BROOKLYN NEWS.

IN THE SOCIAL WORLD.

A DEMAND FOR DANCING MEN WHO ARE NOT SOLDIERS.

DANCES, TEAS AND RECEPTIONS PAST AND TO COME—NOTES FROM THE CLUBS—ENTERTAINMENTS FOR CHARITY.

That the strike of the trolley motormen and conductors would interfere with the round of pleasures outlined by the leaders of Brooklyn society was not thought of a week ago, but that it has sadly interfered with a great many projected affairs has been only too plainly apparent in the week just ended. The question of transportation has not entered into the problem so much as the question of attendance, and when it is remembered that the Brooklyn regiments of the National Guard include many of the best-known men in the city, and that they have been on duty constantly for the last week, it will be easily seen just why the feminine element of Brooklyn society is not at all pleased with the stubbornness of the leaders of the trolley roads or the persistence with which the men hold out for their demands. In spite of the necessary absence of a number of Brooklyn's dancing men, however, there have been several enjoyable affairs during the week, and although attendance at the clubs has fallen off considerably there have been one or two entertainments which were fully up to the average.

One of the largest dances of the season was that given in aid of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum on Wednesday night. The Academy of Music was packed, and the funds of the organization to be benefited will be increased by fully $10,000. The occasion was the twelfth annual ball, and Moses May, the president of the society, and his wife led the grand march.

Another dance at which there was much pleasure was that of the young men of the Polytechnic Institute, the midwinter dance being held in the gymnasium of the institute on Friday night. The committee in charge consisted of David Crisswell Bennett, Frank Jason Perry, Arthur James Griffin and Marcus Butler Waterman. The patronesses included Mrs. Fritz Achelis, Mrs. J. T. Marean, Mrs. Peter T. Austin, Mrs. Daniel W. McWilliams, Mrs. David A. Boody, Mrs. Charles A. Schieren, Mrs. J. S. T. Stranahan, Mrs. Stephen V. White, Mrs. James S. Hollinshead, Mrs. Henry S. Snow, Mrs. Daniel Chauncey, Mrs. David H. Cochran, Mrs. Thomas B. Hewitt, Mrs. Henry E. Ide, Mrs. Timothy L. Woodruff and many other well-known Brooklyn women.

One of the most brilliant Hill affairs of the season was the reception given on Thursday night by Mr. and Mrs. Austin W. Follett and Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Austin Follett, assisted by Mr. and Mrs. William J. Follett, of Boston, at the Franklin-ave. home of Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Follett, which adjoins the home of David M. Stone, formerly proprietor of "The Journal of Commerce." The block in which the house is situated was made to look unusually brilliant, as the conservatory in the south was illuminated by lighted lanterns in various colors. The floral decorations were among the finest ever seen in a private residence in Brooklyn. In the front drawing-room the mantel was banked with Catharine Murmet roses and greens, the rear drawing-room had American Beauties and smilax, while the dining-room in the north wing was decorated in pink and green. About 400 guests called between 8 and 11 p. m., the hours of the reception, and among the guests were some of the best-known people in Brooklyn society circles. Mrs. Austin W. Follett and Mrs. Edgar Austin Follett have cards out for two "at homes," to be given on Thursday, January 31, and Friday, February 1. Mr. and Mrs. William J. Follett returned to Boston yesterday.

Mrs. Arnold G. Dana, of Union-st., gave another of her delightful musical affairs on Monday afternoon to introduce her sister, Mrs. Edwin R. Dimond, of San Francisco. This is Mrs. Dimond's first visit in the East for some time, and she will remain for about two months. She is a member of the staff of the celebrated "Christmas Journal," which is edited by society women of San Francisco. Miss Bucklin, a pupil of Dr. William Mason, of New-York, played two numbers on the violin, Miss Fanny de Villo-Ball gave some piano solos, and Charles A. Bates sang to a violin accompaniment.

On Friday evening, February 1, and on Saturday afternoon following, beginning at 2:30, Silas G. Pratt's musical and pictorial allegory, "America," will be given for the benefit of the Homoeopathic Maternity Hospital, in the Academy of Music. The entertainment has received flattering notices in foreign and American newspapers, and it is expected that the hospital will receive a substantial addition to its funds. The musical arrangements include an orchestra of fifty Seidl musicians, a military band and the Metropolitan Quartet. Among the patronesses are Mrs. Lyman Abbott, Mrs. Truman J. Backus, Mrs. Alfred C. Barnes, Mrs. Loomis L. Langdon, Mrs. William H. Lyon, Mrs. Harry B. Minton, Mrs. Carll H. De Silver and Mrs. Timothy L. Woodruff.

