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AN IRON CHURCH BURNED.

THE BROOKLYN TABERNACLE IN RUINS.

RESULTS OF DEFECTIVE FLUES AND DELAY IN GIVING THE ALARM—THE JUBILEE ORGAN DESTROYED—LOSS ABOUT $80,000.

The Brooklyn Tabernacle, the Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage's church, situated in Schermerhorn-st., near Third-ave., was burned yesterday morning. The fire was first discovered at about 9:30 a. m., by the assistant sexton, in the flue at the south-east corner of the front vestibule of the church. He immediately rang the bell, while the sexton started for the house of Mr. Corwin, one of the trustees, opposite the church. These, with others who had run in, began to fight the fire with pails of water and a small hose, but the flames increased and worked up rapidly. They then set about removing things from the church, carrying out the books, cushions, stools, and nearly everything portable.

As far as could be learned no word was sent to the Fire Department for some time, and it was nearly half an hour after the discovery of the fire before the alarm was sounded from the City Hall. In a few minutes a steam fire engine arrived, followed quickly by others, and soon seven streams were brought to bear upon the front of the building and five upon the rear. The first, however, was applied to saving from destruction the adjoining three-story wooden dwelling, No. 353 Schermerhorn-st., which overlooked the Tabernacle, and was considered in great danger. The flames were thus prevented from spreading in this direction, which was in the immediate path of the wind, at the time blowing very briskly from north-west. The inmates, however, removed their furniture from the house till the danger was over.

RAPID MARCH OF THE FLAMES.

Upon the arrival of the firemen, the fire was still confined to the vestibule, but in a few minutes, with great rapidity, the flames burst into the auditorium, ran up the wall, and along the ceiling, and the whole interior was soon enveloped. The windows being mainly in the upper walls, the firemen could only bring streams to bear directly on a small portion of the burning building through the few which opened on the roofs of the single-storied corner wings. The effect of these streams was slight, however, and the firemen were only able to confine the flames to the interior. The roof fell in early, and the flames rose through the opening with great fierceness, so that serious apprehensions were entertained for some time of their spreading with the wind and causing an extensive conflagration. This was happily averted, however, by the exertions of the firemen, who kept the neighboring buildings saturated with water. The walls, too, aided materially in confining the fire to the interior, standing firm for a considerable time.

The fire raged here, however, almost unchecked for a long time, the streams directed upon it from above through the front windows appearing to have very little effect, and the flames rapidly fastening upon everything combustible which the firemen were unable to reach. The timbers, as they caught fire, gave way, and let the wall fall piece by piece, the bell-tower going first, at about 10:30 a. m., and other portions of the front following soon after. While the firemen in front were throwing water into the building from above, the flames began to creep rapidly along the ceiling of the south-western wing, and threatened to engulf the men who were at work upon the roof. Men shouted to them, "Come down," but they remained at their post. One of the lines of hose was soon brought down, and a stream was directed upon the lower part of the building. This was done first through the front windows, but to so little advantage that the door opening into the western passage was broken in and the hose taken inside. Here the water did good service, quickly extinguishing the flames and saving the roof, so that those above worked away without danger. This also enabled the firemen to reach the fire below, where they did good service. The flames were driven back gradually, and a stream was brought to bear upon the interior with excellent effect. By 11:30 a. m. the fire was under pretty good control, and the work of extinguishing it proceeded rapidly. Portions of the wall which were still standing were then pulled down to afford access to the burning timbers, and the wreck of the structure was thus completed. During the afternoon the fire still smoldered, and several streams were kept playing on the ruins until it was completely quenched. The inflammable nature of the building and the peculiar method of its construction rendered the task of the firemen a difficult one, however, and it early became evident that they could not save it from complete destruction. The air was bitterly cold and the men suffered considerably, when not in immediate contact with the fire. Many were completely drenched with water, which quickly froze on their clothing.

DELAY IN MAKING THE ALARM.

W. J. Crouch, who lives in a frame-house next door to the Tabernacle, told a TRIBUNE reporter that about 9:30 a. m. yesterday he heard the church bell ringing with rapid strokes very unlike the summons to church service; and, rushing out he saw a dense smoke issuing from the south-east flue. The sexton ran out of the church, crying that it was on fire, and that he was going to get Mr. Corwin, one of the trustees. By the time Mr. Corwin arrived, Mr. Crouch had entered the church with an ax and tried to cut through the iron casing to the flue. When an opening was made it was found that the woodwork between the two sheets of iron was all in flames, which at this time began to pour out at the roof. The sexton tried to use some hose from a railroad stable, but without effect. In his opinion the fire was then too far under way to be checked, even if the steam-engines had been on hand; but there was so much delay in sending to the police station that it was fully half an hour from the discovery of the fire before the general alarm was sounded and the engines were on the ground. Indeed, one hook-and-ladder company received information of the fire and had arrived at the scene before the first fire alarm was struck. Mr. Crouch had feared that his own house would be burned, as it was close to the church; and the iron walls, which were helpless to save the church, afforded a protection to its neighbors, and his house was unsinged by fire, though somewhat damaged by water.

