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ROBERT CENTER KILLED.

RUN OVER BY A COAL WAGON ON THE BOULEVARD.

KNOCKED DOWN AND HIS HEAD CRUSHED WHILE RIDING HIS BICYCLE—ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN SPORTSMEN IN AMERICA.

Robert Center, one of the best-known sportsmen in America, was fatally injured about 6 o'clock last night by a collision with a coal wagon while riding his bicycle on the Boulevard near Seventy-second-st. He survived his injuries barely three hours, dying in Roosevelt Hospital, to which he was removed immediately after the accident.

The accident occurred almost under the window of the Colonial Club, and before the eyes of the president, J. H. Punderford, and half a dozen of the members, to several of whom Mr. Center was personally known. The dead clubman, whose devotion to the wheel extends back to its first introduction to this country, was keenly fond of an hour's ride, and was enjoying the exercise when the accident happened. He had ridden from his apartments, at No. 126 East Thirty-fourth-st., over to the West Side, and was going swiftly downtown on the western side of the Boulevard when at Seventy-second-st. he passed alongside of a horsecar which was travelling in the same direction. At the same time a coal wagon, which was coming uptown along the track, turned out directly in his path to make way for the car.

HOW THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED.

Mr. Center's head was bent down over the handle-bars, and, not seeing the approaching wagon, he ran directly into it. The bicycle crashed into the fore part of the wagon, near the wheel, before the driver had time to think of pulling up his horse, and Mr. Center was thrown off into the path of the wheels. The left front wheel ran over his face, crushing in the skull, and the hind wheel passed over his chest.

Car and wagon stopped simultaneously, and J. H. Punderford, president of the Colonial Club; C. H. Williamson and Walter Gear, members of the club, who had been looking out of the library windows, ran out, and, with Hieronymus Herrman, who had been standing on the steps, hastened to the injured man's side. At the same time a gentleman, who explained that he was an army surgeon and who rode past on his bicycle, jumped off and helped to render assistance. Mr. Center was unconscious. He was carried to the roadside and laid upon the sidewalk. Mr. Punderford and one of the other members of the Colonial Club were acquainted with Mr. Center, but so frightfully mangled was he that at first they failed to recognize him, and it was not until the name "Robert Center, No. 126 East Thirty-fourth-st.," was seen by one of them to be engraved on the broken bicycle that they realized who the victim of the accident was. When they did, a few minutes afterward a passing cab was hailed, and he was taken to Roosevelt Hospital.

The surgeons there saw from the first that all attempts to save his life would be futile. They did their utmost to restore him to consciousness, but to no effect. He died in the ward to which he had been conveyed, a few minutes before 9 o'clock. In the interval, the news of the accident had spread rapidly among his friends. Mrs. Henry Livingstone, Mr. Center's sister, and his intimate friend, Oliver H. Cromwell, proprietor of the Clarendon Hotel, with several other friends drove to the hospital, and gathered around his bedside, but Mr. Center was unable to recognize any of them.

SKETCH OF HIS LIFE.

The name of Robert Center was known everywhere in the best sporting circles in America. At the time of his death he was fifty-five years old, and was connected in some way with every branch of sport. Mr. Center was the son of a wealthy cotton broker who died in 1863, leaving him a fortune of $500,000. Robert was educated in Geneva, Switzerland, and came home at the age of twenty-one to take the place which, with his fortune, he inherited as the eldest son of one of the oldest families in New-York. He did not take any interest in business, but from the first associated himself with sportsmen and athletes. He became a member of the old American Jockey Club, and was one of its best riders. He won any number of silver cups, and then turned his attention to yachting. He purchased the yacht Medura, which was the flagship of the Seawanhaka Yacht Club, of which he was vice-commodore, and afterward built the Vindex, the first cutter yacht constructed in this country. He commanded these personally, and sailed them himself in the races for which he entered, and usually with success. His interest in aquatics, however, did not interfere with his interest in manifold other branches of sport, in which he took active part. He brought to this country the first bicycle seen here, a wierd machine in modern eyes, which he christened the Michaux. In other directions, Mr. Center was a hunting man, being one of the first in the field with the Meadowbrook Hunt Club. He had an excellent barytone voice, and was the founder of the Orpheus Glee Club. He was a well-known whip, and a universally popular clubman.

At the time of his death he was a member of the Knickerbocker, Union and Downtown Clubs and the Orpheus Glee Club, an ex-commodore of the Seawanhaka, Corinthian and New-York Yacht Clubs, a member of the Meadowbrook Hunt, the League of American Wheelmen, the Coaching and the Riding and Driving Clubs.

Mrs. Henry Livingstone Center, of No. 34 East Twenty-first-st., was Mr. Center's sister-in-law. He was an uncle of Henry Livingstone Center and Edward Chester Center, and a cousin of Center Hitchcock. Another cousin is Dunham Withers, son of the late David D. Withers, of Monmouth Park, N. J. Mr. Center's mother is still living and at present is in Santa Barbara, Cal., where the news of her son's death reached her by telegraph late last night.

