THE LOCAL OPTION LAW.

Another Attempt To Be Made to Secure Prohibitory Legislation.

REVIEW OF RESULTS HITHERTO OBTAINED.

History of English and American Efforts to Suppress the Liquor Traffic.

BEER AS A POPULAR BEVERAGE.

Interesting Statistics of the Brewing Interest—Is Whiskey Going Out of Fashion?—Information and Suggestions for Lawmakers.

ALBANY, Jan. 20, 1873.

Certain parties, organized as a large and influential association, have combined to obtain the passage of a law by the present Legislature which shall give the power to the majority of citizens resident within such political bounds to say whether there shall or shall not be granted license to sell distilled or fermented liquors within each ward of a city or each township of a county in the State. The policy and probable effect of such a statute, which is commonly known as the Local Option Law, I propose to briefly discuss as a matter of general, if not universal interest, leaving the constitutional question involved to the courts, where it properly belongs.

THE PROPOSED LAW

is meant to be prohibitory, and is to be enacted in order to prevent the manufacture and sale, and consequently the drinking, of any liquor in which alcohol in small or large quanties may exist. It apparently draws no line between any of those beverages. Cider, which contains between seven and eight per cent of alcohol; the so-called lager beer, which has between three and four per cent, and even small beer, which has less than two, are equally proscribed with Scotch whiskey, which sometimes has as high as fifty-six per cent. Root beer, though it contains from two to eight per cent, according to its age and the amount of molasses used in its manufacture, and mead and metheiyn, old-fashioned drinks, having a percentage of alcohol equal to the inferior grades of whiskeys and currant wine, which averages twenty per cent, seem to be not provided for; but this is possibly because they contain so much fermentable mucilage as to render them unhealthy, and the framers of the measure think their use will bring its own punishment. The law is sweeping enough in its terms and purpose, and its projectors seem to suppose they will be able, in most places, to induce the majority of the people to vote against licenses, and so introduce an era of sobriety and decorum unparalleled in the annals of the world. The general prohibitory laws tried hitherto having proved so disastrous in their effects on the morals of the community, and on the general peace and content of the poor—being powerless for good and powerful for evil—the advocates of compulsory total abstinence seem to have abandoned them in order to try the effect of a special law acting on isolated and select communities. As such laws, general or special, are based on the same principle, as they are all in derogation of the liberty of the citizen, it is proper to review the results of those hitherto enacted and to examine into the cause of their failure.

HISTORY OF ENGLISH EFFORTS.

About a hundred and thirty years since the English Parliaments undertook to prohibit the use of ardent spirits entirely. Previous to that—by the act of the second year of George II.—a duty was laid on spirits, over all other duties, of five shillings per gallon, and each retailer was assessed twenty pounds as a license fee. This ed the way to evasion; drunkenness increased, and the law, being found to be impracticable, was repealed. Forthwith, by way of celebration of the event, every one nearly made it his business to get drunk. This roused the indignation of Parliament, which passed the act of the 9 George II., by which the retailing of ardent spirits of any kind was absolutely and positively prohibited. Lord Cholmondely and other noblemen and gentlemen were active in producing this law, which was stringent in its provisions and severe in its penalties. The effect of the scheme had best be told in the words of Lord Cholmondely himself, when he spoke afterwards in favor of its repeal. He admitted in his speech that the impossibility of enforcing the law had been predicted both in and out of the houses of legislation. "But," said he, "so furious was our zeal that no heed was given to such prophecies. What was the consequence? No man could—no man would—observe the law, and it gave such a turn to the spirit of the people that no man could with safety venture to become an informer." And he went on to show how the informers had been mobbed and even murdered; how the government had been obliged to hold troops in readiness to meet threatened rebellion, while in the meanwhile the law was a nullity. The government found prosecutions expensive and convictions impossible; and, above all, it was found that the people abandoned malt liquors and lighter beverages and became more and more addicted to spirits. It became at length so palpable that the law aggravated the evils it was enacted to cure, that it was by general consent repealed.

THE EXPERIENCE OF SCOTLAND.

In Scotland a prohibitory law met with a singular success, but one by no means gratifying to the friends of temperance. There a heavy taxation drove out malt liquors and made the populace fall back upon the fiercer potation. The Scotch became, and remain to this day, the greatest whiskey-drinking people in the world. It is true that this legislation, made in the interest of the English brewers, was changed, but too late to remedy the evil. The Scotch ale now made is excellent, but it is manufactured more for exportation than home consumption. The Scotchman disdains his twopenny ale when he can get his whiskey, and Burns' couplet—

Wi' twopenny we fear nae evil,
Wi' usquebagh we face the deevil—

is a lively sentiment in the mind of the average Scot to this day. In this country the principal prohibitory laws have been those of Maine and Massachusetts, with some attempts at the thing in Wisconsin, and an act in Ohio, which may be defined as prohibition run mad. Local option has been tried in Pennsylvania, partially in New York and locally in New Jersey. Then there is an excise law in New York which forbids the sale of any liquors, distilled or fermented, on Sundays. The result of these has not been the decrease of drunkenness. They have injured the brewers, but rather helped the distillers. It is difficult to get beer in some places, but no man in Maine nor Massachusetts nor Wisconsin nor Ohio nor New York need go without his whiskey. Experience proves, despite the way in which

