

CONGRESS and the country are awaiting with much interest the announcement of the House Committees by the speaker. Much of the action of Congress depends upon the composition of the different committees.

It is rumored that Emperor William, of Germany thinks of visiting America. We have no crowned heads in this country who will present him with diamond hilted swords or give his wife \$240,000 necklaces, but we can take him to a Canstatter festival where 800,000 schooners of beer are consumed in one day. That would prevent him from feeling lonesome.

CHRISTMAS is coming, the merriest holiday of the year. It is especially so to the little folks whose belief in Santa Claus has not yet been disturbed by the encroachment of time. All the Sunday schools are making preparations for its proper celebration, while domestic thought is almost entirely absorbed in arranging for its demands. It takes so little to amuse a child that there can be no good excuse offered for not making juvenile joy universal on Christmas morning.

Nothing is better fitted to point the words of the Preacher—"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity"—than the sudden rise and quick decadence of a reputation. Just fifty years ago a volume came from the press named Proverbial Philosophy, and in the then dearth of great writers in England its author was at once accepted as a considerable poet. America was not slow to follow, over 500,000 copies being sold here in a few years, and translations into foreign tongues still further extended the author's reputation. But when the cable flashed the news last Friday that Martin Farquhar Tupper was dead, at the age of seventy-eight, many a reader of the message must have asked himself, And who is Tupper? It is hard to realize that this writer of truisms and commonplaces, in the baldest of measured prose, could ever have been hailed as a great poet, but he deserved the oblivion of his latest years as little as he did the fame of his youth. Those who toil for the approval of "the public" serve a master whose fickleness is equalled only by its heartlessness.

A New York paper recently opened its columns to correspondents who could give some information as to the best way to keep husbands home nights. It was presumed, of course, that the informants would be found among experienced married women. And so they were. The letters were interesting reading, and thousands of recipes was given. It was, however, reserved for Gen. Wagner Swayne to tell a story before the Ohio Society the other night which seems to fit the case. It was about a young wife who had great admiration for her mother-in-law, because of the manner in which she managed her husband. The honeymoon was hardly over before the young wife came to the older woman to beg for knowledge how to make her young husband as good a man as his father. "You have some secret about it, mother, I am sure; and now that I am your daughter, you can tell me about it, can't you?" The old lady insisted that she had no secret, and knew of no special plan by which to make a man always as he ought to be, but finally, under repeated urgings, she smiled and said simply this: "Daughter, feed the beast."

HINDSIGHT.

The coroner's jury in the Opera House case concludes by asking the authorities to prevent any public gathering in the building as now constructed. That is a good recommendation, but of what use is it? Ten lives have been lost. Public opinion would not tolerate another gathering in the place. Is it the duty of no one to see to such things? It should be somebody's duty to see whether places where large bodies of people assemble are safe or not. We now see the remedy after the occasion for its use is past. Who will teach the public to take precaution against danger? But perhaps the insufficient means of exit was not the only cause of death. When men loose their manhood and stampee like wild animals before they even know whether there is danger or not, most anything is likely to happen.

There is another matter about which something might and should be said in this connection. The present dangerous condition of the wretched apology of a structure taking the place of the Lincoln bridge should receive attention. The Democrat has repeatedly called the attention of the public to its dangerous condition. It is another death-trap. Some time ago it was announced that a better structure was to be put there. It is not there yet, and the good weather is passing. Winter may set in any day and the river freeze over. No bridge can then be built. With snow and ice on the bridge and its approaches the danger from it would be much increased. There is not even a guard-rail to prevent any one from falling over the edge. How long people will wait on the contractors and allow this source of danger to life to remain as it is, is a question. The delay of a day may mean the loss of many lives. Then there will be another coroner's jury and a verdict condemning the structure, and the people will say, "I told you it would be so," and things of a like kind. How much longer will the people wait to have the danger removed?

From Wednesday Morning's Daily:

HORRIBLE!

A Cry of Fire Causes an Awful Panic at the Opera House.

DEAD AND INJURED.

Men Go Mad, and Women Faint—The Crowd Panic-Stricken Rush for the Narrow Stairs.

