TELEGRAPHIC NEWS.

ENGLAND.

Disraeli Anxious to Resign—Mr. Gladstone to Push His Resolutions.

LONDON, May 3, 1868.

It is said to-day that Prime Minister Disraeli tendered his resignation yesterday, but that it was not accepted.

Mr. Gladstone, on Monday, will move to suspend all orders and take up the resolutions introduced by him relative to the Irish Church. If the resolutions are carried it is thought that an address to the Queen will follow.

RUSSIA.

The New Minister to Paris.

PARIS, May 3, 1868.

Count Stackleberg has been appointed Ambassador to represent the Russian government at Paris, vice Baron Budberg, resigned.

AUSTRIA.

Death of the Minister in Rome.

LONDON, May 3, 1868.

A despatch states that Baron Crevelli, the Austrian Ambassador at Rome, died in that city yesterday.

MEXICO.

Arrival of a Mexican Railway Projector.

HAVANA, May 3, 1868.

Señor Da Cunha Reis has arrived among the passengers by the steamer Nevada from Vera Cruz. He is the superintendent of a Mexican company who propose running a railway from Tuxpan to the capital, and thence to some port on the Pacific.

JAMAICA.

Stormy Weather—Three Vessels Stranded on Morant Keys—Arrival of the Cable.

HAVANA, May 3, 1868.

Our advices from Kingston are to the 19th ult. The weather was quite changeable and the tides high. The surf was so violent that three vessels were stranded on the Morant Keys.

The cable had arrived from Havana.

THE STATE CAPITAL.

The Tax Levies and the Non-Confirmation of Governor Fenton's Appointments—Proposed Compromise with the Tweed Democrats on the Part of the Governor.

ALBANY, May 3, 1868.

The two tax levies will be reported in the Senate to-morrow. The sections regarding the lease of the markets, abolishing the Board of Audit, and giving the Comptroller charge of the Board of Education moneys have been stricken out. The provision of last year against giving out contracts for sums larger than the amounts appropriated is inserted.

The two bills would have been reported last week, but the committee held them with a view of keeping the Senate in session until something might be done towards confirmation of the Governor's appointments. This is the real secret of the prolongation of the session. The action of the anti-Fentonite republicans has seriously nonplussed the Governor. He is not desirous of going before the Chicago Convention with the record of a Senate opposed to him. It would materially affect what chances he has for the nomination of Vice President. Hence strategy has been resorted to, and the agents of the Governor have been coquetting all this Sabbath day with Tweed and his democratic colleagues to make a combination for the confirmation of the appointments. The inducement offered was the promise of his signature to the tax levies, no matter how big the jobs they contained. The democrats have not consented as yet, but some understanding may be arrived at before noon to-morrow.

They have all to gain by refusing to confirm, as they hope to be able to secure the same positions for their own party next year by the undoubted election in the fall of a democratic Governor. On the other hand is held out the temptation of the immediate spoils guaranteed in the tax levies. They are thus in a quandary about accepting the proposition. The Governor's party in the Senate are so desperate as to be willing also to break faith on the canal question and unite with the democrats, despite the agreement in caucus to adopt the Conference Committee's report abolishing the present canal contracting system. Lively times are expected in the Senate immediately on reassembling.

The school donations in the tax levies have been cut down by a very large sum in the aggregate. These will be restored and innumerable jobs inserted besides, if the democrats consent to the confirmations.

CALIFORNIA.

Proceedings of the Democratic State Convention—Spiritualists in Council.

SAN FRANCISCO, May 2, 1868.

An additional resolution has been adopted by the Democratic State Convention, endorsing the acquisition of Alaska and denouncing Congress for not making the necessary appropriation for its purchase.

Hon. Samuel B. Axtell, member of Congress from the First district, has been renominated.

It was determined not to make any nomination at the present time for the Second district, now represented by Mr. Higby, the only radical member from California in Congress. The third Wednesday in August was appointed as the day on which to make the nomination.

The Spiritualists of California are holding a State Convention in this city.

RHODE ISLAND.

An Alleged Confidence Man Arrested.

PROVIDENCE, May 3, 1868.

On yesterday a man named H. E. Clarke was arrested in this city on a charge of having swindled Colonel Amasa Sprague and several other members of the Narragansett Park Association. It is alleged that the prisoner is a well known confidence man, and that he has operated extensively throughout the country. In this city he stated that he was connected with several newspapers and on the strength of these statements succeeded in obtaining some hundreds of dollars.

THE WORM NUISANCE.

