FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

MESSAGE OF PRESIDENT THIERS.

DELAY IN DELIVERING THE MESSAGE—THE COMMERCIAL TREATIES WITH GREAT BRITAIN—FOREIGN RELATIONS—HOW THE MESSAGE IS REGARDED IN FRANCE.

[FROM A REGULAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

PARIS, Dec. 8.—At length the great day has arrived, and M. Thiers, after hesitating for three days, has pronounced his first Presidential Message. The most noteworthy fact about the long-expected document is that it fills ten columns of this morning's newspaper. There is nothing—or next to nothing—that is new in the Message, and I doubt if it will in the slightest degree affect the Bourse, that trustworthy indicator of the importance of political events. It is hardly necessary to say that yesterday was a great day at Versailles. The *Salle des Pas Perdus*, as the lobby outside the theater in which the Chamber sits is called, was crammed with deputies, and even with journalists, whom even the irate M. Baze, who looks after newspaper men, had not the heart to expel, as he has done before. There was not a little excitement about the Message. A rumor was circulated, at the last moment, that the reading of the long-expected document had been put off until to-day, and there was not a little grumbling from those who had come down specially to Versailles in order to hear M. Thiers. Soon, however, our hearts were rejoiced by the entry of Madame Thiers and Mlle. Dosne, the President's sister-in-law—a sure sign that the Message was to be read at once. At 2½ o'clock, M. Grévy, the almost unanimously reelected President of the Assembly, declared its sittings open, and then, after having thanked the Assembly for reflecting him to preside over them, he announced that the President of the Republic had "possession of the House."

M. Thiers seemed in good health, to judge from the alert manner in which he mounted the steps which led to the tribune or pulpit from which all speakers have to address the Assembly. He took his time before he began to read, playing with his manuscript and carefully spreading his white pocket-handkerchief on the ledge in front of him, something after the style of popular preachers. The first part of the message was merely a recapitulation of what every one in the House and out of it knew already, viz., the successful conclusion of the negotiations with Germany relative to the payment of the indemnity and the evacuation of all but six departments. France was materially, alas, not morally, at peace, and on good terms with all her neighbors. Then M. Thiers came to the Treaty of Commerce with Great Britain, and this caused the Deputies to give especial attention. After criticising the manner in which the treaty was forced upon the country by the Empire, M. Thiers went on to give an account of the negotiations which had been begun on the subject with the Cabinet of St. James. Taking occasion to again announce that he still adhered to Protective doctrines, M. Thiers stated that, nevertheless, he and his ministers had been anxious that the treaty should not be wholly abrogated, but that it should only be revised. To this end he had proposed that, while nothing should be changed in the custom duties on iron, coal, chemical products, glass, pottery, and products of unmixed wool, the tariff should be raised from 3 per cent to 5 per cent on cotton, linen, and woolen yarn and webs; and with regard to those of mixed cotton and wool he proposed to raise the tariff from 12 to 18 per cent. This latter charge, M. Thiers explained, would really only fulfill the intention of the original negotiators of the treaty, because, owing to fraudulent declarations which it is now impossible practically to prevent, these goods do not, in fact, pay more than half as much as they should do. England, M. Thiers stated, had, after much delay, which he hinted was not quite accidental, declined to accede to these propositions, basing her refusal on a question of principle, viz.: That, to allow the tariff to be raised would be to make a step backward, and render England the accomplice of the greatest industrial nation on the Continent in a retrograde policy. One cannot help thinking that, in plain English, John Bull meant by this talk about principles that he did not intend to make a concession without a consideration; that if M. Thiers wanted concessions on the part of Great Britain, he must be prepared to grant at least equal concessions to Great Britain on the part of France.

M. Thiers has judged it best to give notice of the termination of the treaty next February, with the intention of beginning negotiations without delay for a new one. This he has ample time to do, as a year must elapse before either party ceases to be bound by the old treaty. Political relations with England were excellent, he said. The announcement that the treaty was to terminate was received with loud and prolonged cheering. Here M. Thiers took the opportunity to speak once more of the relations of France, or rather of his government, with foreign countries. His patronizing allusion to Belgium and Switzerland struck us as a remarkable specimen of arrogance. The Swiss can probably be left to take care of themselves, as they have a far better army than France; but it was hardly necessary to be told that France intends always to respect the independence of Belgium. Whoever is to annex Belgium, one thing is very certain, it is not to be France, at least not in M. Thiers's lifetime. Mr. Washburne in the diplomatic box must have felt surprised, I fancy, at no allusion being made to the United States, if only on account of Chicago. M. Thiers ought surely to have said something about the United States.

