BEDLAM BRUTALITIES.

Fresh Cases of Inhuman Treatment of the Insane.

MEN AND WOMEN BEATEN.

Additional Facts About Mrs. Norton's Nurse-Fiend.

There were those, in ancient times, who looked upon the demented as those who had been touched by the fingers of the gods. They were, consequently, treated with tenderness and reverence. There are to-day, among the Hindoos, those who treat in a similarly humane fashion people in whom reason has become unseated. Even making an abstraction of civilization, the world has, in savage tribes, sufficient evidence of the tender care bestowed upon those in whom the real vital spark has been dimmed. Bernardin de St. Pierre, in an essay which places him by the side of the illustrious Buffon, adverts to the apparently general law, in accordance with which members of nearly every species live and feed upon the weaker scions of the family. He cites the lion, the tiger, the shark, the pike, and even the good-humored, blubbery whale. But it does not seem to have fallen under his prodigious inductive powers, or to have occurred to his powerful imagination, that the sane could make a living out of the insane, or that men could form joint stock companies in order to swell their revenues by the greatest misfortune that can fall to the lot of man. Still less does he seem to have supposed that what the French tenderly term *les aliénés* could be handed over to the care of men and women who behave toward them like wild beasts.

NEW CASES OF ILL-TREATMENT.

From the evidence in the Norton case, recently made public, it would really seem as though humanity had fled from those places in which she ought to reign supreme. The disclosures made by Mrs. Norton of her ill-treatment at one of the great lunatic asylums of this State were of a character to elicit a good deal of comment. That comment took one shape in private communications to the HERALD touching two of the most renowned and conspicuous establishments for the treatment of the demented in this and one of the sister States. In response to one of these communications one of the HERALD corps called the other evening at the house of a wealthy and cultured gentleman on Fifth avenue.

"I should not have troubled the HERALD upon this matter," observed the gentleman, "unless I felt two things:—First, that the insane are subject to monstrous ill treatment; and secondly, that the shortest and surest way to remedy this outrageous state of things is to have an exposé of them published in the columns of the HERALD. It has sometimes surprised me that you do not, in some conspicuous portion of the paper, advertise for the communications of all who feel aggrieved at the treatment received by their insane relatives or friends in institutions founded ostensibly for their good keeping and tender treatment."

"The HERALD is always open," replied the writer, "to the just complaints of those who think they are wronged. If you have anything to say against the conduct of any of the lunatic asylums, either municipal, State or private, the HERALD will willingly make these grievances public."

"What I have to say," replied the gentleman, "refers to one of the great lunatic asylums of this State. I have names and dates, and my wife can verify them. Indeed, I think it better that she herself should give you the story, inasmuch as she is even more intimately acquainted with the people interested than I am myself."

The gentleman then introduced his wife, and, with little preface, the lady gave the HERALD man the following story:—

A STARTLING STORY.

"I have, unfortunately," she said, "some experience in the matter of those who have been sent to the Bloomingdale Asylum. And I think it quite time that the excesses there perpetrated by the so-called nurses should be put an end to. The first person to whom I would refer is a gentleman, a friend of our family, who was seized with sudden mania on the cars. He belonged to New Jersey and was on his way to this city. He disappeared and was subsequently found by his friends at one of the uptown hotels. His malady arose, according to the account of the best medical authorities, from excessive study and overwork. He was taken to the Bloomingdale Asylum. When his friends first visited him he complained that he had been frequently and severely beaten. The good natured relatives supposed that this statement arose from his hallucinations. It turned out, however, his friends allege, that the insane man was perfectly truthful in his statements, and that he had been both frequently and severely beaten by the nurse in attendance upon him."

"What became of him subsequently?" said the HERALD man.

"Unfortunately for the authorities of the asylum," said the lady "he became perfectly sane. He was removed from Bloomingdale to Dr. Kirkbride's asylum, near Philadelphia, and there recovered his reason. The methods adopted with him by the nurses at Bloomingdale were strongly condemned by the Philadelphia physician. He said that, had the patient not been treated in the severe and unnatural manner adopted toward him, he would probably have recovered within the second week after his alienation."

BEATEN WITHOUT PROVOCATION.

"What, specifically," said the HERALD man, "was the ill treatment of which the patient complained?"

"He stated that without the least provocation, even at times when he himself was perfectly conscious of being sane, they placed him in a strait jacket, and, if he made the slightest resistance, they beat him cruelly. Further, they confined him in a padded room upon the slightest pretext, and, as he himself now says, probably to be rid of the trouble of attending and watching over him."

"Was there anything else of which he complained after his recovery?"

"Yes. He stated that one of the things that annoyed him worse than anything else was that, although his friends paid liberally for his board, he was obliged every day to sit down and take his meals with the keepers, who were an ordinary, common lot of men, and who made no difficulty about cursing, swearing, and behaving generally in such a manner as to disgust any gentleman, even supposing him to be insane."

"Did he mention anything further as to the way he was treated while at table?"

"There was one thing which struck him particularly. The nurses helped themselves first to the best of everything provided and then doled out the remainder to the patients as though they had been galley slaves."

AN INSANE OLIVER TWIST.

"Did he, outside himself personally, speak of any ill-treatment of other patients at table?"

"Yes. I remember one instance particularly, in which he states that an elderly gentleman asked for something more to eat. The answer given the venerable man was a blow upon the head with a soup ladle which happened to be near at hand."

"Seeing this state of things, how was it that he did not induce his friends to remove him?"

"He did attempt to do so. He told them what had occurred, and begged them to take him away and to remove him to some other place. As a matter of course they consulted the nurse, who is always smooth and sleek to visitors. The answer was, of course, that the poor gentleman's imagination was playing him false. The friends were satisfied for the time. They tried to pacify the gentleman with promises, and left him to the care of the man who had him in charge, and who had so brutally ill-used him."

FEES WITHOUT EFFECT.

"Do you know whether in cases of this description, where patients are liberally paid for, it is usual to fee the nurses in order to secure their good treatment?"

"I do know it; and I am sure that in the case of which I speak, although they are forbidden to take anything, the nurses were largely and frequently feed."

"And still this effected no amelioration in the treatment of the patient?"

"Not the least."

