

The Law of Compensation May be all Right but the Increasing Size of the Ash Heap Hardly Compensates for the Decreasing Fatness of the Coal Bin.

## BENNINGTON SECURITY COMP'Y

Accepts funds in trust, allowing 4 per cent on same. Acts as agent in purchase and sale of stocks, bonds, real estate, etc. Manages estates, acting as executor, administrator, guardian, etc.

CAPITAL.....\$25,000  
SURPLUS.....\$ 5,000

### DIRECTORS:

R. C. GRAVES, President  
C. M. GRAVES, Vice-Pres.  
O. M. BARBER, W. H. HAGEN  
R. C. TURNER  
N. Y. Rep., W. H. Hagen, 59 Wall St

## Bennington County NATIONAL BANK

Capital \$100,000.

Officers JOHN S. HOLDEN, President.  
A. K. RITCHIE, Vice President.  
ELEMENT H. CONK, Cashier.

Bennington, Vt.

Transact a general banking business, pays interest on certificates of deposit at the rate of 3 per cent if allowed to remain three months.

### DIRECTORS

I. E. Gibson, J. S. Holden, Wm. E. Hawks, N. M. Puffer, A. K. Ritchie, J. T. Shurtleff, C. W. Thatcher.

## FIRST NAT'L BANK OF NO-BENNINGTON

CAPITAL.....\$150,000  
SURPLUS and PROFITS.....\$75,000  
RESOURCES.....\$500,000

Most centrally located for country business and is always ready to receive new accounts.

It is one of the oldest and strongest Banks in Vermont, and transacts a general banking business.

J. G. McCULLOUGH, President.  
S. B. HALL, Cashier.

Call And Give Your Orders For  
Nursery Stock, Garden and Farm Seeds, Ornamental Shrubbery, etc. Spring delivery.

C. Ainsworth,  
311 W Main St., Bennington, Vt.

Notice,  
Dec. 23rd, 1903.  
Headquarters Co K 1st Reg. V. N. G.  
The members of Co K will assemble for drill, at the Armory on Tuesday January 5 1904. Per order,  
R. C. Graves, Captain Com'd'g.

## NOTICE!

Bennington County Savings Bank.  
The annual meeting of the corporation of the Bennington County Savings Bank will be held at the office of said Bank in its building in Bennington, Vt., on the first Wednesday, (6th day) of January, A. D. 1904, at ten o'clock p. m., for the purpose of electing a board of trustees for the year ensuing and the transaction of any other business found necessary when met, especially to fill vacancies in the number of corporation and to alter and revise the by-laws.  
C. H. GRAVES, Secretary,  
dated at Bennington, Vt., Nov. 23, 1903.

## NOTICE.

The annual meeting of the stockholders of the First National Bank of Bennington, Vt., will be held at the banking rooms on Tuesday, Jan. 17, 1904, at 10 o'clock a. m., for the purpose of electing a board of directors for the ensuing year.  
L. A. GRAVES, Cashier,  
Bennington, Vt., Dec. 8, 1903.

# 623 PERSONS PERISHED

## Awful Fire in a Chicago Theatre Yesterday Afternoon Kills Hundreds of People.

### Women and Children Numbered by Hundreds among the Victims. Half the Audience Crushed, Suffocated or Burned to Death.

Chicago, Dec. 31.—According to the most reliable figures obtainable this afternoon 623 persons lost their lives in the awful catastrophe at the Iroquois theatre yesterday afternoon.

CHICAGO, Dec. 31.—Six hundred and thirty-seven people by Coroner Trager's actual count were killed in ten minutes during the great fire and panic in the Iroquois theatre, the newest, the largest and as far as human power could make it the safest theater in Chicago.

Chicago is stunned by this, the worst catastrophe in the history of the country.

Men, women and children met death by fire, smoke and panic during a matinee performance of "Mr. Bluebeard," a new play, here at the beautiful new Iroquois theater. Most of the dead are women and children.

While it is difficult to get an exact report, it is known that more than 300 were injured by fire and in the wild stampede for safety.

A few of these people were burned to death by fire, many were suffocated by gas, and scores were trampled to death in the panic that followed the mad plunge of the frightened audience for the exits.

It will be many days before all of the bodies recovered from the ruins are identified. There are bodies lying by the dozen in the undertaking rooms, in the police stations and in the hospitals from which nearly everything that could reveal their identity to those who knew them best is gone. Their clothing is torn to rags or burned to embers, and their faces have been trampled into an unrecognizable pulp by the crowd that trampled them down as they fled for safety.