The next part of the speech, relative to the Prefects appointed by the existing Government, was very badly received, as it is generally considered that M. Thiers has shown a singular aptitude for placing the round men in the square holes, and the Assembly, Right and Left, was evidently angry at his loudly blaming him for. I need not dwell on what followed about the budget, as we already know everything that M. Thiers told us. What we wanted to know—how the newly imposed $70,000,000 worth of taxes were working—was just what the President did not tell us. Then M. Thiers came to the question of military service—a terribly important one in France at the present day, he showed that he stuck to his old connections, and could not bring himself to believe in the necessity of universal military services for all Frenchmen in time of peace as well as in time of war, and here M. Thiers, as is too often his custom, made use of the device of putting up a man of straw, and then taking credit to himself for a victory over the effigy. The advocates of universal military service in France never said, as M. Thiers pretended, that all Frenchmen ought to serve in the army in time of peace as well as in war-time, but that all able-bodied French citizens ought to pass through the army, which is a very different thing. The allusion to the quartering of the army in huts and camps was badly received, as it is intensely unpopular both in and out of the army. However, we may well follow M. Thiers's advice, and let the army alone for the present. M. Thiers wound up his message by a good and a bad point. The good point was his declaration that he left all constitutional questions to the Assembly itself. The bad one was his repetition of his continually renewed offer to resign. M. Thiers does not seem to be able to conclude a single important speech without offering to resign. "Methinks the lady doth protest too much."

As might have been expected, M. Thiers has so carefully abstained from making any allusion in his Message to any of the many questions which agitate political parties here, that little fault is, on the whole, found by the newspapers here for what he said, although many are angry with him for what he did not say. The *Journal des Débats* friendly to M. Thiers) says: "This Message is a sincere, studied, detailed document. It will, therefore, be much criticised. In similar questions people may regard matters from different points of view, but in the end difficulties are easily solved when party passions do not intervene, and when the final decision of the sovereign *juré* is clearly reserved. We remark with satisfaction that to-day's sitting promises us debates but not discussions." The *Liberté*, (Girardin's paper, liberal-conservative,) opens a long editorial thus: "M. Thiers scents danger; he is anxious to gain a harbor. Will he reach it?" The *Gaulois*, the cleverest Bonapartist paper, says: "The Message is of no great importance. It will not make the funds rise or fall; it will disturb no one's sleep; and if it was more applauded by the Left than the Right, it was because the Left began by applauding and the Right by smiling. At bottom, all things considered, it leaves things as indefinitely provisional as ever." The *Temps* (liberal and Republican) is angry with Thiers for having declared against obligatory military service, which is one of the pet schemes advocated by that journal. The Red papers take very little notice of M. Thiers's Message, except to complain of no mention being made of the Communist prisoners, who are still untried and imprisoned on the hulks. The clerical papers are of course angry that M. Thiers has not promised to send an army to Rome at once, in order to eject Victor Emanuel from the Eternal City.

PRESIDENT THIERS ON THE COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

The following is a translation of that portion of the Message delivered on the 7th inst. by President Thiers to the French Assembly, relating to the commercial treaties with Great Britain:

"In leaving in existence all the tariffs relating to iron and iron work, to oils, chemical products, glass and crystal, pottery, woolen stuffs, fresh or salt fish, for the greater part of our trade, in one word, we have only proposed to recover in the modest proportion, now of three per cent, again of five per cent, our rights concerning thread and cotton fabrics, linen, and wool. As for those of wool mixed, which have made formerly the proditious fortune of Roubaix, and which unfortunately add nothing to its riches, we have required merely an elevation of 12 to 18 per cent, and these moderate alterations we have required less for the purpose of obtaining a real increase in the existing tariffs than to insure their thorough application. In point of fact, by the false declarations made in the Custom-Houses, the tariffs are reduced from 3 to 4, and even 5 per cent, in such a way that the increase now asked would only have the real effect of rendering correct the application of the tariffs of 1860. Such has been purely and simply the proposition made by us to England. We prefer, as we have said, the denunciation of the Treaty of 1860, because, like yourselves, we desire to retrieve the freedom of our commercial relations. But, with the utmost good feeling for cordial relations, we consent to remain in a condition very inconvenient for us, provided that such a situation does not tend to kill our principal industries. Our manner of opening negotiations was so natural that it could have provoked at the first blush only a favorable reception. I may also say that the first negotiations of the Ministers of England, both in Paris and in London, enabled us to obtain, if not a certainty, at least the hope, that our propositions would be accepted. Little by little, meanwhile, the circumstances have shown themselves less favorable, and nearly a year has passed without a positive answer, so that the lapse of time is altogether disadvantageous to us. If we had notified that we would abrogate the treaty of 1860 in the month of February last we would to-day have been on the point of becoming free, for it is necessary that a year should elapse between the denunciation and the abolition of the treaty. For the reason that we have given we have lost about 10 months; and even to-day, from the moment when we have expressed the formal wish to repeal the treaty, it has been necessary to lose a whole year before recovering our liberty in trying to obtain a positive answer. There has been opposed to us not a question of tariffs, but an argument of principle. We have been told with all the courtesy which has always existed on both sides in this negotiation, that England, in acceding to our desire, would appear to abandon her principles, and to lend herself to a backward step on the part of the chief industrial nation of the continent.

