OUR STEAMBOATS.

A Visit to and Inspection of Our Inland Passenger-Carrying Vessels.

How They Are Fitted with Life-Saving Appurtenances—Means of Escape in Times of Peril—The Remedies That Should be Instituted.

Wise and judicious laws have been enacted by Congress at various times since the year 1838 relating to the inspection of the hulls and machinery of vessels designed to carry passengers plying upon the sea, lakes, rivers and sounds, with the view of two great ends—the protection of life and the security of property. These were measurably sufficient in their various provisions, but there was required additional legislation touching the equipment of steamboats, which the lawmakers endeavored to supply by the passage of the "Steamboat Act of 1852," wherein are embodied excellent provisions and just requirements in reference to the quality of the materials used in the construction of hulls, the sufficiency and adequate nature of machinery, the precautionary measures to prevent fire and its extinguishment, the necessary provision of life preservers, the possession of lifeboats, &c. These are elaborately detailed in the act, and, if complied with in every particular by those whose positions make the discharge of the duty a moral obligation, the steamboats of this portion of the country would then be entitled to praise as secure and safe mediums of transportation, even as they are now open to condemnation. Each and every one of these measures have so repeatedly been violated and non-complied with that the story is a "twice told tale." Frequent disasters, the direct cause of such omissions, have sent the cry of mourning into thousands of families and made the nation shudder with horror as the agonizing recitals came laden with chapters of hardships and sufferings. It would require a long list to sum up the number of steamboats in this country that have met with accidents since the first introduction of steam navigation, as there are recorded scores of cases where, upon lake, river and sound, brave vessels have gone down with hundreds of souls. Occasionally the causes of these disasters were very trivial in their nature, and by the proper equipment of the vessels might have been averted; but in the absence of such precautionary measures there have been appalling culminations, that for the time startled from their lethargy the men appointed and handsomely paid to see that the laws made and provided to avert such calamities are complied with. The existence of the stain that the proportionate loss of life by steamboat disasters is greater with us than with any other nation does not add much to the inflated reputations these officials often possess. The HERALD in times gone by has fully inquired into the matter where this negligence in executing a righteous law rests, and has given the substance of such investigations to the public, fully showing that by ignorance and criminal collusion such men have continued to contribute their share to the disasters of steamboats on the sea and its tributaries, the loss of lives and the horrors incident to which are conceded universally to be the most frightful of all terrors. In the further prosecution of this purpose it is at this time designed to confine its remarks to the inland steamboats plying from this harbor, with a view of calling the attention of the travelling public to their condition, and at times lamentable deficiency in being suitably provided with boats, life-saving apparatus, fire hose and other necessary appurtenances, together with their adopted security and provisions against fire.

At this season, when the grand channels of steamboat traffic from the metropolis are again about to be opened, and the decks and saloons of a thousand and one crafts will be laden with precious human freight, sailing here and there, through the Sound, along the Hudson, along the East river, about the bay and up and down the hundreds of tributaries that pour their waters into this grand commercial basin, it is particularly desired to attempt this narration, telling the interested millions of passengers who will seek this mode of business communication or of pleasure during the summer in what instances owners and officers of such boats are criminally neglectful in the provision adopted for the preservation of life in case of fire, collision or other disaster. It is also proposed to refer to the character of the modern life preserver, an instrument designed to save life upon occasions of terror and alarm, but which really, because of its miserable construction or long neglect when stowed away on vessels becomes an element assisting in too many instances the waves in swallowing up their victims.

To this end, within the past few days an inspector, duly authorized, left the HERALD office and visited the inland steamboats which he found at the piers along the North and East rivers, to note how far these met the requirements of the act referred to in the matter of remedial measures which their owners have adopted to arrest or avert disaster.

LIFE-SAVING APPLIANCES.

In numberless cases of inspection the condition of the life-saving appliances required by law, and their character, were such that it suggested incompetency, unfaithfulness and criminality on the part of officers and owners. True, in the matter of the possession of the number of life and wooden boats the law requires the vessels visited to carry, this provision has been almost in all the cases literally complied with; but their locations in the majority of instances are so absurdly inconvenient and inaccessible that they might as well—before a terror-stricken and frenzied lot of passengers could use them—be a hundred miles away from the scene of the disaster, as on board. There is also seen the neglect of the judicious provision made in the law, that such boats should be furnished with oars and necessary apparatus, meaning to include thole pins, rudders, life-lines, &c. It may seem trifling work and easily remedied to place in a boat designed to save life in the face of a calamity, the necessary oars and thole pins as required by the emergency of the case, but seconds at such times are very precious, and can be more profitably employed than in searching a vessel for oars or procuring something to act as substitutes for thole pins. The accessible position of a boat should be demanded by not only the inspectors receiving large salaries to carry out the provisions of a just law, but such a demand should be made by each and every one of the passengers who trust their lives sometimes to the care of incompetent and reckless captains and crews. They should never be stowed away on hurricane decks—as has been observed and will hereafter be noted in this inspection—when considerable time would necessarily be consumed in reaching them in order to get them ready for launching, and under no circumstances should they be hampered with old lumber, buckets or rubbish of any kind. In too many instances are the boats also unseaworthy, as many poor fellows would find out to their sorrow had they to entrust their lives in them of a dark night far from shore.