100 STRUGGLING PEOPLE

Held in a Mass in the Doorway—Men and Boys Jump from the Galleries on the Heads of the People Below—Crazed by Excitement the Audience Loses Presence of Mind and Makes a Mad Rush for the Narrow Exit—Ten People Trampled to Death, and Three Times as Many More Badly Hurt—Deaths and Death Cries Commingle—The Coroner's Inquest.

Another dreadful disaster was on last night added to the list of horrors of the year, 1889. Parke's Opera House was packed to the doors, and as has long been predicted if the occasion should present itself, a panic resulted from a cry of fire. The crowd rose en masse and made a frantic rush for the narrow stairway. No second thought was taken. In a moment the stairway was packed full of human beings. Those inside could not get out. There was a genuine panic. Women screamed, men and boys yelled, a number fainted. The scene was indescribable. Outside at the foot of the stairs was a heartrending scene. Piteous shrieks came from the bottom of the seething mass. People begged to be released; others had the breath crushed out of them at once.

THE DEAD.

When the crowd had been fought back, the dead and injured were carried to different places. The morgue authorities were soon on hand and the dead were taken to Henderson's. The list is as follows: JOHN MILLER, colored, Chambersburg, Pa., employed at Koch's saloon. GEORGE SLONICKER, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., a teamster. LIZZIE CLAYCOMB, aged 19, domestic at John Bowser's Bedford street, from Bedford county. MRS. WESLEY BURNS, 40 years, Morris street. CLARA BURNS, 19 years, daughter of above, Morris street. ISAAC FOHLER, 60 years, Conemaugh borough. GEORGE HORNER, aged 11 years, Park building, Park Place. MRS. JOHN W. NESTOR, aged 25, Napoleon street. EDDIE BIGLER, aged 8, son of John Bigler, of Gantier street, Conemaugh borough. GEORGE FRISCHHORN, Baltimore, Md.

THE INJURED.

The number of injured cannot be known at this writing, 3:30 A. M., but it is thought that not less than thirty or forty persons were seriously hurt. These now known to be seriously hurt are: ALBERT OWENS, 18 years, Peelorville. JAMES KELLEY, 15 years, Conemaugh borough. DANIEE KELLY, colored, Kernville. LOTTIE JACSON, Brownstown. LEWIS BUNDY, colored. JOHN WEIMER, Peelorville. CHARLES VAUGHN, Prospect. STEWART BLACKBURN, Morrellville. RICHARD WORTHINGTON, Morrellville. EDWARD STAUFFER, Sherman street. WESLEY BURNS, Morris street. MRS. CLAUSON, Upper Yoder township. MRS. M. S. MCGARRY, Sherman street. CLARENCE ENGELBERTH. JOHN WEIMER, Peelorville. MARTHA OWENS, Peter street, Conemaugh borough. JOHN DEVINE, South street. MRS. WILLIAM PLATT, Grubtown. WILLIE DIBERT, South Side.

HOW THE ALARM STARTED.

Dr. A. N. Wakefield's hostler lives in a small building back of the doctor's residence on Morris street. Before preparing to go to bed he stirred up his fire. The fire comes but a short distance above the roof. The building is low, and as the smoke came from the fire, it enveloped Dr. Wakefield's residence, the air being very still. Some one going past thought

the building was on fire, and went on to ring an alarm. It is also said that the bell on the engine at the corner of Main and Franklin streets was rung once or twice. This was a few minutes after half-past ten. Some one in the upper gallery, said to have been a boy, yelled "fire!" A panic ensued; men and boys jumped from the galleries and lit on the heads of the people on the floor. A seat in the gallery broke with a crash. Some thought the building was falling. Shrieks, cries, and oaths mingled in awful confusion. Tumult reigned. A hundred and fifty people seemed to go down the narrow stairway at once. Those down first were pressed upon so closely that they fell in the doorway. The crowd came confusedly upon them. The stairway was piled full of struggling people. Agonizing shrieks came from those underneath who were pinned to the floor and steps. Others were suffocating. Such a scene was never witnessed in Johnstown. It was simply indescribable. The uproar could be heard squares away. The police were on hand and fought back those who were trying to get out by walking over the unfortunates in the stairway. A great crowd soon assembled on the street and had to be fought back to give room to remove those who were lodged in the doorway. These latter were so tightly held to the floor and steps that strong men could not pull them out. It was not until the crowd in the upper part of the stairway had been forced back, that anything effective could be done toward removing the jam in the doorway.

