SOCIAL SCIENCE.

Interesting Addresses and Papers on the Great Problems of the Age.

MR. ATKINSON ON REAL WEALTH.

The Condition of Southern Industry Reviewed by Mr. Nordhoff.

CURRENCY AND PRICES.

Discussion of the Chinese Immigration Question.

SARATOGA, N. Y., Sept. 7, 1876.

The Social Science Association held two sessions throughout the day, which were well attended and excited much interest. In the general session Mr. Sanborn first presented a report on "The Cotton Industry of Fall River," showing its rapid growth and the social conditions of poverty and ignorance by which it was accompanied. Dr. Davis, of Fall River, and Mr. Derby, of Boston, debated the question and spoke favorably of the present prospects of the city of Fall River.

MR. ATKINSON'S ADDRESS.

Mr. Atkinson, a cotton manufacturer, delivered an address, from which we take the following:—

The points which I shall make are that all progress is destructive as well as constructive; that the term fixed capital is most unfit as applied to actual substance; that nothing old is very useful, and that scarcely anything useful can be very old; and in general I shall attempt to prove that it is not the amount or value of the capital which a nation has accumulated that marks its progress or its prosperity, but rather the mode in which it is applied and the way in which the results are consumed. Subsistence depends vastly more on right direction being given to capital than on its quantity or amount. In modern times production is always ample.

The means of subsistence have increased more rapidly than population. Imperfect as the methods of distribution are, yet there is no given area of the civilized world in which a larger population cannot be supported to-day than ever before. Production was never before so great in this nation in relation to population as it has been in this last year of depression and want. The East is glutted with goods and wares; the West is full of corn and meat; The Middle States are burdened with the abundance of coal and iron; the South is richer than ever before in cotton and grain, and is prospering in spite of alleged misgovernment; each section has what the other needs, and the evil of to-day is a restricted distribution and consumption.

The distrust which causes want and penury may be attributed to many causes, but the chief responsibility lies with those who maintain a national lie as the lawful money of the nation.

I have said that the material tools of distribution are ample. The grain fields and pastures of the West are far away in distance from the mechanic of the East, but when distance is converted into cost and cost again into wages, the fallacy of the hue and cry for cheaper transportation is exposed. Five hundred pounds of meat and grain constitute the full subsistence of an adult man for one year, and it costs to-day but $1 25 to move a quarter of a ton or 500 pounds from Chicago to Boston, less than one day's wages of a good mechanic. In this low cost it would be difficult to find evidence of the rapacity of the railway monopolist.

So far as the people of Massachusetts eat bakers' bread, it costs them more to move the bread from the baker's oven to the mouth of the consumer than it does to move the flour from the wheat field to the oven. The so-called cheap transportation associations, who propose to revolutionize railway service and management, make a great point on the need of cheap bread, but I never heard that they proposed to take charge of the bakers' carts.

PROFITABLE DESTRUCTION.

Our accumulation of substance during a century is but a mere trifle, and if we are to regard wealth only as the synonym of wellbeing our true progress will be found to consist in no great material accumulation on which a price can be put, but rather in the constant destruction of that which has cost years of assiduous labor to accumulate. The evolution theory needs to be applied in this department of science as it is elsewhere. Each structure, machine, tool or fabric is but a development of that which preceded it. A great factory can hardly be completed before some change of method is called for in some part of its operation.

I will take two examples from my own occupation. Had the census taker entered a certain cotton factory in July, 1866, he would have found in one department eight machines used in sizing yarn, worth in the aggregate about $10,000 and eight men well employed in attending them at high wages. In this census he would have listed so much property and so much labor well paid as evidence of wealth and prosperity. Three months later he would have found one machine, worth $2 500, attended by one man and one boy doing the same work, and perhaps seven idle men gazing on a pile of old copper and old iron in an outhouse, representing the eight machines previously in existence. This latter census, considered by itself, would have proved a decrease of wealth and a decrease of occupation; yet the change represents the most marked progress in the cotton manufacture of recent years. The new machine of 1866 was but a development of the previous one, but it has had no long life. In 1876 it again has been largely converted into old copper and iron, and another, better and cheaper form has taken its place.

Again, forty years since the work of one operative for one hour in a cotton mill resulted in the production of three yards of coarse sheeting. To-day the work of one operative for one hour on the same premises will produce ten yards of the same fabric; and the progress has been made, not by the accumulation of capital in the form of additional machinery, but by the utter abandonment of the old and the substitution of the new at less cost and of less value.

In the census of forty years since the evidences of wealth would have been greater in the valuation of the machinery on which the three yards per hour were produced than it is now in the valuation of that on which the ten yards are made. Nothing remains on the premises of the old force or capital except the foundation. In the forty years the old building, water wheel and machinery have been destroyed, new have been substituted; but at the very moment a hundred busy brains are engaged in destroying the new machinery by the invention of better methods in mills and works of all kinds. It is useless to plan for a duration of many years except in the foundations, and the community gains by the constant reduction of the ratio of capital to production. As I have said, nothing old is very useful, nothing useful is very old, and the destructive character of inventions in rendering useless that which has been very costly and for which a high rate of charge could be made is one of the most marked points in our progress. No greater evidence of the destructive nature of progress can be found than by giving some consideration to the statistics of our alleged wealth.