This *hors de combat* condition of several of the boats observed should first open the eyes of the community, if not our legislators, to the reckless disregard for human life in this manner displayed. We fear that of the large fleet of steamboats that will soon dart about and pass continually between New York and our suburban towns, Albany and Boston, with the charming summer resorts set like diamonds in emerald surroundings that border the lakes, rivers and bays about us, that some time one of their number, laden to the water's edge with passengers, may have a terrible accident befall her. At such a period would there not happen something similar to that which befell the unfortunates of the disaster on Lake Michigan, when the Sea Bird was burned and over a hundred passengers went down? It will be remembered the burning boat was seen from the shore, and an effort was made to launch the lifeboat Waukegan, when, on examination, it was found securely locked up in a warehouse, and finally proved wholly unseaworthy; and to have ventured out on the stormy lake in her would have been certain death. There were found in this emergent moment but one thole pin and two oars in the boat, the rest having been loaned to fishermen. More than one example of a similar character regarding the criminal inefficiency in the fitting of lifeboats could be given in this inspection, showing the shameless course pursued by the owners of steamboats, and even by the employés of the government.

Regarding the present boat disengaging apparatus fitted to some steamboats, owners and masters entertain contrary opinions. The steamboat act of 1852 requires that lifeboats be provided with a suitable disengaging apparatus, so arranged as to admit their being safely launched when containing a complement of passengers, while the vessel is under full headway or otherwise, so that one person can disengage both ends at the same time. Such is the law, we believe. While the arrangement for such an accomplishment, generally adopted, has its advocates among seafaring men there are many who believe that the plan is far from being perfect, and such thinkers are nearly right. In cases where it is necessary to make use of a boat hurriedly, leaving a vessel in case of disaster, when excitement is the rule and coolness the exception—the difference of a second might, in all probability, be attended with the most disastrous consequences to all in the boat. All certainly depends on the cleard-headedness and presence of mind of the man whose duty it is to lower or "free" the boat from the steamer's side. In a word, patent disengaging apparatus may, under disciplined men, work satisfactorily, properly and effectively, but it requires practical experience and coolness to manage it, and in the hands of others, in the bustle and confusion incident to a wreck or fire at sea the whole affair would be found to be so complicated it would drown more than it ever saved. If owners of steamboats will furnish them with lifeboats in good condition, enough of them and in accessible positions, they can wait awhile until the invention of decent disengaging apparatus shall supersede the old safe plan of "lowering" a boat.

The life preservers of the present day! Won't many a traveller by water smile when they are alluded to? Who ever heard of the old "cork jackets" or "rings" saving the life of any one? Who ever saw these instruments designed to save life on board of any of our river boats in such accessible positions that if the abandonment of the vessel was hurriedly decided upon they could be easily and immediately procured? and who ever found them in perfect condition? The life preservers of the present day are mere rubbish; there is not a decent instrument of the kind extant. More poverty of invention has been displayed in the manufacture of these things than in aught else in the broad range of mechanics. The "cork jackets" may have saved at times some poor wrecked fellow at sea, but it is so common to place them in out-of-the-way locations, letting them rest without attention for months, even years, that their outside covering becomes torn, the cork like a stone and the strings intended to fasten the preserver about the body gone. One and all of these so-called life-saving affairs can be placed in the same category. It is certainly strange that our commendable fertile inventive genius has not ere this placed before the public and in the water not a straw, but something a drowning man could clutch at and be saved, and which in times of anticipated danger could be easily and securely adjusted to the body, enabling its wearer to take to the water with confidence. One cannot help but feel every time he reads of a fatal disaster on the water that there has been culpable negligence in providing means for the saving of life. It may not be within the wisdom of man nor in the strength of timber to prevent winds and waves asserting at times their superiority, and collisions will occur in spite of the efforts of officers to keep vessels apart; but there need not be the frightful loss of life which so often attends these mishaps. Collisions and burnings of steamboats occur so often on our rivers and lakes, resulting in great loss of life, lead us to the supposition that there is no such thing as a good life preserver manufactured, and really there is not. If there be one, why are not all steamboats compelled to be supplied with it? Owners of these vessels will not provide means of safety for their passengers unless compelled to do so. They will not voluntarily be at the expense of placing good life preservers in such accessible positions that they could be used in emergent cases. Beside the expense they seem to have a prejudice against having anything on board their vessels which implies that she could possibly be lost. In this respect something should be done, and that at once, to lessen the frightful risk of voyages on the water in the matter of the invention of good life buoys.

