PALMY DAYS OF RIVER PIRATES PAST.

LITTLE CHANCE FOR THEM OFF THE WHARVES OF NEW-YORK TO-DAY.

"The day of the river pirate in New-York has gone by," said the old policeman of the Harbor Squad, speaking of the exchange of pistol shots last week between some members of the squad and coal thieves in the Kill von Kull. "The men who made small fortunes in rowboats on the rivers twenty years ago are either dead or out of the business. It doesn't pay any longer to spend nights in rowboats along the waterfront. It is not entirely to the credit of the police, either, that river thieving has ceased to pay."

The old policeman spoke the truth. The palmy days, or nights, of the river pirate ended several years ago, when the transportation companies owning waterfront privileges followed the city's example in building improved piers, which are like huge safes, closed at night. It was in the time of the open piers, when any thief who owned a rowboat could steal up to unguarded treasure on a dark night with a good prospect of getting away with a load of plunder. The business of river thieving was prosperous for many years. It led many desperate men to band themselves together in small boat crews and risk their lives almost nightly on the rivers. It was encouraged by crafty "fences," receivers of stolen goods of all description, who kept their shops and warehouses conveniently near the waterfronts and bought the plunder of river thieves.

In those days the police had no swiftly moving launches in which to pursue the pirates. Patrolmen of the Harbor Squad learned to be experts with the oar as well as with the pistol. Three men in a rowboat was the police rule. Each man took his turn at the oars on a tour of night duty along the shore. When one was rowing another was sitting in the stern of the boat with a ready pistol, while the third was in the bow, peering into the darkness and occasionally throwing a gleam from a dark lantern upon some pier or lighter. The police played a game of hide and seek with the river thieves then, and were often outmatched. River pirates used dark lanterns and pistols, and they knew many secret recesses under piers to which they could row their boats and from which they could crawl to land when pressed closely. They were cunning and crafty, and some of them seemed to be gifted with senses so fine that they could detect the approach of a police boat a hundred yards away on the darkest night.

There were specialists among the thieves, too. Some were mostly after cotton and stole many a bale from lighters and wharves, partly because they had "fences" to whom they could sell their booty at fair prices. There were the coffee pirates, who hunted after bags of coffee stored on unprotected piers. There were regular purveyors for junk dealers, who were specialists in lead pipe and brass castings, and they were rarely caught with their plunder, because it would sink when it was thrown overboard at the approach of a police boat.

"Sometimes," said the old policeman, "we would make up to a rowboat we noticed sneaking along shore, that seemed to be weighted down well, and there would be a splash or two before we got near enough to throw the lantern gleam into the boat. Then we would find two or three tough looking fellows in the boat, and nothing else. They were just out rowing for pleasure, of course, and it was useless to arrest them, so we let them go. Did they lose their booty? Not a bit of it. They went back after it when the coast was clear. How did they find it? Easy enough. When they got near the place where they dumped their 'swag,' they would row inshore and tie the end of a stout piece of twine to a stringpiece or bit of spiling, taking care to fasten it about a foot under water. Then they would row out again to a point a little further out than that at which the plunder was sunk, letting the twine unwind from a spool in the boat. Then the twine would be pulled tight, about a foot under the water, and the boat would be rowed a short distance up or down stream, always in the direction opposite to that in which the tide was running.

"When the boat was turned inshore again and the string was gathered up carefully there would be other strings, each attached to a cork, dragged up with it. Corks float, you know. Each string with a cork to it would be pulled until it brought up the end of a rope, and when the rope was pulled, up would come a piece of brass casting, a coil of lead pipe or some other junk that was worth saving. Why didn't the police recover the 'swag'? Oh, it was a long time before we ever suspected the thieves took the trouble to hitch twine around corks to their plunder before they dumped the stuff overboard."