The driver of the coal wagon which accidentally killed Mr. Center was arrested immediately after the accident by Policeman Gillies, and was locked up in the West Sixty-eighth-st. station. He is Frederick Winkel, of No. 536 West Forty-seventh-st. He told the sergeant that the accident was utterly unavoidable on his part.

THE NEGRO WAS BARRED OUT.

BUT POSTMASTER-GENERAL WILSON CAME OUT AND SHOOK HANDS WITH HIM.

Richmond, Va., April 17.—Postmaster-General William L. Wilson, arrived in this city this afternoon from Washington. He was met at Ashland by a committee of the local alumni of the University of Virginia, and on reaching here took luncheon at the home of Wyndham R. Meredith. A reception in his honor was afterward held at the executive mansion. The Governor was assisted in receiving by his staff. A delegation of white postoffice employes attended the reception in a body. At the door of the mansion a colored letter-carrier joined them. He was stopped by the Governor's butler, and waited in the hall until Mr. Wilson came out of the parlor and shook hands with him. To-night Mr. Wilson responded to a toast at the banquet of the Richmond Chapter of the University of Virginia alumni.

SHE FILLED HIS MOUTH WITH DOUGH.

A NEWARK CONSTABLE ROUGHLY TREATED BY A WOMAN—BEATEN IN THE FACE AND BOMBARDED WITH MOTZERS.

Justice Feldman, of Newark, on Tuesday sent Constable Speigel to the house of Morris Raphael, No. 624 Springfield-ave., in that city, to trace a wagon which had been stolen from Andreas Ast, of Queens County. Mrs. Raphael met him in the yard and proceeded to punch his face. Tiring of this, she filled his mouth with dough and shied an armful of motzers at his spring Derby, all of which the officer resented as best he could, but he was at a big disadvantage.

The details of the encounter were related to Justice Feldman, and he appointed next Wednesday as a time for hearing the case.

LINKED FOR LIFE.

TWIN BABIES JOINED TOGETHER BY A LIGAMENT.

ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE BIRTHS EVER RECORDED IN THIS CITY—OPINIONS OF MEDICAL MEN AS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF SEPARATING THEM.

Two children born to the wife of J. Koehler, of No. 342 East Forty-second-st., on Monday last are considered by the medical fraternity the most extraordinary children ever born in this city. They are both girls, healthy as babies usually are, and are linked for life, as far as present medical investigation goes. The babies are attached to each other from the lower part of the spinal column to the upper part of the pelvis. It is believed that the bones known as the sacrum and coccyx are identical in both bodies. Another feature of the case is that the children, though joined at the back, are able to face to the front, owing to some elasticity of the ligaments and flesh at the place of juncture. They have each the complete quota of organs and limbs, separate and distinct.

Dr. Sigmund Tynberg, of No. 321 East Forty-second-st., who attended the woman in her confinement, told a Tribune reporter last night that the whole family was in excellent health, and later on the reporter called on the youngsters. Mr. Koehler, who is a caterer by trade, incontinently drove the reporter down the three flights of his house when he first called, early in the afternoon, but when he learned from the reporter that the youngsters were probably worth $10,000 a year, he let him have a look at the new arrivals.

They are healthy, pretty and fat, and as the writer looked at them, with that ligament of flesh between them, there came a thought, a perfect certainty that if they live they will be exhibited through this country as curiosities, and when this fact was told to the father, he suddenly realized that he had struck a bonanza. When the suggestion of a surgical operation was made with a view of separating the children, the father became anxious, and remarked: "No, no; dey are vort too much shust as dey are. I will have no medical operations made."

The father is thirty-five years old, the mother thirty, and both are of good stock. Mr. Koehler has not yet enlightened the partner of his twin sorrows as to the formation of the children, as it is feared the shock might injure her. The only other child, a little girl about a year and a half old, is healthy and normal.

It was said last night that there would be an examination of the children by the leading medical men of this city. Dr. Janeway knew nothing about the case. Dr. Lusk, of No. 47 East Thirty-fourth-st., was of the opinion that it would be impossible to separate the children, but would not like to say anything definitely until he had seen them. Dr. Polk, of No. 7 East Thirty-sixth-st., said that medical science had gone so far that unless the bone tissues in the two children were absolutely joined he saw no reason why the youngsters could not be separated.

Dr. Cyrus Edson said: "I have not seen the youngsters yet, but from what you tell me I should say they cannot be separated. As to a meeting of our leading medical men on the question of separating the two children, I know nothing, for I have heard nothing of the abnormal birth. I think your telling the father that the coupled twins will be worth $10,000 a year to him will put a stop to what might have been a most interesting surgical operation."

By last accounts the twin babes and their mother are doing well.

BIGGER WAGES IN NEW-BEDFORD.

AN ADVANCE THERE FOLLOWS SIMILAR ACTION IN FALL RIVER—TWO STRIKES.