An interesting and charming incident of the week was the reception given by Mrs. John W. Lumsdon, at the Arlington, in Montague-st., in honor of the Countess de Castelvecchio and Henry Mosler, both of whom the hostess had been acquainted with abroad. Mr. Mosler was Mrs. Lumsdon's master in art during her student days in Paris, when she was Miss Christine Voss. The Countess de Castelvecchio is said to be a lineal descendant of Napoleon Bonaparte, and was born at Corsica and educated in Paris. She is a third cousin of Napoleon III, and was associated with the Empress Eugenie during her time of prosperity.

Plans for an interesting entertainment to be given under the auspices of the Council of Working Girls' Clubs have been almost completed by the committee in charge. The readings will be given on the mornings of March 13 and 20, and the evening of April 4, at Memorial Hall, of the Young Women's Christian Association, and will be by Brooklyn authors, of selections from their own writings. Those who have consented to read are Mrs. J. S. T. Stranahan, Mrs. Henry Ward Beecher, Mrs. Lyman Abbott, Mrs. Alice Moss Earle, Mrs. Hinsdale, Mrs. Henry Pratt, Mrs. E. P. Terhune, Mrs. Olive Thorne-Miller, Margaret Sangster, Mrs. Tunis G. Bergen, Kate Upson Clark, Mrs. Thomas S. Moore, Mrs. Amelia Wing, Mrs. Bellamy, Mrs. Caroline S. Creevey and Mrs. Caroline B. Le Row. The proceeds will be devoted to the repairing of the Downer Vacation House for Working Girls.

On Wednesday evening the Columbian Club give an informal reception and entertainment at the clubhouse at Hanson Place and South Portland-ave., for the women relatives and friends of the members. The guests were received by William C. Courtney, chairman of the Social Committee, his assistants being Dr. W. E. Sullivan, P. J. Skelly, B. E. Martin and W. J. Grinden. Refreshments were served in the dining-room, and a large number of guests were present.

In the interclub bowling contests of Tuesday night there were some pretty games, and Oxford, which went out to the Knickerbocker Field Club in carriages, owing to a lack of trolley-car facilities, succeeded in taking away only one game from the Flatbush experts. The Lincoln Club's team, which ran up against the Hanover players, defeated the Williamsburg aggregation twice in succession, while the Montauk players punished the Masonic representatives of the Aurora Grata Club in the same way. The score of the eleventh round now stands: Oxford, won 18, lost 4; Hanover, won 15, lost 7; Montauk, won 14, lost 8; Carlton, won 13, lost 9; Union League, won 10, lost 12; Lincoln, won 10, lost 12; Columbian, won 8, lost 14; Aurora Grata, won 7, lost 15; Knickerbocker Field, won 6, lost 16; Midwood, won 5, lost 17.

The attendance at the Riding and Driving Club on Wednesday evening was small. Mobs and blizzards had to be braved, and only those with whom riding is a fashion attended the regular weekly music ride. The chief feature of the evening's entertainment was a tandem drive, which gave great enjoyment to all who witnessed it. On Wednesday evening of this week, after the music ride, the third contest in the tent-pegging tournament will take place.

There is to be a big ball at the Lakewood on Saturday evening, February 2, and already a large number of Brooklyn people are discussing the subject of going down to attend it. There is no doubt that it will be a fine affair and well worth the trip.

The Hamilton Club's bicycle contingent, which, although small, is enthusiastic, has already begun the mapping out of plans for long runs in the spring season. A number of the members have been attending the bicycle exhibition at the Madison Square Garden, and studying the latest and best designs preparatory to purchasing new wheels, and the club has provided accommodations for the wheels of its members on the ground floor of the building, under the café.

Among the announcements of at homes for this week may be mentioned those of Mrs. George Francis Demorest and Miss Demorest, on Wednesday, from 4 to 7, at No. 459 Greene-ave.; Mrs. Jabez Gilbert, on Thursday, from 4 to 7, at No. 189 Lefferts Place; Mrs. J. Augustus Hewlett, on Wednesday afternoon, at No. 68 Remsen-st., and Mrs. George E. Fabys, on Monday, from 4 to 7, at No. 275 Clinton-ave.

On Tuesday evening the formal evening concert of the Brooklyn Amateur Musical Club will be given in Memorial Hall; on Thursday evening the Misses Hawthorne will give a dance for the Tuesday Evening Bowling Club, at No. 122 Lincoln Place; on Friday evening the last Cinderella Dance will be held, in the Pierrepont Assembly rooms, and on Monday evening, Mrs. Tunis G. Bergen and Mrs. Leonard C. McPhail will give a private ball at the Pierrepont Assembly rooms, to introduce Miss Marion Smith.

The members of the Uptown Whist Club are rehearsing the "Martha Washington Minuet," in which they expect to take part, which will be danced in Pratt's allegory "America," previously spoken of.

On Thursday evening, January 31, the annual ladies' reception, concert and entertainment of the Aurora Grata Club will be held in the Aurora Grata Cathedral, at Bedford-ave. and Madison-st., and the clubhouse adjoining. There will be two orchestras in attendance, and it is expected that it will be one of the finest affairs the club has ever given. All the arrangements have been completed through the efforts of the president, Wayland Trask, the Board of Directors, and the Social Committee, of which Frank C. Mason is chairman.