We have a friend who was among those at the awful disaster on Lake Erie last summer, and who was nearly sunk by a poor life preserver, the "cork jacket," and only saved himself by discarding it, and we cannot recall to mind at this writing more than one man who was ever saved by one of them. The reference is made to an individual in the fearful Henry Clay disaster on the Hudson many years ago, who fastened one to his body and jumped into the water; but before ten minutes had elapsed it began to settle and pull him under, when he saved his life eventually by climbing on a floating bale of cotton, where he was nearly frozen to death before being rescued. Assuming that disaster should befall any of our palatial Sound steamers, in the height of the summer season, or the Albany boats, when each has from 500 to 1,000 persons on board, is it difficult to answer the interrogative, "How many lives would the 'cork jackets' of the present day save?" But few. Many of their manufacturers, too, practise in their construction the most shameless frauds. This has been proven recently in London, and such experiments might, without doubt, be repeated here with like results. A prominent gentleman interested in such matters went among the "sailors' shops" and bought life buoys, or preservers, with a view of testing them. His story suggests the inquiry whether or not the "life preservers" on board our steamboats are any better than those described and tested by him. He says:—

One was branded "warranted corkwood," one "all cork," and the third simply bore the word "warranted." They ranged in price from six shillings to seven and sixpence. They were all three carried home and dissected with the following results:—

No. 1 ("warranted corkwood"), when its flimsy, yellow skin was slit, was discovered to consist bodily of straw, sparely covered with cork shavings for the satisfaction, it is presumed, of any cautious mariner who might feel disposed to risk a like slit in his purchase so as to make sure of its quality before he paid for it.

No. 2 ("warranted") was stuffed with rushes.

No. 3 ("all cork") cork chips and rushes, about twenty per cent of the former and eighty of the latter.

To test the buoyant capability of the three detected impostors, they were placed in water, a weight of ten pounds being attached to each. This was the result:—

"Warranted corkwood"—Sank in an hour.

"Warranted"—Stood the test for nearly two hours, and then succumbed.

"All cork"—Floated for four hours and then sank from view.

Fire buckets should be on hand in abundance in every steamboat; the application of a bucket of water has often extinguished the trifling spark, which in a hundred cases of frightful steamboat burnings was the beginning of the disaster. The neglect of furnishing a boat with proper fire buckets and keeping them filled with water has proven greatly destructive of life and property, carrying grief into once happy households and reducing to penury many who were prosperous until the calamity arising from criminal neglect or carelessness brought them to, perhaps, pinching want. Were the proper precautionary measures adopted on board steamboats, in nine out of ten cases none of the dreadful occurrences which too often frighten the community from its propriety would find a record in the daily history of life. The mere possession of buckets is not sufficient. For all practical purposes, in case they are required, they might as well be pendant from the spire of Trinity church, if they are placed in locations where gymnastic skill is a necessary accomplishment in order to reach them, or crowded away in offices, apartments or storerooms, accessible only to the initiated, and empty. Unfortunately, this has been observed in many instances during our late inspections.

Similar comment may be made in relation to water hose. If stored away under the impression of false security, and that it may not be required, owing to the precaution otherwise adopted to guard against accident, the moment surely will come, and at a time least expected, when, panic stricken with fear, the confidence thus reposed results in a miserable and frightful delusion.

Axes should also abound in number and be accessible. In numerous instances they have been found to be stowed away in officers' rooms or in pilot houses, where no passenger is permitted to go.

VESSELS VISITED.

Carrying out the avowed purpose noted as far as practicable when this subject matter was announced, our inspector has visited the inland steamboats carrying passengers lying at our piers, to observe the "quantity and quality of their life-saving appurtenances." Thus ran his instructions, with an eye also to their adopted "security and provisions against fire." At this season, it is repeated, information of this character must be of great moment to the travelling public, showing as it does that both owners and captains of steamboats, with the exception of temporary vigilance, suggested by selfish considerations, are careless and neglectful as a rule regarding the lives of those entrusted as passengers to their care. It certainly has been taught us in many instances by frequent disasters, resulting in loss of life, that the time is at hand when the most thorough, competent and effective means to prevent and preclude the possibility of a recurrence of such dreadful calamities should be made.

The Atlas, hence to South Amboy, is owned by the Camden and Amboy Railroad Company, and is about 850 tons burden. The captain could not be found, nor could the 160 life preservers which the United States certificate of inspection called for. One miserable "ring," painted yellow, was found hanging aft, and this in such a condition that it would probably sink sooner than a man who could not swim. None others could be seen. They may be on board; but of what service are they in the hold of the vessel or elsewhere, hid away where naturally they must be neglected? Only eighteen out of thirty required buckets were found, and but one of six axes could be seen. There was found after diligent search one small wooden boat on the upper deck forward, covered with canvas and rubbish of wood, and no attached lowering apparatus. It would not be of the least service in case of alarm. Another boat of metal was found aft, with the thole pins gone. The security and provisions against fire of this boat are very indifferent.