The property discovered by the local assessors of Massachusetts in the year 1875 consisted in round figures of:—

Real estate	$1,311,000,000
Personal estate	530,000,000
To which may be added deposits in savings banks	238,000,000
Corporation tax assessed by the State	84,000,000
State	$2,163,000,000
Add bank tax	31,000,000
Total	$2,194,000,000

—an average of about $1,330 to each person.

It is, of course, impossible to separate exactly the actual capital from the property of other kinds, but we may approximate thereto. Our first reduction from the total amount must be the value of land, which is the gift of God to the race and is not the work of man. It is customary to consider assessors' valuations as two-thirds land and one-third improvement; but, as this rule will not apply to mills and works in all cases, we will assume that one-half the assessed value of real estate is upon buildings and works which the hand of man has created, and in this item we find a value of capital of $655,000,000. Under our present system the tax on personal property is levied mostly on debts in the form of mortgages and bonds; but as the smaller accumulations of furniture, mechanics' tools and the like are not all taxed, we must allow for that. Before we deduct it will be safe to take one-half the levy on personal estate as representing real capital $265,000,000. It is a large estimate.

The savings bank tax represents debt with very small exception. We may assume the value of buildings owned not over $8,000,000.

The tax on bank shares must all be thrown out, but we may assume that a considerable portion of the corporation tax represents stock and goods; say out of $84,000,000, $72,000,000.

Total, $1,000,000,000.

We must, therefore, assume that the entire capital, the entire substance, the mills, works, railroads, dwellings, warehouses, goods, furniture, material on hand for food and clothing of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts saved for future use is less in value than $1,000,000,000 divided among 1,650,000 people, or about $600 per capita on the average.

On the other hand, the annual production of Massachusetts, by the census of 1875, consists of—

Value of manufactures	$582,873,721
Value of products of agriculture	41,592,048
Value of products of fisheries	7,580,906
Total	$632,046,675

But in order that there may be no cavil or question, having made a large correction for the possible substance that escapes the notice of the tax gatherer, and having estimated the capital of the State at a maximum, I will reduce the estimate of annual product about one-fifth and thus reduce the sum to a minimum. Such a deduction is ample for any possible duplication or error, and this will give an aggregate of $500,000,000 total product, or $300 per capita. This, again, would be at the average rate of $380 per year for the value of the product of each person over ten years of age.

It is, I think, substantially clear that our substance or capital, aside from land, is only about double, possibly treble, the cost of our subsistence. From this consideration of the ratio of capital to production and subsistence, it follows that if we all ceased to work and could eat and wear our houses, railroads, mills and goods of all kinds, we should consume them all within two or three years and come down to the same necessity that our Pilgrim Fathers experienced, only worse, because the present population of Massachusetts could not at once get a subsistence from its own soil, if forced to work with only as much capital in the form of tools as the Pilgrims brought over with them.

SOURCES OF PROSPERITY.

Prosperity consists as much in the method of spending as in saving. It is the quick distribution of moderate quantities of things that promotes general welfare far more than great accumulations. Each year's work gives each year's subsistence, and freedom of exchange is the most important factor in the good subsistence of communities or nations.

Our wage fund, consisting of cotton, wool, lumber, leather, corn and all other crude products, exists this very year in greater quantity than ever before in the history of this nation, but at the same time we have more want in the midst of this abundance than we have witnessed for many years. The force exists that might constitute prosperity and good wages if we measure wages in their purchasing power; but we cannot direct this force because our whole system of distribution has been paralyzed by a vicious currency, by a bad system of taxation and by our provincial insulation in the world. Men want wages this year in part because of the very abundance of the means of paying them. Our true difficulty consists in restricted distribution and consumption, a very different thing, and this restricted consumption happens not for want of means, but because we cannot direct the means to the end. Again, when we consider the insignificant proportion which capital bears to annual production we find the most profound reason to distrust all attempts to divert that capital by means of tariffs and other artificial methods to occupations that would not be freely chosen, and we also more fully realize the grave injury which arises from the abnormal stimulus that war gives to certain branches of industry. In a given year, not many years since, the combined stimulus of war and of an excessive tariff caused the savings of several years to be accumulated in the form of iron works and woollen mills, and we are now realizing the fact that the labor saved in those years was mainly wasted. Our attention must now be given mainly, as it seems to me, neither to greater accumulation, nor to greater economy. Is it not true that much of our present extreme depression grows out of an enforced economy that need not exist in the nature of the case? We have been shut out from commerce with the world, but the world wants all the substance we have to spare, and will give us in exchange a greater abundance of comforts and luxuries that we all desire. We have been devoting our attention too much to accumulation and production, too little to a wider distribution of our own products; hence our capital is fading away, and the very abundance of our productions has become an injury. The community is, as a rule, acting to-day as if no more houses, no more mills, no more railroads, no more mines or works of any kind were ever to be needed. The extreme of confidence has been followed by the extreme of distrust, and the waste of old capital must be to-day going on at a far more rapid rate than the accumulation of new. The destruction of to-day is not that of invention and improvement, such as constitutes progress, but rather the modern destruction, such as is caused by fire and flood. What is the present abundance of money, so called? We have no true money at all. What we call money is but a bad measure, an unit symbol of the abundance of commodities in existence. The so-called money, which one can borrow at the banks at two or three per cent per annum, is not money; it is a title to use bricks, lumber, iron, coal, corn, cotton and all the other primary forms of capital saved for future use at very low prices. Why are these forces idle? Why is there want in the midst of plenty? Why is not this existing substance being consumed more evenly? Why do the few have so much that they know not how to use, while the many who want and are willing to work cannot obtain it? There can be but one reply to these questions. The government has assumed the function of establishing a standard of value and has substituted a lie for a true standard. It has assumed that it can control and give direction to the work of the people, and its interference has culminated in obstruction and disaster. Abundance never yet ruined a nation, and every cause of want in this country can be removed if we apply ourselves to the work.