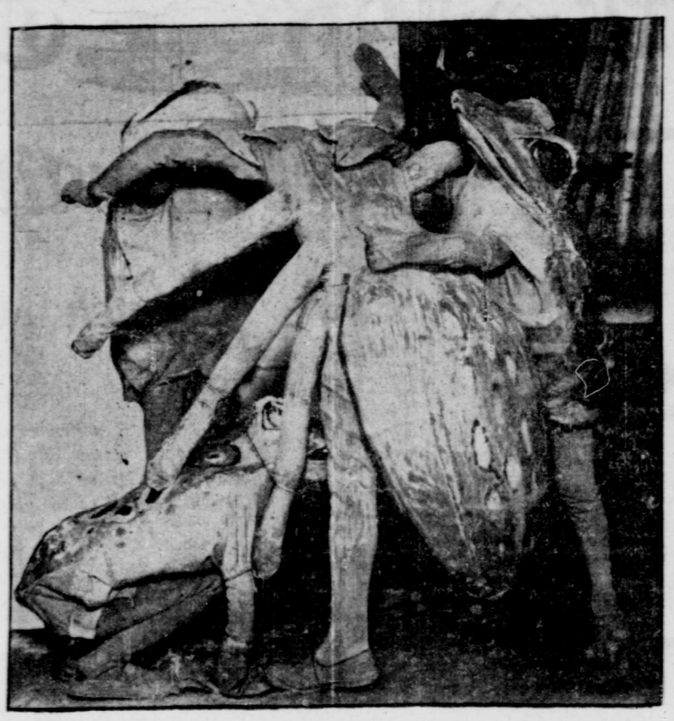
There was one gang of river thieves years ago who made a specialty of stealing choice liquors, particularly such as were imported in casks and barrels. They stole many a barrel or cask of liquor from open piers before their peculiar method of operation was detected. Let the old policeman tell the story:

"It was a mystery for a long time how a couple of men in a boat could remove a cask of brandy on a pier where a watchman was on duty without making noise enough to attract attention. The mystery might have remained one longer if some of the thieves had not let a cat out of the bag by leaving the cask on the pier after they had stolen the brandy. The cask was found empty, and an examination showed that a hole which had been bored in it went clear down through the wooden floor of the pier. The thieves had bored up through the floor into the cask, letting the brandy run out into pails in their boat. In other cases they had stolen the empty cask, an easy job, and had filled it again at a safe distance, the hole in the pier floor being concealed by rubbing some dirt over it. The modern piers are metal lined now, so that no river pirate can bore holes in them."

Pistol shots along shore at night were not uncommon in the times of the river pirates' greatest activity, and they did not always mean that the police were shooting. Private watchmen at some of the open piers fired shots frequently to scare away men in suspicious rowboats, and sometimes they mistook the police for thieves and blazed away at them before recognizing them. In fact, the police were more in danger from some watchmen than from the pirates, who were too crafty to shoot unless they were brought to bay. Most of the encounters in the dark were harmless, however, and it was not often that the police reported the actual shooting of anybody. There never was a case of a policeman being killed in such encounters. Occasionally a thief who tried to escape after warning was crippled by a bullet, and now and then the police reported the "disappearance" of a river thief who had been shot at. The subsequent finding of a man's body in the water, with a bullet hole in it, was not inquired into too carefully.

The police and the river pirates were rivals in the search for corpses in the rivers, particularly in the early spring, when bodies which have been held down by ice and cold become buoyant and rise to the surface. Many persons commit suicide by throwing themselves into the rivers in the winter time, and their bodies are not found until the weather gets warm. Many articles of jewelry and considerable money are found in the clothing of bodies that float near the docks in the springtime. The police, when a body is found, can tell if it has been in the hands of a river thief before they get it. The pockets are always empty and turned inside out in such a case.

Police Commissioner McAdoo is preparing to add six new steam launches to the small fleet of police launches which ply the rivers within the city's boundaries. Now that the day of the river pirate is past, the patrol of the waterfronts is to be made more easy and comfortable for the police.



THE SPIDER AND FROGS, WHICH APPEAR IN "BABES IN TOYLAND," HAVING A FRIENDLY TUSSLE BETWEEN THE ACTS.

GROTESQUE ANIMALS FOR STAGE PRODUCTIONS.

HOW IDEAS OF ACTORS ARE WORKED OUT BY MEN WHO USE PAPIER MACHE AND WIRES WITH SKILL.

With the increase of popular interest in musical extravaganzas on the stage an art unusual and almost uncanny has sprung into being. With costumers and decorators the stage folk have long collaborated, but with the artisans who now, with a few wires, some papier maché, much skill and more patience, convert a good looking actor, as actors go, into either a laughable parody of some well known domestic animal or some beast truly hideous and repulsive the stage is yet not well acquainted.

"But they've got to have us; they can't get along without us," commented one of the foremost in this particular line of art the other day. And there was more truth than fiction in the remark. When shows such, for instance, the the "Babes in Toyland," now at the Majestic Theatre, come upon the stage, these men who work the seemingly impossible in wire and papier maché, are almost as essential to success as the audiences themselves.