Last evening was the occasion of the opening at the Clermont Avenue Rink of the new cycle club, and a large gathering of well-known society people who are interested in bicycles and bicycle-riding was present. The floor of the rink has been especially fitted for the use of wheelmen, and the arrangements of the club, as at present outlined, cover all sorts of entertainments in which beginners, as well as experts, on the silent steed will take part.

THE RECENT BRIDGE ACCIDENTS.

NO BLAME ATTACHED TO THE MEN PRESUMABLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM—CONDITIONS FOR A PANIC.

Accidents on the Bridge have a way of happening at the most inopportune times, and there is a mysterious quality about them which is provoking, to say the least of it. Last summer, it will be remembered, a car was overturned just outside the Brooklyn station one afternoon, and though all the circumstances were carefully inquired into, Superintendent Martin decided that the mishap was unaccountable; no satisfactory explanation of it could be reached. This was an alarming statement, since it indicated that another accident of the same sort might occur at any moment, but at the same time Mr. Martin expressed the opinion that its recurrence was exceedingly unlikely. Whether his opinion was based on adequate premises is a question that will naturally arise in an inquiring mind.

The brace of mishaps on Monday evening are perhaps not quite so mysterious, yet there is something about them that at least suggests the uncanny. Then, too, they happened at the most unfortunate time, and caused great annoyance to large numbers of people. It was lucky in the extreme that the actual casualties were so small. In New-York all the passengers had alighted before the switching engine came crashing into the front of the train. Had this occurred a few seconds sooner, when the passengers were standing in the cars and on the point of alighting, some of them surely would have been badly hurt. No blame is attached to the engineer by Superintendent Martin. As the man started his engine his foot slipped—the fog had made everything wet and slippery—and as his hand was on the throttle lever he unintentionally pulled it wide open. The engine bounded forward. The fireman sprang to the rescue and did his part toward reversing the engine and putting on the brakes. But it was too late. Had the train been twenty feet further back or had there been ten seconds longer time, Mr. Martin says that the engine would have been got under control before the collision occurred.

Nor does he find any fault with the man in charge of the train that caused the collision at the Brooklyn station. Here the speed of the train had been greatly checked, and the force of the collision was accordingly much diminished. Had the colliding train been proceeding at the full speed of ten miles an hour, it is inevitable that many persons on both trains would have been severely hurt. The fog was in part to blame for this accident, but Mr. Martin attributes it still more to the heavy clouds of steam sent up from the engines of the Brooklyn Elevated road, which runs underneath the Bridge near the Brooklyn anchorage. This steam, together with the prevailing fog, formed a heavy bank of vapor, which made it impossible for the conductor of the second train to see the red lantern which was being swung to and fro from the rear car of the train ahead.

It happened that on account of the fog the trips of the ferryboats were very irregular at that time, and so, in a sense, Brooklyn was shut off from New-York except for those who chose to walk across the Bridge, as thousands did, after finding that there would be a long delay on the railroad. Rarely is the Bridge promenade so crowded as it was for a time Monday evening, and it is considered lucky that no serious accidents happened. The promenade was packed. Some persons attempted to get ahead by walking on the trusses, and others wisely betook themselves to the roadways. The crowd inevitably suggested the conditions which made the memorable accident of Decoration Day, 1883, possible. Fortunately the people were all moving in one direction—or nearly all—and on account of the multitude they were compelled to go slowly.

Just after the tragic occurrence of 1883 it was suggested by some wiseacre that the footwalk should be divided by a railing, so that people going in one direction should be separated from those going in the other. The folly of that suggestion is clearly shown by what took place on Monday. The railing would simply have been an obstruction, and would have tended to produce the precise thing which those who proposed it wished it to prevent. To the credit of the Bridge authorities, they never seriously considered the idea of such a railing. Ordinarily, of course, there is rarely a crowd of pedestrians on the Bridge, and on days when there is reason to expect a crowd the authorities have provided that people going in one direction should use one of the roadways. Not until Monday evening has there been such a condition of things as might be calculated to cause another panic like that which produced so fatal results less than a week after the Bridge was opened for public use.

BOOK EXCHANGING IN BROOKLYN.

Perhaps the most striking difference between the Brooklynite and outside barbarians is his capacity for absorbing information, and the peculiar manner in which he accomplishes it. The bookstores, new and second-hand, in New-York are known to every one, and vast, interesting and comprehensive they are, but it has been left to the Brooklyn second-hand establishments to invent the "exchange" idea.