ZINC FLUES CASED IN WOOD.

Mr. Randall, who was sexton of the church when the Tabernacle was built, described to the reporter the construction of the flues. They were square, and constructed of thin zinc; inside of these were round sheet iron pipes for conveying the smoke and gas. The zinc flues were cased in wood, on which the corrugated iron was fastened. If the iron pipes became disjointed or bent so as to come in contact with the zinc, there was nothing to prevent the wood work from catching fire when the furnaces were under full blast.

A gentleman standing near told the reporter that at the time of building the church proposals were invited for constructing the flues, and the contract was given to the lowest bidder. One of the defeated applicants said to him, when the terms were made public, that they could not be safely built for the amount named, and that there would be a fire in that church some time.

Mr. Shotwell, the sexton, was found in the old church, now used for Sunday-school services and prayer meetings. He was carefully piling up the cushions which had been rescued from the burning Tabernacle. He said that the fires in the furnaces were never allowed to go out during the cold weather, and that in the furnace from which the fire caught, the fire had been going since early in November, so that no wood or kindling had been used in it for more than a month. At 6:30 a. m., yesterday, he shook down the fires and put on fresh coal. They were then all in good order. About 9:30 a. m. he was dusting the church furniture, when his assistant went out in front of the church and saw smoke coming out of the south-east flue, and returned saying that there was a fire. Mr. Shotwell at once rushed for Mr. Corwin, a trustee, while Mr. Earle rang a quick alarm on the church bell. He soon returned with Mr. Corwin, and they tried to get at the fire and put it out with hose from a stable. They sent to the Tenth Precinct Station-House and gave the alarm. He thought it would take ten minutes to reach the station-house from the church, and he did not know that there was a fire-alarm box in that neighborhood. The church cushions, books, lamps, &c., were mostly saved. The communion service was not kept in the church. Mr. Shotwell had been under the impression that the zinc flues were cased in brick, but supposed that Mr. Randall knew more about it.

Police Captain Cassidy of the Tenth Precinct told a reporter that there was no delay in sending the engines to the fire after information was received at the station. He did not know how much delay there had been before that; but the alarm on the church bell was utterly useless; no one would know that it was a fire alarm, and the firemen would take no notice of it.

THE CHURCH.

The Tabernacle was completed in September two years ago. It was constructed with a wooden frame, sheathed within and without with corrugated iron, and portions filled in with brick. A solid brick wall formed the rear. The main part was nearly circular, with small, low wings at either corner in front, and an ornamental projection forming the main vestibule. The external appearance of the structure was unique for a church, but rather attractive. The auditorium was very large, and, with the galleries, was capable of seating about 3,000 persons, with standing room for 500 more. All the internal fittings, including a number of strong columns, were of inflammable material, and served well to feed the flames; in fact, there appears to have been very little about the building that did not burn readily, except the shell, which protected rather than hindered the fire.

The complete destruction in less than an hour of an iron building excited no little comment among members of the congregation and spectators generally. One gentleman remarked that it was just like a sheet-iron stove filled with kindlings. The appearance of the ruins showed that there were very few bricks between the interior and exterior walls, the space being almost entirely filled up with wooden joists and beams, which burned like tinder in a strong draft.

THE JUBILEE ORGAN.

The organ, which was built for the first Boston Jubilee in 1869, was destroyed. It is said to have cost originally $25,000, but was purchased by Mr. Talmage's congregation for $7,000. Various alterations, however, were found necessary, and were made at an expense of $5,000. The changes were supervised by George W. Morgan, the organist.

The organ did not contain a very great variety of stops, but they were of great force, so that it was considered the most powerful organ in the country. The few solo stops on the swell organ were of a remarkably fine quality, and the mechanical arrangements were such as to give full scope to the player, allowing him the entire range from the loudest stop combinations to the very softest, by the moving of a single pedal. The organ was built by Mr. Hook of Boston, and at the time it was used at the Jubilee was blown by three hydraulic pressure engines. It was insured for $15,000. Mr. Morgan lost a valuable collection of music, which he cannot replace.

THE LOSSES.

The loss is estimated by Mr. Rowan, clerk of the church, at about $75,000 on the building and furniture; insurance, $45,000. This, he stated, was distributed as follows:

On the building—Phenix of Brooklyn, $10,000; Long Island, $2,500; Humboldt of New-York (guaranteed by reinsurance in another company), $2,500; Ætna of Hartford, Conn., $5,000; Firemen's Trust of Brooklyn, $10,000; total, $30,000.

On the furniture—Guardian of New-York, $5,000; New-York and Yonkers, $5,000; Standard of New-York, $5,000.