THESE REPRESSIVE STATUTES

have been tinkered during several years, that men will no more be made sober than they will be made pious on compulsion. The law is either evaded or disregarded. It has engendered deceit and falsehood, and created contempt for the law itself and the officials, as all unpopular laws do. For an open traffic, regulated and controlled by law, there is substituted a surreptitious trade equally profitable to dealers, but without revenue to the State. The drinker feels all check removed by the partial concealment, and from the necessity of the case chooses the more fiery potations. He cannot indulge in fermented liquors where the percentage of alcohol is small, and where the effect of the slight intoxicating ingredients is modified by its combination with nutritious extractive. Their bulk prevents this. It is almost impossible to indulge in surreptitious beer-drinking. Malt liquors, except when bottled, cannot be secretly transported, and, as a bottle only contains a drink, even their storage in glass for use must be open to observation. Open a barrel of ale or beer and the carbonic acid to which its gratefulness to the palate is mainly due, evaporates, and the liquor becomes stale and vapid and soon takes on the acetous fermentation. A flat bottle of whiskey is portable, and contains more than a man should drink, unless a determined toper, but not more than he will drink under such circumstances in the twenty-four hours. Thus the drinker is driven from malt liquor to whiskey, and plenty of it. This he obtains in spite of the law by the bottle full, and keeps it by him, being tempted continually by its possession to drink unnecessarily, until a depraved appetite is created and confirmed, and he is made

A DRUNKARD BY INDIRECT OPERATION OF LAW.

He drinks no more malt liquors to quench thirst, or to assist strength, but distilled spirits to create hyper-stimulation. The friend of the law views this with surprise and indignation, and, thinking the measure fails for lack of force, clamors for a stronger law, with severer pains and penalties. In some places—in Ohio, especially—they have forced enactments which place every one at the mercy of the unscrupulous black-mailer. One of these cases illustrates the beauty of the law, according to its advocates. A woman recovered $600 damages from a saloon keeper, the ground being that he had sold her husband liquor. That couple can do a thriving business where the husband is not known. It is the panel game in a new shape under the sanction of law. The law in some places is shaped so that a man who gets drunk, and while drunk commits violence or wrong, by pleading drunkenness, has only to say where he got his liquor, whether he got it there or not, and the offence is transferred to the unconscious scapegoat, who is sent, not into the wilderness, but to prison, while the drunken informer is released to seek for a new victim, or for the blackmail that will cause him to look elsewhere. Any habitual drunkard, whose moral feelings are necessarily blunted, unless he becomes a saint by joining some total abstinence secret order, has power to punish any one whom he dislikes—two at once, in fact—beating the one, and transferring the penalty for the assault to the other.

This proposed law, with less apparent severity in its form, has in it some points more objectionable than any of the prohibitory laws that have failed in the past, or remain now

DEAD LETTERS ON THE STATUTE BOOK.

If the premises assumed by its friends, that any drink containing alcohol in any per centage is a deadly poison be correct, what right have they to delegate to the majority of a community the power to permit themselves or neighbors with suicidal propensities, to destroy themselves? According to them arsenic is ambrosia and prussic acid is nectar, when compared with anything of which alcohol may be even an inconsiderable ingredient; but men are not allowed to sell these when it is known they are to be swallowed by human beings, except under the prescription of a physician. Suppose a law were passed permitting every one to vend there poisons in a ward or township if a majority of the inhabitants decreed it, and, if not, not. The absurdity of the proposition would make some laugh and shock others. Still more absurd would it be, while prohibiting prussic acid in its undiluted state, men were forbidden to sell peach kernels, bitter almonds or wild cherry bark, all of which contain prussic acid in appreciable quantities. If alcohol in its milder combinations, as in malt liquors, be equally injurious with its greater approach to an absolute form, as in whiskey, and both have such baneful effects, why permit our community to use it? Why not burn down the distilleries, level the breweries to the ground, knock to pieces the cider presses, and turn the root beer fountains upside down?