Stuyvesant and Union squares and University place have fountains in them in which floating boards have been placed during the last two summers, upon which the birds obtain water. The English sparrows have especially become numerous there, affording much interest to those living in the vicinity and visiting those squares, and doing much valuable service in destroying the mosquitoes and moth millers, and preventing the destruction of carpets, woollen cloths and clothing by the latter, and completely annihilating the measure worm. Previous to the laying of these boards in the fountains the birds could not get water and did not locate there, and the measure worms were an intolerable nuisance suspended from the trees and actually preventing people walking in those squares. Clothing was frequently stained by them permanently. The eggs from which these worms and caterpillars of all kinds are hatched when the leaves are developed are placed in bands around the small branches of the trees, and the birds are now eating these eggs. In the above parks no worms were seen last summer, but in the City Hall Park and every other place containing shrubbery and trees without water they were numerous and destroyed the foliage to such a degree that many trees died. In the City Hall Park several large ones were dead and cut down last fall. The walls of the lower pond in the Central Park are perpendicular, and the birds cannot get water. Boards should be placed in it to induce the birds to locate near it. In those parks of the city where there are trees and shrubbery a small stream of water should be supplied for the birds. A quantity that would pass through a tobacco pipe stem kept constantly running would afford fresh water, and the basins of the fountains should be kept full, with a board in them for the birds to light upon. When water is supplied in a convenient manner for the birds the worm and mosquito plague will cease in all parts of the city.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC NOTES.

BLIND TOM.—Blind Tom will make his reappearance at Irving Hall to-night after a long absence in Europe.

RISTORI.—The drama of "Sor Teresa" will be repeated this evening and to-morrow at the French theatre. On Wednesday, at one o'clock, the first Ristori matinée will be given with the same play.

WALLACK'S.—Sheridan's fine comedy, the "Rivals," with the good standing company of this house, to-night. On Tuesday and Friday "Love's Sacrifice." "Masks and Faces" is announced for Thursday and Saturday.

BROADWAY THEATRE.—Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams open this week with Gayler's "Connie Soogah." The scenery, which is all new, represents some of the most familiar landscapes in Ireland.

NEW YORK THEATRE.—The Worrells keep "Paris and Helen," that amusing burlesque, still on the boards at this house. Mr. Leffingwell appears as usual in the funny farce, "Too Much for Good Nature."

OLYMPIC.—"Humpty Dumpty" gets no rest at this theatre. To-night he enters upon his ninth week. Wednesday and Saturday are matinée days.

NIBLO'S.—This evening the "White Fawn," the fireflies, the bath, the ballet, "Martha and Lionel," dwarfs and giants, and baby danseuse appear for the one hundred and ninth time.

THEATRE COMIQUE.—Lingard, the humorist; Hilton, the ventriloquist; Alrec, the athlete, and Miss Siedler, the cantatrice, are again the attractions here this week.

BOWERY THEATRE.—Mr. Boniface continues to teach the youth of the east side the heroism of breaking into houses and breaking out of prisons after the manner of "Jack Sheppard." During the week there will be three benefits, Messrs. Clarke, Marden and Cunningham being the beneficiaries.

SAN FRANCISCO MINSTRELS.—A new hand, Mr. Lew. Brimmer, is added to this excellent company. The mysteries of the "Ku Klux" continue to receive attention at this house.

KELLY & LEON'S.—The legal proceedings of last week will probably add some interest to this establishment and its "Grand Dutch S." The programme for the evening is rare and racy.

TONY PASTOR'S.—Several fresh attractions, including some of Pastor's capital imitations of well known actors, are announced in this temple of oddities and fun.

MRS. CONWAY'S BROOKLYN THEATRE.—"Under the Gaslight," with Mrs. F. B. Conway and Mr. E. Lamb in the cast, to-night at this favorite theatre.

HOOLEY'S OPERA HOUSE, BROOKLYN.—The panoramic piece which drew such immense houses last week enters upon a new season. Mr. Dan M. Collins has been added to this inimitable company at Hooley's, which already comprises such artists as George Christy, Cool White, Archey Hughes, Dave Reed and the gigantic Mulligan.

MADISON SQUARE HALL.—The interesting "Panorama of the War," elegantly illustrated by the descriptions of Miss Sallie Brownson Goodrich, draws large houses nightly at this hall. Matinées on Wednesdays and Saturdays for the juveniles.

DAN BRYANT AT THE ACADEMY.—The American Dramatic Fund will be the recipient of a benefit at the Academy on Thursday evening, when Dan Bryant will make his last appearance in Irish drama previous to resuming his old minstrel profession at the Tammany building on Fourteenth street.

EUROPEAN CIRCUS.—The season of this attractive and really excellent exhibition is extended for a short time longer at the corner of Thirty-fourth street and Broadway. Another outdoor pageant takes place up town to-day at ten o'clock.

LIEDERKRANZ SOIREE.—The fourth musical soirée of the Liederkranz Society took place last night at the hall in Fourth street. The soloists were Madame Anschutz, Miss Louise Orloff, soprano; Mme. Sophia Lilliendahl, piano; Habelmann, tenor; Fred Steins, basso, and Beyner, violoncello. The orchestra, which is wholly made up of members, gave the "Tell" overture with remarkable effect. The best thing on the programme was Palestrina's "Fratres Ego," a vocal octet belonging to a school of music which is heard too seldom now a days. A melodrama by Tottmann, almost as long as the charge of an Impeachment Manager, was also recited and sung. Mr. Nembach presided at the piano. Max Bruch's Roman song of triumph, for chorus and orchestra, opened the concert.