The fire having been confined wholly to the Tabernacle, the adjoining property was not materially injured. The furniture, however, from No. 353 Schermerhorn-st., suffered considerable damage from water and rough handling in removing, and the coal sheds in the rear, owned by William Spence, were more or less injured. This loss was not ascertained, but a few hundred dollars will probably cover it.

REBUILDING ON THE SAME PLAN.

A TRIBUNE reporter called on the Rev. Mr. Talmage, yesterday afternoon, at No. 227 Quincy-st., to obtain information of the plans of his congregation for the future. Mr. Talmage was very cheerful and communicative on the subject. He said, in reply to an inquiry:

"Well! Its gone up in a chariot of fire, like Elijah. It is quite a loss to us, but we shall rebuild at once on the same spot, and probably in the same style. We shall worship to-night at Plymouth Church, and if my people and Mr. Beecher's all come we shall have a crowd. Before the building was half burned we received an invitation from Mr. Beecher and his trustees to use their church in the evenings until we could rebuild. We had an informal meeting of trustees in the old church, and before the service in Plymouth Church was through they had received a reply that we would use their church this evening, at least. We also received an offer of Dr. Duryea's and Dr. Cuyler's churches, and half a dozen others. We hope, however, to get the Academy of Music until we shall be able to rebuild, for both morning and evening service, and a committee was authorized at once to make negotiations. The Academy is one of the best buildings now in the city for the purpose, but is not equal to our church, which in all its arrangements was unsurpassed. Miss Charlotte Cushman who read in it a short time ago and all speakers who have tried it, have expressed the opinion that it could not have been improved in its acoustic properties. An ordinary conversational tone reached every person in the house, in which 4,000 people could be and frequently were packed.

Mr. Talmage was asked if he thought corrugated iron would be used in this new building. He replied that he thought so. The fact was, in his opinion, that nothing was proof against fire. He had recently come from Chicago, and there he heard of stone buildings melting like wax before the flames. However the fire in the Tabernacle may have originated, he thought its fate would have been the same if it had been built of wood or stone. The style of the church may have seemed eccentric to outsiders, but he liked it. A man is pleased, or ought to be, with the appearance of his own wife, whatever others think of her. So it was with him and his people in their opinion of their house of worship. All its arrangements were harmonious and conducive to sociability; everything was in circles. He thought the new house would be nearly a fac simile of the old.

Mr. Talmage arrived home only Saturday night, from a two weeks' lecturing tour, and though he expected to be cordially received, he did not anticipate, he said, so warm a reception.

SERVICES IN THE EVENING.

Notwithstanding the exceedingly cold weather, the announcement that Mr. Talmage would preach at Plymouth Church, last evening, brought together a large congregation, and long before the services began, every available seat in the building was occupied. In the course of his remarks Mr. Talmage said:

In the village where I once lived, on a cold night, there was a cry of fire. House after house was consumed. But there was in the village a large hospitable dwelling, and as soon as the people were burned out they came into this common center. The good man at the house stood at the door and said, "Come in," and the little children, as they were brought to the door, some of them wrapped in blankets and shawls, were taken up to bed, and the old people that came in from their consumed dwellings were seated around the fire. And the good man of the house told them that all would be well.

This is a very cold day to be burned out, house and home. But we come into this hospitable home to-night, and gather around this great warm fire of Christian kindness and love, and it is good to be here. The Lord built the Tabernacle and the Lord let it burn down. Blessed be the name of the Lord! We don't feel like sitting down in discouragement, although the place was very dear. Our hearts there were filled with comfort, and to us, many a time, did Jesus appear, His face radiant as the sun. To-day, when the Christian sympathy came in from Plymouth Church, and from 10 other churches of the city, all offering their houses of worship to us, I must say that it became very damp weather about the eyelashes. Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. If anybody tells you that there is no kindness between churches, and no such thing as Christian brotherhood, tell him he lies.

I find amid the sorrows of the day one extreme congratulation. I thank God that the fire took place when it did and not an hour later. Had it come an hour later, many who are here to-night—I will not finish that. I shall say to you to-night what I would have said this morning if my pulpit had not been taken away, but before I go on I will say, God bless you every one.

At the conclusion of his sermon Mr. Talmage read the following names of congregations that had offered the use of their buildings: Plymouth, Lafayette-ave., Classon-ave., Clinton-ave., Elm Place, First Baptist, First Presbyterian and Second Presbyterian Churches.

THE FIRE MARSHAL'S INVESTIGATION.

Fire-Marshal Keady began an investigation and took the testimony of the two men who were in the church when the fire broke out. The fire was undoubtedly caused by a defective flue.

