug Uglies of the North, is immense, and will be followed by an immediate revival of business.

John Kelly, (Boss Kelly), has been appointed Comptroller in place of Andrew H. Green, and was promptly confirmed by the Democratic Aldermen. Kelly is the head of that association of thieves, Tammany, and is also of the gin-mill faction. He is a more dangerous man than Tweed, because, while just as unscrupulous, he is a more able man, and has the gin-mills in better training.

SOME EXPERIMENTS WITH FIRE.

I knew him for months and months, and yet I did not know his name. I called him "Spon," and he answered to it as readily as he would have answered to any other. He was small of stature, bent with age, and his scanty locks were as white as snow.

Most men took him to be a beggar, or some old man waiting to die. When I came to know him I found that he had a little old shop on a quiet street, and that he had not a relation on earth. I cannot name the shop. It was not a tailor-shop, or a shoe-shop, or a junk-shop, and yet it was all three, and he kept herbs and medicines besides. No one liked him, and yet all respected him. He was reserved, and yet he was free to answer questions. He gave his history to all honest inquirers, and yet they really learned nothing about him.

GREENEY.

Monday last a monument to the memory of Horace Greeley was erected over his grave in Greenwood Cemetery. A very large number of distinguished men were present to do honor to the great journalist. It is singular, though, how little of a man's work survives him. Horace Greeley controlled a paper which, at one time, was the most influential in the country. He was one of the principal founders of the Republican party, one of the chief promoters of the temperance cause, and the head and front of all schemes of philanthropy and progress. Age brought disappointment; disappointment soured him; an ambition, which a busy life had kept in subjection, asserted itself when he had met the strength to keep it under, had men played with him, and he fell. His paper got into other keeping, and despite the efforts of those still connected with it—who loved the old man and would have been loyal to his memory—it was turned into devious paths. It was almost everything for several years that Horace Greeley would not have had it, and only within a year has got back into its old moorings. And Greeley himself died poor. His paper was supposed to have been making millions, but when he, the cornerstone of the fabric, crumbled out, it was found to be as empty as an egg-shell. He had but little, his partners went into bankruptcy, and the property, heavily mortgaged, passed into other hands. And his history since has been one of financial trouble, though its management have made a splendid fight against the misfortunes that enveloped them. It is a

magnificent paper, and if it can be kept steady in its present course, as the representative of the advanced thought of the city and country, it will come out all right. But who can tell? Who knows whose money is behind it, and everybody knows what power money has. And speaking of newspapers it is a mistake to suppose that a newspaper in New York is a gold mine. The Herald, the Post, the Commercial Advertiser, and the Sun are making money. The World has always sunk more by its real estate than the paper; the Tribune is holding about even, and with the rest it is a struggle with mortgages. It cost a million dollars to establish the Times, and the amount sunk to establish new papers here is fearful.

FASHIONS.

Odd, comfortable-looking long scarves, shaped loosely to the body and covering almost the entire dress, are worn by girls in their teens as a school wrap; the material dark gray undressed cloth. The newest bonnets have high peaked crowns with hardly any brim, a full pleating of velvet and lace taking its place. The trimming now, as ever, makes the bonnet. Broad scarfs of silk or velvet must be laid in many folds about the crown, full ruffles and bows soften the outline, or the high bonnets are the poorest looking looking things imaginable. The new bonnets for children are dark brown or prairie-colored velvet, in the high shape, without any brim except a pleating of silk revealed on the edge, and lace fillet beneath, which gives the breadth of an ordinary brim. The most elegant hats are deep maroon velvet, trimmed with roses, shading from pink to crimson, and loops of dark crimson ribbon. The light scarlet, often called cardinal, looks vulgar in the extreme.

THE COMPTROLLERSHIP.