The average buyer and reader wants to have all the newest books, that is, as soon as they can be brought out in paper, and the cheaper the better; he wants them to thrill him, and to curdle his blood, if possible—and that the modern novelists are faithfully and heroically trying to accommodate him, no one can deny—but after the books are read he has no further use for them. They have served their purpose; he has been duly titillated, thrilled or horrified, as the case may be; the orange has been squeezed and the discarded book represents to him now nothing but so much waste paper, cumbering his room to no purpose. There are half a dozen shops within five minutes' walk of the City Hall where books which have been read can be exchanged for others of the same price—two of the read for one unread. The originator of the idea was a genius, and the results are nothing less than tremendous. The number of books sold in this manner is astonishing. Morning and evening, on their way to and from their employment, the young men and maidens throng the shops, or rather stands, this branch of the business being done on the sidewalk outside of the store proper.

At one establishment of this sort which is particularly worthy of notice the books are in racks, classified, not as in more pretentious houses by subjects, but according to price. In one of these compartments an observer may see "Pilgrim's Progress" in close companionship with "The Heavenly Twins" and a copy of Byron jostled by a volume of that charming writer who thinks she is in hard luck if she can't bring out a new book every two weeks. The customer lays down the two books returned, selects another one at the same price, and the deed is done. At every alternate visit only is there any payment to be made. No words are necessary. It is a desirable business for a quiet man to take up.

It can be easily seen that paper-covered books passing through so many hands, and such hands, would soon be unmerchantable if not constantly looked after. The addition of a little dirt to the outside or even inside, of course, does not impair the book's usefulness, but when the cover goes altogether, and the leaves are in danger of falling out it is time to send it to the hospital. The dealer can be seen with his paste pot, his shears and brown paper for covers, working diligently at repairs when other and pleasanter duties do not claim him. With a little crude lettering on the back of the regenerated book it is ready to go out again on its weary round.

He has old magazines inside by, one could almost say, the carload, with dates ranging back to the seventies. These, also, can be bought for a nickel each, or 50 cents for a complete year. If there is any better mental pabulum for a young man or woman, simply as entertaining, interesting and delightful reading, than a twelvemonth collection of old magazines at this or any price, it is hard to know what it can be, for even what is ancient history is almost sure to be worthy of rereading.

AT THE BROOKLYN THEATRES.

At the Columbia Theatre, "A New Woman," by Sydney Grundy," will be presented by A. M. Palmer's company, from Palmer's Theatre, New-York, to-morrow evening. The cast will include Arthur Forrest, E. M. Holland, Miss Virginia Harned, Mrs. D. B. Bowers, Charles J. Richmond, Madeline Bouton, Reub Fax, Georgie Busby, Emily Seward, Thomas Terriss, Harry Holliday and Annie Russell. The engagement of "The New Woman" is for two weeks.

Beginning to-morrow night, Julia Marlowe-Taber will be seen in a repertory of Shakespearian plays at the Park Theatre. This talented young actress is a prime favorite in Brooklyn. To-morrow evening the bill will be "School for Scandal"; Tuesday evening, "Ingomar"; Wednesday evening, "Twelfth Night"; Thursday evening, "As You Like It"; Friday evening, "Love Chase"; Saturday matinee, "School for Scandal"; Saturday evening, "Romeo and Juliet." Rose Coghlan will follow Julia Marlowe-Taber next week. This week Colonel Sinn will have completed his twentieth year as manager of the Park Theatre.

Beginning to-morrow evening at the Amphion, Mrs. Langtry will delight theatre-goers who attend that playhouse. The appearance of Mrs. Langtry at the Amphion is sure to meet with the appreciation of Williamsburg play-lovers.

ONE YEAR OF REFORM WORK

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE BY COMMISSIONER ALFRED T. WHITE.

THE BROOKLYN DEPARTMENT OF CITY WORKS UNDER MAYOR SCHIEREN'S ADMINISTRATION—REFORMS, ECONOMIES AND IMPROVEMENTS.

Next Friday will mark the completion of the first year of reform administration in the city of Brooklyn. Mayor Schieren, to be sure, took office on January 1, 1894, but under the Brooklyn charter the heads of departments appointed by a new Mayor do not assume their duties until the 1st of February. To those familiar with the Brooklyn system it seems rather strange that Mayor Strong, of New-York, should ask for as much as six months in which to select new Commissioners. In fact, a Brooklyn Mayor has practically three months to make his selections, since he is elected early in November, and need not announce his appointees until the end of January. No Mayor has yet complained that he did not have time to find the right men for the places; and as a rule they have been chosen soon after the beginning of the year, and in some cases even earlier.