William Earl testified, in part: I live at No. 3 Putnam-ave., and am employed in the Rev. Dr. Talmage's Tabernacle as assistant sexton; I went on duty at 8 a. m. at the Tabernacle; I filled up two of the furnaces, and Mr. Shotwell, the sexton, filled up the other two; I filled up the back furnaces; I was at the pulpit when I discovered the fire; I said to Mr. Shotwell "here is a fire;" the fire was then in the floor on the south-east corner of the building; the flames burst out suddenly; there were four furnaces, two large and two small ones, in the church; the large ones were in front and the small ones in the rear; the flues from one of the large furnaces led to where the fire was; when I first saw the fire it was in the chimney near the ground floor of the church; I called Mr. Shotwell's attention, and he said, "ring the bell;" he rang the bell first, and then I rang it and gave the alarm; he did not attempt to put out the fire before giving the alarm; the first effort to put out the fire was made by Mr. Shotwell and one of the trustees, Mr. Corwin; it was up about eight feet then; I ran into the old church and got two pails and took them into the church, and turned on the water in one of the little rooms; other men carried out the water—about twenty pails; the bell was still ringing; I heard some one say that the bell-rope broke; the fire spread rapidly; it broke out at 9:35 by the church clock; the members had not yet come to service; I had not seen the furnace leading to that flue; I do not know whether or not there was more than one furnace pipe leading into that flue; I have only been employed in the church two weeks; the fires were burning slowly all night; nobody sleeps in the church at night; the fires are regulated to run all night; do not know how long it was after the alarm was given before the firemen arrived, but think it was about 20 minutes; do not know anything about the construction of the flue or the origin of the fire.

William B. Shotwell, the sexton, testified: I live at No. 319 Livingston-st., and was in the church this morning when the fire broke out; Mr. Earl said, "here is a fire," and we saw a large volume of smoke in the ceiling; I started to look for the fire, and it burst out in a flame from the south-east flue of the church, the corner of the front vestibule; there was a large furnace pipe leading into that flue; the furnace is called "Littlefield's Base-Burner," and was put in when the church was built; I came to the church about 6 o'clock this morning to see to the fires; I found them all doing well; the furnaces were about a quarter full of coal; I took particular notice of them and shook them down and put into each of the front furnaces about eight or ten scoops full of coal, just to start them; when I had put them in proper burning order by closing the top slide, shutting the top door, and opening the bottom draft, I left the cellar and went home to breakfast; I was absent about 20 minutes or half an hour; I did not look at the fire when I came back, but went to put things in order about the pulpit; I was dusting off the keyboard of the organ when my attention was called to the fire; the flue was built of brick, covered over with corrugated sheet iron, and had still another round flue in the center, inside of the brick square flue; the fire seemed to have caught where the flue passed through the woodwork; it seemed to be above the floor; the flue itself seemed to be on fire; it was trimmed with a wooden base, and I think there was a small cornice on the corner near the ceiling; I gave the alarm at once, and then went for one of the trustees, leaving the assistant sexton ringing the bell; we kept the doors closed; I have been sexton about 12 months, and never had a fire in the building before; we had the furnaces cleaned out last Fall.

IRON TINDER BOXES.

In connection with this fire, so completely destructive to a building popularly supposed to be secure against such a danger, it is interesting to know that this style of structure has never been approved by insurance men, and that this selfsame Tabernacle has only very recently been expressly condemned by Mr. Kingsland, the Surveyor of the Underwriters' Association. Mr. Kingsland stated that these corrugated iron buildings had never been in favor with him, as he considered them far less proof against fire than any other kind of structure, with the exception, perhaps, of wooden buildings. Referring to the several churches which have been erected, or are now building in this city and Brooklyn, he said that he considered their chances of resisting fire to be very slight indeed, as the heat would immediately ignite the wood, and the walls would certainly go down. Even a fire on the opposite side of the street to these buildings, if of any extent, would heat the plates so that they would set the wood-work in flames. As an illustration of this view, he cited the case of a large slaughter-house at First-ave. and Forty-fifth-st., which he described as going off like a kindling-wood box covered with tin, the iron plates curling up and cracking off on both sides, and the walls disappearing as if by magic. He expressed the opinion that some of these churches would some day follow.

Other prominent insurance men have given utterance to the same views, and it is reported that the rates will be increased between 40 and 50 per cent.

CRIMINAL EPISODES.

A SERIES OF ASSAULTS AND ROBBERIES.

Elisha C. Gregory, age 31, proprietor of "Canterbury Varieties Theater," in Broadway, near Bleecker-st., was arrested by Police Captain Byrnes, on Saturday night, for attempting the life of George Wilcox, a newspaper reporter, at the Grand Central Hotel. Gregory accused Wilcox of having written an article severely reflecting upon the resort kept by himself. Wilcox denied this, and Gregory struck him in the face. He retreated to the barber-shop of the hotel, followed by Gregory who drew a revolver, and threatened to kill him. The assailant slipped and fell, and the revolver being accidentally discharged, Theodore Wilson of No. 40 West Houston-st., who was leaving the shop, received the bullet in one of his toes. Gregory then attempted to escape by a rear entrance, where he was arrested. The prisoner shot and severely wounded a young man in Bleecker-st., without provocation a few months ago. His "theater," which was formerly known as the Canterbury Concert Saloon, is operated on the strength of a theater license. After the saloon had been summarily closed by the police, Gregory built a small stage at one end of the hall, where indecent dancing has since taken place nightly.