Again, by the proposed measure, Coldwater township may vote to have no liquor sold within its bounds, while Lush township, just adjoining, and separated from it by an imaginary line, may vote the other way. On one side of a line so fine that a hair's breadth is a timber log in comparison, it becomes a grave misdemeanor, punishable by fine and imprisonment, to do what may be done on the other side, not only with impunity, but under direct sanction of the law. In either case the power exercised is the same. The sale is forbidden in one township, and permitted in the other at the mere will—and it may be the whim, or even caprice—of the majority of dwellers in each petty political division. That majority may consist of one in each township. In Coldwater 400 free and enlightened citizens may take away the liberty of 399 other free and enlightened citizens; and in Lush 400 wicked scamps may annoy and disgust 399 angels in broadcloth by allowing to be sold under their horror-stricken noses the pernicious lager and the maddening root beer. This is the voice of the people, and *vox populi vox Dei*, but which is the true Deity and which is Mumbo Jumbo it is impossible to determine. More than that,

COLD WATER TOWNSHIP

gets no protection against alcohol and its various compounds. A determined toper among its minority, in his desperation, may cross over the imaginary and imperceptible line which divides the sober sheep from the tipsy goats, and, after swallowing a gallon of lager as a foundation, erect on it a first story of root beer, a second of cider, a third of Hocheimer, a fourth of currant wine and a fifth of sherry and top all off with a mansard roof of whiskey, until beneath this monstrous superstructure his reason gives way, and he comes back into moral Coldwater to disturb its hallowed precincts with his howlings and to vex the bosoms of its inhabitants with the painful reflection that they reap all the disadvantages of the traffic, without having shared a cent of its profits.

But a good many bad fellows in Coldwater township would object to many of these pilgrimages to the alcoholic Mecca as a waste of time. The American takes as naturally to labor-saving processes as a young duck to the nearest puddle. Hence they would reverse the action of the Oriental prophet. They would bring the mountain to Mohammed, in order that Mohammed might not have to go so often to the mountain. They would buy their whiskey by the bottle in Lush and bring it into Coldwater, and pocket pistols, whose contents go into the brains of those who fire them off, would be the concealed weapons carried. No need to smuggle either, if the liquor be imported in glass. Uncle Sam desires revenue and he protects "the original package." No State law can prevent this. It does not in Maine, nor Massachusetts, nor New York; it could not in New Jersey or elsewhere. It may stop the consumption of beer, since a bottle only holds a drink. And that brings us to the whole gist of the matter. The law, whether so intended or not, is in the interest of the distillers against that of the brewers. Whether that is sound policy or not is the real question to determine.

The decrease in the consumption per head of distilled liquors in the United States during the last ten years, and the increase in that of fermented drinks is something remarkable. If there had been a decrease in both, it might have been inferred that we were growing to be an abstinent rather than a temperate people. But the increase of the one has been at about the same rate with the decrease of the other. The statistics of the manufacture and consumption of malt liquors have become first trustworthy because of the necessity for additional federal revenue, which made ale, beer and porter objects of excise. The official returns show

THE AMOUNT OF TAX PAID BY THE BREWERS,

and representing nearly as many barrels of beer, a trifling special tax making the difference, to be as follows:—

1863	$1,628,933	1868	$5,958,868
1864	2,290,009	1869	6,099,879
1865	3,734,928	1870	6,319,126
1866	5,220,552	1871	7,380,501
1867	6,057,500	1872	8,400,000

(the last year being in round numbers, the last month being estimated) making a total of nearly $53,000,000. At the same time the amount of native grape wine is increasing year by year. And yet, with all this vast increase, or, we might say, because of it, drunkenness is looked upon with more disfavor than ever, and excess, instead of being as it used to be, considered to be pardonable, and even rather praiseworthy, by rich and poor, is mainly considered to be the vice of the depraved. The time was when it was fashionable to be "a three-bottle man," and when the guest at the dinner table was classed as "a milk-sop," unless he could drink large draughts of Madeira, supplemented by brandy or whiskey punch, without flinching. It was a proof of the host's hospitality when the greater part of the guests, at the close of the entertainment, lay under the table. Now a guest who would leave the house intoxicated would scarcely receive a second invitation. Even the saturation of New Year's Day, which a fine old Dutch custom seemed about to degenerate to, has been softened into comparative decorum, and brainless youths are not so ambitious to make beasts of themselves by swilling large amounts of cider, thinly disguised as champagne. Whiskey drinking is left mainly to the lower order of roughs, and beer drinking supplies its place among persons of moderate incomes. The rich still indulge in wine, to some extent; but with them the use of malt liquors increases. That this change is a desirable one is seen by a reference to the criminal records of the countries where the fermented drinks are consumed in comparison with those of whiskey-drinking lands. Of the offences resulting from other causes, such as briberies, coining, &c., where intemperance may be the incident, but not the moving power, it is unnecessary to speak. But the records of the beer-drinking German States show less arrests for offences resulting from intoxication than in brandy-drinking Russia, or in the whiskey-drinking parts of the United States. In this country the percentage of such arrests is steadily decreasing. And here the

ASSAULTS, RIOTS AND MURDERS

spring from the whiskey shop and not the beer saloon. If they occur at the latter investigation generally shows the offender to be one of the patrons of the former out of his element, and not one of the regular frequenters of the place. This is not because the Germans in Germany are inherently a better people than others or that the beer drinkers here are of a naturally superior stock of men. The inherent qualities of all civilized and civilizable peoples are nearly the same. They are changed and developed by education and circumstances. Here education is general and circumstances favorable. Nor is the Russian, either, an inferior man. The Slavonic is a type that for native moral principle and intellectual force does not compare unfavorably with the Teutonic or Celtic. Nor are the Germans any more religious than the Russians or ourselves. So far as external manifestation goes we are among the most pious of States. Scarcely any one but has some religious belief, from Roman Catholicity down to Mormonism, and the piety of the Russians is intense.