John Kelly, (Boss Kelly), has been appointed Comptroller in place of Andrew H. Green, and was promptly confirmed by the Democratic Aldermen. Kelly is the head of that association of thieves, Tammany, and is also of the gin-mill faction. He is a more dangerous man than Tweed, because, while just as unscrupulous, he is a more able man, and has the gin-mills in better training.

THE BETS.

John Morrissey has declared all bets on the Presidency off, and is returning the money he holds—a million and a half—to the rightful owners. What the others will do no one knows. There is a tear on the part of betters that instead of declaring the "off," they will take themselves off. They are all shaky.

PITIRO.

BY M. QUAD.

"If you men are not more careful you will burn the whole city to-day." "How—why?" asked the official. "Old Spon led us to the room where the oil-finished frames were being finished up. It was a small, close room, the floor was spattered with oil; scores of oiled frames were hanging on the walls; there was a bushel or more of oiled rags on the floor and benches.

"We never have a stove here, even in winter," said the superintendent, and he looked around. "Each of those rags is a stove," replied the old man. "The windows are up now and the hot air has a chance to escape, but put them down and spontaneous combustion will fire the factory within six hours."

The superintendent smiled contemptuously as he turned to me, and on the way out he wanted to know if my old friend was not an escaped lunatic. To follow this case through, I will add that one cold day in October, the employees of the finishing room put down the windows and left them down when they went home at six o'clock. At ten o'clock in the evening, an alarm of fire was turned in from the factory, and the flames created damage to the amount of \$3,000 before being conquered. One could trace the origin of the fire directly to the finishing room. That room was all ablaze before any other portion of the factory was touched. The cynical superintendent became a believer in spontaneous combustion, and the oiled rags are now thrown into an iron box for the night.

"A case in which spontaneous combustion could be more clearly traced soon occurred. A woman used a piece of old cotton and some linsed oil to brighten up the table of her sewing machine. Through her carelessness the rag afterwards found its way into the basket of soiled clothes, which was kept in a close closet. That night, within six hours after placing the rag in the closet, the house became filled with smoke and an investigation proved that the clothes basket was on fire.

Old Spon was delighted when he heard of the incident. This made the third case of spontaneous combustion from oiled rags, and he was prepared to prove that rags alone would ignite under certain conditions. He went to a paper dealer's and selected several pounds of rags, some flannel, some cotton, some silk and a few bits of velvet, as a family might make up a rag bag in the course of three months. These rags were placed in a soap-box, which had been provided with a glass end, and the box was placed in the window where it had the full strength of the sun. Within two hours the glass began to grow dim, and in three hours the glass was smoking. We waited another hour, and then the old man made an air-hole in the top of the box, raised the glass a

little, and a forked tongue of flame leaped out and the box burned. We had indeed spontaneous combustion by shutting off ventilation. The woolen and the velvet had engendered the heat, the silk had acted as a telegraph wire for it, and the cotton, old and soft as down, had struck the spark.

A lot of paper rags hung in a tight closet, or piled up in a store where there is no ventilation, will sooner or later start a fire. There are dealers who know this, and would as soon think of throwing a lighted match into cotton-balling as of closing the storage-room against ventilation. The lower sash of at least one window should be taken out during the summer, and it would be better to leave an opposite one raised a few inches, so as to secure a strong draught. A few months since some oiled rags in the basement of a Detroit picture store took fire on a hot Sunday morning and called out the fire department, although one of the basement windows was open for ventilation. It was through this window that the smoke poured and gave the alarm.

At the Detroit House of Correction, in December, 1870, one of the prisoners employed in the chair-finishing room, piled up a bundle of oiled rags in a corner as the bell rang for the close of working hours, and at 8 o'clock, only two hours after, the shop was fired by spontaneous combustion and several thousand dollars worth of damage done. The room was close, contained many chairs just finished, and as soon as the rags were piled and packed together the foundation was laid for a destructive conflagration.