Of the men comprising Mayor Schieren's cabinet, which includes the heads of all the municipal departments, the one holding the most responsible place is Alfred T. White, the Commissioner of City Works. Mayor Schieren and the citizens of Brooklyn have good reason to congratulate themselves on the fact that Mr. White was prevailed on to accept this onerous and responsible office. His high standing as a public-spirited citizen, his strict integrity and his business experience especially fitted him to undertake the reform so sadly needed in this branch of the city's business. Commissioner White has devoted himself to the duties of his office with a diligence rarely seen in a public official. Since January 31 last he has spent just one hour in attending to his private business; this was in July or August, when he went over to New-York for a part of one afternoon. Fortunately, he has been able to leave his private affairs in the hands of others, and on the average he has given ten or eleven hours a day to the duties of his public office. He has had a zealous and capable coadjutor in Deputy-Commissioner Lyman, who has rivalled his chief in the time he has devoted to official duties.

A DIFFICULT JOB.

When Commissioner White was asked a day or two ago for some expression of opinion regarding his first year in office, he replied that he knew at the start he was undertaking a difficult job, but he would not have been willing to go into it at all if it had been something pleasant and easy. On the whole, he had not found it more difficult than he expected. During the first six months he had to listen to numerous applications for employment, but he relieved himself of this by providing for the enrolment of laborers on the plan adopted in the Navy Yard. Some system of this kind was necessary to enable the head of the department to attend to his business. In those six months about 10,000 applications were made, but in the second half of the year the number has been comparatively small.

In answer to a question regarding the important work of the Department of City Works during the last year, Mr. White said: "I suppose the water supply is entitled to the foremost place, and that may be considered under three branches. First, the improvement of the existing works; second, the increase of the supply; third, the necessity of provision for the future. In the reference to the existing works, the main thing has been the introduction of various economies in the purchase of supplies, improvements designed to save fuel, etc., and the discharge of superfluous employes. The saving accomplished thus far has been about $150,000, and for the coming year it will amount to still more, for we are just beginning to realize the advantages of some of the new appliances which have been introduced in the pumping stations.

INCREASING THE WATER SUPPLY.

"The increase of the water supply became a matter of absolute necessity last summer. Owing to the unprecedented drouth, the city of Brooklyn was placed in a situation that for a time looked serious, and prompt measures were necessary in order to assure an increase of the supply. The old pumping stations were overhauled and their capacity was increased, and an aggregate gain of 10,000,000 gallons daily was made. In addition to this it was necessary to provide for a permanent increase of 25,000,000 gallons, and as soon as the Common Council authorized the issue of the requisite bonds arrangements were made for this. A contract was made with Edwards & Co., and the first station under this contract is now supplying water to the city. This water is drawn from driven wells, which have been found to furnish even better water than the streams and other sources of supply. The city is most amply protected under this contract, as the test is to be based on the five consecutive days of smallest supply in twelve months. One man who thought of putting in a bid, when he saw the terms of the contract refused to do so, and said that the city was protected by the contract at both ends and in the middle. The engineers of the department say that now for the first time in their experience they have no fear whatever of a water famine in Brooklyn.

"As for further provision for the future, that is not an immediately pressing question, and though the matter has been carefully inquired into the engineers have not had time to work out the details. I hope that this can be done within the next two months, but I would not like to make a positive statement regarding it. It is an interesting circumstance that there are different strata of water on Long Island. Some of our driven wells are only thirty feet deep; others are 200. At one of the stations a well 170 feet, or thereabout, has been driven near one only thirty feet deep, and a bed of clay perhaps fifty feet thick was found between the two sources of supply. There is a good deal of water yet on Long Island; and within 100 miles of New-York I should say that there is water enough to supply 6,000,000 people, or more than twice the present population of New-York or Brooklyn."

HOW GOOD PAVEMENTS MIGHT HAVE BEEN ASSURED.

Commissioner White next referred to the building of the Greene-ave. relief sewer and to the work that has been done to prevent the discharge of sewage into Newtown Creek. On the question of pavements he spoke of the recent experience which he had when visiting Philadelphia. He was surprised to find himself rolling along over asphalt on his way to the station, and then he remembered that one of the conditions imposed on the street-car companies for the privilege of introducing the trolley system there was that the companies should repave all the streets in which their tracks were placed with either asphalt or granite, in the discretion of the Commissioner of City Works. In this way Philadelphia has been provided with a hundred miles of well-paved streets, at an expense to the companies, he was told, of between $5,000,000 and $6,000,000.

"Think," he said, "of what might have been done for Brooklyn if such a condition had been imposed by the Board of Aldermen before the present one, for we have 130 miles of trolley railroad here. It seems to me that the railroad companies ought in equity to bear a part of the expense where streets which they occupy are repaved. In my annual report I spoke at some length of this matter."

Mr. White referred to the new Wallabout lands as one of the subjects requiring special attention from his department, and also to the number of new problems occasioned by the annexation of the three county towns.

DIVIDING THE DEPARTMENT.

"What about the proposed division of your department?" was asked.