"This reasoning has not convinced us. If, at bottom, the treaty had been only injurious, one could have reasoned after has fashion; but such an objection when three objects only relating to our textile industries are in question; when iron and its products, oil chemical products, and the greater part of the matters composing our Exchange underwent no alteration, such an objection is altogether at issue with the condition of affairs. Is it, then, without an object that it had been determined, after an existence of ten years, the question of the treaty should be considered? Was it without an object that article 21 of the treaty had stipulated that, after ten years, the tariffs should be revised? It is pretended that the treaty should always remain untouched; but then the stipulated reservations would have been vainly inserted. We must remember that we employ our incontestable right, and that we use it moderately in demanding that the treaty of 1860 should be, not abandoned, but merely modified. Here, then, is the point to which we have been actually brought, which is comprised in our power to negotiate, but which will not be altered if you do not approve it—it is to denounce the treaty, while consenting to negotiate one whole year still in such a manner that the notice will take date from to-day, both that the time to be lost during these new negotiations shall not be lost for us alone, and that it be taken during the pending year, that the treaty shall remain in action after our notice. Thus the question still remains of the abrogation, or the simple modification of the treaty. Our political relations with England will be also as amicable as in the past, and our tariffs will remain precisely as they were except upon the points which have been on our part matters of objection. Certainly we may say no negotiation could have been conducted with more moderation, more love of peace; and no impartial judge of Europe, even in England, will find it possible to condemn our conduct."

NEW ITALY.

MORE ABOUT THE POPULAR ENTHUSIASM—WHO ARE THE DISSENTIENTS—INTERNATIONAL TELEGRAPH CONGRESS.

[FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

ROME, Dec. 3.—The manifestations of joy on the part of the Italian people over the installation of both King and Parliament in Rome have not yet entirely subsided. While the new capital was rejoicing on the 27th ult., all the provincial cities, hung with flaunting banners and lighted with lamps, were likewise engaged; and the telegraph brought many addresses of greeting and felicitation to the sovereign and the old city restored in its secular capacity. Probably few nations have ever experienced the like strong and thrilling emotions as those with which Italians have just solemnly and officially received their fair land back into their own keeping; certainly their revolution has been unique. Now that they possess a country, the very first question they themselves put is "What will we do with it?"—and readily the answer is also given by themselves: "Work hard to improve it and ourselves." Yet, of course, there have been and there are exceptional abstentions from the general jubilation. Here in Rome, and to a less degree elsewhere in the peninsular, the most conspicuous members of the nobility and the most ignorant classes of the people have taken sides with the Pope and the Church against the King and their country; and fidelity to the Pope is very ostentatiously displayed by the confraternity of priests both in their newspapers and pulpits, while the new order of things and persons is put under ban of excommunication. Many belong to the Pope's party because they have suffered in their interests; others have suffered slights from the present authorities, and have thus joined the enemies of Italy; others have tacked themselves to the Vatican through a regard for the old Pontiff, on account of benefits received at his hands or through a love of the fat places enjoyed at his Court. These are passing causes, and are of a nature to disappear. There are deeper and stronger ones, and they consist in the powerful influence which the priests still exercise over timid consciences. Thanks to the exclusive domination of priests for such a long time, the word excommunication is still a dread reality to the mind of most Italians, even to the many who laugh at it. It has been a dread inherited from father to son, and continually fostered in the confessionals; enlightenment will remove it by degrees. All that the priests are now able to do with the timid portion of the community is to extract money from the pockets of the latter and stimulate a few to petty acts of spite. Nevertheless, such hostility is very much feared by the national leaders, and they are at present extremely anxious to appease the wrath of the priests by compromise or conciliation for the time being, while leaving with confidence the task of the future to the future. This is the policy that will prevail, for the Italians as a rule are very moderate, and not educated to extreme ideas. The partisans who acknowledge Garibaldi and Mazzini as their leaders, however, cry aloud daily for the suppression of all the religious orders in Rome and the expulsion of the Pope and his Cardinals.

The Parliament has elected its President and secretaries and duly come to work in the new buildings erected for it. The members of the Chamber find their hall at Monte Citorio very uncomfortable just at present, because the fixtures for illuminating and warming it have not yet been got into operation. The delegates, therefore, are compelled to discuss matters with their hats and overcoats on, owing to cold weather, and at 4 p. m. they have to adjourn for the want of light. These inconveniences, as well as others resulting from a bad arrangement of the Committee-rooms, will be soon remedied. It is decided that no great measure of reform, whether as regards the financial or religious questions, will come off before the Christmas holidays are over. Already Victor Emanuel has determined to leave for Turin in order to pass there the coming fête; he is to leave this evening and the royal Princes will remain here to keep Court. The King is not comfortable at Rome at all; the priests add that the air of Rome is bad and will prove unhealthy for all the *bacciovi*, or new comers. Some of the Deputies have also left. The talk about the Pope's leaving is nearly at an end. That he remains in the Vatican is regarded as a triumph for the nation. Pius IX. is in very feeble health, and walks about very little and is unsteady on his legs while in motion. His principal pastime is reading the clerical gazettes, and joking now and then with the visitors who still come to be presented to him from all parts. In his younger and stronger days billiards were his favorite amusement and he was wont to play for hours at a time with his *guardie nobili*. Although always a punster, he never indulged in the trivialities or *bon mots* as the Italians say, of his predecessors, Gregory XVI. had his Cardinals to jump about and roll on the grass of his gardens after the approved fashion of Court buffoons; and during the long Winter evenings they had to go through in the Vatican with many ludicrous games, such as lotteries with ridiculous prizes, tournaments of facetiousness, etc.