Probably not one in ten of those who have seen the "big black spider sit down beside her and drive Miss Muffet away" at the Majestic has sympathized with the spider, or even given a rap how he came to be a spider, anyway. Those overgrown frogs with their awkward hops have a wonderfully lifelike appearance, but they owe it all to the artist in wire and papier maché.

Persons witnessing a performance in which several of these extraordinary creations are produced together cannot realize the amount of study and work required to make each move as smoothly and naturally as it does.

"There's an awful amount of detail in this work," said an artist in an uptown shop the other afternoon, as he rested for a moment in his endeavors to make a huge donkey head as lifelike in every particular as possible.

"'That's right," agreed his assistant, as he straightened his back and shifted the close fitting head he had been wearing while his chief adjusted it.

"Now, take this head for instance. It's to be worn by—by—who's this—why, that Jack in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'—you know who I mean."

"Well, now, look here. See those strings?" and he pointed to two rows of thin, but very strong cord hanging at either side of the donkey's neck.

"Now, watch them," and he pulled first one and then another, until all of the twelve had been pulled. As each was worked the papier maché donkey did the unexpected. His lips rolled back in a broad grin, his mouth flew open in a hearty, "Ha! Ha!" his ears turned in every conceivable position and entirely independent of each other, his eyelids blinked naturally, and he made "goo-goo" eyes, in response to the twitching of another string, in a manner to excite the envy of the author of that art.

"Now, that was no fool of a job," explained the chief, as he relieved his assistant of the cumbersome headgear, "to work out that thing. Of course, this isn't dressed up yet. This is just the foundation; just wire and papier maché. This has to be coated with hair and painted up to make it look natural.

"Took a whole lot of figuring to get that thing right. You see, the actor gets an idea; he comes to us and outlines what he wants. We get together on it. Of course, the actor generally has big ideas about what can be done. We know, however, and just do the best we can.

"Yes, it is pretty expensive work. For instance, that head there we've just been looking over is worth, roughly, about $50. These others," and he pointed to the array of apes' faces, lions, tigers, elephants and other animals grinning down from the rafters and from nearly every side, "are also very expensive things, some of them costing more than this head, and some of them less.

"Just before the theatrical season opens is our busy time. Then they come in on us with a flood of new ideas, and they are always in a great hurry for us to work them out."

To many of the actors taking animal or kindred parts on the stage much credit is due for the ingenuity they display in devising and carrying out their parts. One of the most striking illustrations of the amount of study that can be put into such a part is afforded by the spider in the "Babes in Toyland." Off the stage the spider is Robert Burns—"Bobbie" Burns his friends call him when in poetical mood. Unlike the poet, however, this Mr. Burns is an athlete. When Julian Mitchell conceived the idea of having a giant tarantula gyrating about the stage during the scene laid in the spider's forest, Mr. Burns was called upon. His costume as first designed was two legs short, according to the fashions prevailing in the best tarantula society. Mr. Burns proved this by purchasing a tarantula brought from California. This tarantula he kept in a bottle in his room. To perfect his imitation of the insect's movements he studied its motions closely. His imitation of the slow, hesitating movement of the insect is now said to be as near perfect as it is possible to get.

Theoretically, the imitation of a huge spider is easy; in actual practice it is not so easy.

"It is a hard strain on a man's arms and legs," says Mr. Burns, "to move about supporting the weight of the body upon them, spread out as they must be to imitate the legs of a spider."

While acting his part Mr. Burns wears a tight-fitting jersey suit, colored and spotted to imitate the body of a spider. About his waist is strapped what may be styled an elongated bustle. This is colored and spotted to represent part of a spider's body. Fastened to the sides of his suit are three long, padded legs or claws. These rest upon the floor as he crawls about upon his hands and feet, and give him the appearance of a huge spider, having five legs on either side of the body. All of the legs on each side are made to move in unison by means of rubber bands passing from the actor's hands over and around the artificial legs back to his own legs. To the neck of the suit is fastened a hood, shaped and painted to imitate the head of a big spider, while a face mask of mosquito netting does away with the necessity for making up. In the dull green light which follows him about the stage Mr. Burns looks extremely spiderlike, and the manner in which he climbs trees and crosses the tropical growth of scenery overhanging the stage makes the little ones in the audience tremble in ecstasy of mingled fear and delight. A cross piece of tough wood, on which are fastened cleats two feet apart, furnishes the grasp needed by the athletic spider to suspend his weight aloft.