New-Bedford, Mass., April 17.—Notices were posted in the local mills to-day of a restoration of the former schedule of wages, following the action of the Fall River manufacturers in that regard.

Providence, April 17.—A strike began at the Geneva worsted mill in North Providence this morning.

The plant is operated by Senator-elect Maurice Ulmann, and he is said to have discriminated against union men in the matter of hiring and discharging help. The strike is to force him to recognize the Textile Union. It throws 200 hands out of employment.

Augusta, Me., April 17.—The strikers of the Vassalboro woolen mills have concluded not to accept the terms offered by the corporation. They struck for an advance of 20 per cent in wages, and the mill-owners conceded 10 per cent.

VENTURED ON THE FLOOD.

TWO MEN BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN DROWNED IN VERMONT—OTHER NEWS OF THE FRESHETS.

Bellows Falls, Vt., April 17. Great anxiety is felt here for the safety of S. N. Alexander, jr., cashier and paymaster of the Fall Mountain Paper Company, and Foreman Fitzgerald, of the Paint Works, who started down the Connecticut in a small cedar canoe yesterday at 3:30 p. m. for a ride of a mile or two. About 5 o'clock they were seen passing East Putney, twelve miles below here, since which time nothing has been heard from them. They were expected back on last night's train. It is feared their canoe was capsized and that they were drowned. Alexander was betrothed to a young woman and was to have been married soon.

A party of boatmen in search of young Alexander and his companion arrived in Brattleboro to-night, having in tow the canoe in which the young men embarked and which they found in an eddy two miles below Brattleboro.

Middletown, Conn., April 17.—The Russell Company's mills at Higganum are closed owing to high water. The Middlesex Rubber Company, at South Farms, has shut down, the high water extinguishing the fires.

Hartford, Conn., April 17.—The river this morning was twenty-six feet above mean low water. The Little River overflowed on Capitol Park to-day and the driveways were flooded.

THE HIGH PRICES UNWARRANTED.

DR. SALMON'S REPORT ON THE ADVANCES IN RATES FOR BEEF.

Washington, April 17.—Referring to the letter addressed to him by Secretary Morton under date of April 11, directing an investigation into the causes of the rise in the price of beef, Dr. Salmon, the Chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry, has presented to the Secretary a brief statement as to the prices in the Chicago market of dressed beef and shipping steers since January 1, 1895. This statement shows the extremes of prices for this class of cattle to have been, for January, $4 to $5.25; for February, $4.10 to $5.50; for March, $4.60 to $6.20; for April (first half), $4.75 to $6. Commenting on these figures, Dr. Salmon says:

These prices show that cattle on foot are approaching paying figures for growers and feeders. But they do not warrant any such sensational rise in the price of dressed beef to butchers by the great slaughtering establishments, nor an advance such as has been reported on the part of the retail dealers in meat to consumers. A normal rise in the wholesale price of dressed beef and in the retail prices should be only in proportion to the rise indicated for beef on foot.

EAST SIDE BUTCHERS COMBINE.

No relief has come for the suffering and inconveniences caused by the unwarrantably high prices exterted from consumers of beef, not only in this city, but also all over the country. The local Hebrew butchers, of whom there are about 700, mainly on the East Side, say that they are making less that $1 a day. They aver that they have appealed in vain to the wholesale dressed-beef dealers, and that unless prices are speedily reduced they will all be compelled to close their shops, as many have already been forced to do, through the greed of the Chicago Beef Trust.

They declare that they have tried to combine among themselves, thereby saving rent and gas, but have been unable to do so, and that as soon as one of their number gives up in despair, someone else is at once started in his deserted shop by agents who are believed to be secret emissaries of the Trust.

The Kosher Butchers' Association, which is now fully organized with about 600 members, who have each contributed $10 to a "war fund," has appointed a "war committee," composed of M. Abramovitz, A. Goldstein, Samuel Lockman, D. Grosse, B. Leroky, M. Hoffman, L. Rose and M. Goldstein, which is to formulate and report a plan for fighting the Trust. The association demands the right, which is denied to it, of employing its own butchers, instead of being compelled to pay extortionate fees for butchering and having ruinously high rates placed upon particular portions of beef cattle which they commonly use.

A STARTLING DECLINE IN OIL.

FROM $2.55 THE PRICE RISES TO $2.70, THEN FALLS TO $2.

PITTSBURG FOLLOWS OIL CITY IN THE FLUCTUATIONS—FEW TRANSACTIONS RECORDED.

Pittsburg, April 17.—This was the most exciting day in oil circles since the present boom in prices began, and near the close a small-sized panic was created.

On the local exchange certificate oil opened at $2.55 bid, and not until $2.65 was reached was there a sale of the May option. From $2.65 the market advanced to $2.70, and then declined to $2.62, where it remained pegged until a little before the close. Then suddenly a terrible surprise came. It was telegraphed from Oil City to Pittsburg that oil there was offered down as low as $2.58, at which price sales were made. Again in a few seconds the quotations from Oil City recorded $2.45 as the price. Just before the close the market at Oil City was as low as $2 bid, and inside of a minute it was bid up again to $2.17, at which price transactions in certificate oil were made.