Mr. Nourse, of Boston, read a paper on the relation of currency to prices. This and the address of Mr. Atkinson were warmly debated by Professor Sumner, Horace White, Elizur Wright, and others.

MR. NORDHOFF'S PAPER.

Mr. Charles Nordhoff read a paper on the condition of the South, from which we give the following extracts:—

In what I am to say on the subject assigned me it should be understood that I speak of six cotton and sugar States only, naming Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina; and that the observations on which I found my conclusions were made during the spring and summer of 1875, more than a year ago.

The States of which I speak contained, according to the last census, 2,945,886 of white and 2,342,882 of colored people. These colored people were, it will be remembered, when set free, absolutely without property. In 1865 they owned nothing but the rags they stood in. The experiment of setting free 4,000,000 of slaves without making any provision whatever for their subsistence, without giving them houses to live in or land to cultivate, is, I believe, unprecedented in the history of civilized society. Russia did not venture on any such enterprise; she provided by an elaborate system of regulations for the maintenance of her freed serfs.

When I saw these freed people they had had their liberty ten years; they had in that time not only lived and raised families, and migrated in great numbers from State to State, and engaged in an almost unceasing turmoil of politics, which more or less interrupted the resumption of their labor, but they had besides this everywhere accumulated considerable amounts of property. The freedmen of Georgia, according to the returns made to the State government in 1874, owned at that time 338,769 acres of farming real estate, $1,200,115 worth of city and town real estate, and paid taxes to the valuation of $6,157,798.

In the States of which I speak the greater part of the colored people are engaged in agriculture. They form the real laboring force of those States. They produce by far the greater part of the cotton, rice, sugar and other exports of these States. This is sufficient proof, of course, that as a mass they practise steadfast industry. In fact they are the most prosperous class in the South, in my judgment; by which I mean that the average negro head of a household in the States of which I speak has probably in his hands at the close of the working season, when his crop is harvested, a larger surplus than the average white working man in the same States, and I believe a larger surplus than the average mechanic or farm laborer of the North. He is a more prosperous being than the poor white farmer of the South.

Partly this is due to the fact that the negro engaged in agriculture seeks the richest lands, which are often disagreeable to the white farmer because of malarial diseases; partly it is due to the fact that the negro willingly works hard and still lives contentedly in a very simple manner. In the great majority of cases the colored man is not the owner of the land which he cultivates; but he prefers to be a tenant, and he raises cotton, either for half a share of the crop, or on land for which he pays a certain number of dollars per acre per year as rent. In the sugar and rice country they receive wages. More and more of them are buying farming lands, and there is no difficulty in their making such purchases anywhere.

In the cotton country the land owner or planter lets his land at from $3 to $10 an acre per annum to the negro; or more frequently makes a contract with him by which he furnishes houses, fencing, the use of the gin, tools and animals and receives a specified share of the crop. In all cases the planter gives a general superintendence to affairs, advises and insists upon the various operations being performed at their proper times and in a proper manner; and this is found necessary. It is done with the free consent of the colored people. The planter in most instances also keeps a store on his place, where the colored tenants are allowed to have a running account in advance for their necessary supplies. He thus takes a certain amount of risk, and if the crop is a failure he expects to lose because he does not expect his tenants to pay out of the following crop; in fact if he did his people would probably leave him on the failure of the crop.

In this arrangement, which is excellent and suited to both parties, the negro tenant, or renter as he is called, will have in a good year, over and above his year's expenses, at the close of the season, cotton to the value of from $100 to $250, and in some cases even as high as $350 or $400. This is actual surplus from the year's labor. With that he can do what he pleases.