The fire broke out during the second act of the play "Mr. Bluebeard," which was the first dramatic production produced in the theater since its erection. The company, which was very large, escaped to the street in safety, nearly all of them, however, being compelled to flee into snowy streets with no clothing but their stage costumes. A few members of the company sustained minor injuries, but none was seriously hurt. The dead and wounded were all in the audience.

The accounts of the origin of the fire are conflicting and none of them certain, but the best reason given is that an electric wire near the lower part of a piece of drop scenery suddenly broke and was grounded. The fire spread rapidly toward the front of the stage, causing the members of the chorus who were then engaged in the performance to flee to the wings, with screams of terror.

The fire in itself up to this time was not serious and possibly could have been checked had not the asbestos curtain failed to work. As soon as the fire was discovered Eddie Foy, the chief comedian of the company, shouted to lower the curtain, and this was immediately done. It descended about half way and then stuck.

The fire was thus given practically a free through which a strong draft was setting, aided by the doors which had been thrown open.

The flames opened up the people on the floor and, reaching clear up to the balcony, caught the audience by death where they sat. Immediately following this rush of flames there came an explosion which lifted the entire roof of the theater from its walls, shattering the great skylight into fragments.

As soon as the first flames appeared beyond the curtain a man in the rear of the hall shouted: "Fire! Fire!" and the entire audience rose as one person and made for the doors. It is believed that the explosion was caused by the flames coming in contact with the gas

reservoirs of the theater, causing them to burst.

As near as can be estimated at the present time about 1,800 people were in the theater. Three hundred of these were on the first floor, the balance being in the two upper balconies and in the hallways back of them.

The theater is modeled after the Opera Comique in Paris, and from the rear of each balcony there are three doors leading out to passageways toward the front of the theater. Two of these doorways are at the end of the balcony and one being in the center. The audience in its rush for the outer air seems to have for the greater part chosen to flee to the left entrance and to attempt to make its way down the eastern stairway leading into the lobby of the theater.

Mr. Edward Butler, who escaped from the burning theater and afterward saved a lot of lives, said:

"We caught hold of the handles of a gallery exit door and managed to break it open. Piled up five feet deep by the door were dead and dying human beings. I grabbed hold of an arm, and the burned skin peeled off in my hands. The smoke was suffocating, and the heat was terrific.

"I pulled out one girl whose hand was burned to a crisp clear to the elbow. It seemed as if they were all little children and women and mangled, torn and burned until it would break your heart. Smiley Corbett carried them away two at a time, and for ten minutes it seemed we did nothing but try to untangle the heap of dead and dying. By that time the firemen came to help us, and we carried the living out into the air.

"I was asked how many there were, and I said there might be 200 and there might be 1,000, for I don't see how any of them could have got away from that black hole. Hell doesn't more than begin to describe what we saw when we broke in that gallery door."

Edgar S. Buss of Bridgeport, Conn., is spending a few days with relatives in town.

Alba Buss of North Adams spent several days of this week in town.

Louis Puffer, who has been ill for some time with a bilious fever, has had a relapse.

Miss Jennie Summersgill who has been confined to the house for some time is able to be out.

S. S. Pike has sold his meat market to A. C. Sweet, who took possession Wednesday. Mr. Pike expects to go on the road for Swift & Co.

Mary J. Mattison, aged 67, of Shattsbury died Wednesday, Dec. 30. The funeral will be held at 1 o'clock p. m. Saturday, January 2, the interment being in Maple Hill cemetery.

Arthur J. Holden will speak on Y. M. C. A. work at the mens' meeting Sunday afternoon. Mrs. H. W. Downs will sing from 3:45 to 4.

Fortnightly this week, January 2nd subject "Animals in Brooks" Com., Misses H. L. Norton, H. H. Walbridge and Mrs. W. Morse.

J. W. Carberry, one of the star men of the Boston Globe and one of the best known newspaper reporters in New England, is here today getting an illustrated writup of the Rogers case for the Sunday Globe.

John Jepson caught an owl in a trap near the Hoosick line Wednesday night. Some time during the night a fox came along and attacked him, but the owl fought him off, as was shown by the tracks around the trap. The owl is on exhibition in Griswold's store.

legs and arms, and two were picked up at this point with fractured skulls, having been killed instantly.

Eddie Foy, principal comedian in the play, was one of the last to escape by getting out through a rear door after assisting the women members of the company to safety. He went into the Sherman House in his stage costume and with his face covered with grease paint in order to secure surgical attendance for some burns which he had sustained. In describing the commencement of the fire Foy attributed the extent of the catastrophe to the failure of the fireproof curtain to work properly. Because of this, he said, the flames readily obtained access to the main part of the theater and were by the draft, carrying with it gas as well as fire, swept up to the two balconies, where the loss of life was greatest.