CALLING BACK THE CROWD.

When the alarm was announced inside, a few of the more collected persons called to the people to keep their seats. Nobody seemed to listen. Several persons leaped to the stage and assisted the actors in endeavoring to call the people to their seats. The play Uncle Tom's Cabin, acted by Stetson's Company, was nearly over, the scene being where Legree orders Tom to whip Cassy and upon Tom's refusal Legree whips him. The actors behaved with great presence of mind, and prevented the catastrophe from being worse. Mr. Frank Buchanan knew of a back stairway which he quickly ascended, but not before many persons had used it as a means of exit. He came to the front of the stage and attracted the attention of the people. He said that he had come in from the outside and that there was no fire. To prove it he said he would stay right where he was. By this time a great part of the crowd had cooled down and most of them returned to seats or to the space in the neighborhood of the stage. Then it was that progress began to be made in the clearing the stairway. The dead and badly injured were dragged up and placed on the stage, and others less badly hurt were helped to the top of the stairs.

The policemen and workmen were much hampered by the crowd outside. The firemen at the engine near by turned a stream of water from the hose toward the crowd and scattered them a couple of times.

The dead and dying were carried to different places near by. Several died in a few minutes after being released. Others were lifeless when removed. The several places to which dead and wounded were taken were Moses' tailor shop, the Hulbert House, Opera House Saloon, the Opera House Restaurant in the basement, and the tobacco and cigar store next to the Opera House. Miss Clara Burns died after being carried to John Thomas's partly completed show window.

The dead bodies were taken to Henderson's undertaking establishment and the wounded to their home.

While the dead and wounded were being removed there were dozens of people from all parts of the town running about looking for friends who were known to have gone to the play. It was very difficult to give these people satisfaction.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

The following gentlemen were empaneled by Coroner Evans as a jury to view the remains and ascertain the cause of the death of a number of individuals in Parke's Opera House on the evening of December 10, 1889:

- JAMES SHUMAKER, GEO. FRISCH, E. ZANG, JOSEPH PRICE, TOM SEIBERT, JACOB HORNER.

Being duly sworn they proceeded to call witnesses.

A. E. Humphreys, of Johnstown, Pa., being duly sworn, testified as follows: I was up behind the railing, and I heard the cry of fire from above, that is the railing on the first floor of the Opera House; the railing around the stairway. I tried to get around the corner of the railing coming from above to save myself, and was carried to the foot of the stairs by the crowd. I was crushed there and was forced down stairs to door and had my head out of door. There was a lady that was either dead or in a faint, that lay on my right shoulder. My feet were fast between two bodies lying under me; there was a boy lying across my left shoulder, he was also helpless. My left arm was fast between the heads of two other parties and the feet of a third party was in my side. In the struggle I got my left arm loose and moved the boy away from my shoulder; two men pulled the lady off me. There was an alarm of fire given from the upper gallery; it was nearly at the end of the show. A good many shouted that there was no fire; to be seated and that all would be right, but the people kept rushing down stairs. I know of four who tramped over the heads of the people. I was pulled up the stairs

by a couple of men. I don't know how long I was in the jam. The lower doors were open as far as I could see, but there was a jam below as well as above. The stairway is about six feet wide. The hall is a very bad one to get out of on account of there only being one stairway, and it is so narrow.

Mr. Turner—What about the back stairway? Answer—I don't know anything about that. I saw several persons crawl down the post from upper gallery. The cry to be quiet seemed to come from the stage.

Question by Coroner—Do you consider the house a safe one? Answer—I do not.

A. E. HUMPHREYS. John Morley, Johnstown, Pa., sworn—I was not at the show. I was coming down Main street shortly after the cry of fire, and when I had reached John Thomas' store there was a woman laying in the window, her head was held by John Harris (not the Chief), and Dr. Sheridan was attending her. I was there when her other identified her as his daughter, Miss Burns, of Kernville. JOHN H. MORLEY. L. W. Washburn, sworn—I reside in Utica, N. Y. I am the proprietor of the company which gave an exhibition in the Main Street Opera House on the evening of December 10, 1889. I was not in the hall when the alarm was given, had left about 9 o'clock. In the case of an alarm, or an accident, or when there was an actual fire the exits are not sufficient for the escape of the people from the house.