Hardly less interesting than the big spider are the ten frogs figuring in the show. When the curtain is up and the performance on, they are ten of the most sedate frogs to be encountered anywhere in New-York City. When the curtain is down, however, they are just mischievous boys, glad of a chance to frolic after sitting froglike inside big papier maché cases, made in the shape of and painted to imitate a frog's body. They wear tight-fitting jerseys, colored like a frog's legs, and on their hands and feet are big webbed frog feet.

No self-respecting frog would act as these frogs at the Majestic act at times. Their respect for the huge spider vanishes with the fall of the drop curtain, and they like nothing better than a bout with him. It is a funny spectacle which is presented when three or four of the frogs, with their slim little legs, great green bodies and tea saucer eyes, run about standing erect and pummelling the spider with their webbed front feet in an extremely unfroglike manner. The spider, his head covering thrown back, his artificial legs flip-flopping back and forth, and his body bustle bobbing up and down in a laughable manner, is a sight to throw any well ordered spider community into hysterics. Should a naturalist come along just at the moment one frog is hanging around the spider's neck, another tangled up in his artificial legs and still another belaboring the bustle part of his anatomy, he might well be pardoned for thinking himself the victim of some terrible nightmare. Occasionally the big bear "butts in," and then the whole order of natural history is indeed upset. The limit is reached when the bear or the spider "treats," and the frogs are obliged to devise ways and means of getting chocolate drops safely through their yawning frog maws into their own personal mouths.

But though it may have some pleasant features, the task of those actors taking animal or insect parts on the stage is by no means easy.

"It's no cinch," admits the spider, as he sheds his belegged and padded suit.

"The song and dance for mine," chimes in a precocious youth, as he wriggles clear of one of the big frog body cases.

While the comment of children in the audience is: "My, but wasn't it fine!"

WHERE MANY STRANGE ANIMALS WHICH APPEAR IN NEW-YORK THEATRES ARE MADE.

TREATMENT OF FRENCH JUVENILE OFFENDERS.

WORST POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENT PROVIDED—PRISON OCCUPATION AND DIET.

Paris, February 29.

Early one morning last week a young couple were surprised by a policeman outside the market known as the Ave Maria, in the St. Gervais quarter of Paris, in the act of abstracting two bottles of liqueur from a tradesman's cart, which had been left for the moment unprotected. Carried forthwith before the police magistrate, the couple proved to be mere children, a boy of thirteen years and the girl one year younger. The latter, a handsome little brunette, stated with much pride that her companion was her "fourth fiancé," and in the boy's pocket there was found a letter addressed to the girl by a former lover, now in prison, in which he charged her bitterly with her infidelity, and reminded her of the happy days they had passed together, pilfering a little here and a little there, and imploring her to wait till he was free again, that they might renew the good old times.

This story, together with others of a similar nature published in the police gazette of Paris, induced a philanthropic young American woman to find out how France dealt with the problem of the child criminal. Paris contains a larger percentage of such children than any other Continental capital.

France has prisons for juvenile offenders of both sexes, and while the maximum sentence for a minor of less than fifteen years is one month, over that age the magistrate may impose a period of six months, and both sentences will be carried out in the prison called "La Petite Roquette." This prison system is accompanied, since the Act of 1875, with solitary confinement—a most cruel and pernicious method for youthful offenders. Thus from the moment that a boy is detected in crime, petty larceny, vagabondage, disorderly conduct, or whatever the offence may be, he is placed in the worst possible environment. The hours passed at the depot into which day and night the offscouring of Paris is constantly pouring—the irreclaimably vicious men and women whose whole lives are an endless chain of shorter or longer periods passed alternately in and out of prison—the drive in the prison cart, which has been wittily named in Paris the "panier à salade" (the salad basket), and the final arrival within the walls of La Petite Roquette bring him into enforced contact with more hardened, because more experienced, sinners than himself.

Nothing could be more repellent than the position of the Paris prison for juvenile offenders. It stands exactly opposite the Grande Roquette, in which criminals under sentence of death await their last hour, and where, until recently, the guillotine stood, ever ready for the next victim. The curious construction of Petite Roquette, with detached cells in circles like a spider's web, is due to the requirements of the act enforcing solitary confinement. There are six wings radiating from a central spot on which stand the chapel and school. High aloft a little observation turret is occupied by a warder, who thus ovelooks every one of the inclosed courtyards. The four hundred boys now in the building, whose ages range from ten to eighteen years, take their regulation walk of twenty minutes' duration in detachments of fourteen, and one of the courts set apart for this purpose is so arranged that the rule of solitude is not broken even here. Each child moves in an isolated compartment, and the warder on duty in the turret has each one under observation.