The building in which the calamity occurred stands midway between State and Dearborn streets on the north side of Randolph street. Although every available policeman within call of the department was immediately hurried to the spot and the men placed in lines at the ends of the block, allowing nobody to enter Randolph street from either Dearborn or State street, it was found for a time almost impossible to hold back the frenzied crowd that pressed forward, many of them having friends or relatives in the theater and anxious to learn something of them.

Although all the patrol wagons and every ambulance owned by the city was pressed into service, they were utterly inadequate to carry away the dead, and in a short time there was a line of corpses fifty feet long piled two and three feet high on the sidewalk in front of the theater. It was found necessary in order to convey the bodies rapidly to the morgue and to the various undertaking establishments to press trucks into service, and in these upon costly blankets furnished by the dry goods stores in the vicinity and covered with the same material the dead were hauled away practically like so much cordwood.

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SCENE FROM KING JOLLITY

## SPLENDID SUCCESS

### King Jollity at the Opera House Last Evening.

### TO BE REPEATED.

### Production was Complete and High Class and Delighted the Large Audience.

In the production of King Jollity last night, beautiful scenic effects, colored lights and vari-colored costumes presented a spectacle of unusual beauty.

The soloists and chorus worked harmoniously together, contributing vastly to the musical success of the piece. The dances were graceful and wonderfully well given. Miss Fanny Taft as commander of the Royal Guards, rendered a solo in a most pleasing manner.

Fred Harmon, "The only original King," in a laughable makeup, did some particularly clever work which was appreciated by the spectators.

A quartette that did some fine work was composed of Misses Hudson, Galusha, Livingston and Merrill; their dances and costumes being very fetching.

Hubert Daley as "The Sunniest Man on the Island," in picturesque jester's costume was a veritable funny man. He, with the combined efforts of Lynn Wood, kept the audience in a continual uproar. Mr. Wood made many local hits of great aptness, whose spontaneous humor was infectious.

A solo, accompanied by a pretty dance, was finely rendered by Miss Irene Davis as "Queen of Folly." Miss Bessie Hudson, whose charming voice is always warmly received, sang several solos—"Lullaby" gaining the first encore; the chorus in this selection added, with the lights, a moving mass of color.

Several little maids in white, as "The Petite Ballet," gained applause by their dainty dances and posing.

Among the specialties, six little tots in nightgowns, caps, and their dolls, proceeded to keep the audience laughing and Lulu Gokay and Edith Russell, quaintly attired, made a tremendous hit and were recalled twice.

Miss Mabel Barber's solo, "The Autumn Girl," was well rendered and was accompanied by a shimmering light effect.

The Animal Quartette, whose exits and entrances were in imitation of our four-footed friends, were very clever; they scored several hits—one on unions.

Mr. Harmon's hit on the trading stamps was timely. Mr. Wood and Miss Hudson came in for success in "Just a Tiny Little Kiss," which was decidedly well sung.

Of the cast, Mrs. Ross sang several delightful solos. Mr. Habbey sang with his usual masterly command of expression and was very effective as "Prince Beauco." The four songs and "The Cops" were both funny features—the latter were admirable miniature take-offs on the current events.

Gokay gave his solo in fine style and was well received.

As the plotting queen, Miss Bessie Harbour appeared, well capable of carrying out the intended murder of the King and of managing the "Four Wise Men."

The finale of Act II received a great amount of applause and the combined effect of light, beautiful costumes and various colored confetti, produced an effect seldom rivaled. One of the most decided hits of the evening was a coon song, "Watermelon Boy," by Miss Theresa Straub, who did some of the best work of the evening.

The picturesque and finely drilled "Sailor's Chorus" was a great success. After some excellent chorus work, Miss Mary Toomey did the horn-pipe; no jolly tar could have surpassed her dancing. She repeated the performance after a storm of applause. "The Lass that Loves a Sailor" by Miss Hudson, was one of her best solos. It was given with much spirit and piquancy and she, together with the chorus, made a graceful "Flora-dora" exit.

The performance reflects great credit on the performers and YMCA as well as on Prof. E. Wales, who owns and manages the attraction. It will be repeated Saturday evening.

## BROUGHT BACK HERE

### Erskine and Seeley Spend Last Night in Jail.

Sheriff Wilson and deputy sheriff Godfrey returned from Maine Wednesday with Bernard Erskine, and H. A. Seeley who were arrested upon a warrant charging them with being connected with George M. Rowell in the late insurance frauds in this place.