THE SCHUETZEN FEST.

Mass Meeting of Germans in Favor of the Teutonic Pastime—Addresses by General Siegel and Others—Organization for the June Festival.

A grand mass meeting of the German population of New York and vicinity was held yesterday afternoon at three o'clock, at the Germania Assembly Rooms, in the Bowery, in favor of and to organize for the shooting festival, to begin at Jones' Wood on the 27th of June. Mr. T. F. Steffen presided, and Mr. Max Morgenthau officiated as recording secretary. The following organizations were represented:—Liederkranz, New York; Teutonia, New York; New Yorker Turnverein, Nineteenth Ward Leseclub, Melrose Liedertafel, Rheinischer Saengerbund, Gesang-Verein Uhland Bund, Twentieth Regiment Veteranen-Verein, Social Maennerchor, Franz Abt Quartet Club, Verein-Erheiterung, New York Quartet Club; Arminia, New York; Jersey City Turnverein; Fidelia, New York; Mozart Verein, Colonia Maennerchor; Deutscher Liederkranz, Williamsburg; Caecilie, Williamsburg; Melomanen, New York; Harmonia, New York; Jersey City Saengerbund, Helvetia Maennerchor, New York; Jersey City Turnverein, Mozart Maennerchor, New York.

A Committee on Permanent Organization, consisting of General Franz Siegel and others, reported the following list of officers:—President, Theodore Steinway; Vice Presidents, General Shaler, Louis Kenmerer, Herman Burenberg, C. Young, C. Huertz and Fritz Knebel; Secretaries, Otto Wallott, Louis Erbe, P. Allsgood, John Schommemen, Jacob Schmied, F. Floeger, H. Gunther, W. Kieng and A. Sperling.

The Committee on Resolutions then reported the following series, which were adopted by acclamation:—

Resolved, That we perfectly agree with the object and expediency of a national shooting festival and should regard it on the part of the American sharpshooters a deviation from their solemn obligations, entered into at the time of the Chicago festival, if they would not try to do all in their power for the successful end to be attained and to justify the expectations of the American Schützenbund, as well as of all the friends and promoters of their cause.

Resolved, That in appealing to the good sense and patriotism of our fellow-citizens we hope to receive their kind assistance in the work begun and firmly rely on their co-operation before and during the festival.

Resolved, That we address ourselves especially to all clubs and organizations, civil and military, as we are well aware that by their participation and co-operation the projected enterprise will receive that truly and social national character which it is intended to have.

Resolved, That we, the citizens assembled in this mass meeting to-day, pledge ourselves to work for the best interest and final success of the "Third American Schützen Festival," and that we will canvass it among our friends and give all such information which may lead to a perfect understanding of our affairs and secure the confidence of the public.

Resolved, That, considering the great difficulties which naturally embarrass all social enterprises of such character and magnitude, we approve the preliminary arrangements already made, but would suggest that by a more numerous and properly elected representation, as well as by a greater participation of the public in regard to the direction and administration of affairs, a mutual confidence may be strengthened, differences of opinion settled and existing defects amended.

Resolved, That we hereby publicly tender our sincere thanks to those of our fellow citizens and to such societies and organizations who have by the subscription of shares, the bestowing of honorary (gratuitous) prizes and otherwise, given the real and unmistakable proof of their sympathy with and their confidence in our enterprise. Also to all those newspapers and periodicals, in America and Europe, who have shown an interest in our cause and introduced it with kindness and impartiality to the public.

Addresses were made by General Siegel, Theodore Steinway, Oswald Ottendorfer, Dr. G. Sauer and others.

ARRESTS FOR OBSTRUCTING RAILWAY TRACKS.—Two men, named John Burke and John Ecanrodes, were arrested in Ada, Ohio, on the 30th ult., for placing obstructions on the track of the Pittsburg, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railway, on the night of April 29, about half a mile east of Ada station, at what is called Gross' Run bridge. Ecanrodes turned State's evidence and swore their object was to throw the train off the track and rob the passengers. Burke is considered a very hard case, and has been suspected for some time of opening switches. In default of $1,000 bail they were both sent to the Hardin county jail to await the sitting of the Grand Jury at the next term of the court. They were arrested upon the station agent's complaint.

CITY INTELLIGENCE.

METEOROLOGICAL.—The meteorological notes at the Park for the past week exhibit that the barometer reached its maximum during the evening of the 26th ult., showing 30.322, and its minimum during the afternoon of the 30th ult. being 29.751. The weekly mean was 30.1041. The thermometer showed its maximum of 67.50 at two P. M. of the 27th ult., and its minimum at four P. M. on the 26th ult. being 35.60. The weekly mean was 50.61. The wind during the week was exceedingly variable. There was rain on the 29th and 30th ult. and on the 2d inst.; total duration, 13 hours and 25 minutes; total depth, 0.52 inch.