The schoolroom is perhaps the most curious feature of the place. It is fitted with two hundred little cells placed in an amphitheatre, from each of which the teacher can be seen, while every other cell is entirely invisible. The pupils take their places one by one, the first comer occupying the furthest cell, and the act of closing his own door opens that of the next cell, and so on round the semicircle. The lesson is given in profound silence, only the voice of the teacher being heard.

An enterprising young American woman thus describes a day spent in this melancholy place: "I called at 6:30 a. m. At 7 o'clock work begins. Some make purses, or labels; others thread beads for the artificial flower memorial wreaths so much in vogue in Paris; others, again, make dolls' houses and cradles, for which they are paid, three, four or five centimes apiece, according to size. Some good workers will in this way earn as much as a franc, or 20 cents, a day, but only the half of the amount is paid over to the prisoner. Another inducement is offered to the workers in the shape of good conduct marks, and every tenth day the seven who have earned the most of these good marks get a voucher entitling the holder to a quarter of a litre of wine. At 10:30 those who so wish repair to the schoolroom for lessons. Then comes the twenty minute walk in the yard; then work again until 6:30 p. m., when all are sent to bed.

"The prison diet, somewhat Spartan in character, includes for those over sixteen years of age two meals a day; the first, at 9 a. m., consists of soup and vegetables, and the second, at 4 p. m., of vegetable only, with the addition of 950 grammes of bread apiece a day, and twice a week a dish of meat (two hundred grammes apiece). The younger boys are fed more abundantly. They get soup at 7 a. m., soup and vegetables at 11 a. m. and a vegetable again at 5 p. m., with meat on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. All the food is good of its kind. Refractory prisoners are, after due warning, put upon a dry bread diet, with solitary confinement in the dungeons.

"All these four hundred boys, however, are not criminals. A certain number are here for what is called 'paternal correction,' and, drastic though the means employed seem to be, the manager of the prison assured me that some excellent results had been obtained. He quoted the case of a young law student who could not be induced by his family to break an undesirable connection. He was placed at La Petite Roquette, and the first day of solitary confinement broke him down completely. On the sixth day, by the advice of his warder, he was removed to his home, and his father has had no further cause to complain of his son. Such subjects as these are known only by numbers, their names and origin being carefully kept from the knowledge of warders and jailers, in order that their sojourn in La Petite Roquette may never in the future be cast up against them.

"But, however carefully the prison may be administered, there is little doubt that the whole system is a most pernicious one. Statistics prove that solitary confinement is responsible for the terribly large percentage of feeble witted children in the criminal classes, and the long hours spent seated in the cell over a purely mechanical task develop at a precocious age abnormal vices."

It is pleasant to turn from the French prison system, with all its painful suggestions, to the admirable work—due in the first instance to private initiative, and now carried on by the state—for the released prison child. Orphans, children abandoned by their parents or those whose family circle is vicious are sent to an agricultural "colony," where they receive a moral, religious and technical education, carried on simultaneously with a healthy, open air life in the fields. As many as possible are trained to agricultural work, but others adopt a trade; all are kept in the "colony" until they are thoroughly fitted for freedom and independence. Of the first of these "colonies," that of Mettray, in the Department of Indre et Loir, has proved successful, and a number of clever young mechanics have been graduated from the institution. Another penal "colony" is established on the island of Belle-Ile-en-Mer. Here young sailors are recruited for the French Navy and mercantile marine. Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, who has a summer residence near the marine reform school of Bell-Ile-en-Mer, takes great interest in it, and has subscribed liberally toward its support.

C. I. B.

LITTLE OLD NEW-YORK.

Some Odd Phases of Her March to Greatness.

XXXIII.

With the possible exception of the year in which independence was proclaimed, no other year in the eighteenth century was so fraught with good for the citizens of New-York as the year with which we continue our chronology, 1798. While it opened inauspiciously, the seat of government being removed to Albany, leaving the city neither a State nor a federal capital, and while the scourge of yellow fever was again felt by the inhabitants from the middle of the year until its end, two movements for the benefit of the people of the city were inaugurated—the procuring of water for drinking purposes and the application of steam as a propulsive power on water. We will treat of the first of these movements.