On the 1st inst., the International Telegraph Congress assembled here. Their sessions were inaugurated in the hall of the *Conservatori*, at the Capitol, by a speech of Visconti Venosta, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. All the European Governments—the telegraph and posts being in their hands—are officially represented in the Assembly by the chief directors of their telegraphic lines; and the object of the meeting seems to be to discuss modifications of the present systems and to obtain uniformity of rates and general service. The last Congress was held in Vienna, three years ago, and on its adjournment it voted to reassemble at Rome—then, as it were, central territory. They have come to Rome just in the nick of time to witness the act of Italy taking possession. So far, the sessions have been taken up with formalities; but, as the consultations will last several weeks, there will be ample time for work—and good work, it is believed. The city authorities are very busy showing the said Congressmen every attention, and have provided, not only accommodation in the Capitol, but a private debating-hall on the first floor of the Hotel de Minerva, with breakfast, dinner, refreshments, stationery, newspapers and reviews, all at the city's expense. Moreover, three festive entertainments are to be given in honor of the occasion. Evidently, the municipal idea is that our entry into the family of the Great Powers carries with it high duties and responsibilities. The Italian Director of Telegraphs is the President de facto of the body, which is composed as follows: Janco Effendi and Izett Effendi, representatives for Turkey; Mr. Brändström, Sweden; Wladen and Z. Radovcvitch, Servia; Mr. de Luders, Russia; Prince Ghika, Roumania; Valentine Evariste De Riego, Portugal; W. Staring, Holland; Nielson, Norway; Shiodo, Japan; Salachas, Greece; Messrs. Chapman, Robinson, Allan Chamber, England; Allaud, France; Hippolito Araujo, Marquis de Montemar, Spain; Levy, Denmark; Vinchent, Belgium; D'Arg, Hungary; Brunner de Watenure, Austria; De Klein, Wurtemberg; Gumbart, Bavaria; Col. Meidan, Germany. America does not belong to the society. An international organ and permanent office with clerks is kept in Berne, Switzerland. Several representatives of English private companies are here on their own account, but having no vote will not take part in the decisions, and will only enter into the discussions by way of consultation. Prominent among this class is Sir James Anderson, of "Great Eastern" fame. He is President of the Mediterranean Submarine line to Egypt, and connected with many other lines whose interests he has come here to watch over. You know he left the seas for the telegraph business after the laying of the first Atlantic cable, and he is pronounced now by competent persons to be very proficient in the management and construction of telegraphs and cables. He proposes, it is rumored, to put down a cable from Brindisi to Alexandria for the accommodation of the Italian Government, at an expense of $1,500,000, merely to keep up the monopoly of his company in the Mediterranean.

CHICAGO.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE GREAT CHARITY.

APPEARANCE OF THE BURNED DISTRICT—THE PROBLEMS OF THE RELIEF SOCIETY—THE METHODS BY WHICH RELIEF WAS SUPPLIED—RESULTS—THE INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE OF THE APPLICANTS SUSTAINED—MANY NEED NO FURTHER ASSISTANCE.

[FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

CHICAGO, Dec. 15.—Pictures of current events are valuable; statistics are great helps; and able pens have described the extent and horrors of the Chicago fire; but though I had seen all the illustrations, studied the statistics, and read the picturesque letters of Horace White and Fred. Law Olmsted, which rendud me of De Foe in the minuteness of their details, when I drove yesterday over the burned district, I found I had not gained from any or all these sources of information anything like a real impression of the fearful, terrible work of the great fire. The ablest artist cannot give you at a distance an idea of the vast space which has been burned over, and on the greater part of which not even ruins are left, but only insignificant ash-heaps, where before whole blocks and miles of houses stood; while old landmarks, known to the occasional visitor to the city, are in many cases, entirely obliterated. Of the Sherman House, one of the largest hotels, for instance, not even a vestige of wall is left. In fact, no description can take you in detail over the burned city, or impress upon your imagination a destruction which extends not over acres, but miles; and the limits of which your eyes cannot take in from any one point in driving over the charred plain, which still gives out that odious and indescribable smell which comes from the burning and smouldering ruins of human habitations.

WHERE TO GO AFTER REVIEWING THE SCENE.