"Now, madame," said the HERALD man, "it is important that such matters as these should be very accurately verified. Can you give me the name of the gentleman in question, his address, and all particulars concerning him at present."

"I can." (Here the lady gave full particulars, which are in the possession of the HERALD.)

A FEMALE PATIENT BEATEN.

"You were saying that there were other cases of the same kind within your knowledge. Would you kindly give me another?"

"I will, although it goes to my heart to talk about any one whom I have known so intimately as the lady about whom I speak now. She was removed to Bloomingdale from another asylum. She was at times violent, but not frequently. Her mania was a religious one. She had, also, the notion that people were going to poison her. You will therefore see that her case was one for very considerate and delicate treatment. Instead of receiving such she was dreadfully ill treated. Her nurses beat her upon the slightest provocation, and frequently kept her without food. During the eight or nine months she was at Bloomingdale she was never once permitted to leave the house in order to take exercise in the open air. She was frequently placed in a strait-jacket for the merest trifle. When her sister visited her the patient's terror of the nurses was so great that she would beckon to her to be silent, and take her aside so that the nurses might not hear what she said. The sister who visited her avers that during her visits, in the hottest part of summer, there was a delicate lady in the asylum whom the nurses placed in the padded room, and left her there for twenty-four hours without even so much as a glass of water."

"Is that lady still in the Bloomingdale Asylum?"

"To the best of my knowledge she is still there, and I wish indeed that your paper may be the means of effecting her release. You will, perhaps, consider these statements strange; but for the substantial accuracy of them I, and those of my people who know the facts, are prepared, if necessary, to make affidavits, and, further, if necessary, to give our names to the public."

MRS. NORTON'S STORY.

Mrs. J. T. Norton, whose testimony relative to her treatment while in Bloomingdale Asylum, has been before the public, has made a sworn statement prefaced by the following remarks:—

An examination of my case took place before Dr. Ordronaux, Commissioner in Lunacy, at the New York Hospital, in Sixteenth street, on the 13th of October. Four of the ten governors were present with the doctors and nurses of the asylum. A stenographer was present, and I have just learned that he was hired by the Bloomingdale officials, instead of by Dr. Ordronaux, as supposed. Dr. Ordronaux tells me this and also another thing. When he dismissed us at the close of the investigation he told us that he should assemble us again at the same place to hear his decision after he had read the stenographer's report; he wrote my husband, Mr. Jonathan T. Norton, two letters to the same effect, one of them stating that he should demand that all the ten governors should be present. This meeting was never called, although I had written him meanwhile that, owing to the lateness of the hour, &c., I did not contradict Jane Eaton's testimony in one particular as I wished to do. When Dr. Ordronaux was questioned on the failure of the meeting he said its cause was the refusal of the use of the hospital by the Bloomingdale officials. In the light of the evidence there are some surprising statements in Dr. Ordronaux's report, whether caused by delinquency in the stenographer, or how caused, has not yet been made apparent. Dr. Brown, Medical Superintendent of Bloomingdale, testified, under oath, that patients, other than myself, had complained to him of the cruelty of Jane Eaton. The report would lead one to suppose that no complaint of her but my own had ever reached them. Another flagrant deviation from the facts is this, viz.:—The report speaks of Jane Gordon, as being equally employed with Jane Eaton in attending upon and feeding me. A greater mistake could scarcely be made. To the best of my knowledge and belief Jane Gordon was in my ward not more than two months of the time that I was there, and during that time she only occasionally assisted Jane Eaton in feeding me. During the eight months that I was under the care of Jane Eaton I was almost always fed by her alone. Her being assisted by any one was an exceptional thing. She and I were alone together. At the time I left the asylum many months had passed since I had seen Jane Gordon. Dr. Ordronaux seems to take no note in his report of how often the Bloomingdale officials corroborated my statement of facts, showing my memory to be perfect, even in the very words used in many cases; also that Mr. Norton testified, under oath, that he never knew my memory at fault in relating any particular of his or my son's visits. He is reported by a newspaper correspondent to have said this:—"Mrs. Norton's memory was remarkably good in relation to persons and things about her, but *nil* in regard to herself." If such a state of memory is recognized by psychologists I did not know it, and I know that I remember that most terrible things happened to me at Bloomingdale and all the details of them. He says that I gave few details of the injury done to my throat. If I did not give enough, I can give as many as may be desired. Drs. Burrell and Brown both told me before the examination that they were convinced that I remembered correctly all that happened to me while in their asylum. Dr. Ordronaux is also reported by a newspaper correspondent to have said, "Mrs. Norton, being a powerful woman, probably resisted the nurse," until such and such effects were produced. This "powerful woman"—myself—was so extremely emaciated that my husband has often said that he did not believe that I could have weighed ninety pounds. Many who saw me in the asylum did not know me after I had recovered and gained flesh. Besides this, I was bound hand and foot, also so tightly across the chest that I could not breathe naturally. I was much of the time so weak that I was expected to die at any time, night or day. This, by the doctor's testimony, was the "powerful woman."

I asked Dr. Ordronaux myself whether or not I should have been put into a strait-jacket, considering that the doctors testified that I never attempted any violence to others or myself? He answered:—"Oh, that is part of the discipline of the asylum, and I cannot do anything about it." It is well that it should be known what the discipline of the asylum is. Owing to my being locked up for much of the time alone, I cannot testify, to any extent, of other inmates of the building, but it was the commonest of things to see people in strait-jackets. I have seen a partly grown girl tied, in a standing posture, to a post in the dining room, for hours at a time, on many occasions. She appeared to be an imbecile child. This cruelty was inflicted by the nurses, as were all the cruelties which I witnessed in the asylum. The nurses seemed to manage the institution. I have lately visited Dr. Kirkbride's Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane. Dr. Hess, one of the physicians there, told me that they never trusted a nurse to feed mechanically in their institution. They (the doctors) always did such feeding themselves. There never had been in one instance an exception to this rule.

THE DELAY IN PUBLICITY.