A COURT FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF MERCANTILE CLAIMS.—On Saturday last a number of gentlemen known to the community as merchants of integrity assembled at Judge Dyer's rooms in Wall street, and, with their legal advisers, agreed to the establishment, under the Revised Code, of a court for the amicable settlement of all disputes which may arise out of mercantile transactions. Articles are to be drawn up, and those who appeal to the court, which shall be one of arbitration, are requested to subscribe to the conditions that may be imposed alike on all, among which will be acquiescence in the conclusions and conditions which may be arrived at by the court.

SUDDEN DEATH AT THE STEVENS HOUSE.—Coroner Flynn held an inquest at the Stevens House, Broadway, on the body of Mr. Benjamin Sheppard, a man fifty-six years of age and a native of one of the New England States, who died there very suddenly. Deputy Coroner Knox made a post mortem examination on the body, which resulted in showing that death was caused by apoplexy. The jury accordingly rendered a verdict to that effect.

A FEARFUL FALL.—A little boy two years old, named John Clabby, whose parents reside at No. 298 Mott street, fell from a fifth story window of the house yesterday afternoon, and was fatally injured.

FOUND IN THE WATER.—Coroner Keenan was yesterday notified to hold an inquest over the body of an unknown man which was found floating in the dock foot of Warren street, North river. The remains, which had been a long time in the water, were conveyed to the Morgue for identification. The remains of a man whose name is unknown was found in the dock foot of Nineteenth street, East river. Deceased was respectably dressed in dark clothes. Apparently the body had been in the water for several weeks. An inquest will be held on the body to-day.

THE MORGUE.—The body of a man was taken from a carriage in front of Bellevue Hospital yesterday, supposed to be John A. Walsh, of 138 Franklin street, aged about thirty-five years, five feet eight inches high, dark brown hair, whiskers and mustache; had on heavy black cloth overcoat, black business coat and pants (tweed), white shirt, canton flannel drawers, white cotton socks and elastic gaiters; right leg artificial.

DEATH BY DROWNING.—The body of an unknown man, apparently about thirty years of age, and five feet nine inches in height, was brought to the Morgue yesterday. The deceased had brown hair and a mustache of a lighter color. He had on a black cloth business coat, pants and vest of the same material, two Scotch plaid shirts, gray undershirt, black necktie, red flannel drawers and boots. The body was too much decomposed to be placed for inspection.

IN BRIEF.—For various crimes and misdemeanors, more than ninety in every hundred being for drunkenness, disorderly conduct, assault and battery, street walking and petty larceny, 1,522 arrests were made by the police in this city during the past week.

Among those who left for Havre, France, in the steamship Periere on Saturday was the United States Minister to Greece, Charles K. Tuckerman.

The bill of mortality for the week ending Saturday, May 2, gives a total of 453 deaths.

The Boards of Aldermen and Councilmen will, it is understood, now that the Legislature is about to adjourn, be more attentive to their duties as municipal legislators. The tax bill which provides for an increase of salary all around the board, will be right now; and the onerous duty of lobbying being removed the city solons will be more attentive for the future to ring jobs at home.

The value of the manufactured goods imported from Europe into this city during the past week was $5,395,815.

That dilapidated contrivance known to citizens and outside barbarians as the Post Office of New York has been enlarged within the past week by erecting over the shed on Nassau street a sort of Mansard attic, where it is proposed to incarcerate and slowly roast to death during the summer months those unfortunates who have had it worked into their noddles that clerking in the Post Office is an exhibition of patriotism without "smile" or guile.

During the summer months the Savannah Steamship Company will despatch two steamers a week to Georgia.

To-day, at the Everett House, a fair in aid of the proposed new Church of the Holy Innocents will be opened.

The bricklayers engaged in the construction of the monster railroad depot now going up on the site of St. John's Park struck on Saturday for an increase of wages. They had been receiving $4 25, and demanded $5 per day of eight or nine hours. It was immediately accorded them.

A railroad from Harlem to Bronxville, or some point in Westchester county, on the Long Island Sound, is proposed. The trains on the road are to be propelled by steam. A subscription list for stock is to be prepared and an act of incorporation asked for immediately.

Isabella Miller, a girl ten years of age, residing in Fortieth street, near Ninth avenue, took a dose of Paris green yesterday. Result not yet finally determined.

Michael McMenomy, of 230 avenue A, died suddenly yesterday evening.

Joseph Clancey, a lad nine years of age, was drowned last evening at the foot of Twenty-sixth street, North river.

Zubina W. Chase became angered at some boys who were playing on pier No. 4 North river yesterday, and shot one of them, named James O'Brien, who resides at No. 14 Washington street, in the shoulder, wounding him severely. Chase was arrested.

A man who engaged a room at the New England Hotel on Saturday evening, and registered his name as Mr. Warner, was found dead in bed yesterday at noon.

BROOKLYN INTELLIGENCE.