It was a terrible blow; but Chicago has not lost its presence of mind; and when you have driven about among dreary miles of ash-heaps; when you have seen dozens of costly churches and other public buildings whose walls are still standing, with their interiors so thoroughly "cleaned out" that the fire has hardly left a trace of its own presence except in the blistered and cracked outside walls; when you have seen the ruins of block after block of the most costly dwellings in Chicago, at the North End, where masses of tangled and half-melted gas and water pipes, and perhaps the base of a heavy chimney stack, are the only remains, except a charred lawn, in the midst of which the house stood; when you have passed huge piles of hardware melted together and fit only for the furnace; and have seen even the burned fences and monuments in the old grave-yard which is a part of Lincoln Park; and—what touched me as much as any sight in my drive, the broken pots and kitchen utensils scattered among the burned graves, which mark spots where the poor people brought their few household goods, and camped among the graves, and were driven away even from this last place of refuge by the relentless fire—when you have seen and taken in all this, and return sad and discouraged to your hotel, as I did, and overwhelmed with the impression of the tremendous loss and discouragement of this blow, I advise you to do as I did visit next the barracks where the houseless poor are lodged, the relief stations where they are fed and clothed, and the headquarters of the Relief Committee in Standard Hall where the great work of relieving want and repairing loss is organized, and from which it is directed and administered. You will return encouraged, brightened, cheered, and proud that you are an American, the countryman of these faithful and indomitable men and women, who have stood by the ship, and with many sacrifices of business, leisure, and money, are helping the suffering and disabled, and with the best kind of help, that which helps men to help themselves.

CHARACTER OF THE RELIEF AND AID SOCIETY.

The administration of the large fund which has been raised for the Chicago sufferers has fortunately fallen into the hands of a society chartered and organized like the New-York Society for the Relief of the Poor—the Chicago Relief and Aid Society. This body, which is required to make an annual report to the City Council, and which had for some years the charge of the suffering poor of the city, had for its directors a number of the ablest and more public-spirited citizens. It had a small body of men trained to the work of relieving suffering, and it is now administering its large trust with, as I mean to show in some detail, remarkable ability, wisdom, and thoroughness. It must be remembered that the fire left a great population—over 100,000 persons—not merely homeless and without shelter, but, in the greater number of cases, absolutely without food, almost without clothing; thousands having not even time to dress themselves before leaving their burning houses; without money, or tools, or employment, or the possibility of getting them. So sudden and complete was the deprivation that in some cases men of great wealth were compelled to ask the Relief Committee for a shirt, a coat, or a meal of victuals. A former member of Congress was, I was told, thus indebted to charity for a coat and shirt, and I heard of other cases equally strange. Of course, food, cooked and uncooked, and clothing, came almost at once, and were dealt out to the suffering without loss of time, but next came the money which was to provide for the future—for the Winter which stared 100,000 homeless poor in the face.

After some hesitation the Mayor, Mason, handed over the relief fund, and the whole business of administering it, to the officers of the Chicago Relief and Aid Society, which promptly accepted the charge. It will give you, perhaps, an idea of the confusion which existed when this was done, to mention that when the Mayor sent to Standard Hall, the headquarters of the Society, the sum of between $300,000 and $400,000, which had been sent on in bank notes—checks or drafts being useless at first, as all the banks were burned—Mr. Geo. M. Pullman, the inventor of the Pullman cars, who had been appointed Treasurer of the fund, had this pile of money deposited on the top of a piano in the building where the Society hastily established itself, and with two other members mounted guard over it, until, after some search, a safe was found to lock it up in.

ORGANIZATION FOR THE GREAT EMERGENCY.

The work of administration was put into the hands of an Executive Committee, of which Wirt Dexter, a prominent lawyer, is Chairman; the other members are Col. C. G. Hammond, T. W. Harvey, T. M. Avery, Geo. M. Pullman, Henry W. King, N. K. Fairbank, Dr. H. A. Johnson, and J. McGregor Adams. Committees on shelter, receiving supplies, distributing food and clothing, furnishing employment and transportation, sanitary measures, correspondence, &c., were formed; and thus the work was organized.

Supply and relief stations to the number of eight, I think, were set up in the proper quarters, rude board structures, water-proof and sufficient; the burned district was divided into subdistricts, and posters and handbills in German and English informed the people where they should apply for aid. The following handbill will give you an example of this subdivision:

CHICAGO
RELIEF AND AID SOCIETY,
DISTRICT No. 1.

TERRITORY:
THE ENTIRE NORTH DIVISION.
J. T. CHAMBERLAIN, Superintendent.

SUB-DIST. No. 1.
F. S. HEYWOOD, Superintendent.
All of the territory lying north of North-ave.
Office and Depot at the intersection of Wells and Clark-sts.
All persons in this Sub-District requiring aid will apply at this office.

SUB-DIST. No. 2.
D. W. RICHARDSON, Superintendent.
All of the territory lying south of North-ave.
Office and Depot at the corner of Sedgwick and Division-sts.
All persons in this District requiring aid will apply at this office.
No person will receive aid from any office but that of the Sub-District in which he resides.
O. C. GIBBS,
Gen'l Supt. of the Distribution of Supplies.