"That subject is now under careful consideration. A bill has been drawn to cover the matter, but some changes in it will be required. It seems necessary to make such a division, and to apportion the duties now done by the Commissioner of City Works among three Commissioners. Mr. Fowler, my chief clerk, who was chief clerk under Commissioners Ropes and Fleeman, in Mayor Low's administration, says that the work of the department is now four times what it was then. For a city of half a million inhabitants or less, the present system is as nearly perfect as may be. There are certain decided advantages in the concentration of duties and responsibilities. In the proposed division, it is the intention to make the three departments work together harmoniously, because in various works, such as opening the streets for any purpose, more than one of them will be brought in. The plan is to put the matter of water supply in the hands of one Commissioner; street cleaning, the removal of ashes, the Wallabout Market, the care of the docks, etc., in the hands of another; and to leave to the Commissioner of City Works the construction and maintenance of sewers, all local improvements, construction and repairs, and all the other matters now in charge of the present department."

Commissioner White added that, while he had worked hard in the performance of his official duties, he had met with cordial co-operation, and whatever he had asked from the Aldermen or the Legislature had been readily granted. As is generally known, he has conducted his department on strict business principles, and has sought no favors from politicians. It is probable that the plan for dividing the Department of City Works will be carried through the Legislature, and in that case Mr. White will be the last Commissioner to perform the duties now attached to it. The new arrangement is expected to go into operation when his successor takes office, a year hence.

STILL AFTER SUPERVISOR BENNETT.

Another attempt will be made on Wednesday to oust Supervisor William Van Brunt Bennett by means of a peremptory mandamus, compelling the Board of Supervisors to seat his opponent, Peter H. Rumph. The first move in the matter was made yesterday, when Mr. De Fere, of the law firm of Graut, De Fere & Maier, submitted to Judge Landon, of the Supreme Court, an order for the Board of Supervisors to show cause why the mandamus should not issue. Bennett is a Shepard Democrat, while Rumph belongs to the Machine Democracy.

BROOKLYN'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

THE REPORT OF THE ADVISORY EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE.

A LARGE AMOUNT OF WORK CAREFULLY AND THOROUGHLY DONE—HOW THE RESULT IS REGARDED—A BILL THAT SHOULD BE MADE A LAW.

The report of the Advisory Committee appointed by Mayor Schieren last summer to suggest changes and improvements in the public school system of Brooklyn justifies the wisdom of the course adopted by the Mayor and the good judgment shown in selecting the members of the committee. It would have been difficult to choose seven men in Brooklyn better qualified to do this important work. Three of them, Dr. Backus, Dr. Cochran, and Dr. Levermore, are at the head of the three principal educational institutions of the city—the Packer Institute, the Polytechnic Institute, and the Adelphi Academy; three others have in former years been members of the Board of Education—namely, Messrs. Harkness, Creevey, and Kelley; and the remaining member is the president of the Board of Education, Mr. Swanstrom. The professional standing of the first three especially fitted them to act as revisers of the school system, and the practical knowledge of the other members was undoubtedly of the greatest value in evolving a new system to take the place of one that is confessedly antiquated and inadequate to the needs of the city at the present time.

The recommendations of the committee are in many respects radical. Under the system proposed there will be fifteen instead of forty-five members of the Board of Education, and there is to be a clean sweep at the beginning of July next. That is a most important and significant change. The present board is so large as to be cumbersome, and responsibility is so much divided that it is virtually dissipated. By the change proposed the local committees are done away with altogether—a feature of the existing system that unquestionably has been the source of much evil. It is contended by the advocates of the local committee system that by this means the schools have been kept in close touch with the people. That sounds well, but there is little truth at the bottom of it.

A COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION.

A still more radical change is the proposed appointment of a Commissioner of Education, who is to be the responsible executive head of the school system. He is to be a salaried officer, and will, presumably, devote all his time to the administration of the schools. He is to have complete charge of the business of the Department of Education, while the supervision of the schools themselves is to be under the direction of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. A division between the business and the scholastic departments of the educational administration is thus provided for. The Commissioner is not to be a member of the Board of Education, but is to attend its meetings and act as a member of its three standing committees. His standing will be the same as that of other heads of city departments, and he will be a member of the Mayor's cabinet. Thus the Department of Education will be brought into close relations with the city government.

Concentration of authority and responsibility on both the business and the educational sides of the school system is thus assured. In furtherance of this idea the powers of the Superintendent of Public Instruction are enlarged in various directions. The number of assistant superintendents is increased from two to five, and it is provided that at least two of them shall be women; and provision is also made for an increase in the number of superintendents to keep pace with the increase in the general school attendance.

IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS.

At present it is almost impossible to get rid of incompetent and careless teachers. Under the system proposed by the committee this is made much easier, and even principals may be suspended or removed by the superintendent at any time, and his action is final unless reversed by the board. Changes are also recommended in the internal management of the schools, which will reduce the cost of administration and increase their efficiency.

The committee urgently recommends the introduction of kindergartens as a part of the public-school system as early as possible, though it is frankly confessed that the first demand to be met is the providing of sufficient room for the children who are crying for admission to the primary and lower grammar grades. With the subjects of manual training and military drill the committee deals only cursorily, no recommendations in their favor being offered.