In the rice and sugar country they spend their wages pretty much in the same way, and there is no doubt that when some years ago wages were very high the amount of money they saved was in their then condition and habits a detriment to them, because it produced an unsteadiness in their habits.

It is remarkable that almost universally the relations between the planter and his renters or hired employés are kindly and agreeable. The colored man seeks the planter's advice in all the relations of his life, deposits his spare cash with him, and in fact deals with him as his friend, up to the point where politics come in, and there he shoots over to the other side without a moment's hesitation.

Finally, it is my conviction that the Southern negroes are on the whole the best body of peasantry, looking at them from the planters' and employers' view, in the world. They are cheerful, sufficiently industrious, easily led, as a rule sober, contented, and with sufficient skill to make their labor profitable to themselves and to those who employ them.

The substitution of free for slave labor has produced many important changes in the Southern States. In the first place it has caused an astonishing growth of towns and villages, and increase in their number. The negro who grows cotton or sugar has a good deal of money to spend; hence country stores have increased in number and a vast amount of money which under the old system was spent in the large cities or in the North is now circulated in the towns and villages. Moreover, formerly a man who had saved $1,000 bought a slave with the money. He now buys a house or a town lot. White mechanics thus find far more employment in the South than they ever did under the old system, and society is gradually taking on the shape which it has in the North.

It ought to be noticed that the only turmoil or trouble in the South is political. How little it really effects industry is seen from the crops actually produced and sold; and I will add here that the Southern States are, in my judgment, more prosperous at this time than the Northern. There are fewer persons there unemployed, the average earnings of the laboring classes are larger, the surplus produced in those States over and above what is necessarily expended by the population in living has been greater for several years than in an equally numerous Northern population, and if the discontent and restlessness which prevail there, and which arise almost entirely from preventable political causes, producing misrule, waste and extravagance in government, and encouraging rather than discouraging lawlessness—if these could be ended the States which I saw would have before them and would enter immediately upon a career of unexampled prosperity. Few men at the North suspect how great is the undeveloped wealth of the Southwestern States. Louisiana is as rich naturally as California, and in Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas and other States lie millions of acres of the most fertile soil in the world, from which may be raised an immense and as yet unsuspected variety of valuable products.

What is needed in such States as Louisiana or Mississippi to produce the necessary peace and settled condition of things is mainly a reform in the civil service. The men who have misruled down there, who have succeeded in banding the colored voters together, and thus in massing upon one side ignorance, unthrift and political superstition, have been for the most part federal office-holders.

If this class of unscrupulous political gamblers were swept away, if in their places were appointed men who would do their duty faithfully and refrain from mixing themselves in the local politics, the affairs of these States would arrange themselves without further trouble. Nowhere can the evils of the present civil service system be studied to so great an advantage as in these States, and nowhere in the country would the benefits of a thorough reform in the civil service be so immediately conducive to peace and quiet and prosperity to all classes and to both races as there.

This was debated and its views generally concurred in by Elizur Wright, Edward Atkinson, George Bradford, Dr. Howe and Professor Sumner, of Yale College.

The latter believed that we in the North should mind our own business severely. He was opposed to the interference by the federal politicians in the internal affairs of the Southern States.

In the Jurisprudence meeting Professor Dwight read a paper on law schools, and D. B. Eaton one by Professor Von Holtzendorff, of Munich, on legal education in Europe. These were debated by C. A. Peabody, of New York; L. L. Delafield, George Hadly, of Ohio; J. M. Barnard, of Boston, and others.

In the evening the Conference of Charities joined with the Social Science Association in debating the question of Chinese immigration. The debate commenced with a letter, which was read by Mr. Sanborn, from F. B. Thurber, of New York, who, while in San Francisco, investigated the question. He instanced the falsity of many charges made against the Chinese, and seemed to view them favorably.

D. A. Wells did not think the Chinese could assimilate with our people any more than could the Latin and colored races, and said that they would have to give way in time.

Professor Sumner spoke briefly and was followed by Mr. Linsley, of Oregon, who clearly favored the Chinese, and did not think any attempt to modify the Burlingame treaty practicable. He said:—"The Chinese are beginning to vote, and the question will be governed by that in time."

George Bradford, of Boston, was the next speaker and held somewhat similar views.

DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL.

AN IMPORTANT SESSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC STATE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The Executive Committee of the Democratic State Central Committee were to meet at noon yesterday in parlor 117 at the Metropolitan Hotel. About twenty minutes after twelve o'clock the members of the committee gathered in room 101 and a general conversation took place. The committee was composed of Daniel Magone, Jr., of St. Lawrence county; John Kelly, of New York; Allen C. Beach, of Jefferson county; Joseph Warren, of Erie county; William A. Fowler, of Kings county; L. B. Faulkner, of Livingston county; W. W. Gordon, of Delaware county; David Manning, of Albany county, and William Bookstaver, of Chautauqua county, with Daniel S. Lamont, of Courtlandt, as acting Secretary. Among the visitors were August Belmont, John T. Agnew, General James B. Craig, Coroner Woltman, ex-Sheriff James O'Brien, General Spinola, Edward Cahill, of the State Central Committee; Mr. F. L. Lalin, of Ulster county; Senator Schoonmaker, Hiram Calkins, C. C. Childs, of Westchester; S. T. Fairchild, of Madison; Oswald Ottendorfer and others.