A person in want having been directed by the above handbill where to apply, appeared at the office. If his case was evidently urgent, his immediate needs were supplied; but his name and address were at once entered on a slip. These slips were laid in pigeon-holes, for the local visitors. These, each taking a regular and small beat, went out to examine and report upon the actual wants of the applicants. They take with them the following blank:

Name.	Have they any property now?
Present residence.	Were they insured? For what amount?
Former residence	In what Company?
Nationality.	Are they receiving aid from any source?
Present occupation	Do they want work?
Former occupation.	What kind?
Rate of wages now received.	Have they any relatives here or elsewhere?
Married or single.	Are their relatives in condition and disposed to aid them?
Number of children.	Is it a suitable family to be sent out of the city?
Their ages.	Are they willing to go?
How many attend school?	
How many children are employed?	
What is their occupation?	
Total income of family per week?	
Were they burned out?	
Had they any property, personal or real?	

Visitors will write in full upon back of this sheet any additional information that may be obtained.

The local visitors' reports are at once tabulated; those applications which they reject are laid aside for reexamination, if the applicant demands it; and the recommendations are acted upon, by giving to the applicants such checks as these:

CHICAGO RELIEF AND AID SOCIETY.
CHICAGO,.....187
BEDDING.

To Clothing Department:
Deliver to.....
Residing at.....
.....Mattresses. .....Comfortables.
.....Sheets. .....Pillow-cases.
.....Pillows. .....Bed ticks.
.....Blankets.

CHICAGO RELIEF AND AID SOCIETY.
CHICAGO,.....187
WOMEN'S WEAR.

To Clothing Department.
Deliver to.....
Residing at.....
.... Dress. .... Shawl. .... Bonnet. .... Wrappers.
.... Cloak. .... Skirts. .... Sacks. .... Night dresses.
.... Chemise. .... Drawers. .... Aprons. .... Hose.
.... Stockings. .... Shoes. .... Towels. .... Slippers.

And similar forms for boys, girls, and men.

For food, the following is a copy of a printed order, which entitles to a week's ration for a family of, in this case, seven persons:

Form 2.—3. 7. (This means 8th Dec., 7 persons.)
CHICAGO RELIEF AND AID SOCIETY.
CHICAGO, ... 187

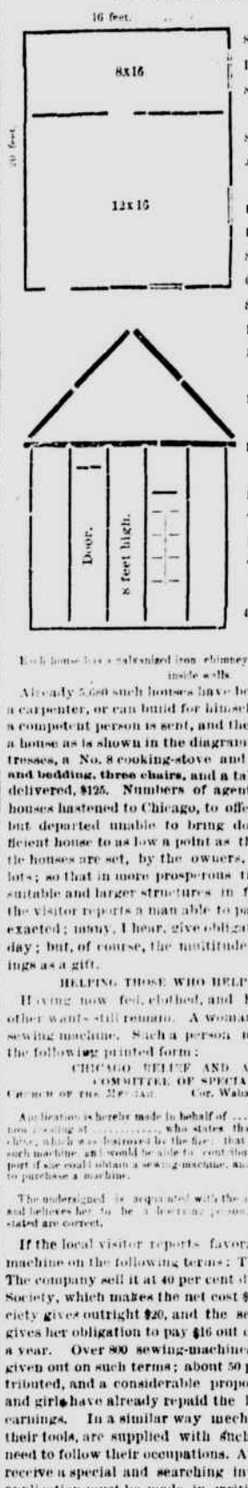
To Storekeeper:
Deliver to .....
Residing at .....
20 lb Flour. .... lb Meat, ... loaves Bread.... lb Crackers.
....Meat. }
4½ lb Salt Pork, } 2½ pecks Potatoes. 2½ lb Rice. 2 lb Soap.
6½ lb Salt Beef and }
8 lb Fresh Beef— }
.... lb Tea. 2 lb Coffee. 2½ lb Sugar. 2½ lb dried Apples.
Superintendent ..... District.

SHELTERING THE HOMELESS.

Thus you will see that, after proper and rigid examination, every actual want was at once supplied, and the family was clothed and had a week's rations. As most of the sufferers were houseless, barracks were hastily erected, and 1,400 families still live in these frame structures. They are long rows, divided into rooms, each about 14 by 17 feet in area. A family occupies one of these rooms; cesspools and privies—the latter separated for men and women—connected with the sewers, are at hand; hydrants at the end of each row furnish abundant water; ventilation is cared for by a large, open space in the ceiling, allowing the bad air to pass into another space above. Through this hole runs the stove pipe, for each family has a cooking-stove, and cooks its own ration. These quarters are vigilantly policed: the children are sent to school if they have no employment, and the able-bodied men are required to work, and to make a return of the number of days in each week in which they have earned wages. If a man has worked three full days, his ration is cut off for the following week. If less than three days, something (but not a full ration) is supplied. If a man reports that he cannot find employment, he is sent to the Committee on Labor, who place him. If no work is ready for him, he is sent to the wood-yard to saw wood, and if he is an idler, he disappears from there, and is no more heard of. Meantime the work of building houses goes on very rapidly. A large proportion of the suffering people owned or leased the lots on which their little homes stood. In such a case the man applies to the Shelter Committee, and if his application is approved by the local visitor, he receives at once an order for the materials marked on the subjoined slip, a copy of which he gets for his own guidance:

SHELTER COMMITTEE.