In order to carry the proposed changes into effect the committee submits a draft of a bill which, if it meets the approval of the Mayor, will be sent to Albany with his indorsement. It is significant that the action of the committee, as is stated in the report, was unanimous on every point considered. As the president of the Board of Education was a member of the committee, the agreement of that body in the changes suggested ought to be taken for granted. Whether it can be or not is another question. That there will be strong opposition to the bill in some quarters is to be expected. The conservative element will naturally cry out against the radical recommendations of the committee on the general principle of "let well enough alone." But things as they are are not well enough. Everybody knows that the school system of Brooklyn is far from perfect, and is by no means accomplishing what it should. The work of the committee will beyond doubt be approved by the great majority of intelligent citizens.

AN IDEAL COMMITTEE.

A citizen who has given careful attention to questions of school administration expressed himself thus, after reading the report of the committee: "It seems to me that this committee has done its work with great care and thoroughness. The committee was an almost ideal one for the purpose. The presence on it of the heads of our three leading schools was a guarantee that it would proceed on the broadest lines, and the other members were all men specially acquainted with the school system and its needs. It was pre-eminently wise to put on the committee Mr. Swanstrom, the president of the Board of Education, and Mr. Harkness, whose long experience as a member of the board gives the highest value to any opinions he may express on the subject. Mr. Creevey and Mr. Kelley, too, have had considerable experience as members of the board. On the whole, the committee was an admirable one, and I am sure that it has left nothing undone in the direction of obtaining information and suggestions.

"The report shows that careful inquiries were made regarding school systems in other cities, and all the principals of schools in Brooklyn were consulted and their suggestions carefully noted. It is especially significant that the president of the Board of Education has given his approval to all the changes recommended. This ought to mean that the Board of Education as a body will approve the bill submitted to the Mayor, even though the members themselves are to be legislated out of office. The New-York bill, you will notice, has the approval of the Board of Education, but the number of members there is not reduced, and it is specially provided that all the present members shall serve out their terms. But whatever opposition may be made by the members of our Board of Education ought not to be considered as against the judgment of our best educators and wisest men. The members of this committee have spent a good deal of time over their work, have carefully studied educational systems, and the results of their labors are entitled to the approval which the enactment of the proposed bill would signify.

HALF A CENTURY BEHIND THE TIMES.

"Everybody who knows anything about it knows that our educational system in Brooklyn is half a century behind the times. I do not mean the work done in our public schools, but the system of administration in general. It is time for a change. There has been talk for the last ten or dozen years about reducing the membership of the Board of Education, and thus concentrating responsibility. It ought not to be postponed any longer.

"The creation of the office of Commissioner of Education impresses me very favorably. The great amount of work to be done requires all the time of a thoroughly competent man, and if Mayor Schieren is employed to appoint a commissioner I am sure he will select a man in whom entire confidence will be felt. It is right also to increase the powers of the superintendent. He can thus be held responsible for the work under his charge. There can be no question as to the need of more assistant superintendents, and I am greatly pleased that the committee urge that at least two of them should be women. The report is silent on the question whether women should be appointed on the Board of Education, but on the point of superintendents it is clear and explicit. Whether this will solve the question of women on the School Board or not—and it is a question that comes to the front regularly every year—I am not prepared to say.

"The report as a whole, I am bound to say, is an admirable one, and I earnestly hope that the proposed legislation will be enacted. Mayor Schieren has been subjected in some quarters to criticism because of his appointment of advisory committees to consider various questions, and this Educational Committee has been sneered at as 'the seven wise men.' The result, however, in my judgment, fully justifies the action of the Mayor, not only in deciding to appoint such a committee, but also in choosing the men to act upon it. They have done a large amount of valuable work, and although they are all busy men they have not hesitated to devote all the time necessary for the thorough elucidation of the subject of school administration. They deserve something more than the thanks of the community. Their work should receive the stamp of popular approval and the bill they have prepared should be enacted into law."

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AFFAIRS AT THE NAVY YARD

FINISHING WORK ON THE BIG BATTLESHIP MAINE.

THE MISHAP TO THE VESUVIUS—LINE AND STAFF MATTERS—MEASLES ON THE FLAGSHIP.

Few visitors to the Brooklyn Navy Yard passed through the York-st. gate last week, and when the weather, the strike, the absence of the big ships, and a few minor things are considered, this is not to be wondered at. But there is one feature of naval work going on which in itself is worth a visit to the yard; that is, the finishing work on the second-class battleship Maine, now in the timber drydock. The work of setting and fitting the great curved masses of steel which form her turret, the placing of the smaller guns and the building of the shields around them, and the thousand and one other operations, are all object-lessons in detail of the way in which a powerful engine of destruction is put together and the means of maintaining the Nation's honor are supplied.