L. W. WASHBURN. Will C. Yeager, sworn—I am a member of the company which occupied the hall December 10, 1889. I am a musician. The first alarm I heard was on the inside of the theatre. I think it was given by boys on the upper gallery. A panic ensued at once. The hall was full of people. The people on the stage spoke to the audience and told them to keep quiet, that there was nothing the matter. The audience crowded me to the stage and I could not see what was going on at the door. I, together with some of the members of the company, helped some of the ladies on the stage to save them from being crowded. The company made no effort to escape, but all I saw were helping the people. I do not consider the hall a safe one in case of a fire. I have been in a great many theatres and do not recall one in which the exits are so bad as this one. I reside in Westley, R. I., when I am at home. The panic occurred just as the last act was fairly started.

WILL C. YEAGER. B. F. Reininger, affirmed—I reside in Johnstown, Pa. I was at the theatre, there was quite a large crowd there, I was on the first gallery and heard the cry of fire and thought it came from the upper gallery, and the people on the gallery where I was all made for the stairs to get down. I saw some of the people on the lower floor run for the stage and others for the stairs. I heard some one from the stage cry out for the people to take their seats, that there was no danger of fire, I didn't come off the gallery, I staid there until order was restored and then saw them carry five persons that seemed to be in a faint, towards the stage. I judge it was fifteen or twenty minutes from the first alarm until order was restored. I didn't hear any other alarm but the cry of fire. B. F. REININGER.

E. D. Pugh, sworn—I reside in Johnstown, I was at the show on Tuesday evening, I was in the top gallery and heard the alarm of fire given on the upper gallery. The gallery was crowded, I started for the stairway and seen it was crowded so, that I held back, the crowd kept pushing behind and I was carried to the lower end of the stairs on the first floor. I saw and knew Mary Burns and Clara Burns of Napoleon street, Johnstown, Pa. I seen the dead bodies of both these persons lying in Henderson's morgue. The alarm was given in one of the front rows of the gallery. It was about fifteen minutes from the time the alarm was given until I got to the pavement. I heard the showmen hollowing to the people to keep quiet that there was no fire. I don't know anything about a back way to the hall. I didn't hear the fire bell ringing.

E. D. PUGH. Inquest adjourned to meet at Coroner Evan's office this evening at 7:30.

HOW THE NEWS WAS SENT ABROAD. The Western Union Telegraph Office was closed, the operator having retired, but the unlagging Master Jas. A. Bough, a reporter for a Pittsburgh paper, went to Cambria and aroused one of the operators and sent the news of this disaster to his paper. Soon came the inquiry from everywhere for particulars.

BIDS FOR BACHELORS. Agree with the girls' father in politics, and the mother in religion.

If you have a rival keep an eye on him, if he is a widower keep two eyes on him. Don't put too much sweet stuff on paper. If you do you will hear it read in after years when your wife has some especial purpose in hollowing up on you the severest punishment known to a married man.

Go home at a reasonable hour in the evening. Don't wait until a girl has to throw her whole sole into a yawn that she can't cover with both hands. A little thing like that might cause a coolness at the very beginning of the game.

The Rev. Dr. F. S. DeHass, who had been lingering so long at the point of death, from cancer of the face, died at 11 o'clock Sunday night at his home in Martin's Ferry, Ohio. He was born in Washington county, Pa., in 1821, and was educated at Washington and Jefferson colleges. He entered the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church and for many years was one of its most earnest workers. He built the Metropolitan Church at Washington, D. C., and was Consul at Jerusalem during the Grant Administration.

Both the Pennsylvania and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroads will sell holiday excursion tickets this year as heretofore. Tickets will be sold from December 21st to January 1st, inclusive, good to return until January 4th.

FURTHER DETAILS

OF THE FATAL DISASTER AT PARKE'S OPERA HOUSE.

The Disposition of the Dead—The Condition of the Wounded—The Building Now Useless to the Lessees—All Engagements Cancelled—How a Greater Panic Was Prevented.