The Maitenawan, hence to Keyport, of 775 tons burden. Of the 160 life preservers she is required to have forty-three cork jackets were in racks under the lower decks, inaccessible except by a giant; the gangways being filled with freight, much of it directly about these racks, the jackets could not be then used under any circumstances. On the upper deck were found the balance. These could easily be reached, but they were in a miserable state of repair and confusion, the pieces of cork enclosed feeling like pieces of stone. Many of the miserable coverings were torn and mutilated so that after an exposure to the water for several minutes they undoubtedly would be useless. Only one of the two boats required by law was noted, this being aft the port wheelhouse, capable of holding comfortably about twenty-five persons. It had no oars, and its lowering apparatus contained great knots. Twelve out of the twenty required buckets were found on the upper deck. The security against fire of this vessel is indifferent only, and the ability of its officers to save many passengers in case of danger, merely conjectural.

The Thomas P. Way, hence to Newark, is of 453 tons burden. Its United States certificate calls for 100 life preservers, twenty buckets and two boats. The latter are situated aft the wheelhouses. One of them was upside down, and the other's lowering apparatus in bad condition. They are insufficient in size and inefficient in condition. Six gilded empty buckets were found in the saloon; they are ornamental, but useless. In the entrance to the hurricane deck, from the upper saloon, were found some seventy of the old cork jackets, in poor condition, packed away as if they would never be wanted, and that within two feet of the smokepipe of the boiler. Pleasant and safe place for life preservers! particularly as it is like a furnace seven times heated in that enclosure, and, again, it is always closed, none out the initiated knowing of such a doorway and receptacle. About fifteen or twenty other jackets were found below situated in racks that rendered them inaccessible. Freight is carried in large quantities in the gangways and even in the saloon of this boat, which is highly censurable. Her security and provision against fire are not to be commended.

The Electra, hence to Providence, is of 1,567 tons burden, and has 47 staterooms and 200 berths, which will give one an idea of her passenger-carrying capacity. The law requires her to be provided with 200 life preservers, which are of the ordinary character, and these are placed in the staterooms and berths. Thirty-six buckets were found aft, easily observed, but not easily reached. Twenty-four were noted on the upper deck in very convenient locations. Her five boats were found on the upper deck, three on the port and two on the starboard side, in good condition and with lowering apparatus in excellent order. This is to be commended. Her fire security is also worthy of commendation.

The Galatea, of the same line, and a sister vessel, is similarly fitted.

The Doris, also of the same line, 1,360 tons burden, is a freight boat, but carries an occasional passenger or two. Her cork jackets are of the old style, thirty in number. She has two boats on the upper deck.

The Empire State, hence to Newport, belonging to the Boston, Newport and New York Steamboat Company, is 1,692 tons burden. When this vessel was visited and permission given to inspect her the officer saluted answered, "Well, yes; but we allowed a HERALD man here once before and he went back on us, and that wasn't square." This boat has 106 staterooms and 500 berths, but her certificate from the United States inspectors calls for but 353 life preservers; these, of the old cork jacket style, are in the various rooms and berths, so far as they hold out. Six hundred feet of hose is called for, and part of it was seen. Of the sixty buckets demanded to be on board, twenty-two were found on the hurricane deck, each containing a few drops of rain water; ten on stateroom deck, not filled, and six in the cabin, very ornamental but not very useful. Of the boats, two very small ones are on the hurricane deck, aft, out of the way and hardly to be reached in case of alarm; one had no lowering apparatus, two others were abaft the starboard and two aft of the port wheelhouses, with lowering gear, but their location cannot but be condemned. They are too far from the water and two closely hemmed in by staterooms, &c. The boilers of this boat are on the guards, and the woodwork about them is too near, although protected, as the continued radiation of heat from the boiler is to be feared.

The Andrew Harder, hence to Stuyvesant. The person in authority said the United States certificate was "locked up in the safe." The boat has thirty-four staterooms, and there were found but thirteen cork jackets on board. "The others will be here next week," said our informant. One small boat was discovered on the upper deck, and another of like character on the lower deck; neither would be of much service in a hurry or during an alarm. The boilers are not felted, and no buckets, axes, hose, &c., could be found. The fire risk of the boat is not to be praised.

The Jesse Hoyt, hence to Port Monmouth, is of 624 tons burden. Her inspector's certificate calls for 400 life preservers, two boats, thirty-nine buckets and eight axes. Only two hundred and ninety three of the old cork jackets were counted, some being easily reached and others inaccessible. The boats are placed in inconvenient locations, have no lowering apparatus, and they would not hold one-twentieth of the number of passengers that sometimes frequent her decks and saloons. Some of the buckets were seen and two or three of the axes. Her security and provisions against fire are not first class.

The Wyoming, hence to New Hamburg, is of 363 tons burden. Her certificate from the United States authorities calls for 154 life preservers, two boats, twenty buckets and five axes. After thoroughly searching the boat but seventy-three cork jackets could be found, and these were in places that during a panic among a large number of passengers, would be regarded as inaccessible. Buckets and axes were not seen. The boats are small. This vessel during the summer season of 1868 ran on several routes from this city, among them being to the Fishing Banks and New Haven, and on many of these trips carried several hundred passengers. The life-saving apparatus she was then supplied with, based upon the present stock, was totally inadequate to save one out of ten of those who entrusted their lives to the officers of the boat, had a serious accident occurred.