Dr. Ordronaux remarked in his report that I did not make known my injuries to the public until eleven months had elapsed after my return home. This is true. The reasons for it were these:—

First, my friends had great objections to the fact of my insanity being made known at all. They, particularly my sons, boys in their teens, had taken great pains to conceal it. My husband objected to a disclosure of the indignities to which I had been subjected. He thought it hard that he, "among all husbands in Brooklyn, should be singled out to bear such a thing." In consequence of his being much shocked and grieved on account of the minor sufferings, blows, &c., which I had undergone, I concealed from him the injuries to my throat, notwithstanding advice to the contrary from my sister, to whom I had revealed the extent of my affliction within a few days after my arrival home. He—my husband—reproached himself much for putting me in the asylum. I thought that he should not reproach himself at all, for he opposed it to the last, and yielded only when overborne by the representations of my physician, Dr. Ormiston, who assured him that at Bloomingdale there were appliances for feeding patients who, from fear or otherwise, did not eat readily. I would say, just here, that those appliances were never used in my case, and that the doctors were not, in one instance, present when I was fed. Furthermore, I rapidly became worse after my removal to the institution. I attribute this to two causes. The principal one was, doubtless, the contrast between the tenderness with which I was treated at home and the cruelty experienced there. The other was the loss of the treatment of Dr. Ormiston, who has a peculiar comprehension of the organism of the human mind, and is more than ordinarily capable of understanding nervous diseases. To return to the reasons for my concealment of my injuries. My sister, although anxious that I should tell my husband of the injuries to my throat, did not wish me to make known to the outside world any of the abuses which I had suffered until a considerable period had elapsed from the time of my return from the Asylum, on account of the prejudice usually entertained for recently recovered insane patients. I promised her to delay it. It was a trial to me to make it public at all on account of the different members of my family, who were doing everything to make me happy by their sympathy and kindness, shown to a greater degree, if possible, than ever before. But I was surprised and indignant at first upon my recovery that so little had been made known respecting the treatment in asylums by recovered patients, and I thought I should be as guilty as they if I remained silent.

LET THERE BE LIGHT.

If my friends had known the true nature of asylums I should have been kept at home, saved the most annoying physical torture, and, I have no doubt, had my mental disease shortened by months. Although exceedingly melancholy and having delusions I was, in comparison with what was to come, out of misery till my incarceration in Bloomingdale. My babe was born on the 12th of March. I did not go there till the 22d of the following January. A word more as to the sensitiveness of my friends in regard to my injuries. One of my sons has never seen my throat injuries to this day—he does not feel as if he could look at it. With mention of one instance of Jane Eaton's falsity in testimony I will close this part of my paper. She said that I was driven to the bath room without clothing, apparently wishing it understood that I was not driven from it in the same manner, whereas the fact was that I was driven thus quite as often, if not oftener, from it than to it. My remembrances of suffering at the indignity are more connected with times when I was driven from it than any other way. Notwithstanding that Mr. Brown has heard of the cruelty of this Jane Eaton to others, as well as to myself, she is still, or was at latest accounts, in the institution.

NEWS IN THE CITY.

The Rev. J. D. Fulton, of the Berean Baptist church, corner of Bedford and Downing streets, will deliver a lecture this evening, in the church, on "The Preacher in Brier-Wood Parish." The lecture, which Mr. Fulton delivered some time ago in Boston, is said to "sparkle with brilliant illustrations," novel, witty and sparkling.

A grand vocal and instrumental concert will be given, under the auspices of Miss Rebecca Cohen, at the Beekman Hill church, East Fiftieth street, near Second avenue, on Thursday evening, in aid of the sufferers by the Brooklyn calamity. Miss Cohen will be assisted by the following artists, who have volunteered for the occasion:—Miss Meserau and Messrs. Charles Torriani, Joseph Loewenberg, Frederick Bergner, Brandies and Sherek. The proceeds of the concert will be sent to Mayor Schroeder, of Brooklyn.

Miss Gibbons has placed some of her finest pictures in the parlor connected with the Gibbons Art Gallery in Fifth avenue, and purposes to charge an admission fee of twenty-five cents, the proceeds to be devoted to the fund for the relief of the sufferers from the Brooklyn fire. Among the pictures to be exhibited is what is believed to be a genuine Murillo representing the Madonna and infant Christ. The owner of this picture wishes it to be seen by all the art lovers of our city in order that he may have their opinions upon it. This exhibition of paintings will open this morning and continue open during the entire week.

BROOKLYN.

The residence of Mr. John Koop, No. 205 Clinton street, was entered by a sneak thief on Saturday evening and several coats and a revolver were stolen.

Rev. Albert Ericson reports that his residence, No. 566 Pacific street, was burglariously entered on Saturday and jewelry valued at $90 was carried off.

The dwelling house of Mr. Joseph Loeder, No. 401 McDonough street, was entered through a second story window by some unknown thief, who stole a gold watch and chain and several dresses, amounting in the aggregate to the value of $260.

A valuable package of toys was stolen on Saturday evening from the express wagon of James Reynolds while the vehicle was standing in front of No. 62 Court street.

THE ICE SKIMMERS.

The Ball to Fly at Central Park To-Day.

SKATING IN THE OLDEN TIME.

The cold weather furnishes a theme for Sunday meditation which the pastors of the city churches strangely overlooked in their sermons yesterday. Skating is a subject especially associated with the ups and downs of poor humanity. Graceful and satisfactory as the sport in itself may be, serious falls and backslidings are sure to occur to its devotees. The moral of a fall upon the ice is, to get up. The lesson taught in the act of rising above the embarrassments of one's situation is full of comfort for the sad-minded and sorrowful. It suggests the triumph of the animate over the inanimate—of soul over solidity. This figure admits of much amplification, and as skating begins to-day in these two great cities, it is to be hoped that much use will be made of the opportunities offered during the coming week.