BLOODSHED IN A BALL-ROOM.

A general fight occurred at a ball in Newman's Hall, No. 475 Ninth-ave., at 2:30 a. m. on Saturday, in consequence of a gang of rowdies having forcibly entered the place against the desire of the managers. Roundsman Meade and three officers of the Twentieth Precinct, who were summoned by the proprietors of the hall to quell the disturbance, were violently attacked by the ruffians, with drinking-glasses, bottles, and other missiles. Several pistol-shots were fired during the struggle. By vigorously using their clubs the officers mastered their assailants, and arrested Barney Kiernan and Thomas Keirns, the ringleaders, who are known as dangerous persons. It was afterward found that Kiernan had been shot through the leg during the fight. The officers were all severely cut in the faces with the glasses hurled by the rioters, and were also badly bruised. The prisoners were committed, at the Jefferson Market Police Court, in default of bail, and Capt. McElwain is seeking their confederates.

LOTTERY EPILOGUES.

The funeral of Nicholas B. Duryea, the lottery dealer, who was hacked to death with a bowie-knife in the hands of John E. Simmons, also a lottery dealer, in Liberty-st., on Monday evening, took place on Saturday from the Dutch Reformed Church at Port Richmond, S. I., where the deceased resided. The pastor, the Rev. Dr. Brownlee, officiated, and was assisted by the Rev Dr. Smith of the Congregational Church of Plainfield, N. J. The pastor eulogized the deceased as a charitable citizen who had been an attentive and regular attendant at his church. At the close of the services the remains, which were inclosed in an expensive rosewood casket, heavily mounted with silver, and profusely decorated with flowers and Masonic emblems, were conveyed to Greenwood for interment. The funeral cortege was headed by Richmond Lodge, No. 66, F. and A. M., six of whose members acted as pall-bearers. Delegations from Excelsior Lodge, No. 195, and from the Neptune Social Club, were also present. At Hamilton Ferry the procession was received and escorted to the Cemetery by a delegation from Excelsior Lodge.

Simmons is still under treatment at the Park Hospital for his fractured ankle, and is constantly guarded by officers, night and day. Dr. Amabile thinks that his patient will be able to leave the hospital to-morrow. The day for the inquest has not yet been designated.

Charles Johnson, age 50, a lottery dealer at No. 2 First-st., who boarded at No. 77 Fourth-st., committed suicide, near the Dairy, in Central Park, on Saturday afternoon, by shooting himself through the head with a Derringer pistol. He had been engaged in the "policy" business, in various parts of the city, during several years. About 18 months ago his wife and his only son died, and he has since been depressed in mind. This, with bad business prospects, may have been the incentive to self-destruction.

MR. STEWART UNINJURED.

A report was widely circulated in the streets yesterday that Mr. A. T. Stewart had, on the night previous, fallen in front of his new house and severely fractured a leg. A reporter of THE TRIBUNE called at Mr. Stewart's residence last evening, and was informed that no such mishap had occurred, nor was there any foundation for the rumor of the accident.

THE ERIE TRANSFERS.

The officials of the Erie Railway Company, in conjunction with Jay Gould, were busy on Saturday in consummating the transfer of the property to the Company, at the office of S. L. M. Barlow, in William-st. The transfer of the Opera House was completed, Mrs. James Fisk, jr., having formally relinquished her interests in it.

TELEGRAPHIC NOTES.

....Feucht & Lenckhardt's grocery store in Front-st., Memphis, was destroyed by fire, yesterday. Loss, $20,000.

....Mrs. Samuel Knox, residing on Walnut-st., Harrisburg, Penn., was killed, yesterday, by the explosion of a cooking range, the water-pipes having frozen.

....The hot-water boiler attached to the kitchen-range in Col. Moulton's house at Cincinnati, exploded yesterday, nearly killing Kate Connor, one of the servants.

....Mr. Odo Russell, the British Embassador at Berlin, gave a ball last week, at which there was a brilliant gathering. Prince Bismarck and other notabilities were present.

....A cable dispatch has been received in Boston from Capt. Dawes of the ship Matchless of that city, stating that the ship is safe at Shields, the recent report of her loss, with all on board, being entirely erroneous.

....A locomotive became disabled between Goshen and Warsaw, Indiana, on the Cincinnati, Wabash and Michigan Railroad, Saturday night, and the engineer and fireman, in attempting to reach a residence a mile distant, were frozen to death.

....The main 24-inch water-pipe on East Merrimac-st., Lowell, burst yesterday, filling to overflowing the cellars in the brick block occupied by H. M. & J. Rice, provision dealers, and L. Emerson, grocer. That portion of the city known as "Belvidere" is cut off from a supply of water.

....An explosion at the Hercules Powder Works, six miles from San Francisco, Saturday afternoon, killed two Chinese workmen, one of them being blown to atoms. William Cook, the foreman, was seriously injured afterward by the burning acids. It is stated that the explosion was caused by his intoxication.