The Stonington, hence to Stonington, Conn., is of 1,634 tons burden. She is fitted with 117 staterooms and 351 berths for passengers. Three hundred and seventy-five life preservers are called for by her inspection certificate, these being in the staterooms, &c. Any one who recollects the crowded state of the Sound steamboats at times during the past season will stamp this number of cork jackets as inadequate. Her boats, five in number, are in good condition, but they are placed in such locations that great difficulty might be experienced in launching them in case of alarm. Eighty-eight of the prescribed 110 buckets were counted. This boat is also supplied with a life raft, but it is stowed away on the upper deck, and, for all the purposes for which it is designed, might as well be in the loft of the manufacturer. The security and provisions against fire in this vessel are quite good.

The Narraganset, sister vessel to the above, is, we believe, fitted in like manner.

The James W. Baldwin, hence to Rondout, is of 1,000 tons burden. She has been undergoing repairs during the ice embargo of the Hudson. The inspector's certificate calls for 250 life preservers and two boats, besides thirty-nine buckets and eight axes. She is fitted with sixty staterooms and 250 berths. The boats were not furnished with any lowering apparatus. Most of the buckets and axes were found. The life preservers are the old cork jackets, stowed away in racks. Comment is unnecessary. Fire risk susceptible of improvement.

The Adelphi, hence to Sing Sing, is of 643 tons burden. It is supposed she is fitted with, or rather the inspector's certificate calls for 250 life preservers, two boats, twenty-five buckets and five axes. The cork jackets found approach very nearly the above number, but many are placed in racks so far above the reach of individuals of ordinary height that their usefulness is negatived, while others are where no mortal would think of finding them in case of alarm. The boats are in good condition and might be effectively used if needed. The reprehensible practice of blocking up the gangways of boats of this character is noted here in its worst aspect. Her security and provisions against fire are only fair.

The Osseo, hence to Flushing, is about 200 tons burden. The certificate of inspection, which should have been hanging on deck prominently, could not be found. "The captain has it locked up, I guess," said one of the employés. It was found that she had fifty-two cork jackets, placed in racks out of reach. Many of these were in very sad condition, the coverings being shamefully torn. Twelve buckets were found on the upper deck, as were two small boats abaft the wheelhouses, not fitted with lowering apparatus. Her security against fire might be greatly improved.

The T. V. Arrowsmith, hence to Glen Cove, of 527 tons burden, should have by inspection authority 193 life preservers, twenty buckets and two boats. There were found and counted after some trouble 102 old cork jackets, not worth the room they occupied, so far as their life-saving virtues are concerned. The boats are located on the saloon deck aft, covered with canvas, and two or three buckets were seen on the upper deck, in such an inaccessible location that they might as well be overboard. The fire risks of this boat can be improved without trouble or great expense.

The Nelly White, from this port to Glen Cove, of 444 tons burden, her certificate says, should possess 253 life preservers, two boats, twenty buckets &c. After an extended search eighty-seven cork jackets were found in positions not easily reached and many in a very bad state of repair. The boats are abaft the wheelhouses on the saloon deck, and might be improved, both in size and quality. Not a single bucket could be found anywhere aboard the vessel. If they were stowed away of what use would they be in case of fire? Her security and provision against fire are but indifferent.

The City of Hartford, hence to Hartford, is of 1,307 tons burden. She is fitted with forty-eight staterooms and 204 berths; her certificate advises, and the same authority assures the inquirer, that she is supplied with 200 life preservers, which, we presume, are cork jackets stowed away in the rooms and berths; some few were seen; sixty-two buckets and six boats are also called for. Three of the boats were found on the saloon deck in locations not easily reached, three were on the hurricane deck, with no lowering apparatus, and so placed that during an excitement they would only be found by the crew, and it is questionable if they could launch them. Eighteen buckets were found on the hurricane deck aft without water, and twenty-four forward, in the same neglected condition. The provision against fire in this boat might be improved without trouble.

The Continental, hence to New Haven, of 1,024 tons burden, her inspection certificate advises, has 210 life preservers, six boats, seventy-two buckets and twelve axes. She is fitted with fifty-six staterooms and 300 berths. In these are placed, so far as they hold out, the cork jackets, denominated life preservers. Of the boats, none in the very best of repair, three are placed aft on the saloon deck, with lowering apparatus; they are approached with some difficulty; one is stowed away on the hurricane deck and is useless, while the other two are placed forward of the port and starboard steam chimneys, only to be found by the initiated. Twenty-three buckets are on the hurricane deck without water, and twenty-two were counted on the lower deck. The security and provisions against fire, as noted on this vessel, are not to be commended.

The Sylvan Shore, hence to Port Washington. The inspector's certificate could not be found, one of the officers supposing "that the captain had it, as it was never hung up." One hundred cork jackets, many in bad repair, were found in the saloon cabin under the seats, and thirty-two in racks out of reach on the main deck. There were no buckets visible, and the two small boats—one without any lowering apparatus—are not in good condition. Her fire risk is bad.