With the intense cold of the last few days, skating in the Central Park will soon become so general that many of our young people may sing the glories of this amusement with as much fervor as they were sung by Klopstock in his maturer years. The author of the "Messiah"—a poem which in its time was thought equal to the writings of Tasso and Dante—was the poet of the ice and its sports. Even Gœthe, who never skated in his boyhood, was inspired with a love of the exercise by the lyrics of Klopstock, and he too became a persevering and enthusiastic student of the art whose praises Klopstock sang. "It is with good reason," Gœthe says, "that Klopstock has praised this employment of our physical powers, which brings us in contact with the happy activity of childhood, which urges youth to exert all its suppleness and agility, and which tends to drive away the inaction of age. We give ourselves up to this pleasure with happy abandonment. A whole day passed upon the ice does not satisfy us, and we prolong the amusement far into the night. While other exercises indulged in for an unusual length of time weary the body, this one only seems to increase its suppleness and vigor. The morn coming forth from the bosom of the clouds and shining with mild radiance over the snow-covered fields, the night wind that sighs as we quickly cut through it, the cracking of the ice beneath our feet, our flying movements—all suggest the savage majesty of the scenes of Ossian. We declaim after such other one of Klopstock's odes, and when we meet together at night we make the air resound with our praises of the poet whose genius has lent a grace to the pleasures of the ice. Like the young who, in spite of the development of their intellectual faculties, forget everything for the simple games of youth, as soon as they have once recovered the taste for them, we seem when skating to lose entirely any consciousness of the most serious objects that claim our attention. It was while abandoning myself to these aimless movements that the most noble aspirations, which had too long lain dormant within me, were reawakened, and I owe to these hours which seemed lost the most rapid and successful development of my poetical projects."

HISTORY OF SKATING.

This testimony to the sport which so many young men and women are about to enjoy on the ponds and lakes of Central and Prospect parks though it may not make poets of them will give them a keener relish for the sport if they will only take the trouble to recall it. Skating, like everything else in which mankind indulges, has not only its poets, but its history and literature. Its origin is lost in the myths of the early ages, but the first champion of the sport seems to have been the god Uller, who is distinguished in the Edda for his beauty, arrows and skates. Where the god obtained his skates is one of those mysteries which perhaps some antiquarian may be able to solve, but it is not improbable that the handsome pair which gave him so much distinction was made out of the jawbones of an animal, fashioned and polished with a nicety suited to the taste of the dandy among the heroes of the Walhalla. A pair of these primitive skates is preserved in the British Museum, and others have been dug up at Moorfields and Finsbury, where the youth of old London used to do their skating. "When," says Fitzstephen, in his description of that metropolis, "the great fenne or river (which watereth the walls of the citie on the north side) is frozen, many young men play upon the yce. Some, striding as wide as they may, doe slide swiftly; some tye bones to their feet and under their bootes, and shoving themselves by a little picked staffe, doe slide as swiftly as a bird flyeth in the air or an arrow out of a crossbow." The Icelanders in former times used for skates the shankbone of a deer or sheep, about a foot long, which they "greased, because they should not be stopped by drops of water upon them." In Germany skating has long been a favorite pastime, and in Holland the taste for it is even more fully developed. In England and Scotland, too, from a period beyond which the memory of man runneth not, there has always been, in the language of Mr. Weller, a "fine time for them as is well wrapped up, as the Polar said to himself ven he was practising his skating." Dickens gave us a capital description of "an hour on the ice" in his "Pickwick Papers." There is something exquisite in his account of Winkle's skating. "You skate, of curse, Winkle?" said Wendle; and Winkle could only reply, "Ye—yes; oh, yes." But to his excuse, "I—I—am rather out of practice," it was only natural that Arabella, the young lady with the fur round her boots, should implore him, "Oh, do skate, Mr. Winkle; I like to see it so much." It was only natural, too, that another young lady should say, "Oh, it is so graceful;" that a third should declare it to be "elegant," and a fourth express the opinion that it was "swanlike." Under all the circumstances Mr. Winkle could only consent and make a fool of himself, as many a young fellow is likely to do in the Park to-day.

SKILL IN SKATING.

The record of feats of skill in skating is unusually full. The famous Chevalier de St. George, who was marvellously expert in all exercises of the body, was able to sign his name upon the ice with the blade of his skate. A certain young lady, it is said, accepted a challenge to a correspondence on the ice, and in a few minutes a question and answer were written down with an elegance unsurpassed by handwriting upon glass with a diamond. There was a Swede who was able with one foot to design portraits on the ice. Strutt, in his "Sports and Pastimes of the People of England" speaks of four skaters who were able to dance a minuet upon the ice with as much elegance as if they had been walking on the floor of a ballroom and William Hone, in his "Every Day Book," speaking of the skating on the Serpentine River, says:—"The elegance of skaters on that sheet of water is chiefly exhibited in quadrilles, which some parties go through with a beauty scarcely imaginable by those who have not seen graceful skating." Mr. Sam Weller, as we learn from the veracious history in which Mr. Pickwick figures so prominently, was an adept at the beautiful feat of fancy sliding known as "knocking at the cobbler's door," which is achieved by skimming over the ice on one foot and occasionally giving a double knock with the other. Tracing the letters of the alphabet on the ice has long been a favorite exercise, but with us, in these degenerate days, the execution of the figure 8 is about the severest test of skill. In Germany, particularly, there are many graceful skaters. Baron de Brincken, who was page to the King of Westphalia, was able while moving over the ice at a great pace to leap a distance of two yards and clear two or three hats placed one above the other, or even some of the little sledges which the ladies use. Klopstock not only wrote fiery lyrics in praise of skating, but he was an expert at the exercise even in his old age. "What!" the less active among his countrymen would exclaim, "the author of 'Messiah' linger over pleasures no longer suited to his age!" When he and Goethe met the conversation for the most part was upon skating, and the latter is said to have found in the exercise a relief from the tortures of mind he suffered in consequence of the breaking of the love link which had existed between him and Frederica of Sessenheim. With us it is within a comparatively recent period that ladies began to skate, but in the countries of Northern Europe both sexes practise the art. In Friesland most people skate more than they walk, and skating races, especially for women, are frequent in all of the towns. The course is always carefully laid out, long strips of wood being ranged in line to keep the competitors separate, and as it is sometimes more favorable to swift progress on the one side of this demarcation than on the other, the skaters are required to change sides every time they turn. The lists are enclosed by ropes which run around by the sides of the canal, along which there is always a multitude of excited spectators. The prizes are valuable, but to obtain them it is necessary to win from sixty to eighty races. As a matter of course, the races in which women alone engage are more interesting than those open only to men. First, there is the honor of attaching the skates to the feet of the fair contestants, and second the reward of a kiss to the fortunate swain. In these countries, if the women are not as swift as the men they are at least more expe. and excel them in lightness and in beauty of style. "The races on the ice," says Palati, "are the carnivals of the Dutch; they are their *fêtes*, their operas, their dissipations. At this season, during which many fashionable people in different parts of the world are ruining themselves by their extravagance, the only expense to which the Hollanders are put is the cost of a pair of skates and the outlay is called for only once or twice during their lives."