The young men made no objections about returning with the officers which simplified matters very much.

They first made a visit to Lyons brothers tonsorial rooms, and the Putnam house office. The young men are good singers with voices that blend well and in the latter place entertained quite an audience with favorite selections. They also gave a selection in the municipal court room before being arraigned before Judge Bates.

In reply to the usual questions Erskine stated that he was 43 years of age, born in India, present occupation insurance agent.

Seeley gave his age as 29, born in New York also insurance solicitor.

Both waived examination and each was held in the sum of \$200 to appear in court Monday January third. Both lay their troubles to Mr. Rowell. As they could not furnish bail they went jail.

## KINDERGARTEN CONCERT

Christmas Tree and Concert for Baptist Kindergarten Class.

The Kindergarten Department of the Baptist Sunday School held their Christmas concert and tree, Wednesday afternoon, Mrs. L. A. Graves, Mrs. A. Buel Sibley and Mrs. Norton acted as a reception committee. Miss Mabel Wood rendered several selections in a fine manner while the children were being served.

The concert began at 2:30 with songs and recitations by the children. Miss Mabel Wood presiding at the piano. The songs were conducted by Miss Florence Walbridge and Miss Norton. At four o'clock a tree with Wallace Cutting as Santa Claus was un-

No Paper Tomorrow.  
Tomorrow, New Years Day, there will be no issue of the Evening Banner.

## TRIAL OF MRS. MOFFAT

### Mears on the Stand in Sandgate Poisoning Case.

At the opening of the session yesterday afternoon, Dr. Wiltse, of the state laboratory, testified that he had analyzed the whiskey and the poison sent him by the states attorney. He said the poison was corrosive sublimate and that analysis discovered its presence in the whiskey.

Frank Moore, a clerk in a drug-store in Shushan, N. Y., testified that the Friday, when Moffat says he was given the poison, he sold a one ounce bottle of corrosive sublimate to Joseph Mears, who gave his name as John Provan.

Mrs. Clara Dean, who was living with Moffat, her uncle, testified that Mears brought a bottle of whiskey from Shushan and gave it to Moffat. He and Mears took a drink together.

The next morning Moffat said he had been ill during the night and continued to complain throughout the day.

Mrs. Dean said that she rubbed some of the whiskey on her teeth, because they were aching. She experienced no ill effects.

During the examination of Mrs. Dean, Mrs. Moffat, who is said to be an epileptic, fell into a sinking spell, which, with a slight hysteria, made it necessary to assist her from the court room.

Court suspended and a doctor was called. After some twenty minutes Mrs. Moffat came to.

Joseph Mears was brought here last night from Windsor by a keeper in the states prison and went onto the stand this morning to testify against Mrs. Moffat.

He said that in the early part of February, 1902, when he and Mrs. Moffat were living at Conkey's, they drove to West Pawlet together and at her request he bought a box of rough on rats for her.

Soon after she went and staid over night with Moffat and the next day came back to Conkey's and sent Mears to her husband's.

Mears cooked some pan-cakes for breakfast the next morning from some "batter" and flour and sour milk which he found in the pantry. After eating the pan-cakes Moffat became violently ill.

In the afternoon Mears returned to Conkey's and told Mrs. Moffat of her husband's illness. She then told Mears that she had put rough-on rats in the pan-cake flour and the sour milk.

On Friday, later in February, she gave him a dollar to buy a bottle of whiskey and an ounce of corrosive sublimate, at Shushan, whither he was to draw a load of wood for Moffat.

He bought the poison and two bottles of whiskey, one of which he gave to Moffat Friday and the other of which he gave to Mrs. Moffat Saturday.

She went to see her husband Sunday and took her bottle in which the poison is alleged to have been.

The defense claims Mears poisoned him on Friday night, the prosecution claims that Mrs. Moffat poisoned him Sunday.

At the time of the hearing before the Grand Jury, Mrs. Moffat told Mears it is said that if they put her on the stand, she would pretend to have a fit. (She kept her word and had the fit according to contract.)

## BANK DIVIDENDS.

All The Local Banks Will Distribute Much Money.

The First National Bank has declared a semi annual dividend of five per cent. The Bennington County National has declared one of 3 1/2 per cent, payable on January second. Five hundred dollars was added to the surplus, making the total now \$19,500.

The Bennington County Savings bank has declared the usual semi annual dividend to its depositors of 1 1/4 per cent the highest all.