....Indian Agent Tatum writes, under date of Dec. 9, that Mow Way, Parry Ocoon, and Tabeaness, head Chiefs of roving bands, have all come to the Kiowa Reservation, Indian Territory; that all the Chiefs and many of the head men have been to see him, and that they expressed their intention to comply with the requirements of the Government, as expressed by Commissioner Walker to the delegates who recently visited Washington.

WASHINGTON.

FINANCIAL MEASURES.

AN OLD SCHEME REVIVED—RESUMPTION STILL DISTANT.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22.—The financial bills introduced thus far during the present session present no new features. A few old projects have been revived with slight variations of detail. The most noteworthy among these is the plan of the convertibility of greenbacks into 3-65 bonds and vice versa, in order to secure an elastic circulating medium and at the same time relieve the Government from the stigma of partially repudiating one class of its obligations by providing no way by which its notes can be redeemed. This plan, first broached three or four years ago, appears to be growing in favor. There will be no time for its thorough discussion this Winter, but it will find strong support in the next Congress. Another project emanates from the banks, which have long been anxious to obtain interest on the whole or some portion of the greenback reserves that the law obliges them to keep in their vaults. There is such a general belief among the people that the banks with their present privileges make enormous profits, that Congressmen do not appear to venture to approach this object directly, but attempt to accomplish it by indirection in bills whose titles do not indicate their real purpose. Two or three of the kind are now pending, but are not likely to be discussed this session out of the committee rooms.

No new plan for the resumption of specie payments has been introduced; indeed, there is much less talk about resumption than there was two years ago. The people who want a sound, redeemable currency are the laborers, the artisans, and the farmers; and these have not got the ear of Congress like the bankers and the trading and speculating classes. Until the great moneyed and mercantile interests want specie payments it is quite certain that Congress will do nothing in that direction. The question will hardly be seriously mentioned this Winter.

SOCIAL LIFE IN WASHINGTON.

STATE SOCIABLES—DEMOCRATIC AMUSEMENTS.

[FROM A REGULAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21.—The State sociables have been revived. The Pennsylvanians lead off, the New-Yorkers and Ohioans come next, and the other States will soon follow. These sociables are a unique feature of Washington society life. They are given by associations composed of department officials, clerks, and other Government employés living in the city. These organizations have a double purpose. They make inquisition into the political faith of all persons holding office in Washington from their respective States, to see if there be any Democrats, Liberals, or other political heretics among them; they aid in the distribution of documents, levy assessments, and obtain leaves of absence and half-fare on the railways to enable their members to go to their former homes and vote. But when the work of the campaign is over and the victory won, the members' thoughts turn from politics to the milder excitement of the quadrille and the German, and their partisan organizations are converted into pleasant social coteries. Each engages a hall and a band, provides a supper, and hospitably invites all citizens of its State to come in and have a good time, charging them a small admission fee to pay expenses. The principal Northern States have each an association. The New-England States join together, and all the Southern States furnish only Republicans enough for a single society. The sociables of each society usually occur at intervals of a fortnight or three weeks, but there are so many associations that there is fiddling and dancing going on the whole Winter long, and as it is the custom for people from one State to invite their friends from another to come to their sociables, the friends of course returning the compliment, there is no end of opportunities for those who are fond of such festivities to pass their evenings in dancing and chat. Nothing could be much more democratic than these affairs. The political importance of the associations secures the occasional attendance of the President and Cabinet, and Congressmen are always present in goodly numbers. Mingled with these dignitaries are poor clerks and messengers, who never owned a dress coat in their lives, and whose sensible wives make no attempt to keep up with the fashions. For the time they are as good as anybody. Poor Jones of the Tenth Auditor's Office, who makes shift to live on $1,200 a year, takes in his ungloved hands the white kids of the Cabinet Minister's wife, in "turning corners" in the "Lancers," and Mrs. Jones, who has carefully darned her old black silk for the occasion, is made happy by a polka with a Congressman or a waltz with an attaché of some foreign legation. There is perfect freedom of dress. Plain walking suits mingle with elegant *robes de bal*, and rusty frock coats with the latest cut of swallow-tails.

Whatever may be thought of the political feature of these State associations, in their social phase they are entirely commendable. They foster a love of one's native State—a kind of patriotism which, perhaps, needs cultivation amid the strong centralizing tendencies that now prevail. They promote friendships between people of common nativity, engaged in the common business of serving the Government, and they no doubt create to some extent that *esprit du corps* which makes men take pride in the faithful performance of duty. Besides, they afford harmless and pleasant social diversion, at small expense, to many who without them would have few opportunities for such enjoyment.

CURRENT TOPICS AT THE CAPITAL.

THE ARKANSAS TROUBLES.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22, 1872.