THE CHANGE IN OUR NATIONAL DRINKS

which is going on with such marvellous swiftness, leads us to replace whiskey and brandy with ale, beer and porter. The different effect of the two classes of drinks on health also leads to a marked change in our vital statistics. Alcohol in excess acts injuriously on the system, and in a sufficient quantity produces death, just as strychnia or as table salt in those few cases where the latter is not ejected by the stomach would do, by paralyzing the nervous centres. But when combined with ethers and water, as in wine, or with nutritive extractive, as in beer, it facilitates the assimilation of food as well as promotes digestion, and produces a stimulus which is never injurious so long as the liquor is not taken in an amount sufficient to narcotize the drinker. The general impression is that alcohol is not nutritive itself, though the experience of eminent physicians points to another conclusion. But in malt liquors the amount of nutritive matters outside of the alcohol is very heavy. Much of the starch and sugar of the malt remains undeveloped in the beer, as a matter of course; for if the starch in solution were all converted into sugar and the sugar into alcohol the last change in the process would commence, the acetous fermentations set in and the beer become sour. This uncombined nutritive matter is easily digested in the stomach, and the beer becomes, to a certain extent, food as well as drink, beer bearing the same relation to whiskeys and wines, to use the words of an eminent chemist, "as cocoa bears to tea and coffee."

There can be no doubt, then, to the mind of the impartial observer, that the decrease in the consumption of ardent spirits and the increase in that of fermented liquors is one of benefit to the morals and health of the people. This growing reform is one which the proposed law, if not a dead letter, would reverse. The change would be necessarily a sudden one and productive of the serious financial shock consequent on changing the direction of a large capital into new and perhaps already filled channels. Few persons indeed have any notion how important

THE BREWING INTEREST

is in point of money capital and the number of persons employed. In 1868 we learn that with a product of of 5,685,663 7-10 barrels of beer the capital employed in breweries was $56,855,330, in malt houses $12,792,673 and in land used in growing barley and hops $35,392,060—a total of $105,040,063. Taking the amount produced this year as the basis, which is estimated to be between nine and ten millions of barrels, the present capital invested must reach, in round numbers, $180,000,000. In these breweries, malt houses and farms we have employed annually nearly 70,000 persons. But this does not take into account the branches of mechanical industry which the brewery interest calls to its aid and the large number of coopers, blacksmiths, wagonmakers and other mechanics it employs; the draft it makes on the services and the amount it pays to forges, foundries, rolling mills, stave dealers and railroads—a capital amounting to nearly as much as it directly uses and labor nearly equal to what it directly employs. All this important industrial element it is proposed not only to disorder but to actually destroy by an experiment necessarily destroying it unless itself be a failure.

Beyond all this, and calling for particular attention from the statesman and public economist, is the political effect of the law. It is not necessary to assure observers that at this time the relations of capital and labor are particularly unsettled. Even if we pass by in derision the fact that the International, at whose secret action the most potent dynasties of Europe are agitated, has made its centre in New York city, there is before us the inevitable result of the modification in our system—stimulated by war, but mainly due to the aggregation of wealth in fewer hands—an uneasy feeling in the poor man's mind and a growing conviction with the laborer that the great employer is his natural enemy. That intelligent men generally do not believe this, that there need be no necessary antagonism between rich and poor, who should be harmonious parts of a united whole, has nothing to do with the matter. The feeling itself exists whether true or not. Now this law is one directly aimed at the poor. It is impossible at any time to make a sumptuary law bearing on the rich. The power of the purse is greater than that of the sword. The sword, indeed, is powerless until the purse grasps its hilt. This law strikes at the privileges of the poor. The rich man, if he wants his beer, his wine or his brandy, stocks his vault and drinks at will. This the poor man cannot do. If the laborer at his midday meal wants to moisten his food with a glass of beer he is to be deprived of the power to refresh himself cheaply. The rich man, privileged by his riches, becomes further privileged by law. A discontent now acute becomes chronic. You add another grievance to the stock in hand and widen still deeper the gulf between the classes. Your fanatical legislator becomes thus a blind missionary for the International, and aids to precipitate the struggle between muscle and poverty on one side and craft and riches on the other—a struggle whose ultimate result no man can foresee, and whose probable incidents make the men of property shudder.

No one lightly estimates

THE EVILS OF DRUNKENNESS.