AN ESCAPED CONVICT IS ARRESTED, AND AGAIN BREAKS HIS PRISON BARS.—On the night of July 27, 1867, the office of Reuben Vose, broker, No. 193 York street, was broken into and the safe blown open with gunpowder. The contents, which were a small amount of money, were stolen. Suspicion pointed to a well known character residing in that vicinity as being concerned in the burglary. The person in question, whose name is James McDermot, twenty-one years of age, a glass blower by trade, was arrested, tried before the Court of Sessions, convicted and sentenced to the County Penitentiary for one year. He was duly consigned to the Penitentiary and remained there for about two months' time, when suddenly he disappeared from the watchful eye of his keepers, and has up to within the past few days eluded sucessfully the vigilance of the authorities in their efforts to apprehend him. The police of the Forty-second precinct have been on the alert for several days watching for the appearance of McDermot, who was reported to have been observed standing about the corner of Gold and Front streets. While Officer Gregory of that precinct was on patrol in the vicinity on Saturday night he caught sight of the familiar features of the escaped convict, and stealing upon him unobserved he seized his prey firmly by the collar of the coat. The prisoner made a desperate resistance, but vainly sought to loosen the hold of the officer, who conveyed him in safety to the station house in York street. The fellow was locked up in a cell on the ground floor. About five o'clock yesterday morning the doorman, on making his round of inspection, was astonished to find McDermot's cell vacant, he having made his escape from the premises. It appears he drew the large iron hook that holds the sewer pipe out of the wall, and with that instrument broke the lock of his cell and managed to pry open the outer door. Once in the yard he readily scaled the enclosure, and went out into freedom, having twice proved the inadequacy of prison bars and walls to detain him in confinement. He is still at large.

IN BRIEF.—There could not have been less than twelve thousand persons at Prospect Park yesterday. Though the afternoon was rather dull and overcast, yet the cars leading to that popular place of recreation were crowded until nearly six o'clock.

John R. Ferguson, an individual about forty-seven years of age, was arrested on complaint of Alderman Thorn, charged with having cruelly left a horse hitched to a post in Court street all night without food or shelter. He gave bail to appear for examination to-day.

An old man named William Clark, while laboring under the effects of too much spiritual comfort, fell on the sidewalk in Garrison street on Saturday night, and cut his head severely. He was picked up by an officer, and sent to the City Hospital.

Carroll Park, South Brooklyn, is undergoing several needed improvements in the general outlay of the grounds, under the directions of the Commissioners.

The work of widening Clinton street is progressing slowly.

The proprietress of a candy store, a Mrs. Maria Hudson, No. 109 Sands street, was arrested at a late hour on Saturday night last by an officer of the Forty-second precinct for selling liquor without a license. This being Maria's fourth violation of the Excise law, she was locked up to answer.

The funeral of the Rev. Mr. Sands, formerly of the York street Methodist Episcopal church, took place from that edifice yesterday afternoon. The remains were consigned to their last resting place with all the solemn and impressive rites of the ritual of the Masonic order, of which he was a prominent member. The deceased was widely known, and his funeral was largely attended.

Officer Kellet, of the Forty-third precinct, was assaulted by a party of rowdies while in the performance of his duty, in endeavoring to arrest a man for fighting, in Congress street, on Saturday night. The officer was struck upon the head with a stone, but was not seriously hurt.

OUR STEAM VESSELS.

A Visit to Our Passenger-Carrying Steamers—Precautions Against Fire—Condition of Machinery—Means of Escape for Passengers in Case of Accident—Life Boats and Their Appliances for Launching—Life Preservers and Where Placed—Vessels and How Rated.

The laws enacted by Congress at various times since the year 1838 relating to the thorough inspection of the hulls and machinery of passenger vessels plying upon the seas, lakes, rivers and sounds surrounding and within the territory of the United States are measurably sufficient in their various provisions for the great end in view—the protection of life and the security of property. But since the passage of the Steamboat act of 1852, wherein there are embodied wise and just requirements in regard to the excellency of materials required to be used in the construction of hulls, the sufficiency and adequate character of machinery, the precautionary measures to prevent fire, and the necessary provision for life preservers, &c., each and all have so repeatedly been violated and non-complied with that frequent disasters, the direct consequence of such action, have made the nation shudder with horror and clothed sections of the land in mourning. Since the first introduction of steam navigation in this country the long, sad list of vessels that have met with accidents at sea—upon rivers, bays and along the shores of sounds—can be referred to by the score. Many of these accidents at first were trivial in their nature yet they have been attended with appalling culminations simply because the enacted laws to avert such calamities were not complied with, and this record has caused a blot upon the country's fame. Owing to the existence of this stain, and as the proportional loss of life from disasters to steam vessels is greater with us than with any other nation, it is not amiss, as a measure of apology, to inquire upon whom the responsibility rests, that by ignorance or criminal collusion have and are continuing to contribute their share to the disasters of the sea and its tributaries the loss of lives and horrors incident to which are universally conceded to be the worst of all terrors.