The Attorney General said, to-day, that the Government has no present intention of interfering in the Arkansas troubles. It is not expected that anything of a serious character will occur until the meeting of the Legislature on the first Monday in January. Both of the Senators from Arkansas have had frequent interviews with the Attorney-General with reference to the differences, and, as might be expected, Mr. Clayton tells one story and Mr. Rice another. The Attorney-General will give no indication of what his action will be in case of a disturbance, but will simply wait and pursue such a course as may seem wisest at the time. Both Senators have taken their departure. Senator Harlan's paper, in an article deprecating the prominent part played by Federal officials in Southern elections, says: "It is time that some of these men learned that they can better serve the country and promote the success of Republicanism by contenting themselves with the duties of Federal officers and not seeking State positions."

ANOTHER CREDIT MOBILIER RUMOR.

It is reported that among the documentary evidence laid before the Crédit Mobilier Committee by Col. McComb is a letter from Oakes Ames to the late Senator Grimes, who was a large holder of the stock, and, it appears, wished to dispose of some, informing him that it could be sold at $450 a share. This letter was written, it is said, about the time Ames was furnishing stock to members of Congress at $100 a share.

WASHINGTON NOTES.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22, 1872.

Senator Sumner will remain in Washington during the recess, and give himself up entirely to the treatment of his physician. He has been much more comfortable for a day or two past than before since his return. He has not yet prepared his speech on his resolution to leave the names of the battles of the Rebellion from regimental flags and the army register, but has much of the material for it collected. His proposition meets with much more favor among army and navy officers than was anticipated, and some of them have expressed their views on the subject to Administration Senators, and urged them not to oppose the resolution.

The exodus from Washington for the holidays is more general than it has been before for years. The hotels to-night are almost literally deserted. A few Senators and Representatives who are keeping house in this city, and a few others who reside so far away that it is inconvenient to make the journey, are the only ones who remain. The lobbyists are all gone, and as orders have already been given to close some of the Departments at 12 o'clock daily, business may be expected to stand still for the next two weeks.

Senator Fenton has been confined to his house since Tuesday last by sickness. He is now recovering, and his physician promises to have him out in a few days.

[GENERAL PRESS DISPATCH.]

The United States and Spanish Governments have just concluded an agreement for jointly taking testimony in Cuba, to be used by the Commission holding its session in Washington, for adjudication of the claims of American citizens growing out of the present rebellion in that island.

THE ALABAMA LEGISLATURES—ALLEGED REPUBLICAN BAD FAITH.

MONTGOMERY, Dec. 22.—In the House yesterday Mr. Boyd (Dem.) offered a resolution that the House should be immediately declared duly and permanently organized, under the plan of the Attorney-General, which was voted down by the Republicans. The Senate joint resolution to adjourn till Jan. 13 was adopted by the House, with the proviso that it should not be construed as recognizing a permanent organization of the Senate. The Lieutenant-Governor announced the Senate organized and ready for business several days ago, and when this proviso came back for concurrence the Senate refused to concur, whereupon the Lieutenant-Governor adjourned the Senate despite its action.

The Court-room Legislature continues to hold daily sessions, and the Governor, yesterday, sent them a message, recommending an increase in taxation of 100 per cent. That body passed a bill authorizing the issue of $2,000,000 bonds. Mr. Parsons, the permanent Speaker of the consolidated House, signed the Court-room bill while presiding in the Capitol. The Lieutenant-Governor did the same while presiding in the Senate at the Capitol. The Democrats saw this duplication of the Legislature, with the same officers presiding in both, argues bad faith, and they will again appeal to the Attorney-General if it is not discontinued.

FOREIGN NEWS.

POLITICS IN FRANCE.

RESTORATION OF THE PROPERTY OF THE ORLEANS PRINCES—FATE OF COMMUNISTS—THE EXTREME LEFT THREATEN WAR AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

PARIS, Saturday, Dec. 21, 1872.

Before adjourning this afternoon the Assembly finally passed the bill restoring to the Orleans Princes their confiscated property.

President Thiers had a conference at Versailles, this afternoon, with the Committee of Pardons, respecting the cases of several Communists who have been sentenced to death, and who are to be executed before the end of the year, unless their sentences are commuted.

President Thiers and his family will return from Versailles to Paris to-morrow, and will stay there until the reassembling of the National Assembly. M. Dufaure, Minister of Justice, will remain at Versailles during the holiday recess.

The *Corsaire*, a Radical journal, has been suspended for advocating the doctrine of Socialism.

PARIS, Dec. 22, 1872.

The *République Française*, the personal organ of M. Gambetta, predicts serious Parliamentary crises when the Assembly meets in January. It says the trimming tactics of the Government only increase the disquiet of the country, and the acts of Ministers Dufaure and Goulard endanger the Government's popularity. The Assembly yesterday voted to continue the tobacco monopoly ten years. The two sub-committees of the Committee of Thirty sit with closed doors.

GERMAN EMIGRATION TO AMERICA.