Although it was well understood that the Executive Committee were to meet simply to organize for the conduct of the State campaign, it soon became evident that candidates for the nomination as Governor on the State ticket to be made at Saratoga, on Wednesday next, were bringing all their influence to bear on the Executive Committee, in the hope that their names would be considered favorably by the Convention. Mr. August Belmont had a long conversation with Mr. John Kelly, urging the claims of Mr. Manton Marble, it was said. Another representative of the party presented the claims of Mr. Samuel D. Babcock, President of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, urging that his character, being unimpeachable, he could, as an old-time democrat and a favorite with the merchants of New York, walk over the track ahead of Marble, Morgan or Potter. It was conceded by all the prominent politicians present that Mr. Potter was out of the race. Everybody was very serious and a long talk ensued. The names of Samuel Hand, of Albany; Dewitt C. West, of Lewis county, and Homer A. Nelson, of Poughkeepsie, were brought forward as possible candidates at the Saratoga Convention. Mr. Kelly heard all, but said nothing. The name of Judge William F. Allen, of the Court of Appeals, was strongly urged, even against the objections made that he is in poor health and could not be induced to accept. The generally expressed opinion was that no name placed before the last Convention as a candidate for the Gubernatorial chair should be brought up before the recalled Convention. Mr. Calkins said, in regard to the nomination of Mr. Seymour when there was no hope that he would accept, that the true story of that day had not been told. It was really as follows:—Mr. Spriggs did send a despatch to the effect that the Convention could go on and finish the ticket; but subsequent to the sending of that despatch Messrs. Spriggs and Fairchild saw Mr. Seymour, and from the Governor's own lips received his positive declination to be the candidate of the party. Two despatches were then sent, one to Senator Kernan and the other to G. S. Fairchild, both of whom were at the Convention, to the effect that Mr. Seymour adhered to his resolve not to accept. These despatches were not received until after three o'clock, although we have proof that they were filed in Utica at ten minutes to ten o'clock. The Convention had adjourned and the delegates separated, so that nothing could be done. While I do not say that I credit the story, still I do not mind telling you that the suppression of the despatches is charged upon our political opponents. That Governor Morgan is possessed of large telegraphic interests is well known.

General Craig was somewhat reticent. He had heard that Babcock's name had been suggested, but he had not been generally known as a politician. His record, commercially, was first class, and he was glad to know that he had always been a democrat. It was necessary to canvass his prospects as a nominee before speaking.

Mr. Calkins thought there might be some petitions at Albany signed by Mr. S. D. Babcock that might be used by the republican party against him. So the conversation went on until twenty minutes before one o'clock P. M., when Mr. Beach requested all persons in the room, other than members of the Executive Committee, to withdraw.

The doors were then closed and the committee organized by placing Mr. Daniel Magone, Jr., chairman of the State Central Committee, in the chair *ex officio*. Mr. Fairchild was made treasurer by virtue of his office as Treasurer of the State Central Committee, and Mr. Apgar, Secretary. In the absence of Mr. Apgar, Mr. Daniel S. Lamont acted as secretary. After a somewhat protracted debate, showing, however, harmonious feeling existing in the Executive Committee, a resolution was passed appointing Messrs. W. W. Gordon, of Delaware county, and Allen C. Beach, of Jefferson county, a committee on meetings and speakers, and Mr. John Kelly, of New York, a committee of one to designate headquarters. Mr. Kelly said that until next Tuesday night the headquarters of this committee will be at Congress Hall, Albany.

On Wednesday the committee will be at Saratoga, and after the adjournment of the Convention the headquarters will be established immediately at the corner of Fifteenth street and Broadway, the next corner above Tiffany's. Until that time the address of the Secretary will be at Congress Hall, Albany. The committee then adjourned.

THE POLITICAL COMMITTEES.

Yesterday was a very dull day at the Republican and Democratic National Committee rooms.

At the Everett House, the democratic headquarters, there were few visitors. Those that did call spoke very hopefully of the campaign, and enthusiastically concerning the nomination of Charles Francis Adams in Massachusetts. A democratic gain was claimed in the Vermont election, and one gentleman said that a proportionate gain in New York would give the party 150,000 majority, besides carrying a large majority of the other Northern States.

At the Fifth Avenue Hotel the Republican Executive Committee held a meeting and transacted routine business. It is claimed that the nomination of Charles Francis Adams precludes all hope for the democrats in Massachusetts. Mr. Henry Wood, of Cleveland, who called yesterday, stated that Ohio would give sure 10,000 majority for Hayes. He also stated that the enthusiasm in Cleveland was intense.