Inspectors appointed under this act, ostensibly "for their knowledge, skill and experience in the uses of steam for navigation, and who are competent judges not only of the character of vessels, but of all parts of the machinery employed in steaming," are widely distributed throughout the United States at large annual salaries. By the provisions of the enacted law by which they hold office they are delegated with the fullest power to put into effect such remedial measures, wherever required, that the lives of passengers may not so often be subjected to jeopardy. Do such inspectors conscientiously perform these duties? Do they fully execute the laws tending to the required condition of steam vessels, not alone in making hasty "annual inspections" of all such as are in their respective departments, but in "seasonably examining steamers arriving and departing, so often as to enable them to detect any neglect to comply with the requirements of the law?" Character, merit and skill they may possess, and though many steamships are fully and religiously equipped and provided for as demanded by the authorities and the public, and with whom the thousands of miles of ocean travel amid the anger of the elements have been free from accident, yet others do exist, both of ocean and inland design, that are, in their many details, in such flagrant opposition to the requirements of the act referred to and in their owners' adoption of remedial measures for the ends in view, that we present the following recital of some of the principal causes of disasters at sea, with observations regarding the proper measures which should be resorted to to arrest or remove them. To this end, and as examples, a few of the steam vessels in our harbor yesterday were visited and their condition noted respecting the compliance with the law. Should it direct the attention of owners and officers of steam vessels generally to the great responsibilities of their position, causing them to reflect upon the nature of their duties, both to the public and to themselves, some good may be affected thereby.

NEGLECT OF SECURITY AGAINST FIRE.

Section two of the law of 1852 says "that it shall be the duty of the inspectors of boilers and engines to examine and see that suitable and safe provisions are made to guard against loss or danger from fire." This includes first, the construction of boilers and the arrangement of their appurtenances. These, with internal furnaces like the ordinary marine boilers, should have water bottoms to prevent fire from being communicated to their beds through openings caused by imperfect fittings of the legs to the beds, or by neglect in the workmanship. When a natural draft is used for combustion, the exhaustion within the furnaces, tubes, &c., is such as to cause a current of air to lead into and through any apertures opening to them, and hence fire and sparks are prevented from being emitted through any ordinary openings or joints about a boiler. Where a blower is used these conditions are radically different. The pressure then within the furnaces, flues, &c., is such that fire sparks and occasionally small pieces of ignited coal will be forced through any opening that may exist, and as it is impracticable to construct a boiler without a number of insecure openings, such as those of the furnaces, ash pits and flue doors, &c., fire is liable to be constantly forced out through them, and a great number of steamers have been destroyed through this cause alone. The momentary firing of vessels from this cause is so probable and of such frequent occurrence that if the travelling public were fully aware of the risk of life they incurred in steamers where blowers are used the abandonment of them would be universal and their owners would be compelled to remove the objectionable feature forthwith, their interests in this inducing their attention thereto more effectually than any law that might be enacted to reach them. The use of blowers is so opposed to all propriety and their abandonment so essential to the requirements of personal safety that inspectors should decide and follow up their decision with such measures that a vessel in which they are used should be proclaimed, on river, lake, sound or ocean, unseaworthy.

Included in this section, the effective covering of boilers with felt should never be lost sight of by those executing its provisions. The propriety and necessity of this is so apparant that all competent engineers in every character of steam vessels demand its use, its utility being recognized in restricting radiation of heat, and as a security against fire being communicated by an over-heated boiler it is of the first importance, for the reason that immediately upon its being burned the peculiar odor of its combustion is readily recognized, and the attention of the engineer and firemen on duty is immediately directed to the circumstance and remedial measures resorted to.

The act also imperatively demands that the woodwork around boilers, their steam chimneys or drums shall be placed from it as far as it may be practicable, consistent with the capacity of a vessel. This should be very particularly and religiously attended to by inspectors in its many requirements. Thus, when a boiler is in the hold of a single decked vessel it is not practicable to afford much space between its top and the under side of the deck beams above it without making a break in the deck—a means not always consistent or desirable. Neither is it desirable when the boilers are upon the guards of a steamer, to construct a covering to them of sufficient height to secure it from being fired by radiation of heat. Great distance is not essentially necessary between boilers and their surrounding woodwork if inspectors see that the latter is properly protected. All woodwork about the boilers, as well as the top and sides of the firerooms, should be covered with iron or zinc, the sheets well secured, placing the laps of the sheets upwards. When this protection is not used several coats of thick whitewash mixed with glue answers the purpose well.

Again, great regard is had in this act for the proper provision of pumps, hose, &c., on board steam vessels. It is most important that all steamers should be provided with independent steam fire and bilge pumps, and an auxiliary boiler in those of magnitude to work them. Fitted to these pumps a sufficiency of hose (in good order) to lead to any part of the deck or hold is called for; added to which a number of hand fire pumps, placed fore, aft and amidships, with a sufficiency of hose so fitted as to be capable of being attached to the independent pumps is required. The spirit of economy some owners desire to carry out should never be heeded by inspectors, and although many think a requirement of steam pumps altogether unnecessary and imposing too great a burden upon them, they forget that fittings of this character monthly save upon our coast and the ocean many steamers from burning or sinking, and under circumstances when the ordinary engine and hand pumps have proven totally inadequate to meet the exigencies of the case. Inspectors should also fully see to that provision of the law regarding the carrying of fire buckets and axes, and rigidly enforce it.