The New Haven, hence to New Haven, is of 448 tons burden. Her certificate of inspection calls for ninety-two life preservers, three boats, thirty buckets and six axes. She is fitted with twenty-six staterooms and 100 berths. When the mate was requested to point out the location of the cork jackets he replied, "Oh, yes, we have a quantity here," and, after some deliberation, he opened two staterooms and displayed the "life preservers" at the head of the berths. The boats were found on the hurricane deck, a location very inaccessible, and one was not fitted with any lowering apparatus. Twenty buckets were discovered, after diligent search, on the upper deck, but being placed there renders them valueless for the object intended. The fire risk of this boat can be greatly improved without any difficulty.

The Bridgeport, hence to Bridgeport, is of about 1,000 tons burden. Her lower deck was so thoroughly blockaded with freight of every conceivable character, including much that was greatly inflammable and explosive, that it was impracticable to pass from the bow to the stern of the boat through the gangways. This practice is so inconsistent with the idea of safety in the running of a passenger steamboat that it partakes of a criminal neglect on the part of its officers for the lives entrusted to their care. This blockade prevented the inspector's certificate being seen, if the boat possesses one, and consequently the number of life preservers, boats, &c., the law requires her to be fitted with cannot be given. Five boats, however, were found of their kind, two of them being located on the port side of the after saloon deck. These were upside down, without any lowering apparatus attached. One was found on the hurricane deck, with blocks and tackle attached, yet its inaccessible location makes it almost worthless, and the other two were in quite as inconvenient places, with no appliances for lowering. The condition of repair of these boats can be improved. Neither buckets nor axes were seen. The fire risk of this vessel is very indifferent.

The P. G. Coffin, hence to Sing Sing and Nyack, is of 440 tons burden. The United States inspectors give her 150 life preservers, two boats, twenty buckets and five axes. The cork jackets found on the lower deck in racks are beyond a passenger's reach, and those in the saloon are old, torn and greatly worn. Only seventy-eight could be mustered. Neither of the small boats can be boasted of. One is located aft of the starboard wheel and is in poor repair; it would not be very serviceable. The other is stowed away on the hurricane deck without any lowering apparatus, and should it ever be launched in time of alarm it would require considerable trouble and no small degree of ingenuity to do it safely. The gangways in this boat are also filled with freight during their trips. Patient searching failed to reveal either buckets or axes. The fire risk of this boat is not good.

The New Champion—an old boat with a garbled name, it is alleged, but newly painted—was lying at pier No. 35 North river. The captain was found on the after guard of the boat with a paint brush in his hand when our inspector approached and requested permission to "look around." After reading the authority shown to him he for a second stopped his painting and petulantly exclaimed, "Go to the laws of the United States and see what this boat should have, and then you can bet we have got it." Having had something of an experience with steamboat captains before this—particularly in what their ideas consist of when their own boats are alluded to—the HERALD inspector declined the source of information suggested, and repeated his wish that he might "see for himself," when he received a point blank refusal; yet he did look around, and this is the result—There were no life preservers nor axes seen on the lower deck. Sixteen buckets were found piled together in a heap on this deck. Of course they were empty. There was noted one small boat, located aft of the starboard wheelhouse, and another seen on the hurricane deck. All the service the latter would be during an alarm incident to a fire or collision can be easily imagined. The fire risk of this boat can and should be improved. By what authority the name of this craft (as we were informed such is the case) has been changed from "Champion" to "New Champion" we could not learn. Did Congress give her owners permission to make this change? The United States inspectors' certificate could not be seen. As considerable freight was noticed on this boat's deck it is supposable she will soon take up her position on the line to Catskill.

The Thomas Powell, hence to Catskill, is of 625 tons burden. This boat has also been painted up, and one of her deck hands said she was "all ready" to be placed on the route. It is supposed that cork jackets are placed in each of the staterooms and berths; but that can only be conjectured, as permission could not be obtained to make the inspection. Seventy-four were counted on the lower deck, in the same old inaccessible locations, out of reach in racks over head. One ordinary sized wooden boat was found on the lower deck. Perhaps the employés of the boat spoken to was mistaken about her readiness. For her future passengers' sake, in case of accident, the HERALD hopes so. The fire risk of the boat should be improved.

The Ansonia, plying to Sangerties, was found in about similar condition. She has been recently painted externally, and as the certificate of the inspectors could not be found it is impracticable to state how many jackets, &c., she should be furnished with. It was intimated on board that she would at once be put on the line of her route. After diligent searching a small number of cork jackets, apparently old and in poor repair, were found stowed away in lockers, where, if they remain when the boat is in service, might just as well be at the bottom of the Red Sea, so far as the benefit they would be to her passengers if needed. One small boat was noted on deck; neither buckets nor axes could be found. The fire risk of this boat is not to be commended.