In addition to the full report of the dreadful disaster at the Opera House on Tuesday night as published in yesterday morning's DEMOCRAT, there are not many important details. None of the injured have since died and most of them are on the street to-day. But everybody is excited, and the accident is the topic of conversation everywhere. Many tell how near they come going to the play, and yet they did not go. How fortunate they were! The number of those injured is a mere matter of conjecture.

HOW THE DEAD WILL BE DISPOSED OF.

The body of Miller, the colored man, will sent to Chambersburg yesterday on Day Express at 10:13.

Miss Claycomb's body was taken yesterday overland to Bedford county.

Mrs. Wesley Burns and daughter will be taken this morning at 7:45 to Snyder's Station, Somerset county.

The remains of George Horner will be interred in Grand View this afternoon at half-past 2 o'clock.

The body of Mrs. John Nestor was taken to Somerset yesterday afternoon on the 3 o'clock train.

The funeral of George Freshcorn will take place from No. 651 Wood street, corner of Poplar, this afternoon at 2 o'clock. Interment will be made in Sadyvale.

The remains of Isaac Foler are still awaiting the orders of friends.

The funeral of Eddie Bigler will take place from the family residence, No. 500 Chapin street, Conemaugh borough, at 3 o'clock this afternoon.

The body of Mr. Slonicker will be taken to Mt. Pleasant, Pa., for burial. His friends came yesterday.

LOSS TO THE MANAGERS.

The managers of the Opera House are Messrs. M. McCann and James Flinn. Mr. McCann's wife and child were in attendance, as were Mr. Flinn's mother, brother and nephew. None of them were hurt, as they kept their places. Mr. McCann had been in all parts of the house during the evening, and just prior to the panic, had gone to the foot of the stairs at the street. While there he heard the fire bell ring in Kernville. He did not know just what it was for the sound of the bell was new. When he saw what it was he remarked to some who stood in the stairway near to him to keep quiet, and immediately started up the steps in anticipation of trouble. On the way up he met the first of the crowd. They bore him down in front of them to the street. Mr. McCann thinks that about twenty-five persons got down before anybody fell. Then it seemed like a spill. Some jumped over the guard railing around the stairs on the crowd in the already clogged stairway.

Mr. Flinn was in the audience, and when the rush came, he with several others who did not lose their presence of mind, leaped to the stage and tried to restore order. His most able assistants in that particular were D. S. Shellenberger, James Davis, the photographer, and Frank Buchanan. Others whose names are not known also rendered able assistance.

Many of those present also state that great credit is due to Reddy Hawkins, an employe of T. Benton Brown & Co., for his efforts in keeping back the crowd in the gallery.

There were many acts of heroism, which of course, must pass unnoticed, because those who did them were unknown. There were many also many cases of total loss of manhood and good sense. These of course will pass unnoticed, but the man or boy who so senselessly cried fire, should be known and gagged hereafter, when he goes to a place where crowds of people are assembled.

The managers had recently had the building fitted up at their own expense with electric lights and new scenery. Everything was in good working order, except, of course, the means of exit, which has always been pronounced insufficient. They had plenty of good offers from companies, and several engagements had been booked. These have all been cancelled by telegraph, and it is likely that the house will now stand idle. Public opinion would not now tolerate the holding of entertainments there. As it was just the commencement of the season the managers will lose all they have spent in refitting the house.

JUMPED FROM GALLERIES AND BOXES.

Mr. James Flinn, one of the managers of the Opera House, was the first to leap to the stage and assist the actors in the endeavor to restore order. He says that four or five men or boys jumped from the first gallery to the floor. Several people were injured by these men alighting against them.

Two men leaped from the upper box on the left to the stage, and two ladies from the upper right hand box followed suit.

A VISIT TO THE OPERA HOUSE YESTERDAY. The Opera House was visited yesterday by a representative of the DEMOCRAT. It was found that the back to one of the seats on the upper gallery was broken. The cracking made by this break is said to have intensified the excitement caused by the first cry of fire. Some other seats in the gallery were also displaced.

On the first gallery there were footprints on all the seats, indicating that the

audience in that part of the house had walked over the furniture.