About two years ago, one winter evening, the watchman at the Michigan Central Railroad car shops, located a short distance below the company's passenger depot in the city of Detroit, passed through the pattern and wood shed and found everything safe and quiet. Fifteen minutes later he was alarmed by the smell of smoke, and while mounting the stairs leading to the second story of the shop, the flames burst out in one end and the entire shop was destroyed within an hour. A pattern-maker had used some oil and a rag just before six o'clock to oil a pattern just finished, and he had probably thrown the rag among the shavings. There was no stove in that end of the shop, smoking was prohibited, and no one had a doubt that the conflagration was brought about through the medium of that oiled rag.

But spontaneous combustion does not depend upon the presence of oiled rags alone. Three or four years ago, at seven o'clock in the evening, the front windows, sash, glass and blinds, of a Detroit dry goods store were blown out into the street with a noise like the rumble of thunder, and the store was ablaze in an instant. The porter left an hour before the explosion, and a policeman tried the doors not ten minutes previously. The gas had all been turned off, the steam pipes were nearly all shut, and there was no light around the store. There was no smell of gas, no oil nor fluids inside, it was a wonder to most minds how the fire ignited. The house had an immense stock of dry goods, and when closed for the night the store was like a dry kiln. The heat thrown out by the goods was like gas, and finally became powerful enough to force its way out. A gas-lamp was turning in front, and when the hot air struck the fire traveled back into the store like a flash of lightning. The very same thing occurred soon after at another store on another street, and the circumstances pointed so strongly to spontaneous combustion as the agent that each fire was recorded under that head in the record book of the fire department.

My old friend made another experiment. Procuring a bottle of liquid "warranted to remove grease, printer's ink, etc." from any sort of fabric, he exhausted the contents by pouring it up over cotton rags and pieces of worsted dress goods and bits of woolen. These pieces were placed in a box, as ladies would hang their dresses in a closet, and in less than five hours the box was on fire. The liquid contained turpentine, and perhaps benzine, which was almost as dangerous as gunpowder. Bits of cloth saturated with liquid no doubt often find their way into paper rag sacks, and in time they are almost certain to become the agents of a disastrous conflagration.

It is claimed and denied with equal vehemence that steam pipes are and are not the agents of conflagrations. My old friend and I have made more than a score of experiments, with varying success. Where steam pipes ran along a well ventilated room we have placed bits of cotton and paper on them and left them there for weeks, to lift them up unscorched by the contact. Again, where the pipes ran along a brick wall, unbroken by windows for a long distance and where the room was close, we have scorched pipe blocks as black as tar in two days. We have never succeeded in producing actual fire, but have heated the blocks to such a degree that they could not be held in the hand. In a factory where there is much dust and poor ventilation, a bit of iron can be made so hot by leaving it on a steam-pipe while that it will start a fire among shavings or rags if knocked off. Steam heating is doubtless the safest method of warming factories, stores and dwellings, but it has its dangers unless ventilation is provided, and it is warmth and heat that paves the way for a blaze.

The thoughtlessness of an employe in dropping an oily rag or a handful of shavings upon steam-pipes or in close proximity, may not burn the building to-morrow, but a conflagration will sooner or later come.

"You see," said uncle Job, "my wife's a curious woman. Sheeremped, and saved, and almost starved all of us to get the parlor furnished nice, and now she won't let one of us go into it, and hasn't even had the blinds of it open for a month. She is a curious woman."

"A prudent man," says a witty Frenchman, "is like a pin; his head prevents him from going too far."

Always ready to take the stump—The dentist. It is a pointed fact that Germany makes the best needles. Somebody has lost as much as ten dollars on this election. Vote early and work hard for the success of the ticket four years from now.

Deaths of a Year.