In a word, fire at sea is conceded to be the terror of the ocean, and where inspectors and owners alike fail as to the means of subduing it, the public can have but little confidence in such steam vessels, and it is too often the case that they are thus inadequately fitted. Were it otherwise travellers would not upon its occurrence exhibit that want of reliance in the ability to arrest it which is ever so fatal to the chance of subduing it. The law lays particular stress upon these provisions regarding fire, and inspectors should be more zealous in their execution. When the officers of a vessel are aware of the insufficient means in their possession to arrest a fire on board, and the crew are without that observance of obedience and restraint due to discipline and a reliance in their officers, there can be little combination of efforts, and when the inflammable character of steam vessels is considered, it must be admitted that it is not from the labors of one or even a few individuals that success is anticipated. In such a state it requires a high order of compulsory discipline for a crew to continue at their posts with the knowledge that passengers are not only cutting off their means of safety by occupation of the boats, but, terror-striken and frenzied, they may be destroying that only means by their confused and ill-directed labors.

LIFE-SAVING ARRANGEMENTS.

On board the vessels visited the laws of Congress in relation to the preservation of life or the means of escape from danger by passengers and crew have been fairly carried out. The requisite number of life boats and life preservers called for according to the measurement of each vessel, and the number of passengers carried by such vessel and which is specified on the government inspector's certificate, have, in nearly every instance, been complied with. In regard, however, to the present

BOAT DISENGAGING APPARATUS,

masters of steamboats entertain contrary opinions. The law requires that the life boat be provided with a suitable boat disengaging apparatus, so arranged as to allow them to be safely launched with their compliment of passengers while the vessels are under full speed or otherwise, and so that they may be disengaged by one person releasing both ends of the boats at once. Now, while the present arrangement for such an accomplishment and one of almost general adoption has its advocates among seafaring men, there are many who believe that the plan is far from being perfect. In cases where it is necessary to make use of it, attendant upon departure from a vessel in case of disaster, and where excitement is the rule and coolness the exception, two seconds' difference, even less time, in the working of the apparatus might be attended with the most disastrous consequences to all on board the boat. All depends upon the presence of mind of the man placed on the boat for the purpose of freeing her, so that at the proper time, when the boat is close to the water, he may work the bolt that frees and disengages her from the ship.

The opinion of one captain in relation to the matter was, that to work it properly and effectively it was necessary to have some person who had practical experience combined with coolness to attend to its management, in cases where emergency required its use. He had tried it at sea and found it to work all right, but on all occasions of the trial the experiment was made by the second officer. If the danger, then, in launching is so great by the present appliance as that alluded to, especially in the hands of inexperienced men in the bustle, confusion and excitement incident upon a calamity occurring to a ship at sea, is the superiority it is claimed it possesses over the old plan sufficient to secure its general adoption? and if it is should not a number of the men be regularly exercised in its working whose business it would be, should an emergency arise, to be at their posts and have sole management of the disengaging of the boats?

LIFE RAFTS,

though highly spoken of, are not much adopted. The merit they possess is that they can be hove overboard with ease, will right themselves as soon as they touch the water. On a raft of moderate size from thirty to fifty people can find room and safety. They are at all times ready for use, are devoid of complications that could in any way impair their usefulness, and many of them can be propelled with oars. The steamship Fulton, which runs between here and Aspinwall, is furnished with one capable of holding fifty people, and the Richard Stockton, plying between this port and South Amboy, has another, different, however, in construction.

LIFE PRESERVERS.

Apart from the means of escape afforded by the boats and rafts to those who have the misfortune to be on board a vessel at a time when abandonment is resolved on, life preservers or cork jackets placed in the berths or in convenient and accessible places was wisely decided by the laws for the government of steamships. In almost all sea-going steamers these are placed in every state room under the mattress, so that passengers have them all ready should their use be required. On the Sound boats the same practice is adopted. In relation to the means of putting out fires, should such a calamity occur on board, a number of

FIRE BUCKETS,

should be on hand ready for use in case circumstances should require them to be brought into requisition. In most instances the buckets are placed in stands on the promenade deck, so that passengers can lend a hand in the extinguishing of the flames in their early progress. This mode of putting out fire, however, is independent of the more effective means by the use of pumps worked by steam, with hose attached, or the application of steam itself when the fire occurs between decks. On some of the Sound steamboats metallic buckets are placed in the sleeping rooms of the passengers, underneath the washstand, so that they may at all times be easy at hand for use. This is an excellent plan and one worthy of emulation. The

HOSE PIPE,

ready to be attached, have been found in boxes located in close proximity to the pumps to be used in cases of fire. As a general thing, in those vessels which have been visited, the hose has been found in excellent condition and the full quantity required by law, so far as could be ascertained. In regard to the location of the

AXES

and the number called for, these instruments are not as easily accessible as they might be. In numerous instances they are stowed away in officers' rooms and pilot houses, where no person is permitted to go unless by permission; yet while many of the boats have them in such places as they may readily be distinguished, in prominent places in cabins and on deck, still there are others which, if they have them at all, have placed them in out of the way places and in situations where they cannot readily be got at.