The Pittsburg market followed Oil City. If the price in the latter place was bid up or offered down the Pittsburg market followed without a single transaction being made. Not for nearly twenty years have such wide fluctuations in prices occurred. From $2.70 to $2, a decline of 70 cents, would years ago probably have broken many banks and ruined numerous people. The decline of to-day, however, is not so disastrous. In this wide range in price probably not 50,000 barrels of certificate oil changed hands; and even those who parted with certificates at to-day's extreme low figures probably bought them at a much lower price.

What caused the big slump from $2.70 to $2 nobody seems to know. A United Press reporter asked James S. McKelvy, one of the best-posted and most prominent oil brokers in this city, to explain it. Mr. McKelvy thought that somebody in Oil City got scared and wanted to let go his holdings, probably thinking the Standard would reduce the purchasing price at the agencies to-morrow, and that everybody on the Exchange here got scared at once. Mr. McKelvy had telegraphic advices from Oil City that the Standard people were not buying certificate oil around $2.50, the price they had set for to-day, and this frightened timid holders, who tried to get rid of their oil at any price.

What the Standard will pay for crude oil at their agencies to-morrow is a question anxiously discussed. Whatever this price will be, it will probably govern the special delivery market.

Cleveland, April 17.—A dispatch to "The Press" from Findlay, Ohio, says that producers are selling all their surplus oil in anticipation of a decline in the market. Leasers are offering fabulous royalties for good territory.

A dispatch to "The Press" from Lima says that all Eastern oils were advanced this morning. Tiona going to $3, Pennsylvania to $2.50, Calling to $2.35, Harbarville to $2.35 and Newcastle to $2.25. There was no change in the local market. There are a number of important test wells due. A "wildcat" is being drilled ten miles northeast of this city, on the Snyder farm, Southwest of the city, and all along the oil belt into Indiana hundreds of new derricks are up awaiting the drills.

Bradford, Penn., April 17.—The phenomenal advance in oil is the sole topic of interest. Credit balances were marked up to $2.50 to-day, an increase of 55 cents since yesterday. There is great activity in all oil-well supply industries, and producers are clearing out old wells, repairing rigs and preparing to drill new wells. Thousands of acres of undeveloped territory are being leased. Every kind of business is booming.

SEELYE'S FATAL CLIMB.

A SON OF THE PRESIDENT OF SMITH COLLEGE KILLED BY A FALL ON MOUNT TOM.

Northampton, Mass., April 17 (Special).—The anxiety which had brooded over this city for thirty-six hours was changed into sadness this morning when the body of Arthur M. Seelye, second son of the president of Smith College, was found at the foot of a cliff on Mount Tom, about five miles southeast of here.

Seelye, who was twenty-five years of age, left home on Monday morning, intending to view the flooded valley from the top of Mount Tom. His continued absence alarmed the family, and a search was begun yesterday. Walter Seelye, a younger brother, led a small party over the mountain, but without results. This morning the fire bell was rung, and Chief Bardway started with his men to join in the search. Large parties of citizens from here and Easthampton, assisted by squads from the mills, made up a total of over 300 searchers. The body was finally found about 10:30 this morning on the side of the mountain toward Easthampton.

The young man had slipped on some icy rocks, fallen from a height of over 100 feet and struck on his head. His further descent was prevented by a tree, against which his body was resting. By a prearranged signal the rest of the company was summoned, and the body was taken to this city, where the Medical Examiner viewed it. There were several cuts on the head and arms made by striking against the jagged rocks, but the upper skull was not fractured. Death was doubtless instantaneous, as there had been a hemorrhage in the right ear, denoting fracture at the base of the brain.

Seelye was graduated from Amherst in 1892. For two years he taught in the Adelphi Academy, Brooklyn, and last fall he began post-graduate work in English literature at Harvard.

S. S. HERZIG CONVICTED OF FORGERY.

THE JURY MAKES A STRONG RECOMMENDATION FOR MERCY.

Samuel S. Herzig, a furrier, doing business at No. 133 Mercer-st., with his father and uncle, under the firm name of Herzig & Co., was placed on trial in Part I of the Court of General Sessions, before Recorder Goff, on a charge of forgery in the second degree yesterday. The complainant is Cashier Fox, of the Columbia Bank. It is said Herzig has no interest in the firm, and that they suffered losses to the extent of $20,000 through his practices.

The jury, after remaining out for three-quarters of an hour, returned a verdict of guilty as indicted, with a strong recommendation to the court for clemency. On motion of the defendant's lawyer, James W. McLaughlin, the defendant was remanded until Friday for sentence.

STRONG EVIDENCE AGAINST DURRANT.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CORONER'S JURY IN SAN FRANCISCO—FUNERAL OF ONE OF THE VICTIMS.