Assaults, affrays, riots and murders are its certain consequences, and it depraves and brutalizes its victims as well as beggars and degrades their families. But these evils cannot be prevented by the empty enactment of laws prohibiting the sale of intoxicating drinks—certainly not by laws which encourage the most objectionable form of alcoholic stimulants by preventing, if effective against any, the consumption of the milder kinds. The only remedy lies in the diffusion of knowledge concerning the effects of alcohol and its compounds on the human system, and of the evils of excess in anything—eating, drinking, mental effort, physical labor and fanatical impulses included; in the increased compensation and additional home comforts and innocent pleasures of the working man, whose prosperity should be the first care of the State, since without it the State itself is not prosperous; in the creation of a higher standard of morality and virtue, and in the persistent non-interference by the State with the pursuit of the individual after happiness so long as that pursuit does not interfere arbitrarily with the same object in others. But to attempt to legislate people out of habits that violate no necessary laws, or to force a uniformity of opinions, tastes or appetites, is one of those absurd efforts that brings its own punishment in the disturbance and consequent distress, if not the disorganization, of the whole body politic.

THE WIFE-SCALPING CASE.

Sheffiin Held and Committed to the Tombs—A Verdict Against Him—He Denies His Guilt.

Yesterday morning Coroner Kessler held his first homicide inquest on the Sheffiin wife-scalping case, which occurred at 414 East Eleventh street, on the evening of the 14th instant, as fully reported in the HERALD at the time. The testimony adduced against the prisoner was comparatively slight, there being nothing to show that he used any weapon on deceased except his own hand, and that only when he found a dirty vagabond running from her bedroom. It doubtless is true that deceased was beaten over the head by some weapon, but at whose hands it did not appear. Below will be found a synopsis of the evidence elicited.

Mrs. Ann Sheffiin, mother of the prisoner, was first called to the witness stand and testified that last Tuesday night her husband was sent to the hospital, after which the prisoner, George Sheffiin, came to inquire for his father, and asked where Maria, his wife was, and being informed that she was in the bedroom, he went in there, and, finding a young fellow with her, chased him out, and returning, snapped her across the face with his open hand, and in staggering away she fell across the stove and cut her head; she was too drunk to walk steady; prisoner used no weapon on his wife in presence of the witness; prisoner remained in the house till next morning, when he left; did not know of deceased's death till nine o'clock in the morning.

Mary Moore, sister of the prisoner, was next called, and testified that she was intoxicated on the night in question, and saw two boys come in with bottles of liquor for deceased; after the prisoner came in there was a difficulty during the evening, but did not see her brother strike any blows; after he came in, at ten o'clock P. M., she was too drunk to know what was going on; at two o'clock A. M. the witness went out, and, meeting an officer, told him there was a sort of muss inside, and asked him to go in; he said, "There is no noise in the house and there is no use going in;" the next morning prisoner asked the witness to cover up deceased, as she lay on the floor, and in doing so found that she was dead; prisoner said, "Oh, my God!"

Ferdinand Sternshorn, keeping a saloon at 414 East Eleventh street, deposed that on Wednesday morning the prisoner came into his place, feeling bad, and among other things said his wife was dead; he further stated that the night previous he caught a fellow with his wife, and struck her because he found the fellow in bed with her; he said he would go to the station house and give himself up; Maria was in the habit of seeing company; prisoner did not say what he struck his wife with.

Mary McGinn testified that after nine o'clock on the morning after Mrs. Sheffiin's death, she saw old Mrs. Sheffiin carrying a pail of blood out in the yard; saw some blood in the yard; the old woman said she had great trouble; her son was using his wife most brutally, and wished he would go away; she did not say her daughter-in-law was dead.

James P. Bennett, of the Detective force, deposed that he arrested Sheffiin at his boarding house in Third avenue, near 104th street, by direction of Inspector Walling; Sheffiin was asleep in bed; prisoner said that the night previous he had been to a political meeting, from which he went to his wife's place and saw a man run from her room; he said he supposed that he had done more than he ought to do, but denied using any weapons; prisoner said he went to sleep on a chair, and awaking at three o'clock A. M., being cold, called his sister to cover up his wife, who lay on the floor; in the morning when he awoke again found his wife dead; Sheffiin said he afterwards went to an undertaker's in Thirty-seventh street and requested him to notify the Coroner.

Deputy Coroner Leo then read his report of the post-mortem examination, and gave it as his opinion that death resulted from hemorrhage, through the injuries inflicted.

A KNIFE AND A PROTEST.

At this stage of the proceedings Coroner Kessler exhibited to the jury a bloody table knife said to have been found in the room with the deceased. Mr. William F. Howe, counsel for Sheffiin, urgently protested against showing the knife to the jury, inasmuch as it had not been offered in evidence, and there was not a particle of proof to show that the weapon had been used by the prisoner.

The Coroner then read a carefully prepared charge to the jury, after which the case was submitted to them, and they rendered the following

VERDICT.

"That Maria Sheffiin came to her death by hemorrhage from violence to the head, inflicted, as we believe, at the hands of her husband, George Sheffiin, at 414 East Eleventh street, on the 14th day of January, 1873."

Sheffiin is thirty-six years of age, born in Ireland, and by occupation a plasterer.

By advice of his counsel the accused declined to say anything at present concerning his guilt or innocence.