HOUSE WITH TWO ROOMS.



DIMENSIONS.

Size	16x20
Height of Sides	8 feet
Studs, 16 inches from centers.	

MATERIALS.

Studs.....85 pcs. 2x4	6
Joist for two doors.....22 pcs. 2x6	16
Rafters.....12 pcs. 2x4	12
Plates & Ridge 3 pcs. 2x4	20
Sills.....2 pcs. 2x6	20
Girders.....6 pcs. 2x4	16
Sides.....650 feet 3 ft. boards	
Floor 400 ft. matched boards	
Floor Attic. 350 feet rough boards	
Roof. 3.0 ft. common boards. 10 feet long	
Partition. 200 ft. dressed and matched boards, 8 ft. long	
Battens....85 pcs., 4 ft. long	
Two Doors and Frames	
Door Trimmings.	
Three Windows and Frames, glazed, &c.	
40 lb 10d. Nails. 10 lb 20d. Nails. 7 lb 6d. Nails	

Each house has a galvanized iron chimney, and felt paper lining for inside walls.

Already 5,650 such houses have been built. If a man is a carpenter, or can build for himself, he does it. If not, a competent person is sent, and the owner assists. Such a house as is shown in the diagram costs, with two mattresses, a No. 8 cooking-stove and fixtures, a bed-tead and bedding, three chairs, and a table, all complete and delivered, $125. Numbers of agents of patent portable houses hastened to Chicago, to offer their contrivances, but departed unable to bring down the cost of a sufficient house to as low a point as this. Most of these little houses are set, by the owners, on the back of their lots; so that in more prosperous times they may erect suitable and larger structures in front of them. Where the visitor reports a man able to pay for a house, pay is exacted; many, I hear, give obligations to pay at a future day; but, of course, the multitude receive their dwellings as a gift.

HELPING THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES.

Having now fed, clothed, and housed a family, some other wants still remain. A woman or girl has lost her sewing machine. Such a person makes application in the following printed form:

CHICAGO RELIEF AND AID SOCIETY.
COMMITTEE OF SPECIAL RELIEF.
CHICAGO, ... 187.
Cor. Wabash-ave. and Hubbard Court.

Application is hereby made in behalf of ....., a sewing woman, now residing at ....., who states that she owned a sewing machine, which was destroyed by the fire; that she understands the use of such machine, and would be able to contribute largely to her own support if she could obtain a sewing-machine, and she is destitute of means to purchase a machine.

CHICAGO, ..., 187.

The undersigned is acquainted with the above-named ..... and believes her to be a deserving person, and that the facts above stated are correct.

If the local visitor reports favorably, she receives a machine on the following terms: The machine costs $50. The company sell it at 40 per cent discount to the Relief Society, which makes the net cost $36. Of this the Society gives outright $20, and the sewing girl or woman gives her obligation to pay $16 out of her earnings within a year. Over 800 sewing-machines have already been given out on such terms; about 50 per day are now distributed, and a considerable proportion of the women and girls have already repaid the loan of $16 out of their earnings. In a similar way mechanics, who have lost their tools, are supplied with such as they absolutely need to follow their occupations. Applications for money receive a special and searching investigation, and the application must be made in writing. For money for rent, an equally rigid investigation is made. The food ration for each family is for a week. In the basket containing it, a card is placed, on which is printed in German and English:

"You now have a week's ration for your family; and you can receive no more till one week from this date. Put this food where it will keep dry and in good order."

At first, of course, not a few were improvident, and ran out of food before the week was over. In such cases, they receive, after investigation, a part of the ration for the remaining term, with a warning to be more careful. The coal ration is for a month. It was foreseen that there must be cases which would not come under any of the departments I have described. For instance, a poor woman before the fire kept a boarding-house. If she could be reëstablished, she could earn her own living, give employment to one or two servants, and supply homes to a number of unmarried workingmen, her former boarders. She has found a house, but has no furniture; and it is plain that a small sum would here be well laid out. For such cases, the gift of Mr. A. T. Stewart of New-York has been reserved; and from his $50,000, a special committee, having her case approved, advances her perhaps $75 worth of furniture. This Stewart fund is used chiefly for the relief of working women and girls.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT—NATIONALITIES OF SUFFERERS.

Finally I come to the medical department. A medical staff was organized by engaging at $50 per month each 30 physicians who had been burned out, to act under the orders of the head of this department. Dispensaries and hospitals were speedily run up, and in each subdistrict the destitute are publicly notified where to apply for medical aid. During week before last 6,000 persons were healed by the medical corps, and last week the cases were 30 per cent less than the previous week. Dispensaries supply the medicines gratuitously, and so thorough and able is this service that there has been no epidemic; there has been but one death in the barracks among 7,200 people, and at one range of barracks which I visited I found the hospital empty. The whole medical corps meets daily for report and consultation.