San Francisco, April 17.—At the Coroner's inquest to-day, in the case of Minnie Williams, whose murder Theodore Durrant is charged with, A. E. Williams, father of the girl, testified that she had been keeping company with Durrant for some time. He identified his daughter's purse, found in Durrant's overcoat pocket, stating that he had given it to her last Christmas.

Miss Miriam Lord, Miss Lilla Berry and Miss Stevens testified to finding the body of the murdered girl. Police Sergeant Burke told of the search for bloody clothing the morning after the murder at Durrant's house, and of the finding of Miss Williams's purse in the accused man's overcoat pocket. Dr. Thomas A. Vogel, at whose house the meeting of the Christian Endeavor Society was held Friday night last, testified that when Durrant reached the house he had perspiration in his face and his hair was over his forehead. He washed his hands, as he said they were dirty. He entered into the spirit of the festivities and seemed perfectly natural all the evening. A statement of the witness to the police was read, in which he stated that Durrant had attempted to decoy Miss Lucile Turner into the church. Miss Turner kept away from Durrant thereafter. She had told the witness that Miss Williams had expressed to her a fear of Durrant, to whom he had made some improper proposals.

F. A. Wolfe testified that he left Dr. Vogel's house on Friday evening with Durrant. Miss Lord was in their company. He saw Miss Lord home, and later saw a man in the vicinity of the church who looked like the prisoner. There were several other witnesses at to-day's proceedings, but their testimony was unimportant. After hearing them the Coroner continued the hearing until Friday morning.

The most startling feature introduced into the tragedy to-day was the finding of a trail of blood by Patrolman Hervey, on Twenty-fourth-st., near Bartlett, which led in the direction of Durrant's house. Hervey's discovery may give a clue to the disposition of the bloody clothing. If the man and woman whom Hills saw enter the church Friday night a few minutes after 8 o'clock were Durrant and Miss Williams, the murderer would have had time to commit his crime, take his bloody clothing to Durrant's home and dispose of it, and arrange his toilet as it was when he reached Dr. Vogel's.

The funeral of Minnie Williams took place from the First Baptist Church this afternoon. Fully 5,000 people were present.

GRACE DOES AS CROKER DID.

HE RETIRES FROM THE LEADERSHIP OF HIS ORGANIZATION.

A SENSATION CAUSED BY HIS RESIGNATION AS CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE STATE DEMOCRACY—THE CONDITION OF HIS HEALTH AND BUSINESS DUTIES GIVEN AS THE CAUSE—SPECULATION OVER THE REAL REASONS.

Ex-Mayor William R. Grace created a sensation in political circles last night by retiring from the leadership of the New-York State Democracy.

Last evening the Executive Committee of the State Democracy held its regular meeting at the Grace headquarters, in East Twenty-third-st. There was a pretty full attendance of the district leaders, though none of them would admit the receipt of a "tip" on the impending cause of astonishment. Robert Grier Monroe, in Chairman Grace's absence, presided, and after some routine business had been transacted solemnly announced that he had received the following note, dated New-York, April 17, 1895, and signed William R. Grace, and asked Secretary Henry H. Sherman to read it. Mr. Sherman raised his stentorian voice and read:

I hereby resign the office of chairman of the Executive Committee of the State Democracy, to take effect as of even date with this communication before the committee at its meeting to-night, and to ask that it be immediately accepted, so that there may be no delay in choosing my successor.

Then Acting Chairman Monroe produced another and much more wordy document, also from Mr. Grace, addressed to the "Executive Committee of the State Democracy." It contained the ex-Mayor's alleged reasons for resigning, and Secretary Sherman read it with elocutionary effect calculated to bring tears to the eyes of the most hardened Anti-Snapper present.

HEALTH, BUSINESS, ETC.

Mr. Grace did not allude in his opening sentences to the fact that it was not yet a year since Richard Croker made his farewell bow as a political boss, but gave the same excuses for retiring practically that Croker gave when he said he retired from the leadership of Tammany Hall. The condition of his health and business obligations, Mr. Grace said, required that he separate himself from the activities and worrying details of politics. He did this with the deepest feelings of friendship and the keenest regret at leaving his comrades at this critical time. "If this action may seem surprising to you," he continued, "because of its apparent suddenness, you will, I think, feel that I have been justified in taking this step in view of the explanations I have just made to you."

Mr. Grace recalled to the minds of the committee that "the State Democracy was organized for the purpose of representing and advancing that public sentiment which had grown restless because of the dangerous tendencies of an organization which was masquerading under the standards of Democracy." It was now five years since the first influences were brought, by those with whom he was associated, to overthrow Tammany. The first effort failed, but the seeds had been sown, from which the great victory of last year had come, and Mr. Grace proceeded in many flowing sentences to take credit for the overthrow of the Wigwam combine.