SKATING IN ITS PRACTICAL ASPECTS.

"It is not," says Blaine, in his "History of Field Sports," "in Holland, Germany, Russia and America only that skating is used as a great agent both of personal communication between distant localities and of transmitting the necessaries of life from place to place. On the contrary, in the fenny districts of Lincoln, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, &c., when the vast floodings have become frozen and left only a broad expanse of ice far as the eye can reach, it is equally available and almost as usefully employed as in the northern climes. At such times, when not only all means of conveying the products of life from one locality to another, but also those of personal transit, are extremely difficult to command, then it is that the skate is called into requisition and the wearers set off at railway speed from one town to another, either on business or for pleasure." It is probable, however, that in this account Mr. Blaine drew upon his imagination somewhat for his facts or else he jumbled his facts too indiscriminately together, for, apparently, he would have us believe that in England skaters not only accomplish as many as fifty or sixty miles without fatigue and in a short time, but push before them small sledges or boot-shaped lockers, filled with wares. This is frequently done in Holland; but then that is a country where people smoke, or even knit, while they glide over the ice. In that country, too, the army goes through all the military evolutions on the ice; but in this the Dutch are surpassed by the Norwegians, who have considered it necessary to form a regiment of skaters. It is seldom that skating would be found useful in military movements, but it is related that an officer charged with bearing an order from Napoleon to Marshal Morier in 1806, commanding him to make himself master of the Hanseatic towns, saved six hours by skating across the mouth of the Elbe, a distance of seven miles. On the stage feats of dexterity in skating are very common, but in this country these performances are confined to the "variety" theatres, although when the opera of the "Prophet" was produced in Paris it included a ballet of skaters, which attracted much attention.

EFFECTS OF SKATING UPON HEALTH.

Everybody will recall the wonderful effects of Dr. Ox's gas upon the people of the Flemish town of Quiquendone, in Jules Verne's story, when an opera which previously required four hours in its rendering was sung in exactly eighteen minutes. The effects of skating upon the Dutch are not less wonderful. In Holland winter, which in other countries benumbs the limbs and makes men sluggish, has exactly the opposite effect, and enlivens the people and puts them in good humor. "Heavy, massive stiff creatures, during the rest of the year," said Palati, in his "Letters From Holland," published nearly 100 years ago, "become suddenly active, ready and agile as soon as the canals are frozen." In summer the Dutch move with the celerity of snails. In winter they run, leap and dance upon the ice. The trudging peasant shakes off his heaviness and awkwardness in an instant and puts on elasticity and grace with his skates. Health and enjoyment both come with the ice and the sports of winter, and this is true not only of Holland, but of every country where skating is practised. In bringing health and enjoyment the ice is indeed a great blessing, and with words almost as fiery as Klopstock's, with a sincerity as simple and unaffected as Goethe's, we may welcome the beginning of a season already too long delayed. The ice has its dangers it is true, but its pleasures are too enticing, its enjoyment too health-giving not to tempt even the most timid to run the risks of accident for the sake of the excitement and health which the sport affords.

THE GAME OF POLO.

To the Editor of the Herald:—

The crowd at Gilmore's Garden on Thursday night was so large and their interest in the polo playing so great that the game, a splendid one if well played, may fairly be considered to have established its place among American sports. But in spite of their interest it was pretty evident that the spectators had very little idea what the players were doing, and, within the limits of a necessarily circumscribed ring, the players, though some of them rode very well and were mounted on excellent ponies, were quite unable to enlighten them, the scrimmages being endless and the free hits few and far between. I have seen something of the game elsewhere and might be able to say something about it that would interest the uninitiated.

Its chief law I believe to be this:—That a good rider with a good pony must be an utter idiot if he cannot learn to play polo. Even if he wears spectacles his eyes will soon be able to measure the distance of the ball from his saddle. The body speedily discovers the proper angle of inclination and his arm the right moment to strike. If his wrist is weak he can wear an elastic band or play with a light stick. He then has to acquire a few tricks, such as hitting backwards when running on the right side, and hitting both backward and forward when running on the wrong side. The rest is merely a question of good horsemanship; the stirrup being, as a rule, taken rather shorter than usual. And as good horsemen are by no means rare, especially in America, it follows that the great difficulty in the game is not to find the man that can play, but the pony. That is the rub. For polo not only demands of the animal an extraordinary agility on its legs and great speed over a short distance, but a sort of genius for the game and a quite human interest in its proceedings. Odd as this sounds, every practised player knows it to be a fact. You will see ponies following the ball like kittens, swerving with every swerve it makes, stopping dead if their rider misses it and carrying him back to the scrimmage at once, and gradually shutting off steam when he is preparing to make a backhanded stroke; and all this without the slightest pressure of the bridle.

That is why it is surely very bad advice to recommend the game as a substitute for the riding school. Put a lout of a boy on an untrained pony and he will never get near the ball; put him on a trained pony and he will spoil its mouth to a certainty, and then you might as well play with a mule. A hard mouthed brute is the *bête noire* of the polo player, worse even than one that kicks or rears, and the choice of bit and bridle requires the greatest nicety of judgment. I notice that the American players ride on an ordinary snaffle, which is wise. Cavalry officers in England prefer the light Pelham, a lady's bridle, but that is too heavy. The natives of India use the lightest of all possible reins, a piece of twisted hemp. They are really wonderful players, these natives of India. They have not only an astonishing quickness of eye and hand, a snakelike suppleness of body and a very firm seat, but their ponies have much of the sacred fire in them. Heaven only knows where they get it. Some scraggy starveling of an animal that brings the banker's presents of vegetables to the collector's bungalow or transports the wares of the box-wallah or carries a fat Badri Singh into the bosom of his family at nightfall will be detected by a sagacious eye, bought for twenty or thirty rupees, sent down to the *maidân* and trained for a week, and then sold to an Englishman for 300 rupees, and turns out to be a prodigiously fine player. The better sort of ponies, as a rule, won't play. Arabs, for example, are almost useless. They have plenty of speed but no strength. But on their own beasts the natives of India are unrivalled. Some of the Manipuri fellows will never miss a stroke in a week. So it is easy to conceive what short work a good straight player like Captain Mowry makes of the ring at Gilmore's Garden.