The John L. Hasbrouck, hence to Poughkeepsie, of 477 tons burden. More fresh paint here. The boat has been running several weeks, but her certificate of inspection could not be seen, after the most patient searching from stem to stern. No cork jackets could be found, nor were there any buckets or axes where they should have been—in fact, none could be exhumed. For the information of her passengers we vouchsafe the statement that the Hasbrouck should be supplied with 100 life preservers, two boats and twenty buckets. Is she thus supplied? One boat was discovered on her hurricane deck, stowed away without oars, thole pins or lowering apparatus, as if it would never be required. Just as well, perhaps, as it would be of very little service to a number of startled passengers. Her security and provisions against fire are not good.

The C. Vanderbilt, plying between this port and Troy, measures 1,094 tons. Her certificate of inspection calls for 224 life preservers, forty-seven fire buckets, nine axes and two boats. The cork jackets are presumed to be in the berths and staterooms; some of them could be in better repair. The two boats are on the upper deck and of ordinary size. Some of the buckets were seen, and two or three of the axes noted. Those who are acquainted with the large number of passengers that sometimes crowd this boat and the Connecticut, the sister boat of the line, may well ask "Is she properly supplied with life-saving appurtenances?"

The St. John, on the route to Albany and return, is about 1,760 tons burden. Her certificate requires her to be fitted with 407 life preservers, ninety-three fire buckets and four lifeboats. As it is boasted that both the St. John and her associate boat, the Drew, have accommodations for over 700 passengers, it is submitted should a collision occur on the Hudson at dead of night between them and some craft with less upper work, of light character, and should a panic ensue, how many of the seven hundred—assuming that number to be carried, and it often is—could be saved by the cork jackets hid away in berths, &c. Her boats were found to be in a fair condition, but not very accessible. Her security and provisions against fire can be improved, and should be.

The Bristol, hence to Bristol, R. I., is of 1,962 tons burden. She has ten boats, 110 fire buckets, twenty-four axes and 800 life preservers, or rather her certificate credits her with these. It need only to be mentioned that her officers boast of having accommodations for 1,200 passengers, and that during the opposition on the Sound last season such a number was, it has been said, repeatedly carried by this boat. Under these circumstances how many lives would these cork jackets have saved had a disaster then occurred? Four of the boats are in accessible locations, but the balance are not so well placed. Some buckets and few axes were seen. The boat's fire risk is passable.

Similar remarks in every essential particular refer to her sister steamboat, the Providence.

The City of New York, hence to Norwich, Conn., is of 1,562 tons burden. This, like the other Sound steamboats, has the cork jackets with which she is supplied placed in the staterooms and berths. The certificate of the authorities says she has 450 of these, eighty-five buckets, twelve axes, four life and three other boats. Two of the boats are forward of the wheelhouses, two stowed away amidships, the balance, being the smaller ones, in locations not easily reached. The buckets are not accessible. This boat, like her sister boats, the City of New London and City of Lawrence, oftimes carries a very large number of passengers. The City of New London has 200 life preservers and four boats. Their fire risk is fair.

CONCLUSION.

Here is a pretty revelation! In the inbred love of our citizens for summer travel by water they flock at times by the hundreds to the decks and saloons of the above and other steamboats that ply from the metropolis to the thousand and one resorts that are properly termed our suburban towns. The owners of these boats by this traffic amass fortunes, but what care they, seemingly, for the lives entrusted to them? All decent men heartily despise the "crimps" and "longshore" sharks who prey peculiarly on seamen and fleece them of their hard earnings. They utterly abhor the "wrecker," the cold-blooded, murderous villian who, by means of false lights and signals, betrays a noble vessel to certain destruction, that he may gather the plunder the wreck and the drowned bodies yield. What, then, is the opinion of the man or men, who, for the sake of little extra profit, consigns a fellow creature to the lingering torture of death by gradual drowning? Such results seem to be the aim of the manufacturers of the life preservers (Heaven save the mark!) tested by Mr. James Greenwood, as noted above. How many of such worthless affairs are furnished to our steamboats plying daily at our doors and carrying our friends from place to place? We do not charge them with being filled with straw, rushes and chips, but we do assume that many of them in their ill repair and neglected condition are no more serviceable. In times gone by it has not often happened that, being cast away on the face of the waters of the Sound or North or East river, the possessor of a life buoy deserving the name has in the end been worse off than the man who had no such hope left him out of a wreck, and "went down and was done with it;" but this has been providential. Who will undertake to tell, unless this wretched imposture ceases, how many instances in the future there will be of desperate hope unexpectedly mocked to death, of lives lost that would have been saved had the promise of a treacherous preserver held out but proved true? Nay, how many men, and women, too, have been and will be cheated out of their lives by abandoning the spar or plank for the more hopeful looking cork jacket, "warranted solid cork wood," but which is no better than straw and rags, which soddens and sinks, dragging the clingers with it.