Further on in his farewell address Mr. Grace took a shy at the reform element which he was ready to desert last year had Tammany acceded to his terms. He said:

I know that the fad of the day is the government of cities by non-partisan bodies of citizens getting together from time to time for such purpose. But, in my opinion, the efforts in this direction will fail and partisan politics, elevated by true patriotism, self-sacrifice and relentless, persistent activity against evil influences, must be accepted as the only road to permanent success.

The ex-Mayor urged his bereaved followers to maintain the standard of true Democracy and to outlive false Democracy in New-York City. The best partisanship for either party was that which secured the best government.

Referring to the administration of Mayor Strong, Mr. Grace wrote:

It is now four months since the new Administration began its work. You have been called upon to assume through representatives some share of the responsibility of this new Administration, and you can safely challenge any one to gainsay the ability and fitness by general character and experience, of your representatives for the responsibilities cast upon them. It should be a matter of very proper pride for you, as it is to me, that your organization has never recommended any one for official responsibility who has not the personal character, capacity and training which are the requirements for successful administration.

Speaking personally, Mr. Grace said:

Up to this time, as you know, I have given up my own time and energies that the purpose for which you are organized might be gained. I have done it without other hope of reward than that which the gratification of my civil pride, of my desire to see New-York not only the commercial and financial metropolis of this country, but also its model community in its local administration would give me. I have done it to the neglect of private responsibilities which, in justice to others who in some measure rely on me, I ought no longer to neglect. It is right for me to ask now to be relieved of some of this burden.

WILLING TO HELP THE MAYOR.

Among Mr. Grace's concluding promises is this, directed to the Mayor, as an afterthought apparently:

I ought, perhaps, also to say that in every effort that Mayor Strong shall continue to make to redeem the pledges which he represented in the election of last fall, I shall be ever ready to contribute, in my relation as a private citizen, whatever of aid, suggestion or support he may desire of me.

John Hayes, of the XXIst Assembly District, after eulogizing Mr. Grace and his career, offered the following:

Resolved, That the Executive Committee of the State Democracy has heard with profound regret the considerations which have prompted our chairman to tender his resignation; and,

Resolved, That to assurances of our deepest regard and gratitude for his services in the past we add the hope that his returning health may justify us in expecting still to rely upon his leadership.

Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed by the chair to convey to Mr. Grace our expression as above set forth and to recommend to a special meeting of the committee such action as it may deem necessary or proper.

E. J. Kiely followed, saying among other things that Mr. Grace's resignation was a serious blow to the organization. Roger Foster took issue with Mr. Kiely as to the effect of Mr. Grace's resignation, and believed that the New-York State Democracy would survive the blow. Ex-Congressman Warner praised Mr. Grace, and after others had spoken Mr. Hayes's resolutions were adopted unanimously. The chairman named John Hayes, John DeWitt Warner, Roger Foster, George Karsch and John Murphy the committee to see Mr. Grace.

There were many rumors floating about last evening as to the causes of Mr. Grace's alleged retirement. Few politicians took any stock in its genuineness, and the general opinion was that he would continue to manage the organization from the outside. The act of the ex-Mayor revived in some quarters the recent assertions that his destination was the leadership of Tammany Hall, and that he went out to prepare the way for his passage inside the Wigwam. This, however, was not seriously regarded as Mr. Grace's present aim.

Another and more plausible explanation was that Mayor Strong has given Mr. Grace to understand that he can expect no more appointments of any importance from the Mayor, and that Mr. Grace concluded that he would retire while his prestige was good.

It will be observed that the resignation was not formally accepted, and some of the Grace leaders believe that it will not be acted on.

"DOC" MINCHON'S TRIAL BEGUN.

Rome, N. Y., April 17.—The trial of "Doc" Minchon, charged with aiding the "Bunco King," O'Brien, to escape from custody in Utica three years ago, is on here. It took two days to get a jury. The first witness, Andrew Hamilton, ex-District-Attorney of Albany County, testified to O'Brien "jumping" his bail bond at Albany and his extradition from England, trial, etc. He said Minchon was frequently with O'Brien when he was in Albany.

FAT FEES FOR LITTLE WORK.

ABUSES UNDER THE COLLATERAL INHERITANCE TAX LAW.

CONTROLLER ROBERTS ANXIOUS TO HAVE PUBLIC APPRAISERS INSTEAD OF THOSE APPOINTED BY SURROGATES.

The collateral inheritance tax has evidently opened the door to a good deal of fraud, and made it possible for appraisers, attorneys and others to get fat fees for doing a small amount of work. The abuses have been so many that a bill has been introduced recently, at the instance of State Controller James A. Roberts, which has for its object the abating of the abuses which now exist.

This tax, with the exception of the amount expended in collecting it, goes to the State. In the nine years that the law has been on the statute book the sum of $11,000,000 has been collected under it. Of this amount $6,600,000 came from the county of New-York, leaving only $4,400,000 from all the other counties in the State. Of this remainder, $1,000,000 came from the county of Kings, $360,000 from Westchester and $326,000 from Erie.