STEAMBOATS VISITED.

Below will be found a list of the boats visited, together with the observations made, from personal inspection regarding their condition and appointments:—

The Richard Stockton runs between here and South Amboy, touching at intermediate points. This boat is 912 tons measurement. The inspector's certificate says that she has 540 feet of hose, forty-three buckets, nine axes, four boats, two of which are of metal, and 250 life preservers. The boats were on the upper deck, aft the paddlebox; two of the boats had no tackle attached, and were lying amidships. A life raft capable of holding forty persons was ready for use in case of necessity. In regard to life preservers, buckets, axes, hose, &c., the provisions of the certificate were apparently complied with. The boilers were built in 1852, but after fourteen years' of service repaired. They are not felted, and their sides, tops and backs are too near the woodwork, which is not properly protected for safety. The requirements of gauges, water and steam are sufficient, but the required number of hand pumps could not be found in their appropriate places. The boat is deficient in an independent steam fire and bilge pump.

The J. Belknap, travelling over the same route, is 495 tons measurement. The certificate announces 530 feet of hose, twenty fire buckets, five axes, three boats, one of which is of metal, and 213 life preservers. In general appearance the Belknap has not much to recommend her. Her sanitary condition was most unfavorable. The boats, from their situation and the appliances at hand, were not in a condition to be effectively launched. There were only about fifty of the life preservers seen, and the majority of these were thrown together on the upper deck, where it would be next to an impossibility for a female to get at them if occasion required their use. The boilers were built in 1858, with slight repairs in 1866. The inspectors assert that there are four gauge cocks on each, two water gauges, two steam gauges, two fire pumps, &c. The facts are that there are but three gauge cocks to each boiler, one steam, one vacuum, and one water gauge, the steam gauge in the boiler rooms being seemingly worthless, and the water gauge on the starboard boiler broken. The boilers are not felted, and the insufficiency of protection about the woodwork of the fire room—neither zinc nor whitewash being apparent—seems to invite ignition. The forcing pumps called for could not be seen.

The James Adger, a boat of 1,085 tons measurement. The arrangements of this boat in the following respects, regarding life preserving in case of accidents, is apparently all right. Has 430 feet of hose, forty-seven fire buckets, nine axes, two lifeboats of metal and three of wood, and 150 life preservers. Those applied to on board in relation to the compliance of the vessel with the requirements of law seemed to imagine that the investigation made was altogether unnecessary, and acted in accordance with their own views in this respect. The boilers were not felted, but the space along the sides is sufficient to allow a current of air. The feed pumps, water, steam and vacuum gauges are in accordance with its certificate.

The Charleston, plying between this port and Charleston, is of 1,227 tons burden. This vessel has been lately inspected. The announcement in the inspector's certificate claims that she is provided with 466 feet of hose, fifty-five fire buckets, eleven axes, two life boats of metal and two of wood, and 120 life preservers, which are placed in the berths of passengers. This vessel is well provided in the deck department. Her boilers are too close to the sides of the vessel, and the ignition of the wood is to be feared. In the matter of steam gauges, water gauges, gauge cocks, &c., the inspector's assertions seem to be correct.

The Columbia, 1,271 tons measurement, runs between this port and Havana. The vessel is provided with 460 feet of hose, fifty-eight fire buckets, twelve axes, five life boats, four of which are made of metal, and 200 life preservers placed in the passengers' sleeping rooms. Her boilers were built in 1864 and are in good condition. The independent steam fire and bilge pump is below in hold, instead of being on the upper deck, accessible at all times. In this particular there are many stupid violations, or rather misconceptions, of known requirements, and engine drivers protest against innovations, seemingly converting some inspectors. In other points the engine and boiler rooms are pretty well fitted.

The Missouri numbers 1,180 tons measurement, running between here and New Orleans, has, in accordance with the certificate of the government inspectors, 420 feet of hose, fifty-five fire buckets, eleven axes and four life boats, two of which are made of metal. There are forty-two life preservers on board. This vessel has been inspected within the last two months. The axes to be used in case of need are in the officers' rooms. The boilers of this vessel are not felted, and they are placed too near the adjacent wood work. Gauges, steam, vacuum and water, are seemingly as required.

The Cortez, of 1,246 tons, travelling over the same route as the previously named vessel, has 450 feet of hose, fifty-seven fire buckets, eleven axes, two metal life boats, and two of wood and one hundred life preservers, placed in situations easily accessible. This boat was inspected about a month ago. Her