Under Stuyvesant three public wells were ordered sunk in the middle of three streets in the populous part of the town, where, in case of fire, the water could be easily obtained. The water was not intended for drinking purposes, as the drainage and rainwater that ran through the centre of the street poured into the wells and made their contents dangerous to the health of the inhabitants. On occasions when the flow from private wells temporarily ceased no other recourse was left to the people but to use the water from the public wells. In 1701 four more of these were sunk, in Broadway, Broad-st. and Wall-st., with the hope that better water would be obtained, though it was found to be brackish and not suitable for drinking purposes. Movement after movement was started by the citizens when the scourges of yellow fever which attacked the city at different periods had passed to find the cause, and all ended in inaction. Of all the wells in use, only one—and it was outside the limits of habitation, at what is now the corner of Park Row and Roosevelt-st.—afforded pure, cool and palatable water. Its supply was apparently inexhaustible, but its being, as was said, outside the limits caused much trouble to the people to procure a part of it when it was most needed. The enterprising mind of some one grappled with the problem, a pump was put into it, and its product was drawn into casks and carried to the doors of the citizens, where it was sold to them at a penny a half cask. It was afterward called the Tea Water Pump, a name which is to a degree self-explanatory.

In 1774 the initial step was taken by Christopher Colles toward supplying the city with water. Under his direction a reservoir was constructed at the public expense on the east side of Broadway, between Pearl and White sts., on two acres of ground purchased by the Corporation from Augustus and Frederick Van Cortlandt, at the rate of £600 an acre. Into this reservoir water was raised from large wells sunk on the premises, and also from the Collect, and distributed by means of wooden pipes throughout the city. The supply proved insufficient, the water was of an inferior quality, and in the ensuing foreign occupation of the city the enterprise was neglected, and the citizens returned to the wells of their ancestors, which still continued to be located in the middle of the streets.

When the yellow fever broke out violently in July, 1795, and business was suspended and schools and churches closed, the farmers even ceasing to bring their products to the market because of alarm, the citizens considered that the time had arrived for quick action regarding the evidently bad condition of the city's water, and, with a death list of over two thousand confronting them appealed to the Corporation for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the matter. A preliminary report was made to the Corporation by a Dr. Brown, who affirmed the impurity of the water on the island and recommended the appointment of a competent engineer to investigate the matter and report a feasible plan to bring in water from the mainland. On his recommendation an English engineer named Watson was appointed, who recommended the raising of the Rye Ponds to a reservoir in Westchester County, the mills to be located on the Bronx River, "where the surplus water would be used in raising the water, which would thence be carried to the Harlem River in an open canal, then conveyed across the river through an elevated iron pipe to a reservoir, where it would be filtered, and then distributed through the city."

In January, 1799, "a large and respectable committee of the Citizens, Physicians and of the Corporation was appointed to inquire into the causes of the late Pestilence, and in two long and able reports on the subject enumerated the following causes: Deep, damp cellars and filthy sunken yards; unfinished water lots; burial grounds in the compact part of the city; narrow streets; sailors' boarding houses and tippling shops; digging up made ground; putrid substances being allowed to remain in streets and houses, and the want of an adequate supply of pure and wholesome water."

When the report of this "large and respectable committee" was submitted to the authorities shrewd men presented various schemes to meet the emergencies that confronted the people. One of these men was Aaron Burr, who was planning to extricate New-York from the hands of Hamilton and the Federalists, the first step being his own election to the Assembly. Burr was anxious for influence to that end, and knew that among a certain class of men the more publicity was given to his movement the more he would be talked of and consequently the more prominent he would become. He also had in view the power wielded by Hamilton in the only two banks in the city, which were considered Hamilton's creation and through which he supposed discounts were influenced by political consideration. "Taking advantage of the investigations regarding the cause of the terrible ravages of yellow fever in the city and of the impression that the brackish wells contributed largely to the spread of the pestilence, Burr adroitly organized a company for the ostensible purpose of supplying the city with pure and wholesome water, but which was to use and exercise all the privileges of a bank. In applying to the legislature for a charter authority was asked to raise $2,000,000, although it was uncertain how much money was needed. As the amount named might possibly be too much, the projectors proposed to insert in the charter a provision that 'the surplus capital might be employed in any way not inconsistent with the laws and Constitution of the United States or of the State of New-York.'" While under discussion it was proposed in the Senate to strike out of the bill this clause. Burr objected, saying that the supplying a city of fifty thousand inhabitants with water would not of itself remunerate the stockholders, and that it was intended to give the directors liberty to found anything they wanted—an East India Company, a bank or anything else. None except those in the secret knew that the name Manhattan Company meant Manhattan Bank. The bill was referred to the Chief Justice of the State, who recommended its rejection because of the unlimited powers conferred by the surplus clause. These objections were overruled, and Governor Jay signed the bill. The papers of the day attacked the Governor, Burr and all who were concerned in the scheme, and Burr lost his election to the Assembly. After the company was formed it obtained a grant from the Corporation of the grounds formerly occupied by Colles, and, erecting a reservoir in Chambers-st. between Broadway and Centre-st., pumped water into it from wells sunk in the vicinity, whence it was distributed by means of bored logs through the city. The company soon tired of this scheme, as did the people of the bad water, and turned its attention to the banking business. No record exists of this company having even attempted to bring water into the city.