The little spitfire Vesuvius made an attempt to get to sea on Tuesday, but her steering gear became disabled and she came home again. It is expected that repairs will be completed so that she can start again to-morrow on her campaign against the derelicts. Gun-cotton torpedoes will be taken on board at Fort Wadsworth, and the first raid will be made on some obstructions reported by the Hydrographic Office off the Long Island coast. These disposed of, Lieutenant-Commander Knox will take his vessel down toward Barnegat, and afterward go to Hampton Roads for further instructions.

Orders for the Castine to be in the stream on Saturday, February 2, will doubtless be obeyed, as the work outlined for her by the Board of Inspectors is practically finished, and there is nothing to prevent her sailing by the present time schedule.

It is said at the Yard that Rear-Admiral Meade is greatly pleased at the action of the Department in attaching the new cruiser Minneapolis to the fleet under his command. With this cruiser he undoubtedly has the finest squadron ever assembled by the United States, and he will now be able to have the evolutions, which at one time seemed to be very mythical. Rear-Admiral Meade expected to leave Hampton Roads with the New-York, Minneapolis, Cincinnati and Raleigh early next week. The Columbia is now undergoing repairs at the Norfolk Navy Yard, and when these are completed she will come to New-York to be docked. According to an official telegram received at the Navy Department, she is lying in the mud at the Norfolk Navy Yard when it is low tide. Rear-Admiral Brown, commandant of the Yard, states that there is no danger of her straining in this position, and his opinion has alleviated to some extent the fears entertained for the cruiser's safety. It is expected that the Columbia will not join the remainder of the North Atlantic Squadron in the West Indies until the latter part of February or the first of March.

Measles has developed among the apprentice boys on board the New-York, and the presence of this disease will detain the vessel at Hampton Roads. A report received at the Navy Department states that several cases exist, and orders have been issued to hold the New-York at Hampton Roads until the disease is entirely eradicated. It is probable that the boys who are ill will be transferred to the Naval Hospital at Norfolk and precautions taken to stamp out the disease. It is possible that Rear-Admiral Meade may transfer his flag from the New-York to one of the other ships, probably the Minneapolis, in case it should become apparent that the New-York will be detained longer than is now anticipated. In that case, the squadron evolutions will occur without the big cruiser.

The case of Chief Engineer John Lowe, of the Navy Yard, who has been ordered to the Norfolk Hospital, calls attention to one arm of the service which is sadly in need of young blood. The new ships are using up the older chief engineers at a rapid rate; young men are needed, and with the new Personnel bill as an element in the calculation, young men have not the enthusiasm which would prompt them to become "greasy mechanics" even for the benefit of the service.

The case of Chief Engineer Burdette C. Gowing, who was court-martialled a year or two ago at the Yard, has gone to the President, Secretary Herbert having approved the finding of the Retiring Board: "Recommended for retirement, in line of duty." Doctors say that rum has had nothing to do with his disability.

The Navy Register for 1895 is out and differs little from the regular annual, except so far as it changes the order of precedence of graduates of the Naval Academy who have been commissioned since August 5, 1882. This arrangement was compiled in accordance with a decision of the Attorney-General on June 28 last. The Register is the combined work of Lieutenant-Commander Heald and Ensigns Robert E. Coontz and William W. Phelps. Ensign Phelps had charge of the compilation of the matter for the document when the work was first started, but he was relieved and assigned to other duty, and Ensign Coontz, after a good deal of hard and painstaking labor, completed it. This was done under the general supervision of Lieutenant-Commander Heald. According to the new Register, the active list of the Navy is composed of 1,460 officers and the retired list of 434 officers. Of the active list 716 are line officers, 164 are members of the Medical Corps, 96 of the Pay Corps, 175 of the Engineer Corps, 22 chaplains, 12 professors, 12 civil engineers, 32 constructors, 34 boatswains, 40 gunners, 40 carpenters, 19 sailmakers, 23 mates and 75 marine officers. There are 235 cadets at the Naval Academy and 87 on cruise. Thirty-nine deaths occurred during the year, 13 active and 27 retired; there were 41 resignations, 41 retirements, 3 dismissals; two officers were dropped and 6 were dishonorably discharged. At the present time there are 11 vacancies in the line, 7 in the Medical Corps, 15 in the Engineer Corps and 1 in the Pay Corps.

During Secretary Tracy's administration of the Navy Department he ordered a court of inquiry in the matter of organizations of officers of the Navy, declaring that they were prejudicial to "good order and discipline of the Navy," and that he was determined to uproot them. Since that time the new Navy Regulations have been issued, and Article 235 prohibits officers from doing certain acts "or attempting to influence legislation in respect to the Navy otherwise than through and with the approval of the Navy Department." It is in view of this fact that much interest is now taken as to whether the Secretary will take any steps with regard to the following circular which has just been issued by the "Line Association of the Navy" to every line officer of the service, and signed by Ensign Philip