TAMMANY GENERAL COMMITTEE.

The Tammany Hall General Committee met last night at the old wigwam, and there was a very large attendance in anticipation of something important being done. Augustus Schell presided. The committee appointed to draft suitable resolutions on the death of Speaker Kerr, reported and offered a lengthy resolution to the following effect:—That the democracy of the nation have sustained a great loss in the death of the Hon. Michael C. Kerr, Speaker of the House of Representatives; that we tender our deep sympathy to his family and friends in their affliction. That the lifelong services of the distinguished stateman, his purity of life and conduct, his intelligent and consistent course as a legislator and his fitness as a leader, as evinced by his selection to preside over the deliberations of the first democratic House of Representatives assembled in eighteen years are worthy of grateful recognition by the democracy. It is also matter of gratification that the recent attempt made by his political opponents to charge him with venality in office so utterly failed and recoiled with such force on the heads of those who sought to blast his spotless fame. The resolutions were unanimously adopted.

THE HELL GATE DISASTER.

Story of a Person who Witnessed the Explosion.

BURIAL OF THE VICTIMS.

Fearful Record of the Effects of Nitro-Glycerine.

THE INQUEST CONTINUED TO-DAY.

Yesterday was unusually quiet at the government works at Hell Gate. A few visitors came and went, but the stunning effects of Tuesday's catastrophe seemed still to pervade the place. On the scow where the accident occurred work was suspended during the entire day, as the workmen had absented themselves to attend the funerals of the three men killed. A solitary watchman was seen on board, who busied himself in removing the traces of the accident. The scow lay in the same position as she did when the event took place, and on her decks were piled up the fragments of what had been the diving house.

So far as is known none of the uninjured who have been employed upon her have declined to continue work. Said one of them to a HERALD reporter yesterday afternoon, "We are not a lot of cowards, to run away for something which may not occur again in a hundred years." In the shafts work was carried on as usual, none of the workmen, save the nine of Wednesday morning, having struck off. The Coroner's jury, which adjourned over to-day on account of the funerals, will meet again this morning in the old ferry house. Now that it has been determined in what manner the deceased, Doyle, transported the glycerine to the scow, there will be little more for the jury to do. The wounded are all believed to be doing well. Jake Peterson, who narrowly escaped with a few flesh wounds, says that he stood close by the explosion, but can give no idea of the manner in which it happened.

AN EYE-WITNESS' STORY.

It has been a question of considerable interest and importance to know the exact means by which the explosive material was ignited. Various theories have been offered and discussed, but yesterday a HERALD reporter received the statement of one who witnessed the circumstances of the catastrophe. This was Francis Colty, a carriage painter, who resides in Astoria. His story runs as follows:—

I was standing for a quarter of an hour previous to the accident upon the new derrick, about seventy-five feet away from the scene. I was idly watching the course of events on board the scow when I saw a man, carrying a brown paper package, stop before the door of the diving house. I did not know who the man was. He laid the package down on the corner of the deck and opened it. Then I saw him take out one of the cans of glycerine and hold it in both hands, as if examining it. He then took it in his left hand, and with his right begun working upon the stopper of the can. I did not see exactly what he did to it, but, upon the instant, I heard a terrific explosion and was stunned by the shock. It seemed about two minutes before I realized what had taken place; then I heard men calling for a boat, and the rest is pretty well known to everybody.

This appears to be a satisfactory explanation of the method of the accident. There can be no doubt that the man who directly caused it was Lurson, and that he was at the time making some examination of the explosive. His right arm, with which he was operating in some way upon the stopper, was blown off entirely, and afterward found on an adjacent blacksmith's shop. The lower portion of his body was in close vicinity to the package lying upon the deck and was terribly mutilated. Beyond the facts above recited it is improbable that any further particulars will be known as to the immediate cause of the explosion. Colty states, however, that an unknown gentleman and lady stood near by him and must also have witnessed the affair.

BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

Yesterday the last rites were performed over the bodies of the deceased workmen in the presence of sorrow-stricken relatives and sympathetic fellow laborers. The remains of John Doyle were conveyed at two o'clock from his late residence, at No. 197 Sackett street, Brooklyn, to St. Stephen's church, on the corner of Simmons and Hicks streets, where a requiem high mass was performed by Father O'Reilly. He was afterward buried in Flatbush Cemetery. His wife and two children and a large procession of friends followed his remains to the grave.

The services over the body of John Hickman took place at half-past ten o'clock, in his house, No. 139 South Second street, Williamsburg. The pastor of the Dutch Reformed church officiated, and the remains were interred in Cypress Hills Cemetery, East New York. The funeral of Henry Lurson took place at one o'clock, from his late residence in First avenue, between 106th and 107th streets, New York city.

TERRIBLE RECORD OF FORMER EXPLOSIONS.