Mr. Howe said, admitting the prisoner's guilt (which he denied), the case was nothing more than manslaughter in the third degree, and consequently bailable.

The motion to bail Sheffiin was denied for the present, and Coroner Kessler committed him to the Tombs.

William H. Kidd, of the Murray street arson case, was brought before Judge Dowling yesterday. On the advice of his counsel, Mr. J. B. Fellows, late Assistant District Attorney, he waived examination. Judge Dowling committed him under $10,000 bail to answer at the General Sessions.

BUREAU OF COMBUSTIBLES.

Inspection of Theatres and Other Buildings Continued by the Fire Commissioners.

Four Important Public Places Examined.

What is Thought of Wallack's and the Union Square Theatres, the Grand Opera House and the Brevoort House—Their Security and Provisions Against Fire.

The inspection of theatres and other buildings is being continued under direction of the Fire Commissioners. Those reported at the headquarters on Mercer street yesterday were Wallack's and the Union Square theatres, together with the Grand Opera House and the Brevoort House—the hotel located on the corner of Fifth avenue and Eighth street. The result of these examinations will be found appended.

WALLACK'S THEATRE.

This building is 75 feet by 140 feet, and substantially constructed. Two furnaces are under the stage, supplying heat to the rear of the theatre. Sixteen buckets, filled with water, are here distributed. To provide additional means of escape, in case the necessity should arise, an iron ladder has been placed in the area on the Fourth avenue side, leading to the sidewalk. Five pails, filled with water, were found in the flies. There is a small gas stove for heating glue in the carpenter shop, which is well protected; also a stove in the scene painter's room, protected with zinc, and away from any woodwork. Five border lights are used, of the latest improvement, made of tin, and protected with iron bands and wire. Two axes are in place in the flies and the same number on the stage floor, kept especially for fire use. One fire extinguisher was found in the rigging loft, kept in order and recharged from time to time by the manufacturer. Five buckets of water are in the loft over the auditorium. On the rear of the stage is a fire hydrant, two and a half inch opening, to which are attached 100 feet of combination hose, with pipe, capable of reaching to any part of the stage, and always ready for use. No smoking or matches are allowed in any part of the building. Every light about the theatre, dressing roams, &c., is protected with wire baskets. Two watchmen are on duty every night patrolling the house, and their vigilance is half-hourly attested by a telegraph connected with Mr. Wallack's residence. The theatre seats 1,600 persons, but will accommodate 2,000. It requires ordinarily four minutes to empty it. There are two doors opening from the family circle, each six feet wide, to a stairway eight feet in width, leading into Thirteenth street. One door, six feet wide, also opens into this stairway from the dress circle. Two doors, each six feet wide, furnish passageway to the main entrance in Broadway, by a stairway, eight feet in width. The main entrance, in Broadway, is eighteen feet wide, as is the Thirteenth street entrance. The building has iron shutters on all the windows, excepting those on Fourth avenue and two on the alleyway on the north side, and are closed at night. The roof is covered with tin; skylights of light glass. There is no great accumulation of old scenery about the place. The carpenter shop and all parts of the theatre are neatly kept. The exits in both front and rear are very ample.

UNION SQUARE THEATRE.

The basement in Fourteenth street contains a horizontal tubular boiler twelve feet long by forty inches in diameter, and of thirty-five horse power. There is here one small pump for forcing water to the top of the hotel in same building, for fire and other use, and an opening on the street to attach hose in case of fire. The boiler is set safely; two tanks, holding 400 gallons of hot water, are under the sidewalk on Fourteenth street. There is an oven in the basement using a coal fire, with a space of fifteen inches over the top for the circulation of air. The smoke pipe from the range is carried along too close to the ceiling. It will be covered with zinc and lowered. In the hall under the parquet there are two axes, fifty feet of two inch hose attached to the water cock and one fire extinguisher. Under the stage was found fifty feet of two inch hose and pipe, properly attached for immediate use. The lights throughout are protected with wire baskets, and above and behind with tin. There is a fire extinguisher on the side of the stage. Two two and a half inch water cocks are connected with tanks on the roof, and a third with the steam pump in the vault, which is furnished with seventy feet of two inch hose and pipe attached. Only one set of scenery is on the stage at a time. The footlights are covered with glass. Have no ballet here. In the flies are thirty feet of one and a half inch hose, supplied from two inch pipe leading from tank on the roof. There is also a branch from the same pipe on the opposite side with fifty feet of one and a half inch hose and pipe. Four border lights are over the stage, of recent construction, and protected with wire and strong iron bands. There is a gas stove for heating glue in the scene painter's room and also one in the scene room. One axe was found on each side of the flies and one on the stage, designed for fire purposes only. The gallery has two doors, one four feet and the other six feet wide, stairs of corresponding width, and one side door on Fourth avenue. The family circle has two stairways leading to the street, one four feet and the other six feet wide. The parquet has a door, 9 feet in width, leading to the main entrance on Fourteenth street; one door, 2 feet wide, from main entrance to the hotel, and a doorway 12 feet wide to office and thence to the street. The main entrance is 11 feet wide. House holds 2,000 persons and requires six minutes to empty. The building is 55 feet by 140 feet; wing on Fourth avenue 18 feet by 40 feet. The carpenter shop is located over the auditorium, and is neat and clean. On this floor is a 2½-inch pipe, reduced to 1½ inches, connected with tank, with 50 feet of rubber hose and pipes attached. Eight buckets of water were found on the bridge across the flies. Enclosed outlet on Fourth avenue, 10 feet wide. Skylight on roof, with heavy iron frame and thick, rough plate glass. Tin roof. One man does all the lighting, with a torch. No one allowed, even in own rooms, to light gas. No cigars or pipes permitted to be used or matches carried about. One day and one night watchman patrol the house continually. An apparatus indicates their passing certain points every half hour.