So it is with the equipment of these steamboats in regard to lifeboats. What is the value of a boat pied aloft out of reach and without thole pins or oars in case of disaster? What is the use of having buckets to extinguish fires if they are locked up and empty? Where is the propriety of in having axes to cut away a wreck if they are stowed away out of view? Where is the judgment displayed of those who go up and down rivers, across lakes and through the Sound in patronizing steamboat owners who are very sure to get their passage money in advance, and have not a proper care for the lives of passengers, and do not provide means for their safety in cases of danger?

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

Ecclesiastical Meetings, 1869.

The following table of the times and places of holding ecclesiastical meetings for the present year will be found valuable to many of our readers:—

GENERAL ASSEMBLIES.

O. S. Presbyterian—New York city, May 20.
N. S. Presbyterian—New York city, May 20.
Southern Presbyterian—Mobile, May 20.
Cumberland Presbyterian—Murfreesboro, Tenn., May 20.
United States Presbyterian—Monmouth, Ill., May 26.

GENERAL SYNODS.

Reformed Presbyterian—Cedarville, Ohio, May 19.
Evangelical Lutheran—Cincinnati, May 20.
Reformed—Philadelphia, June 2.
German Reformed—Philadelphia, November 24.

GENERAL ASSOCIATIONS, CONFERENCES, &C.

Kansas General Association—Lawrence, May 12.
Michigan General Association—East Saginaw, May 19.
Indiana General Association—Indianapolis, May 20.
Illinois General Association—Farmington, May 26.
Iowa General Association—Denmark, June 2.
Rhode Island Conference—Little Compton, June 8.
Ohio Conference—Akron, June 8.
Nebraska Congregational Association—Fremont, June 10.
Connecticut General Association—West Haven, June 15.
Vermont General Association—Brandon, June 15.
Massachusetts General Association—Woburn, June 15.
Oregon Congregational Association—Salem, June 17.
Maine General Conference—Bangor, June 22.
New Hampshire General Association—Keene, August 24.
Wisconsin Presbyterian and Congregational Convention—Sparta, October 6.
California General Association—San Francisco, October 6.
Minnesota Conference—Owatonna, October 14.
New York General Association—Potsdam Junction, October 19.
Missouri General Conference—Sedalia, October 20.

Progress of Christianity—Conversions, Accessions, Revivals, &c.

We have received reports for the past week of some 7,000 accessions or conversions to various churches as the result of revivals. Of these 4,000 are among the Methodists, 850 among the United Brethren, and 600 each among the Baptists and Presbyterians. At its last communication the Congregational church in Bridport, Vt., received thirty-nine accessions. Other revivals are noted in the Congregational churches of Sudbury, and Sunderland and Palmer, Mass. (See correspondence.) The Baptists have shared in the revival in Pittsfield, Mass., and fifty-five have joined that Church. Dr. Newell's church in this city (Presbyterian) received fifty new members at its last communion. The North Presbyterian church in Buffalo is enjoying the most remarkable work of grace in its history, and 100 converts have begun a new life. In Bel Fre, Ohio, forty converts are numbered among the Congregationalists, and eighty-four among the Presbyterians of Elizabethtown, Ind. In Fulton, Ill., Rev. J. D. Potter has been working with great success, and the churches have been greatly revived, and there are said to be 300 converts, of whom sixty are among the students of the Illinois Soldiers' College. Forty-one have been received on profession of their faith by the Westminster Presbyterian church of Salt Point, Dutchess county, N. Y. On a late Sunday fifty-four persons were received into the communion of the First Presbytrian church, Bridgetown, N. J. The Second church has also received a goodly number. Twelve persons were received by profession in the Presbyterian church of Chester, N. Y. In Salem, Washington county, N. Y., there has existed for several months past a very interesting work of grace. There were on the first sabbath in March twenty-one added to the church, all but one on examination. In that number were persons of almost every age, three men fifty years old, two of them with their wives, one with his wife and son, a mother and daughter, sisters, and sisters and a brother.

Thirty-three persons were admitted to the communion of the old Pine street Presbyterian church, Philadelphia, on Sabbath, 20th ult.

A remarkable revival of religion began with the week of prayer in the Presbyterian church at Shamokin, Pa. Some who had long withstood the invitations of the Gospel are among the converts.

A country neighborhood prayer meeting, which has been sustained for a year or two past by a few laymen and women in one of the towns of Massachusetts, has been much blessed of late. A week or two since more than one hundred were present and among them ten inquirers.

A revival is reported in progress at Stockbridge, Wis., in which the plan of visiting, singing and praying in saloons, hotels and other public places, has been adopted.

The churches of Lawrence, Kansas, held a union communion service February 28, in which about 500, of whom at least 100 were colored, participated. Nine pastors took part in the service.

The Presbyterian church at Mount Hope, N. Y., has recently enjoyed a season of spiritual refreshing. A decided interest was developed during the services of the week of prayer, which were continued through four successive weeks.

A revival of considerable interest has been in progress at the Presbyterian church in Babylon, Long Island, for some time past. The services of last Sunday morning were rendered more than usually solemn and interesting by the celeb