A census of the dependent population has been taken, from which the following details of origin will perhaps interest you: There have been 18,478 families relieved. If you count five to a family, and I found 13 in one family in the barracks, and seven each in several instances, you get a total of 92,390 persons. This excludes single persons and those who have been sent away, as I understand it. Of the persons relieved, 7,280 are Germans. It was the German quarter which suffered most from the fire. There are 5,517 Irish, 2,101 Scandinavians; 1,724 Americans, 500 English, 195 Scotch, 208 Bohemians; 241 Colored; 185 French, and 23 nationalities are represented among the destitute.

GENERAL RESULTS.

To permanently house a family of five, including necessary furniture, costs $125. The weekly food ration for a family of five, costs $1 96, which is less than six cents per day for each person. The fuel ration for the same costs $1 12 per week. Thus for $3 10 a family of five is warmed and fed.

There are fortunately no soup houses nor public bakeries; each family cooks for itself, and the cooking-stove warms the house, or room in the barrack. It results that the women and girls are busy cooking, washing, and ironing; that all are made provident by having to manage their own weekly ration; and that I saw in the burned quarter not a single idle person, except a few boys, who were playing, it being after school hours. Every kind of help is delivered at stated hours; a telegraph connects the headquarters in Standard Hall with every depot and office of the Society, so that when one applies for relief, he has not to run about to get what he wants. He may go home or about his work, confident that relief will come at once; no time is lost by the agents of the Society, who communicate by telegraph; and at headquarters, every evening, a tabulated report shows what has been expended during the day, for what purpose, at each station; as well as the sanitary condition and the comfort of the whole population receiving relief. So complete is the system, that during the recent severely cold weather only one case of frost-bite occurred, and that was to the child of a drunken mother, who neglected it herself. There is no idleness, that I could see; drunkenness has actually and considerably decreased; crime and offenses against the law have—so Mr. White of *The Tribune* assured me—decreased; immorality has been successfully guarded against; and what seems to me of the utmost importance, the self-respect of the people is not touched. They are helped to help themselves. The Relief Society is not making paupers. Every week families become self-supporting, and are struck off the lists. The vigilance of the local visiting agents, who are salaried men, is constantly on the alert. At one supply station nearly a third of the applicants for relief had been rejected. Wherever a man has work the ration is discontinued; if he will not work he gets nothing, and sawing wood in the Society's wood-yard is the final test of his willingness.

NOTABLE FEATURES—THE PEOPLE BECOME SELF-SUPPORTING.

The notable features of the system which has been and is so entirely satisfactory seem to me these:

(1.) All the subordinates and agents are paid, and may therefore be summarily dismissed, and must rigorously obey orders. (2.) The whole system rests upon the constant vigilance of the local visiting agents, upon whose report all supplies are given out. These visitors have small beats, and make several reports daily. (3.) The women and girls are kept busy at their housekeeping, and the employment committee sets the men at work. Thus idleness and improvidence are discouraged, and the ration being for a week, each family must manage its own supplies. (4.) The telegraph saves an immense loss of time. (5.) Daily and tabulated reports enable the Executive Committee to keep their whole work in hand, and to meet every emergency. (6.) Independent inspectors, persons of prominence in society, continually inspect the whole work of the paid agents, and make independent reports to headquarters. (7.) Finally, all is pervaded by an anxious care that the people shall not become dependent or paupers; and that while all shall be comfortable, every family shall feel the absolute necessity of becoming independent. It results from this, I think, that I found the people everywhere, in the barracks, cheerful, and making the best of a hard lot, expecting presently to have a home and support themselves. Of all I spoke with, I found but one despondent; she was a native of Luxemburg, and when she found I spoke German her tongue was loose, and I had to hear in detail the story of her hard fate. Poor creature: she had come over, with her family, during the present year. She spoke no English. Her greatest fear seemed to be lest I should think that her cracked cooking-stove had been given her. No, she saved it from her burning house; and when I explained this to my companions, even she seemed less despondent.

I ought perhaps to add that the Executive Committee, who have so ably organized and managed this work, receive no pay. Its chairman, Mr. Wirt Dexter, has abandoned his law practice for the time, to give his whole time to this work; and the other gentlemen of the Committee, all busy men, have in like manner surrendered themselves to this humane effort. Their wise and rigid management has kept the cost of administration down to 7½ per cent of the amount expended, which is an incredibly small proportion, when the details of the work are considered. The relief fund is distributed among the banks, and draws 5 per cent interest on the daily balance.

Finally, send no old clothes. They are, as a rule, not worth the cost of transportation. C. S.

GENERAL NOTES.

There is nothing like putting things strongly. The people of Lynn, Mass., having risen in rebellion against the miserable quality of the gas furnished them, the Corporation publishes a card in which it is stated that the trouble has arisen from "an unforseen oversight," a kind of optical phenomenon curious enough to account for anything.

Whatever books can do for a people, will be done for the people of Massachusetts. We have to record the opening of still another