In England, in 1874, 1,313 persons were killed by horse conveyances; trams killed 62, omnibuses only 55 persons. By cabs 61 persons were killed, and by carriages 82, and this limitation of the numbers is noted as implying great skill on the part of the drivers in streets often crowded. There were 294 deaths from injuries in coal mines, and 118 from injuries connected with copper, tin, iron and other mines. Deaths by poisoning increased to 461, about one third of them being ascertained suicides. There were 25 boys and men, nearly all following out-door occupations were killed by lightning. Sun-stroke was fatal to 90 persons, and 124 were ascribed to gelatio and exposure to cold. A girl only fourteen years old, the daughter of a laborer, died in childbirth. There was a death from the bite of a fox, from the bite of a rat, from the scratch of a cat, from the bite of a leech, from the sting of a hornet, and two from the stings of wasps.

HEARTRENDERING CRUELTY.—The evidence in the case of John and Maggie McCarty, charged with the murder of their foster child, George Woodard, at Bay City, Michigan, shows that once the woman put a red-hot iron in the child's mouth and held his lips tightly against it. Again she held him head foremost down a well. She also frequently placed his fingers in the hinge crack of the door and shut the door against them, and at times put them through the clothes wringer. She was also in the habit of striking him on the head with a huge piece of wood. The woman seems to have little anxiety about the situation, and sings in her cell for a long time.

Do you ever read the newspapers? No. Have you any opinion about anything? No. Do you know your left hand from your right? No. Do you consider yourself a species of born idiot? Yes. Then you are fit for a juryman. Swear him.

GO OFF AT THE WRONG STATION.

The death of one of the oldest residents of Brookfield recalls an incident in her career which happened some fifteen years ago. She was going to Sanford to visit a daughter, and took her seat in the cars for the first and only time in her life. During the ride an accident occurred whereby the car in which she was seated was thrown down an embankment and demolished. Crawling out from beneath the debris she spied a man who was held down in a sitting posture by his legs being fastened.

"Is this Sanford?" she anxiously enquired. "The man was from Boston. He was in considerable pain, but he did not seem to be in the least that he was from Boston; so he said: "No, this is an catastrophe." "Oh!" ejaculated the old lady, "then I hadn't oughter got off here!" "This was so evident as to make a reply unnecessary.

During a thunder-storm a gentleman takes a hack down the Clamps Ellysees towards the Faubourg St. Germain. He noticed that at every flash of lightning the driver piously makes the sign of the cross, and says: "I observe that you cross yourself, you do well." "Oh, yes, it is always well where there are so many trees, but once we get into the street I don't care a curse."

An old woman has a narrow escape from being run over by a hearse. I am not at all superstitious, she said to her rescuer, "but it always seemed to me that it would be unlucky to be killed by a hearse."

"Do I believe in second love? Hm! If a man buys a pound of sugar, isn't it sweet? And when that's gone don't he want another pound; and isn't that sweet too? Truth, Murphy, I believe in second love."

New York city claims to eat every million of eggs per year. No wonder the hens feel as if they were being ground into the dust by the tyrant's heel.

A Harrisburg man fell forty feet, struck a joint with his stomach and was all right next day. Those Pennsylvanians have good digestion and strong stomachs. A Portland woman run her husband in debt \$1,800 before a single bill was presented for payment, and she is now called a great financier. Col. Segar was elected to Congress in Virginia. He will probably be the champion of the tobacco interests. The Philadelphia Times says that Bessie Turner is a waiter in a New York restaurant. Libel suit, of course. There is a county in Virginia having neither lawyer, doctor or book agent, and it is always good weather around there. The Vermont Legislature is cutting down State salaries to a point which makes it no object for a man to hold office. There is no reason why politicians shouldn't shake hands and love one another. "A prudent man," says a witty Frenchman, "is like a pin; his head prevents him from going too far."

STORY OF AN ENGAGEMENT RING.

