

## DEALING IN FIREWORKS.

NO GREAT RISK IN THAT BUSINESS NOW. ADAYS—THE PRECAUTIONS TAKEN.

"Firecracker Lane," as some people have called Park Place between Broadway and Church-st., is one of the most populous thoroughfares in lower New-York. Since the explosion in a fireworks establishment in Paterson many people whose business takes them through that street and others who go that way to and from the elevated railway station have gone by other streets, or if they went their usual way have walked more rapidly and were not ashamed to say that they feared they might be there when a similar accident took place in one of the four establishments from which the block takes its nickname. There are two fireworks stores on each side of the street, and at this time of year, when people all over the country are making arrangements to supply the coming man and his father with material for celebrating the Fourth of July, these stores are usually filled with merchandise, and the sidewalks in front of them are often blocked with cases and boxes.

The fireworks establishments are as likely to take fire as any other stores in the neighborhood, but the proprietors laugh at the idea of avoiding them for fear of an explosion.

"Fireworks are not made now as they were years ago," one dealer said, "and for that reason there is little danger. They are manufactured today on scientific principles which preclude spontaneous combustion. Formerly, sulphur entered largely into the manufacture of the goods, and then there was danger, not only in making, but in storing the stock. The sulphur that is used now has been made harmless by the elimination of acids. A fire in a fireworks store when once started will make good headway in short order, but there will be no great explosion, no blowing down of walls, nor wiping out of buildings, unless, besides fireworks, the people have powder or dynamite in the place. The fire would set the goods off, there would be lots of sizzling and spitting and volumes of smoke and sparks, but this would take place only after the flames had reached the fireworks themselves. If the stock can be 'wet down' in time there will be no fire, and that is more than you can say of a stock of furniture, or lots of other goods looked upon by the public as harmless, innocent stuff in comparison with fireworks. There are certain kinds of torpedoes, which are not generally carried in stock by the large concerns, that are dangerous because they will ignite from concussion. But the rockets, candles, crackers, wheels and all the other popular ornamental fireworks require a live flame to set them off."

It was explained by another concern that the insurance companies do not take a dismal view of "Firecracker Lane" as a risk. They write policies on the combustible stocks at from 1 1/2 to 3 per cent, according to the time of the year; but they insist on the concerns taking certain precautionary measures.

"We do nothing," said one dealer, "beyond being exceedingly careful. We allow no smoking on the premises, keep a fireman at the door who is a member of the department, but paid by us, whose business it is to see that the smoking regulation is not overstepped and that nothing of a dangerous character is brought into the place."

It was suggested that somebody might come in and, while looking at the merchandise, take a match out of his pocket and light some of the samples displayed on the long counter. "That would do no harm," said the fireworks merchant, "because the samples on the counter from which we sell are all dummies, and the stock proper is kept far away from the reach of any crank customer who might come in for the purpose of doing damage. To illustrate the theory that fireworks will not burn until a flame reaches them, we have the experience of a customer in Savannah. He kept a large general store in which he had a case of fireworks from our house on the night when a fire broke out in his establishment. The case stood in the back part of the store, and was thoroughly drenched

by water. The fire destroyed nearly everything on the ground floor of the large establishment except the fireworks, and nobody knew that there were any such in the place until the water soaked case was opened on the rubbish heap. We feel perfectly safe, and deem our business not an extra hazardous one, because we carry no explosives."

### OCCUPATIONS OF THE UNTRAINED.

CONTINUAL SHIFTING FROM TRADE TO TRADE RESULTS IN THE EARNING OF A PITTANCE.

In eking out a subsistence the wits of untrained workers among the poor are often tested

also regarded as enviable, since when at all proficient they may usually count upon from seven to nine months' work during the year, i. e., about three and half months' employment on summer clothing and from three to five months on winter goods. The rush on the latter begins late in July or early in August, and continues until November, when a slack time ensues that lasts from four to ten weeks, according to the advanced or belated condition of the season.

The wages paid for the less difficult of these passing occupations are very small, the earnings of expert workers seldom amounting to more than \$1 a day, unless there be added the pittance obtained by extra night work. There

## THE BOTANICAL GARDEN.

SOME OF THE INTERESTING PLANTS TO BE SEEN THERE—THE TROPICAL COLLECTION IN THE CONSERVATORY.

The New-York Botanical Garden has enjoyed popularity ever since the grounds were opened to the public, but the number of visitors has never been so large as in the last few weeks. Among the visitors are many men and women who go there to study, but there are thousands also who are attracted by the beautiful collection in the great conservatory, by the interesting exhibits at the museum and by the rustic beauty of those parts of the gardens which are beautiful by nature and have been allowed to remain as they came from Nature's workshop.