The requirements of polo, then, are as simple as the alphabet. First catch your pony and then train him. Put a good rider on his back, give them an open plain, field or park, and you have one of the most delightful games in the world. The rush of a dozen horsemen after one who has the ball well under control, is riding with it at full gallop straight toward the goal, and when it lies at the distance of a yard from the flags, stoops, aims and misses it, is worth a year of ordinary existence. Moreover, when properly managed, it is one of the safest of field sports. In England it is governed by an unwritten but quite effective code of laws, containing such items as these:—That no more than six players be allowed on each side, that no ponies be admissible over thirteen hands in height, that no sticks be raised in a scrimmage, and that any such foul play as riding into a pony at right angles be severely discountenanced. When the American clubs have agreed to recognize a common body of rules they will be able to get rid of that extraordinary innovation, an umpire, who must be ubiquitous if he is to be useful.

Your obedient servant, M.

SUICIDE OF AN EX-MILLIONNAIRE.

When the ferryboat Hudson City left Jersey City yesterday morning at twenty minutes past eight a man was noticed on the forward deck pacing up and down in an excited manner. Just before the boat reached the slip he stepped over the chain and leaped into the stream. The action was so sudden that the pilot had no time to give the alarm and stop the boat until it had passed over the suicide. The cry of "Man overboard!" brought the passengers and employés swarming to either deck, and the body was seen in the wake of the boat, buoyed up and buffetted about by the swell of the paddles. Some of the deck hands immediately lowered a launch and succeeded in recovering it. At the Twenty-seventh precinct station house, to whither it was removed, it was identified as the body of Daniel Bowley, of No. 90 Academy street, Jersey City.

Six months' ago this Daniel Bowley was a man of means, with an immense income. He was supposed to be worth a couple of millions, but it was difficult to estimate his actual financial condition, as he was interested in so many and so varied enterprises. In spite of the stagnation of trade Bowley's business ventures seemed to prosper until recently when the bubble burst and he became comparatively a poor man. Since that his business troubles preyed on his mind. He became moody, subject to fits of melancholy, and spoke despondingly of life and its prospects. On Saturday evening he went to his office in Broad street, where he remained all night. In the morning he took the ferryboat for Jersey City, staying on board till it made the return trip, when he committed the fatal act.

NEWTON'S CHANNEL.

The Work in Progress at Hell Gate—Honeycombing Flood Rock.

MORE MONEY WANTED.

Condition of the Broken Gneiss at Hallett's Point.

The Hell Gate explosion is a thing of the past, and the memory of it is almost crowded out of the public mind by the thousand and one occurrences which have happened since that notable Sunday when little Mary Newton, with her tiny finger, fired the mine and blasted the great rock at Hallett's Point.

The approaches to the Point are not materially changed. The old, straggling, low-storied structure known as Miller's saloon presents the same characteristics that it did before New York trembled for its safety and the sound of General Newton's signal gun was taken as a warning that there was prospective damage to window panes and ceilings, and when uptown people were more nervous than usual at the chances of a nitro-glycerine earthquake. The curious looking shooting gallery has disappeared; the crippled Teuton, with the Santa Claus twinkle to his eye, and the gray beard is no more heard crying out, "Tree shots for five cents, gentlemen!" and the fence which shut out the curious eyes of the multitude—the fence which was the barrier to all news gatherers, even of the press—lies broken, neglected and scattered over the dreary marsh.

At the left hand of the visitor as he passes the distorted outline of the fence is the landing place for the workmen now employed on Flood Rock, and a rough looking spot it is. There is no elaborate staging, no carefully prepared awning to shield passengers while waiting in wet weather. A few pieces of board nailed to a couple of upright posts are the means of ascent and descent from the little steam launch or the row-boats plying between the point and the rock where the operations are in progress.

NO CESSATION OF LABOR.

Although the public may have lost sight of the work at Hell Gate, active operations have not stopped. The work of dredging is still going on, with a view of completely clearing the channel of all loose rock. As far as can be ascertained the blasting at Hell Gate was well done, and the rock is coming out, much as was expected, though there may be some larger rocks which will necessitate surface blasting. About 500 tons of rock have already been hoisted. When the contractors commence work with new dredges, new grapnels, and their machinery is in good working order, it will be possible to determine how much large rock remains and how much surface blasting will be necessary.

BLASTING FLOOD ROCK.

The work to which especial attention is directed is the destruction of Flood Rock. There are now about eighty men employed, including drillers, blasters, hoisters, clerks, overseers, carpenters, blacksmiths, engineers, firemen, pumpmen, helpers, surveyors, draughtsmen and laborers. When the works are fully organized, there will be at least 300 men employed, but the number at any time must depend entirely on the amount of the appropriation at the disposal of the engineers. They are a rough looking set of men, these workmen, who do the drilling, the cutting and the blasting, all under the water and under the ground. Their faces are rough from exposure, and their hands are brown and hard, while their costume consists of store woollen clothes, and plenty of them, with large, heavy waterproof boots, and they look like wanderers in a New England seaport town, or wreckers upon the Jersey beach after a storm.

The work in progress is under the control of Captain Mercur, general superintendent, and Barney Boyle, of "Explosion Day" fame, is the omnipresent factotum to the Captain and foreman of the workmen. The Captain is pleasant faced, genial and communicative, and he strokes his well trimmed blonde mustache with army regulation complacency, even while being interviewed.

A HERALD reporter visited the works upon a cold day, when the wind was howling about the point and Hell Gate's waters looked angry, but the Captain was snugly ensconsed in his "office" beside a roaring fire, and, in reply to the question of giving a story to the reporter, quietly remarked:—

"You gentlemen of the press have nearly pumped me dry, but there may be some new facts, and the public will look for them in the HERALD. You see," continued the Captain, "what we are doing now, though certainly very effective work, could be rendered more effective if we had more money. If Congress next June makes a sufficient appropriation we can make rapid progress, but if any parsimonious spirit is shown it will retard the work considerably. We are now using the appropriation for the present fiscal year which ends next June. We are doing good work with our present means, and certainly if those means were larger could do better. There are at present five headings in the rock. Two of these headings are, respectively, 150 and 100 feet long; the other three are about 100 feet in the aggregate. These latter headings have been only just commenced."