Again the people had to return to the Tea Water Pump, whose water appeared to taste sweeter than ever, and in emergencies to the brackish water of the other wells on the island. But new schemes were not wanting for supplying the city with water, such as cutting an open canal to the Housatonic River, in Connecticut, or obtaining water from the Passaic River, in New-Jersey, or boring artesian wells. None of them were adopted, however. Some one called attention to the Croton River, flowing into the Hudson near the old Van Cortlandt Manor House, forty miles above the city. It offered special advantages, as it traversed a region where ten or more natural lakes might at any time be brought into service. In 1834 surveys were ordered of this region and estimates made of the cost to the city of supplying it with water from this point. Among the commissioners was an alderman from the Second Ward named Samuel Stevens, who, after the report of the commission was made public, persevered intelligently for the fulfilment of his idea to bring good water in abundance into every home. Some of the other commissioners favored the Bronx scheme before spoken of.

At last a board of engineers reported in favor of an aqueduct fifteen miles long to take Croton water near the mouth of the river, and deliver thirty millions gallons daily at a distributing reservoir on Murray Hill. It was a much bolder plan than the one proposed in 1798, but the principle was the same—an aqueduct to the Harlem River; across this by a lofty bridge; then to the distributing reservoir. As the cost of such a system would run into the millions, the legislature ordered a vote of the people in 1835 to decide whether the work should be done. A large majority favored the scheme, but a few murmured at the cost. At the end of the year, however, the great fire occurred and was an object lesson to the grumblers of the imperfect condition of their so-called water system. Every one agreed that the work should be started at once, and engineers staked out Croton Lake and laid the course of the aqueduct from the dam to the Harlem. "They then built a dam across the Croton River and made a basin capable of holding five hundred millions of gallons, covering four hundred acres of land. An aqueduct was constructed down to the Harlem River, carrying the healing streams by tunnels through rocks and hills and upon embankments across valleys and intervening streams, and across the Harlem was thrown the present High Bridge. This bridge struck the island at the present One-hundred-and-seventy-fourth-st. Later a small reservoir was built here for Harlem houses. The water was brought to the open air for the first time after its journey of forty miles in a reservoir placed at what was supposed would be Sixth-ave. and Eighty-sixth-st., but which location was taken in by Central Park, where it may be seen."

On June 22, 1842, the work was practically completed from the Croton to the distributing reservoir at Fifth-ave. and Forty-second-st., except that, High Bridge not being finished, the water was carried for the time being by syphon pipes under the Harlem River. Celebrations by the people were now the order of the day. On June 22 water was for the first time let into the canal, or conduit, and a little boat of special design, called the Croton Maid, holding four persons, was sent through its entire length for the purpose of a thorough inspection. On June 27 water was admitted to the receiving reservoir, at Eighty-sixth-st., in the presence of the Governor of the State and the city dignitaries, and on July 4, with suitable ceremonies, into the distributing reservoir on Murray Hill. On October 14, 1842, a monster celebration took place, the like of which was not surpassed in the city's history up to that time. The whole population was given a chance to express its delight at the work which man had bestowed on it. The State officials were again present, with foreign consuls, Mayors of other cities and dignitaries of the nation. In that part of City Hall Park given over to the postoffice a splendid and ingeniously arranged fountain had been placed, with a large pipe and eighteen smaller ones in its centre, through which, by shifting the plate of the conduit pipe, the water could be made to assume different shapes. After the president of the water commission had made a formal transfer of the aqueduct to the city, and artillery thundered in honor of the event, the fountain was set playing sixty feet into the air, and for two hours a procession indicating by floats the interest which each trade or profession took in the enterprise completed passed the reviewing stand. It may be well to mention that nothing but Croton water was served at the reception given by the city authorities at the City Hall.