Ever since the advent of that destructive compound, nitro-glycerine, into this country in 1865, the HERALD has given long and repeated warnings of its dangers, described its properties fully and urged repeatedly the necessity of the greatest caution in its use, manufacture and transportation. It was on Sunday, November 5, 1865, that the explosive properties of nitro-glycerine were made known to the people of New York. Early that morning John O. Mercereau, brother of a guest of the Wyoming Hotel, in Greenwich street, near Jay, called the barkeeper's (John Grogan's) attention to a box which was lying under the counter, and from which smoke and flames were issuing. Together they managed to get the box out on the curbstone, and they were hardly inside the door of the hotel when a terrible explosion was heard. A deep hole was made in the sidewalk where the box was laid. The curbstone was torn away and thrown across the street. Every pane of glass in the Wyoming Hotel was shattered, and about twenty persons in the hotel and its vicinity were more or less injured by fragments of glass and stones thrown up by the explosion. The box that caused this terrible commotion contained several jars of nitro-glycerine, but it was not till the following day that the people who were wounded or the general public of New York knew of the existence of any such deadly compound till enlightened by the HERALD on November 7. The box had been left in the hotel by a former guest named Theodore Zeers, who left it under the counter when he went away, and it had been used as a foot rest on which to black boots for some time, and was actually in use for that purpose by Mr. Mercereau on the morning of the explosion.

Nitro-glycerine, as is pretty well known by this time, is a compound of seventy-five per cent nitric acid and twenty-five per cent glycerine oil. It is claimed for it by its discoverer, Mr. Alfred Nobel, an engineer in the copper mines of Sweden—First, that it cannot be ignited by simple contact with fire; second, sulphuric acid, phosphorus, and even metal potassium, will not decompose it at the ordinary temperature; third, it can bear 212 degrees of heat, but explodes at about 360; fourth, it possesses an exploding power thirteen to fifteen times greater than gunpowder; fifth, having a specific weight of 150, it can be used under water.

A great many of these claims, especially as to its ignition by contact with fire, have been disproved of late, as in many instances workmen near where it was stored have been smoking, and no other cause could be given for some of these explosions than the carelessness of the workmen in throwing lighted matches or allowing the sparks from their pipes to scatter about. Careless handling, however, has been the principal cause of all the explosions. On April 17, 1866,

A TERRIBLE EXPLOSION

of nitro-glycerine occurred at a quarter past one o'clock in San Francisco, near Wells, Fargo & Co.'s building, which shook the earth like an earthquake for a circle of a quarter of a mile. Ten persons were killed, among them Samuel Knight, superintendent of Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express; G. W. Bell, Supervisor and Assayer, and Mr. Wallub, Wells, Fargo & Co.'s assayer, and twenty other persons were seriously injured. This explosion also destroyed the greater part of a block of buildings and resulted in the damage of property to the amount of $200,000. On this occasion the explosion was caused by concussion in opening a leaking box of the compound, which the owner refused to receive in a damaged condition. Previous to this date, on April 3, however, a far more terrible catastrophe took place at Aspinwall, when seventy cases of nitro-glycerine were exploded. Over seventy persons were killed and wounded and over $1,000,000 worth of property destroyed. The steamer European arrived at Aspinwall with a large cargo for all parts of the Pacific and Isthmus; on the following morning at seven o'clock, when, had the train for Panama started on time—half-past six A. M.—all of those employed on the wharf and in the freight house would have been attending to their respective duties, the explosion occurred. The detention of the train was the salvation of very many lives, but as it was the loss of life was fearful, nearly all in the vicinity of the explosion being killed outright or wounded. The steamship European and her cargo and the Panama Railroad Company's freight house at Aspinwall were completely destroyed at this time. An investigation was ordered and the manufacturer, Otto Bursterbinde, was tried in the United States Commissioner's Court for shipping explosive material without marking it as such. The city authorities of New York also took active measure in regard to the storage of nitro-glycerine in New York and its vicinity and the following letter was sent by Mayor Hoffman to Fire Marshal Baker:—

MAYOR'S OFFICE, New York, April 20, 1866.

SIR—Understanding that a quantity of nitro-glycerine is stored in this city in one or more places, I have to request that you will report to me the places in which the same may be stored, and bring before me forthwith the parties owning and controlling the same. JOHN T. HOFFMAN.

In accordance with instructions Fire Marshal Baker proceeded to make an investigation, and he found that Mr. Alfred Nobel and Mr. James Devoe were engaged in manufacturing nitro-glycerine in the old country and shipping it to this for blasting purposes. Mr. Baker found twelve cases of the explosive compound in a warehouse in Greenwich street, Nos. 56 and 58, and two more simply marked "G. M.," at No. 58 Broadway, where they had been sent for inspection. On the top floor of the drug department, piled carelessly away, were a lot of similar boxes, with nothing to warn those hourly around them of the dangerous nature of their contents. The cases were made of common pine lumber about twenty inches in height and fourteen inches long and twenty inches square, and had their corners protected by strips of zinc. All these cases were transferred to a point beyond the city limits, and the owners made no objection to this disposition of their property. When brought before Mayor Hoffman Messrs. Noble and Devoe declared that they were engaged in a legitimate business, but which, if found detrimental to public business, would have to be discontinued. They said that they had sold the lot which had exploded at the express office in San Francisco to a gentleman named Taylor, who, it is alleged, carried it to California, having it safely deposited in his berth on shipboard, whence it was subsequently transferred to the place where it created such havoc.