The facilities for reaching the place are far better than they were in the early days of the gardens, and the increased attendance is largely due to this cause. The direct route to the garden is by the Harlem Railroad to Bronx Park, the station formerly known as Bedford Park, a walk of five minutes from the museum and the conservatory. Another way to the garden is by trolley from Harlem Bridge, on the Williamsbridge line, which lands one at the same place as by the Harlem road, or by trolley from Harlem Bridge to West Farms, and thence by the Mount Vernon line to the park.



THE LILY POND.



PINEAPPLE BUSHES.

to their utmost, and, while the trades at their command are seldom more than a trick of the hand, when all is said and done, he or she who aims to become "a steady worker" often finds it necessary to become familiar with from four to six available avocations, in order to keep busy during the year. Activity in such light trades as flower or feather manufacture, the making of laces, of fringes, of fancy braids, buttons, ties or hats, the sewing of furs, etc., seldom lasts longer than from five weeks to two months. At the end of such a period another shift must be made and a new occupation found. In passing among the tenements of the East and West sides one finds the fur sewers of July and August reappearing in October and November as the makers of Christmas novelties and toys; in December and January, as the straw hat "hands," and again in March and April engaged in the manufacture of ties, or as pasters and coverers of baseballs.

The aristocrats among such workers are those who succeed in becoming salesmen or saleswomen in the small shops, and those who have regular trades, such as that of the barber or baker, with the attendant chances of "steady work the year round." The lot of weavers and makers of underwear and of outer garments is

is, therefore, no serious interest in the work upon which they are engaged. All that remains for the untrained worker is a blind drifting from one vocation to another until such odds and ends of general knowledge have been acquired as shall insure a few weeks' occupation now and then in each trade with which he has become familiar. Those engaged in making notions or novelties are in worse condition than the workers in furs, since time each season must be spent in learning the knack of manufacturing articles for which there is but a momentary market.

### SIR HENRY KEPPEL'S LONG SERVICE.

From The London Chronicle. It seems extraordinary that a man whose youthful and hereditary passion for the sea might have been stirred by reading contemporary accounts of the famous action between the Shannon and the Chesapeake is still among us. Yet it was only a few years after that when Sir Henry Keppel first set his foot on the deck of one of his majesty's ships. When George IV was still King young Keppel was a Lieutenant, and he became a commander before Queen Victoria had left the schoolroom. He did not retire from the active list until he was seventy, and yet that event took place twenty-two years ago, which is quite a lifetime in the history of a modern navy.

fourth route is by the Third-ave. elevated to Tremont and thence by trolley, or by the Sixth-ave. elevated to One-hundred-and-fifty-fifth-st. and thence by Jerome-ave. line to One-hundred-and-seventy-seventh-st. to Tremont-ave. line.

Unless the weather makes walking unpleasant one should go from the station by the driveway to the herbaceous grounds. This is an undulating plot of ground about nine acres in area, surrounded by trees, in which three thousand different plants are arranged in families. There is evidence on all sides of the work of the gardener, but the natural attractions have been allowed to remain, and the trees and rocks and pools add beauty to the picture. Here one may see many specimens of the lily family, including the onion and Spanish bayonet; the buttercup family, of which the peonies, larkspurs, columbines and meadow rue are members; the pea family, including beans, lupins, clover and vetches; the buckwheat family, which is now interesting because of the two giant specimens of knotweed from East Asia in bloom. There are also many varieties of the mint family. The little pond near one end of the grounds is covered with water lilies of many colors, and these, with carnations near by, form one of the brightest spots on the grounds.

From the herbaceous grounds it is only a short walk to the shrub collection, which covers about fifteen acres. The shrubs are arranged in families, of which there are about fifty. The museum, with its great economic collections showing the products derived from the vegetable world, comes next on the visitor's tour of inspection. This is as interesting to the small boy or to the man who wants to kill an hour as it is to the scientist, and the lofty halls where the various products are exhibited in well arranged cases are always favorite resting places for visitors to the garden.

But the main feature of the garden and the one which appeals to all who visit the place is the great conservatory, which when completed will be the largest in this country. Workmen are now engaged in blasting away the rock which masks the building. When this is done the large conservatory, with its central dome and two wings, will be seen from the roadway on a terrace five feet high. Ever since the doors were opened the greater part of this building has been occupied, but in its new arrangement the conservatory is greatly improved. It contains now many of the specimens which were brought recently from the Royal Gardens at Kew by the head gardener, George V. Nash, and also many specimens which were recently acquired by exchange with the National Conservatory at Washington. In the palm house there are some fine specimens of sago palms, and in the same building there is a giant century plant from Mexico, the leaves of which are fully six feet long. The plant resembles a