STATEMENT OF A BERLIN SEMI-OFFICIAL JOURNAL—PROTECTION OF EMIGRANTS.

BERLIN, Dec. 22, 1872.

The *Spener'sche Zeitung* explains that the partial revocation of the reduced fares for emigrants on the State and private railways in Germany is a question of internal administration, and was required of the Government by considerations of political economy, and of the private companies by their own interests. The American press have greatly exaggerated the importance and distorted the significance of this trifling affair. *The Gazette* calls on the United States to do all in their power to bring to a satisfactory conclusion the negotiations for an Emigration treaty, which America, not Germany, has delayed for years.

THE FLOODS IN EUROPE.

GREAT FLOODS IN THE THAMES—A PARK SUBMERGED—A BREAKWATER DAMAGED—THE FRESHET IN THE SEINE SUBSIDING.

LONDON, Saturday, Dec. 21, 1872.

The River Thames, which has already overflowed its banks at many places, suddenly rose nearly a foot to-day at Windsor. Home Park is one vast lake of water, and thousands of acres of other land are submerged. The present inundation of the Thames is the greatest since the flood of 1852.

The breakwater at Wick, Scotland, has been seriously damaged by the late storms.

PARIS, Saturday, Dec. 21, 1872.

The freshet in the River Seine is subsiding. The water has already fallen 70 centimeters.

SLAVERY IN THE WEST INDIES.

INTENDED ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN PORTO RICO—NO REFORMS FOR CUBA AT PRESENT.

MADRID, Saturday, Dec. 21, 1872.

Señor Zorrilla announced in the Senate, yesterday, that a bill would soon be introduced by the Government providing for the abolition of Slavery in the Island of Porto Rico. He took occasion, at the same time, to repeat the statement heretofore made, that no reforms would be introduced in the government of Cuba while a single insurgent remained on that island.

RUSSIAN COMMERCE.

REPORTED DETERMINATION OF RUSSIA TO UNDERTAKE THE EXPEDITION TO KHIVA.

ST. PETERSBURG, Saturday, Dec. 21, 1872.

The *Imperial Gazette* says the question of the Khiva campaign has again been discussed in Government circles, and it was resolved to undertake it.

FOREIGN NOTES.

King Victor Emanuel has recovered from his indisposition.

The Empress of Russia is expected to visit Naples soon, accompanied by a fleet of Russian war vessels.

The entire new Spanish loan of 250,000,000 pesetas has been covered, and the receipts will be issued at the rate of 81.

An Army bill was introduced in the Italian Parliament on Saturday, which provides that all Italians between 18 and 40 years of age shall be liable to military duty.

It is hoped in diplomatic circles in Paris that Greece will accede to the proposition to submit the Laurium mines question to France and Italy for arbitration.

The firm of Lavalero in Genoa have arranged the basis of a contract with the Italian Ministry of Public Works for a steam mail service between Genoa and the South American ports.

A demonstration was made, on Friday, in Paris by 3,000 students in favor of Prof. Robin, a distinguished member of the Institute, who was struck from the jury list in consequence of his disbelief in the existence of a God.

Cora Pearl has been expelled from France in consequence of M. Duval, the son of a wealthy resident of Paris, who founded the soup-houses in that city, shooting himself in her presence. He is expected to recover. The bullet, however, has not yet been extracted.

The mate and steward of the schooner Glad Tidings, which was lost off the coast of Nova Scotia, several months ago, have been arrested, charged with scuttling the vessel. Warrants had been issued against the Captain and all hands, but only those two could be found.

The Bishop of London officiated at St. Paul's Cathedral, and Dean Stanley at Westminster Abbey, on Friday, on the occasion of the special prayers for the success of the missionary enterprises of the English Church. At many of the metropolitan churches, where prayers were also said, the attendance was very large.

William Wately, colored steward of the brigantine Union Star, of Parrsboro, in Nova Scotia, having had a disagreement with Capt. White, at Spencer's Island, Bay of Fundy, a few days ago, attempted to burn the vessel, and kill the officers and crew. He stupefied all the hands, with muriatic acid, while they were sleeping, and then set fire to the vessel in the hold. Before he could extricate himself, he was suffocated by smoke. The Captain awakened in time to arouse the crew and extinguish the fire. Wately, who belonged to St. Kitts, West Indies, was the only person who lost his life.

LOUISIANA AFFAIRS.

JUDGE BRADLEY WILL NOT GO TO NEW-ORLEANS—ACTION OF THE CITIZENS' COMMITTEE.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21.—It can be positively stated on good authority that Judge Bradley has not signified any intention to go to New-Orleans during the present term of the United States Supreme Court and it is pretty certain that he will not do so unless requested by the President. It is understood that the Supreme Court does not regard itself as having any power over the question whether Judge Bradley should or should not go to New-Orleans, and as his going there at all at this juncture might have the appearance of distrust of the two Judges already on or near the spot, he would be very reluctant to take such a course, however willing to do anything in his power to aid in