GRAND OPERA HOUSE

has four doors opening from the family circle, each 5 feet 6 inches wide; one doorway leading to the Erie offices, of the same dimensions, and two doorways in lobby, each 4 feet in width, also leading into the Erie offices, with six fire buckets on shelf and one fire extinguisher; stairway, 7 feet wide, leading down to Twenty-fourth street; a fire extinguisher in the passageway from dress circle to this stairway. The dress circle has three openings, each 7 feet 6 inches. There are two doors passing behind the private boxes to the stage; a window here affords access to the alleyway on Twenty-fourth street. The parquet has a door, 8 feet wide, opening into this alleyway. All the doors open outward. Leading into the vestibule are three doors, each 7 feet 6 inches in width; four windows, each 4 feet 6 inches, open into yards on Twenty-third street. The main stairway from dress circle is 12 feet 6 inches wide; the vestibule is 46 feet by 72 feet 8 inches; main outlet to Eighth avenue, 15 feet 6 inches in width; to Twenty-third street, the same. Arrangements are being made to connect the water main on Twenty-fourth street with pipes from the building, that water for fire purposes may be obtained. A powerful pump and sufficient hose to reach any part of the house will be furnished; also a system of gong signals will be arranged connecting all portions of the house with the engine room, where an engineer is always on duty. Four buckets of water under the stage—which place is well cleaned up—and ninety-four buckets in all are distributed throughout the building. There is a gas stove in the scene painter's room. The property room in the Twenty-fourth street wing is heated with a stove, which is well protected. The room off the rigging loft should be cleaned up. Two fire extinguishers are in place here, and also fifty feet of hose and pipe attached to water cocks. Six border lights are in place, and carefully protected with tin and iron. There is one fire extinguisher in the orchestra. A doorway leads from the stage to the orchestra and also to the cellar of the front building, which could be used by employés to escape in case of peril. No matches are allowed in any part of the house; the gas man attends to all lights; the cleaners use covered lanterns. On the Twenty-fourth street side of the stage two lines of 2-inch hose, 75 feet each, properly attached, are in place. The carpenter shop, on Twenty-fourth street, 50 feet by 50 feet, contains a gas stove for heating glue; the shop is in good order; two fire extinguishers are here, and the lights are all protected. There are six outlets on Twenty-fourth street; fire extinguishers in main entrance. House accommodates 2,500 persons, and it is asserted can be emptied within six minutes.

BREVOORT HOUSE.

This building was formerly several dwelling houses. New stories have been added and doorways cut through walls, so that now the house has 138 rooms, and, when full, accommodates 150 persons, including servants of all kinds. The building is five stories and basement; roof of tin, covered with gravel. Two water tanks are over the main building, having a capacity of 3,300 gallons. Some of the servants occupy a room built above and on the roof, with doors opening on the latter. The roofs of different houses are connected with ladders, so as to allow passage from one to the other. Doors to the roof and scuttles are never locked or fastened; water is kept in a large closet on the fifth floor, where there are three firebuckets and one fire extinguisher. There is a 2½-inch valve cock on this floor, supplied from tanks on the roof, and also a small hose, leading from the closet. There are four stairways leading from the fifth to fourth floor, also five stairways from fourth to first floor. Three fire buckets are in the closets on each floor. The third floor is supplied with a 2½-inch valve cock, connected with the tanks on the roof, with 100 feet of hose and pipe attached. One fire extinguisher is placed in the basement, and two in the kitchen; the latter apartment has a brick floor, laid on concrete; the oven does not come in contact with the woodwork, and has a circulation of air above. Stone floor on ground and no cellar. Locomotive boiler of fifteen horse power, and a horizontal boiler, 12 feet in length, are used for heating purposes and working the pump; also a steam pump in place for filling tanks on roof, and still another for supplying boilers. Two hundred and fifty feet of hose and couplings attached are hung up ready for use; also 100 feet of spare hose, all in good order. A number of the girls sleep in the basement, and if cut off by fire could escape by an iron ladder to a grating always open on the street. Two hot water tanks, holding 500 gallons, heated with exhaust steam, are in place; pipes and connections are safe in place, and near them are five buckets, which are constantly filled with water for use in case of fire only. Up to midnight the full force of employés are on duty throughout the house. The watchman comes on duty at seven P. M. and patrols all parts of the building until seven A. M. From twelve o'clock until three o'clock A. M. the watchman, night clerk, porter and bootblacks are on duty, and at three o'clock A. M. the baker and firemen are at their posts. The proprietor and his family occupy rooms on the upper floor. The servants' apartments, both up and down stairs, are of access to the roof in one case and to the sidewalk in the other. The engineer and his assistant sleep in the house, and one or both are constantly on duty.