SELLING LUCKY STONES.

"There is a young man out in my town," remarked an Indianapolis jeweller recently in New-York to see the races, and putting up at the Bartholdi, "who has enough sand in him to plaster a house, and he happens to be my partner. We're in business, 'Dick' and I—the sort where experience and knowledge are put in at the same value as the other fellow's money. Well, 'Dick' furnishes the experience and knowledge, and as for the money he's more than welcome to every cent I have, if for nothing else than the pleasure of being with him. So far as an outsider could judge, he simply hangs about the place just to kick the office boy occasionally, as an evidence of authority, then places his feet upon my desk and smokes my best cigars. But it's all right. The only time I get weary of 'Dick' is when I find him whittling on a piece of wood or trying to draw pictures on the back of a blotter. Then I know sometning is going to fail.

"'Well, out with it—something to keep our profits up to the safety mark, I hope,' said I, catching sight of him whittling on a stick. 'No,' he calmly replied, 'it's not any great project I have in mind. I was just thinking about a little sale I made one day last week, and how I've been kept busy ever since. When the kid and I were out fishing a few days ago he gathered a large quantity of these little white pebbles, some streaked with red—you know the sort—and on our way home I stopped in here to see after things, and the kid forgot his pebbles, so the next morning I put them in a bag and placed them on the desk under my nose, so that I'd remember to take them home that night. Well, about 12 o'clock a flashy looking chap came in, and not finding anything to suit him—nothing seemed loud enough to his eye—caught sight of the little pebbles.

"'"What are these?" he asked, fingering one.

"'"Lucky stones," said I, "but they are not the sort to have fixed up into chains and pins; fact is, you handle them very little, and if they pass into the hands of another the good luck leaves you and goes to him."

"'Well, he took three at 50 cents apiece. As it happened, he's a horse racing fellow, and he won that day. Next day he brought in a friend—oh, of course, I didn't expect you to believe it,' he broke in, 'but just the same they continued to come thick and fast, men and women, and now I haven't one left. Now, most people would go out for more pebbles, but not me—that would be too much like dishonesty. I've got something better hatching; the pebbles was just a feeler.'"—(Manufacturing Jeweller.

THE WRECKING TRAIN.

Upon the great railroad systems the wrecking train is as carefully aranged as the apparatus in a fire company's house, ready to go into action as soon as the message is ticked upon the sounder in the dispatcher's office. Coupled together, the cars stand upon a convenient switch track that is always connected to the main line. No other cars are allowed to be placed upon this switch at any time. Some companies reserve one of the fastest locomotives purposely to haul the wrecking train, and keep the engine in the roundhouse with fire continually in the firebox, prepared to steam up at a moment's notice. The train is made up of four, sometimes five cars, the rear one being occupied by the officers and wreckers, with a portion reserved for the rope and chain which are always taken along. The officials have a "sitting room" with a table and benches, where they can consult on their way to the scene of the accident. The men's quarters are furnished with a few stools and a bunk for each man, so that, if called during the night, they may have a chance to take a nap on the way. The next car in front is called the "block car," and contains a small sized lumber yard, filled as it is with pieces of timber ranging from wedges, to be hammered under the wheels or jacks, to square pine posts of various lengths, used for propping.

Since the invention of the wrecking crane, "hand tackle" is not employed as much as in former days, but hundreds of feet of rope, ranging from sizes the thickness of one's finger to cables two inches thick, are carried in coils, with huge wooden pulleys, as are also chains strong enough to haul a hundred tons. On the next car are two or three sets of extra trucks with wheels attached, to replace any that might have been broken, for the lower part or gearing of rolling stock suffers more in an accident than any other portion. Sometimes it is wrenched completely from the car itself, the wheels broken off the axles or damaged in some other way, so that it is fit only for scrap iron. Next to the locomotive is the crane car, on which swings a great steel arm whose muscles of chain will raise fifty tons at a time and swing it through the air, doing the work of a hundred pairs of hands.—(Pearson's Magazine.

HAD 75 GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN.

From The Topeka Capital.

Mrs. Elizabeth McLean is dead at Scammon, at the remarkable age of 107 years. She was probably the oldest person in the State, and was the mother of twelve children and the grandmother of eighty-four grandchildren, most of whom are living in the community of Scammon and Prontenac. Seventy-five great-grandchildren are known to be living in this country, besides those in Ireland, where she was born.