In the fiscal year ending September 30, 1894, the amount received from New-York County was $861,315 54. About $8,000 of this was refunded, and it cost $64,000 to collect the tax. Of these expenses $10,879 went to the City Controller; the appraisers got $25,704; counsel fees amounted to $15,517; clerks' salaries cost $11,345, and there were incidental expenses, for postage, etc., amounting to about $500.

Although, as has been said before, the tax goes to the State, the State Controller finds himself in a somewhat anomalous position in collecting it. He does not appear to have power to enforce its payment, except through the surrogates of counties, who have extensive powers in this matter. When the act was first passed, in 1886, the practice in the Surrogates' courts was to appoint an appraiser of each estate, when there was a substantial dispute as to the amount of tax which should be paid.

In 1893 a law was passed giving the surrogates power to appoint permanent appraisers for this purpose. These appraisers make their reports to the surrogates, and the surrogates pass upon the account as rendered. If the tax is too large, naturally those interested in the estate make objections, and, if overruled in the Surrogate's Court, they have a right to appeal to the General Term of the Supreme Court, and finally to the Court of Appeals.

If, however, the appraisal is smaller than it should be, there is no one to appeal over the appraiser's decision, unless the Surrogate on his own motion sets the appraisal aside. Consequently, the representatives of the State really have nothing to say in the collection of this tax.

Controller Roberts has seen the evils which have grown up under this practice, and in the bill which has been introduced he has attempted to do away with them. The Controller complains that in many cases the law is leniently applied as a matter of favor, and declares that one case has been brought to the attention of the department where property appraised at a few thousand dollars was shortly afterward sold for nearly a million.

The appraisers, who are appointed by the surrogates, are allowed $3 a day for the time actually employed by them in making the appraisal. As the law does not recognize a fraction of a day, however, every hearing on a particular estate gives the appraiser, or at least he so construes it, the right to a full day's pay.

The result is that appraisers find it convenient to have short sessions, and have many of them, and by adjourning the hearing on a particular estate from time to time make as many "days" as possible. Then, again, there are so many appraisers throughout the State that the abuse which the Controller referred to, of allowing a low appraisement on certain estates as a matter of favor, has grown to be considerable of a scandal in some instances.

In New-York City the appraiser before whom a large proportion of the business comes is Gilbert W. Minor, of No. 206 Broadway. Mr. Minor was previously a clerk in Surrogate Arnold's office before the latter was elected to his present place, and now appears as Mr. Arnold's partner. He was appointed by Mr. Arnold as appraiser, and much of the business is sent to him by the Surrogate. It might be interesting to know if Mr. Arnold is at present financially interested in his old law firm at No. 206 Broadway. If he is, there are people who might think it better taste for him to send this business to some one besides his own legal partner.

The other appraisers in this city are Max L. Ransom, of No. 38 Park Row, a son of ex-Surrogate Ransom; George P. Webster, of the same address; Walter H. Corgeshall, of No. 22 William-st., and George W. Curtis, jr., of No. 32 Nassau-st. The appraisers in some of the counties have collected for their fees on certain estates more than the entire tax for that particular estate, and in very few of them have they shown any particular modesty in figuring up the amount of their fees.

Controller Roberts is anxious to have an appraiser made a public official, and appointed either by the State Controller or by the Governor, for each county. But he is said to have met with such strenuous opposition from some of the counties that he has practically given up having appraisers appointed except for the counties where there are large cities, where a considerable amount of business comes before them. Where there are so many appraisers, even in one county, they are liable to make different rulings as to what should or what should not be subject to a tax, and also as to the amount on particular kinds of property.

The surrogates are said to be opposed to the measure introduced by Controller Roberts, and evidently it would take a good deal of valuable patronage out of their hands. Whether or not there are any other considerations which induce them to oppose this measure may perhaps be answered by the present position of Surrogate Arnold in connection with Mr. Minor.

A WILD FIRE SCARE ON THE WEST SIDE

THE FIRE WAS TRIVIAL AND THE ALARM WAS SOON ALLAYED.

The carelessness of the janitor in banking the fire in the basement of a five-story flathouse, No. 763 Columbus-ave., Tuesday night caused another scare in that section early yesterday morning. The presence of mind and the prompt action of a policeman prevented the spread of the excitement and the fire was extinguished without the aid of the firemen and before any damage was done. The janitor, who tends the furnace, left the lower door of the furnace open Tuesday night and shortly before morning a live coal rolled from the grate and ignited a pile of sawdust which lay on the hearth. The sawdust smouldered slowly and sent up a thin stream of smoke, which made its way through the open door of the furnace-room into the halls to the top floor. About 5 o'clock yesterday morning, when Oscar Kielsch went to deliver the bread from Joseph Jungux's bakery, No. 685 Columbus-ave., he found the hall filled with smoke and cried "fire" at the top of his voice. The cry was heard by Mrs. Hoffmeyer, who lives on the second floor, and by Policeman George Reid, of the West One-hundredth-st. police-station, who was passing. Mrs. Hoffmeyer woke the other occupants of the house, who ran into the halls and rushed down the stairs. Policeman Reid extinguished the fire with a pail of water. The tenants were assured that there was no danger and returned to their apartments.