A JERSEY CITY MYSTERY.

A Man Found Bleeding and Dying on the Sidewalk—He Lives Only Eleven Hours—Two Men in Custody.

Jersey City is just now agitated by a painful mystery. About one o'clock yesterday morning a quiet and respectable young man named Edward P. Jones was found lying in an unconscious condition on the sidewalk in front of his boarding house, kept by Mrs. Dexheimer, at the corner of Hudson and Essex streets. His head lay in a pool of blood, and an examination showed that the skull had been fractured on the left side, the wound extending to the left eye. The unfortunate man was conveyed into the boarding house, and soon afterwards to the City Hospital. The physicians are unable to say whether the wound was caused by a slungshot or by a fall against the curbstone and scraper. At all events compression of the brain was evident, and the patient lingered only till noon, when he expired. He was unconscious to the last.

When Officer Broadmeadow asked two men who boarded in the same house with Jones to assist him in carrying the injured man to the hospital they refused. Suspicion at once rested on them, and the officer informed them immediately they were under arrest. This brought them to terms, and they tendered their assistance. The officer, however, did not lose sight of them, especially as they had during the night, when they met him on the sidewalk, addessed him in an impertinent and jeering manner. He communicated his suspicions to Officer Rose, and both officers "shadowed" them to a saloon, where they heard one of them remark, "That fellow got a d—— good head on him down on Hudson street, and it served the s—— right," or words to that effect. The officers here darted in and pounced upon the two men, who were conveyed to the First precinct police station. They gave their names as Thomas Lee and Robert Halladay. Lee said he resided at 437 Seventeenth street, New York, though it was afterwards ascertained he resides in Thirty-seventh street. He had come over for the night, he alleged, to stop with his friend Halladay at Mrs. Dexheimer's. Peter Reen, who was found in the saloon with them, was also arrested, but was soon afterwards discharged, although a revolver found on him is kept at the station house.

When the prisoners Lee and Halladay were brought before Justice Seymour they denied all knowledge of the affair and they were remanded to their cells. Lee's prevarication regarding his residence will not help his case. It should be stated that Jones' pocket-book containing money was found on his person, though his watch was gone. He was employed as a draughtsman on the Pennsylvania Railroad and was of a harmless, unassuming disposition. He sat reading and talking pleasantly in the back room of a wine store on Washington street, not far from his boarding house, till near one o'clock in the morning. An inquest will be held.

FATAL ICE ACCIDENT

Censured by a Coroner's Jury.

Coroner Keenan yesterday afternoon held an inquest in the case of Washington J. Andrews, the lad, sixteen years of age, who was killed by a mass of snow and ice falling upon him from the roof of premises 24 Broad street on the afternoon of the 3d inst. Several witnesses were examined, but it did not appear that the occupants of the place had been notified by the authorities to clear away the mass of snow from the roof, but in their verdict the jury censured the owners or lessees of the building for allowing the snow and ice to remain on the roof in so insecure a condition.

MARRIAGES AND DEATHS.

Married.

AUBERT—CARRICABURU.—At Havana, Cuba, on Thursday, January 9, 1873, at the French Consulate, Mr. GODFROY J. AUBERT, of Paris, France, to Miss JULIA E., daughter of Mr. John Carricaburu, of Havana, Cuba.

HAND—GOODELL.—On Thursday, January 16, 1873, by the Rev. Dr. Moore, CHARLES H. HAND to IRENE GOODELL, both of Brooklyn.

HOPPER—SUTHERLAND.—At Cornwall, N. Y., on Thursday, January 9, 1873, by the Rev. Lyman Abbott, JOHN H. HOPPER, Esq., of Piermont, N. Y., to MARY AUGUSTA SUTHERLAND, daughter of Mrs. C. L. Suther land, of the former place.

STANFORD—BRENNAN.—On Wednesday, January 15, by Rev. T. S. Preston, HENRY C. STANFORD to Miss JENNIE E. BRENNAN, both of this city.

Died.

ANDREWS.—On Sunday morning, January 19, of scarlet fever, HATTIE LOUISE, aged 3 years and 6 months, only daughter of Thomas and Jennie A. Andrews.

Funeral from the residence of her parents, 246 West Twenty-first street, on Wednesday, January 22, at one o'clock P. M.

Buffalo papers please copy.

ANTHONY.—On Sunday, January 19, of scarlet fever, CAROLINE ELIZABETH, second daughter of