"But the extent of the rock, Captain," queried our reporter, "seems much larger than it was a few months ago. How do you account for this?"

"Easily enough," said the Captain. "All the rock that is blasted is hoisted from the bottom of the shafts to the surface and dumped on the eastern extremity. This serves a double purpose. The sharp pointed rocks known as the "Gridiron" were a serious danger, and the débris and large pieces taken from the headings and the work generally are thrown directly on the Gridiron, which is on the easterly point of Flood Rock, and, as you can see, these 'heads' as they are called are covered to a great extent. So a valuable piece of work is effected. But there is another reason. We shall have to build engine shops, boiler sheds, machine shops and carpenters' and blacksmiths' shops, with store sheds and offices, upon the rock itself, and we're making ground for this purpose. The blasting operations do not interfere with the surface work, and we must hurry up the 'improvements' we want, as the distance from the Astoria and New York shores to the rock is not a short span, and there's a fearful current on the Astoria side.

"We are 600 feet from Astoria, and 2,600 feet, or nearly, from New York, when we are on Flood Rock, and when we cover up the gridiron heads and dump the broken stone upon the eastern point of Flood Rock, we are doing away with one danger and making good ground to build the shops upon."

WHEN THE WORK BEGAN.

Referring to the present condition of the rock and what it was when the operations began, Captain Mercur said:—"When we started work upon the rock there was a surface at high tide of about 250 square feet above the water; but, as you may see, recent additions have largely increased this."

The rumor current that the rock upon which the men are now working is soft enough to be readily removed by the pick was mentioned to the captain, and the opinions also expressed by some of the engineers that the work could be completed in two years.

"Why," replied the captain, "that story is ridiculous. The rock at Flood Rock is of the same character as that at Hallett's Reef; it is of a gneiss formation, and that is not, as you are aware yourself, noted for its softness. We are compelled to use steam drilling machines to bore the holes into the rock, and then, after these have done their duty, to use Vulcan powder and various nitro-glycerine compounds to blast the rock into pieces suitable for hoisting. Occasionally we use other explosives, experimentally; but their force must be equal to the first two compounds, or they would be useless. Regarding the second point, there are, at least, seven acres of rock to be mined here, and Hallett's Reef, that took years to complete, was not one-half the extent; and, with full appropriations by Congress, it will take more than two years of hard work to honeycomb Flood Rock, with its seven acres of good, hard stone, and get it ready for the final blast."

THE FUTURE OF THE WORK.

We are doing the best we can at present, and are making rapid progress, too, but our future will all depend upon the action of Congress next June. We need money, men and materials. If we get the first, the latter will follow.

Since I have had charge of the operations at Flood Rock there has been about 2,000 yards of rock removed, but this is not all that has been taken from the mines. A large quantity was taken out before I took charge. The actual amount I cannot at present say. We are now removing the rock at the rate of 700 yards per month. I calculate twenty-six working days to the month. The men employed at blasting work from four in the afternoon till eight the next morning. The hoisters, who remove the stone by 'buckets' from the bottom of the shafts to the surface and 'dump' it at the end of the rock work, then follow and work from eight to four. The drillers work all the time, in alternate gangs, straight through the twenty-four hours."

SLIGHT IMPEDIMENTS.

"I presume," said the reporter, "that you have not met with any impediments in the prosecution of this work that are likely to retard you?"

"No; in this respect we have been very fortunate. Our shafts (there are two sunk in the rock—one for hoisting and the other for working purposes) have been kept remarkably free from water, and altogether we have been so far lucky, very lucky, indeed. Last Sunday we met with a slight mishap occasioned by the freezing of the fresh water pipe that supplies the boilers of the steam engine. The Long Island City waterworks shut off the supply, it being Sunday, and the cold snap froze the water remaining in the pipes. Beyond this temporary inconvenience we have had nothing to complain of."

"How are the dredging operations going on at Hallett's Point?" asked the reporter.

"Really, I cannot positively answer that question, sir. The work of dredging the river bed at the scene of the late great "blow up" has been given out by contract to a firm named Seward & Co., of Albany, I believe. I understand that they have just commenced operations, but have not so far been very successful. As to their ultimate success or failure, however, of course I cannot say."

THE QUESTION OF MONEY.

The truest economy would be studied by the grant of a sufficient appropriation to cover the expenses of a full staff of men and the use of the best machinery. To carry on the work efficiently it is important that trained and trustworthy men be employed, and the undertaking suffers in consequence, and not only does it suffer in the working department, but the engineers are prevented from making contracts ahead, while their skill is wasted, inasmuch as they fear to make calculations on a broad and liberal scale. Just now contracts for machinery, labor and necessaries could be entered into with advantage, and the general work planned and carried out with greater success if there was any certainty as to the funds. As it is the engineers are doing the best they can with the limited means in hand.

Since October about 1,600 cubic yards of stone have been drilled, blasted, hoisted and cleared away. This is not as much as might have been done had there been a larger force of men.

THE WORK YET TO BE DONE.

There is much needed work ready for the engineers. The immediate task before them is that of blasting and completely removing Flood Rock, but while this work is in progress the engineers will also give their attention to clearing away Sheldrake Rock, Pot Rock and the débris at Hallett's Point. When all this is done, and not before, vessels will have a wide channel of 1,200 feet and an almost straight course, and unless during the winter the ice floes in the river are large and prevent the use of the boats between the government works and Flood Rock active operations will not be suspended.

SPREAD THE WORD.

The Rev. William J. Tucker gave a lecture last night in the Madison Square Presbyterian church on the Bible, the occasion being the regular meeting of the New York Bible Society. He confined his remarks to the power for good in the Bible and how this power should be used.