MYSTERIOUS FIRE IN FIRST-AVE.

Yesterday afternoon fire was discovered in a baby carriage in the hallway of No. 2,282 First-ave. A bundle of paper which was left in the carriage had been ignited. The matter was reported to the Twenty-ninth Precinct station-house, and Captain Brooks is making an investigation.

FIRE IN AMSTERDAM-AVE.

A fire broke out shortly before 9 o'clock yesterday morning on the third floor of the five-story brownstone tenement No. 88 Amsterdam-ave., occupied by Mrs. Corry as a dwelling. About $200 damage was done by the blaze. The cause of the outbreak is not known.

WILL GET BACK HER MARGINS.

Boston, April 17.—A verdict of $1,356 for the plaintiff was returned to-day in the Superior Court, before Chief Justice Mason, in the case of Adelaide L. Cleveland against Joseph Urig, jr. The action was brought to recover $1,220 in margins paid to defendant, a stock broker, in 1893. The plaintiff said that she put into the hands of the defendant margins for the fictitious purchase of New-York and New-England stock. She declared that the transactions were illegal, and sued to recover what she had paid to the defendant. The defendant denied that the transactions were illegal.

HANDS OFF NICARAGUA.

NOTICE GIVEN TO ENGLAND.

THREE POINTS THE ADMINISTRATION WILL INSIST ON.

TERRITORY MUST NOT BE SEIZED NOR MILITARY OR NAVAL FORCES LANDED—NEITHER WILL NICARAGUA BE PERMITTED TO CEDE ANY PART OF HER DOMAIN TO GREAT BRITAIN.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

Washington, April 17.—The attitude of the Administration with respect to the pending controversy between Great Britain and Nicaragua, so far as it has developed, is one to commend itself to close observers of affairs in Central America. The position assumed by the President and Secretary Gresham is in striking contrast with some of their other moves on the diplomatic chessboard. For once their policy seems to have some backbone. In a word, it has become logical. Three distinct points, it is understood, the Administration will insist on:

First—Whatever may be the outcome of the pending controversy, England will not be permitted to seize any Nicaraguan territory.

Second—In no event shall there be a cession of territory to England by Nicaragua.

Third—Under no circumstances will England be permitted to land a naval or military force for purposes of occupation, either temporarily or permanently.

So much of the Administration's Nicaraguan programme has been fixed, and England has been informed of the conclusion.

It is known to well-informed persons that, however frequent or earnest may be her protestations to the contrary, England has in mind the gaining of a foothold in Central America. Shortly after her ultimatum to Nicaragua was made public Lord Kimberley made known through Ambassador Bayard that Great Britain had no intention of seizing any part of the Republic, but England has in the past repeatedly disavowed similar intentions in other parts of the world, and has subsequently taken and held the very territory which she maintained she did not covet.

ENGLAND NOT ALWAYS SINCERE.

If Administration officials were to tell the reasons which have influenced them in deciding that England is to be prevented from seizing any part of Nicaragua it would probably be said that this is a precaution taken in furtherance of the established policy of the country to prohibit foreign colonization on the western hemisphere. The explanation is well enough for the purpose, but it is much more likely that the President and Secretary Gresham have finally awakened to the realization that England is not at all times sincere in her expressions in international matters. Whatever may be the reasons which have controlled the President and Secretary Gresham, the important fact remains that they have determined that Great Britain shall not secure a foothold in Nicaragua.

With respect to the decision that the British Government is not to acquire territory by cession, the determination is equally firm. The possibility that Nicaragua might be induced to offer certain territory, Corn Island, for example, to England as indemnity has been taken into account. Such action by Nicaragua is not to be permitted any more than the forcible seizure of territory by Great Britain would be. It is not believed that Nicaragua now contemplates indemnifying England by a cession of territory, but emergencies might bring it about. The Administration is prepared vigorously to protest against such a course. It seems to be assumed that England will suggest to Nicaragua that the easiest way for her to get out of the present difficulty is to give up Corn Island, but any such scheme which may be entertained by Lord Kimberley is destined to meet with such opposition on the part of this country as to become inoperative, even in the event of Nicaragua's deciding that it is to her advantage to give up the little island.

Relative to the landing of a naval or military force at Greytown or Corinto, the President and Secretary Gresham are determined that England shall take no such step. Their attitude on this point is said to be one of great firmness. Nor will Great Britain be permitted to resort to subterfuge under cover of which a force might be landed at either of those ports.

TWO POINTS STILL IN DOUBT.

There are two practical points in the controversy about which the President and Secretary of State are said to be in doubt, and it is with respect to these that some disappointment is expressed with a programme which otherwise se