On the main floor, or parquet, the chairs were standing around in a confused manner. Marks of shoes or boots were plainly visible on most all the chair seats, as well as on the guard-rail of the stairway.

The narrow stairway was marked with blood in nearly a dozen places, there being one large pool on the step just outside the door.

The stairway is five feet in width, and between the jambs of the swinging doors on the second step above the vestibule, it is just four feet.

THE WOUNDED.

Those injured are all reported to be doing well, and the attending physicians are quite confident that none of the injuries will prove fatal.

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN ATTENDANCE.

Mr. McCann, one of the managers, says that 718 admission tickets were sold. There were perhaps twenty other persons in the house. One of the boys killed, George Horner, is said to have been admitted for holding a torch. His parents did not know that he was there.

AT THE MORGUE.

The scene at the morgue was a reminder of the days after the flood, or of the raising of the dead. A large crowd, mostly women and children, hung around there all day. A constant train of people passed to and from the morgue to view the bodies.

MAKING A NEW EAR.

Expert Surgical Operation on a Victim of the Johnstown Flood—Flesh Cut From the Head—The Reconstructed Member Will Soon be as Perfect as the Uninjured Ear. Philadelphia Daily News.

An unusual surgical operation has just been performed on Miss Margaret E. Jones, of Johnstown, by Dr. Maik L. Nardyz, of this city. The young lady was one of the victims of the disastrous flood that devastated the Conemaugh Valley. Besides having her right arm broken in three places, and receiving gashes on her head by being dashed against the floating debris, Miss Jones was so unfortunate as to have a portion of her right ear torn away.

HOW IT WAS DONE.

The young lady was carefully nursed, her arm was set and she finally, after a severe struggle, recovered almost her usual strength. The one noticeable defect was the disfigured ear. This caused her much annoyance, as it was noticeable at the slightest glance. She was brought to Dr. Nardyz for examination and he said immediately that he could remedy her defects if she would submit to an operation. He promised to rebuild the damaged ear.

She promised to do so and requested that the flesh needed for the purpose be taken from her arm. The doctor, however declared that flesh from the arm would not do, and he decided to cut away a portion of the flesh on the side of the head, immediately adjoining the lacerated member. The laceration was V shaped and the surgeon skillfully cut a similar portion of flesh from the head sewed it to the remaining portions of the ear with seven stitches and bandaged it.

This was done last Wednesday, and her operation was so successful that Miss Jones proposed to leave for Johnstown on Saturday next. All that is required is time to heal, the thing being now merely a matter of growth. Dr. Nardyz said to-day that in thirty days no one will ever be able to detect the slightest difference between the two ears. The doctor is delighted with the success of the operation, and said it is one of the best surgical feats performed in this country for many years.

HOW THE EAR LOOKS.

A News reporter saw Miss Jones at the residence of Dr. Nardyz, 718 Pine street, this afternoon, and had a look at the reconstructed ear. It is healing fast and already looks nearly as well as the perfect one. There is now a scar behind the ear, caused by the cutting away of the flesh, but this will also heal, the doctor says, and will besides be covered by the hair, so that it will not be visible.

Miss Jones had a very narrow escape from death during the flood. Her mother, sister and three others were all killed. She and her father only were left of the family. She was carried from the second story of her hotel and immediately became unconscious. When she awoke she was several miles away and found her head pinned between the roofs of two houses, with her body immersed in water. She was extricated from her perilous position by a stranger, taken to the hospital, and expects shortly to be in her usual health and appearance.

STORE ROBBED IN EBENSBURG.

The Store Room of V. S. Barker & Bro., Entered by Thieves on Tuesday Night—They Secure \$34.

On Tuesday night, between the hours of 1 and 2 o'clock, the store room of V. S. Barker & Bros., High street, was entered by burglars, and the fruits of their devilish deed consisted in securing from the till, or drawer therein, about \$34 in cash. The entrance was made through the front door of the store room, by means of a pole-ax, which was found jaying at the door in the morning by one of the clerks in the store. The lock had been burst off. A few years ago Mr. A. A. Barker halted a bold scoundrel in the same act as above stated, with powder and lead, and had the same opportunity this time, an effective cure would no doubt have followed. That would have served him right. There is no clue to the guilty parties.