The lecturer first quoted the words of St. Paul to the Romans, i., 14—16. It was the honor of Paul that through him God furnished the world with more truth and in a higher degree than through any other inspired writer. It is not so much now the question of establishing this truth as it is of diffusing it that should occupy us. It is a peculiarity of the present age that God is making use of the great centres of thought—the large cities—to diffuse His word. In this regard the New York Bible Society is doing a good work. It has distributed 669 copies of the Bible in public institutions; 57,000 families have been visited during the past eighteen months and 10,000 Bibles distributed among them. Their statistics show that 33,792 volumes have been placed on board 2,735 out-going vessels. These things were only mentioned to show what a field there is for the society. The great question is, whether there is a spirit in man ready to take the Bible and carry it on its work, to seize this great power and carry it to where it will do the most good. The truths of the Bible should be upheld, and spread with that living, glowing enthusiasm that comes out of conviction. Take the spirit of the men of science as an example of this enthusiasm. I know of no men, said the lecturer, who have such an enthusiasm as the men who believe that they have unlocked the secrets of the universe. We should endeavor to propagate the truth, we need not wait; man is our opportunity.

If we are to hold the Bible in the spirit in which it was given we are to hold it in the spirit of indebtedness. We are to estimate this indebtedness by the worth to other men of what we possess ourselves. If there is any man to whom the Bible is of no use we are not indebted to him. The great argument for the Bible is that no man can take it to himself without feeling that it has an inward worth to all the world. Another law of indebtedness is that if you touch a man to his harm you should make recompense for it. How many strangers are there who enter this city and are led to their ruin! Let us strive to counteract this influence. A consequence of this indebtedness is that wherever there is a man to be reached he should be reached.

A HEAVENLY FLOATER.

"'Floating on the clouds of paradise' will be the subject of my discourse this evening," said Dr. S. M. Landis, formerly of Philadelphia, and now, unfortunately, of this city, at the Cooper Institute last evening. "Oxygen, the vivifying principle of life," he continued, "is of medium weight, and, therefore, is found in the centre of the room. Other gases are lighter or heavier. We should lead such natural, physiological lives that we could hold the same position that the beautiful clouds, with silver linings do, undulating and glorious in every particular. Whatever way we float upon these beautiful clouds we find joy and bliss. If we float where saints are, we are intuitively happy; if we float where bigots are, we rejoice that we are there to teach them; if we float where criminals are, we are glad to be there to reform them; and so throughout the multitudinous conditions of society. Paradise is ever the happy condition, and not necessarily a place. For our authorities we will take Blackstone, the king of scientific lawyers, and Jesus Christ, the king of scientific naturalists. Blackstone teaches that all laws made by men must be founded upon the law of nature, first; and, second, upon the law of revelation. The law of nature is the multiplication table, or key to the law of revelation, and by referring to the second chapter of Genesis, sixteenth and seventeenth verses, we find that the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou may'st freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shall not eat of it. For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This passage is strictly in harmony with the laws of our own natures, which I would entitle a sound physiology, and which makes us frugiverous beings. Physiology, likewise, teaches that in oily, mealy and acid fruits we find all the component parts to make nerve, flesh and bone in proper proportion, besides furnishing us with the greater proportion of pure water. Two-thirds of a healthy human person are pure water. This river of water is colored bright red by air and nourishment, making arterial blood, and tinted bluish by taking up the water made by breathing and locomotion called veinous blood. By referring to the first Sermon on the Mount, by Christ, you will read "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father, who is in heaven." Now, the question is, What are good works? The man that manufactures rum, tobacco, gross and medicated food does bad works, while good works only consist in learning to comprehend the science of human life, which is as infallible as the multiplication table, living it out himself and teaching it to the world. If we wish to float upon the beautiful clouds of Paradise we must learn to minister to a body and mind diseased. We must remodel, regenerate and rebuild the human temple, as houses are rebuilt. How is this to be done? By going back to truth and pristine nature and learning to comprehend that the law of cure and the law of growth are one and the same thing, by learning to fast practically, by living more upon the fruits of the earth and less upon flesh and medicated diet.

THE BROOKLYN FIRE RELIEF ASSOCIATION.

The Executive Committee of the Citizens' Organization have adopted the title of "The Brooklyn Theatre Fire Relief Association." The Finance Committee will consist of the Sheriff of Kings county, the Mayor of Brooklyn, and the chairman of the association, who is to be elected annually. There will also be three volunteers of the association elected each year—one to be chosen from the dramatic profession. The Finance Committee will have power to fill vacancies occurring during the intervening meetings of the association. The committee will elect its own officers, and shall have full control over the management of the money collected. All moneys not immediately required are to be invested in the "bonds of the United States or the State of New York," or may be loaned for short periods on collateral security. The money collected is to be applied and disbursed for the benefit of the sufferers by the fire "in such manner and in such amounts as the Finance Committee shall deem best." Reports will be regularly published on the condition of the fund. No person will receive any salary, all work to be done by volunteers, or by such assistance as the Mayor or Sheriff shall be willing to furnish." All meetings are to be called by the Mayor upon requisition of five members of the association. It was originally intended to hold a mass meeting at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in aid of the sufferers on next Tuesday night, but, as the Academy is engaged otherwise for that evening, the meeting will not be held till Thursday, December 21. Rev. Henry Ward Beecher will then be present and address the audience upon the subject of the late calamity. Other prominent speakers are also expected to participate in the meeting. Collections were taken up in many of the churches of various denominations in Brooklyn yesterday forenoon in aid of the theatre sufferers, and it is believed that a generous response was made by the congregations appealed to. At the German Catholic Church of the Holy Trinity, Montrose avenue, upward of $200 was collected. At St. Leonard's church, Rev. J. J. Raber, pastor, Bushwick, the receipts were $40.

ONE OF THE INJURED RECOVERING.

A reporter saw Charles Vine at the City Hospital yesterday afternoon and learned from the physician in attendance that he was improving slowly and in a fair way toward ultimate recovery. Mr. Vine, who is a fine looking Englishman, will be remembered as the individual who jumped from the gallery of the burning theatre to the parquet, on the night of Tuesday, December 5, and, though terribly injured, was rescued.

A BARROOM ENCOUNTER.

Yesterday afternoon John Chappel, of No. 126 Henry street, played a game of billiards in the saloon at No. 118 Centre street with the bartender, William Mangin, alias Bill the Bruiser. A dispute arose between them, when Mangin struck Chappel across the head with the cue, knocking him down, and continuing the blows till he became senseless. Mangin fled and Chappel was taken to the Franklin Street Police Station, and thence to Chambers Street Hospital, where he now lies in a very critical condition. Ward detectives have been sent in quest of the assailant.