Some time ago a wealthy and otherwise attractive young gentleman of Washington, says the Cumberland (Md.) News, was engaged to be married to a beautiful belle of Morgantown, W. Va., and a brilliant "society wedding" was looked forward to by the friends of both parties, particularly the young lady inasmuch as the prospective bride. But the course of this love was true to the proverb about true love in general, and a month ago the engagement was broken off—how or why does not concern this story—though the whole affair may possibly be rudely dragged before the public by unteeling lawyers; and for no fault—unless carelessness is a crime—of either of the parties. Of course, the engagement was broken, the young lady quickly sent back the ring, and the quick way she could think of was by mail; so by mail it went—what is, it started from Morgantown, but never reached Washington. The gentleman made no inquiries about it, and but for a train of events that couldn't possibly have been arranged by chance, might have gone on thinking that his former fiance was mercenary enough to hold on to the magnificent ring that had been a token of her loyalty to him. But the mysterious destiny which shapes our ends ordered it otherwise.

A few weeks ago one of the Morgantown young lady's friends saw the ring on the hand of a lady in the same town, who was not acquainted with the first named, and consequently did not know the ring or its history. Investigation was at once begun, and a few days' time and very little trouble traced the ring to a clerk in the Fairmount post-office, who, it is alleged, had stolen it from the mail, loaned it to a gentleman friend at Morgantown, W. Va., who had made it to go duty as an engagement ring for his fiance in Morgantown. The Fairmount postoffice clerk was arrested by Government officials and will be tried in the United States District Court at Parkersburg some time during the month.

To the trial of the postoffice clerk will probably be summoned the young lady who "sent back" the ring, and possibly all parties connected with it, including the Morgantown gentleman and his fiance. Should the question of the ownership of the ring come up, it will prove a knotty one. To whom does or did the ring belong at the time of its loss? The case will be an interesting one at all events, and highly so if it should be necessary to legally prove the ownership of the alleged stolen property.

THE BOY OF THE PERON.

"My son," said a father to his hopeful son, "you did not saw any wood for the kitchen stove yesterday as I told you, you left the back gate open and let the cow get out, you cut off fifteen feet from the clothes line to make a lasso, you stoned Mr. Robinson's pet dog and I amed it, you put a hard shell turtle in the hired girl's bed, you tied a strange dog to Mr. Jacobson's door-bell, and I painted red and green stripes on the legs of old Mrs. Polah's white pany, and hung your sister's bustle out in the front window. Now, what can I, what can I do for such conduct?" "Are all the counties heard from?" asked the candidate. The father replied sternly, "No trifling, sir; no, I have yet several reports to receive from others of the neighbors." "Then," replied the boy, "you will not be justified in proceeding to extreme measures until the official count is in." Shortly afterwards the election was thrown into the House, and before long the votes were canvassed; it was evident, from the peculiar intonation of the applause, that the boy was badly beaten.

A carpenter who was always prognosticating evil to himself, was one day upon the roof of a five-story building upon which the rain had fallen. The roof being slippery, he lost his footing, and as he was descending towards the eaves, he exclaimed, "just as I told you!" Catching however, on an iron spout, he kicked off his shoes, and regained a place of safety, when he thus delivered himself: "I knewed it; there's a pair of shoes gone."

The latest London industry is the collection of oleaginous deposits in the mud of the Thames. It is quite profitable, the mud-gatherers making three shillings and sixpence a day out of it. Small globes made of cork and lined with hair are planted in the mud at low tide and the fatty substances in the water adhere to them. This miscellaneous grease is manufactured into fresh butter for the London market.

An agent for the sale of a fine house, hold article attempted to mount the steps of a house recently, but a dog came around the corner and took half a yard of cloth from the back of his coat. The man was sliding out when the owner of the house came and asked: "Did doze dog bite you?" "He didn't bite me, but he ruined my coat," was the reply. "My good friend, excuse doze dog if he didn't bite you. He leeb a young dog now, but my god py he shall take hold of some pyons and eat der pones ride out of them. He bites a coat now but he shall soon do better!"

A locomotive engineer who had just been discharged for some cause gave vent to his spite, eminently characteristic of American humor. He said it was about time he left the company, anyhow, for the sake of his life, for "there was nothing left of the old track but two streaks of rust and the right of way."