After the great explosion at San Francisco the disasters by the careless handling and use of nitro-glycerine continued in regular succession up to the present date, notwithstanding the repeated assurances of its manufacturers, both in court and in the newspapers, that it could only be exploded under certain conditions, such as intense heat, violent concussion, &c.

THE NEXT DISASTERS.

On the 6th of December, 1866, there was an explosion at Rochester, N. Y., when a great deal of property was damaged. On November 26, 1867, an explosion occurred at South Bergen, N. J., and nine persons were killed. At this time it was pretty thoroughly proved that the compound was ignited. In Belgium, July 13, 1868, an explosion of the same material took place, but on the 1st of October, 1868, a whole train of cars, on the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad, was destroyed by the explosion of a quantity of the deadly stuff which was being transported.

On October 26, 1868, an explosion took place on board a Swedish frigate lying at Hunter's Point, and several persons were killed and injured. In South Petersburg, New York, February 2, 1869, a quantity of nitro-glycerine exploded from careless handling. On the 19th of March, 1869, Captain Hart and a sergeant found a boat load of the compound concealed under a wharf at the foot of Whitehall street. It was speedily conveyed beyond the city limits. About this time Dr. Harris, of the Health Department, thought it necessary to write a letter to the Police Board regarding the transportation of nitro-glycerine and other explosives through the city and the great danger to be apprehended therefrom. On April 8, 1869, there was an explosion at Hudson City, when several persons were killed and injured. In Wales on July 13, 1869, a similar explosion occurred, and on the 7th of October, 1869, a terrible explosion took place in the Hoosac tunnel. Most of these explosions, it was judged, were caused by ignition. In 1870 there was a manufactory of the compound at Ridgefield, N. J., and an explosion took place in March of that year, and another in April, after which there was nothing left of the factory. Four lives were lost by these explosions. A quantity exploded in Sing Sing Prison on April 14, 1870, and two persons were killed. A large loss of life and property was caused by an explosion at Worcester, Mass., on June, 24, 1870. Four persons were killed at Fairfort, Ohio, by an explosion that took place November 2, 1870, and four more were killed by a similar cause in the Hoosac tunnel April 23, 1871. On November 24, 1872, four men were killed by a nitro-glycerine explosion at Scrub Grass, Pa., and November 26, 1872, two men were killed at Yonkers. June 13, 1874, there was a terrific explosion at Shreveport, La. On January 9, 1875, an explosion at Pequamoch, N. J., caused great alarm throughout the neighboring country.

AT BLACK TOM ISLAND,

where the nitro-glycerine was taken from last Tuesday morning, five men were killed by an explosion on Janury 19, 1875. This explosion was caused by ignition and carelessness of the workmen.

Two men were killed at North Adams, Mass., by an explosion, on January 27, 1876.

There was one man killed and a building destroyed by an explosion which took place at St. Petersburg, Pa., February 24, 1876.

At Washingtonville, Westchester county, three men were killed March 23, 1876.

Thus the great mortality caused by the use of this deadly material rolls up.

Hardly a month in the year since its first introduction but some disaster has been the result, as stated before, of carelessness in use or transportation, and it shows conclusively what restrictions the authorities should place on its manufacture and storage. But what restrictions should be also placed on those contracters and others who have to use it in their business? The employer should maintain the strictest discipline among his employés in regard to its use and the method of its transportation be strictly watched by them.

DELAWARE POLITICS.

MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC STATE CONVENTION—A PARTY WHICH BELIEVES IN WHITE MEN ONLY—HOPELESS DIVISION AMONG THE REPUBLICANS—THE STATE ASSURED TO THE DEMOCRATS.

DOVER, Sept. 7, 1876.

The meeting of the Democratic State Convention here to-day practically opens the campaign in this State. With the result of the late elections in Newcastle county a few days since, where a democratic victory last fall was changed to a republican majority of over 1,000, the judicious use of money in Sussex county, where votes are openly bartered upon the day of election, and a united republican party, Delaware would be, to say the least, a doubtful State; but she is now safe for the democracy. The Convention organized by selecting ex-Congressman B. F. Biggs chairman, and immediately proceeded to renominate James Williams, the present Congressman.

THE ELECTORS.

The following were chosen electors:—Newcastle county, J. R. Rodney; Kent, W. H. Sharp; Sussex, James W. Willers.

THE RESOLUTION