

**JOHN C. KELLER,
STOVE MANUFACTURER.**

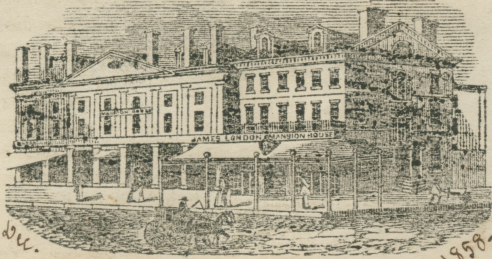


N.E. Cor. of Ridge Avenue & Willow Street,
PHILADELPHIA.

Dec. 28-58-



MANSION HOUSE.



Our "Chips" stirs up the Reporters.

REPORTORIAL HIGHFALUTIN.—We recollect once to have protested to a brother reporter, that his account of an affair, which had excited much public attention, was entirely incorrect, and that it scarcely contained a single properly stated fact. "Why, my dear fellow," responded he, "I know that; people do not read local items to be instructed, they read them to be entertained!" With our Gradgrindish devotion to facts, this declaration seemed like abominable heresy to us; but we said nothing and mused deeply. We perceive that some of our ingenious brethren of the note-book-and-pencil have lately seemed to fall into the views of our friend who had such original ideas of the motives which prompt people to read locals, and they ornament their bare facts with such flourishes and wordy embellishments that the simple truth is hard to find.

By way of a specimen brick of the peculiarity we speak of, we will select the fanciful touches from a report of a fire published recently by a daily contemporary. The facts of the conflagration were simply as follows:—A small house occupied by colored persons took fire, and the flames had obtained considerable headway before they were discovered. A colored woman, who slept in the attic with her little niece, was compelled to pass a burning partition to escape from the house, and in doing so her hair was singed and her hands were scorched. A man and woman also got out of the second story windows. The house was one of a row of similar structures, which were not divided by battlement walls, and the fire crept from one to another until several were damaged. The firemen would not suffer the flames to show themselves above the roof, and they hunted the insidious fire with a good deal of industry, but without a particle of poetic effect or romance. With these commonplace materials, scarcely more romantic than the swabbing of the deck of an oyster boat, or the raking down of a kitchen fire, behold what our imaginative reportorial friend has achieved in the way of a local item, bearing in mind that we only give the choice morsels from the rich dish before us.

After describing the discovery of the fire by the respectable colored inmates of the house, the "moment of terror," and all that sort of thing, our ingenious reporter says:

"Mrs. Becker, while this was going on, procured a quilt or rug, and wrapping it around the sleeping child, picked the yet unconscious little one in her arms, and dashed with desperation through the stifling smoke and flame, down the stairs, the steps of which gave way almost at every tread. On reaching the door of exit, she fell into the arms of the officers. The little girl was saved, but the poor woman, in her heroic exertions to accomplish this desirable object, in which she triumphed, was shockingly burned. Her right clothes took fire, and she appeared to be a mass of living flames as she made her egress from the burning tenement. Her arms, hands, and face, presented a most shocking picture to behold, the skin being peeled off and the blood oozing from the half-burned flesh. Her agony was intense, and as soon as possible she was placed under the care of a physician. On making a closer examination of her injuries it was ascertained that her eyebrows and eyelashes were singed off, and her eyes so much hurt by the flames and smoke that in all probability she may lose the sight of one of them, even if she should survive. Such heroic devotion and fidelity as was evinced by this woman for the safety of a child, and others, under such appalling circumstances, has not often been our lot to record."

"The wind at the time was blowing in fierce and fitful gusts; myriads of sparks were whirled along by each passing current, threatening in their course, property to the leeward; but by the prompt and efficient action of the firemen the owners and occupants soon had their minds relieved from apprehension."

"Taking the whole conflagration into consideration, it was grand and sublime, and at times terrible to look upon."

After this magnificent conflagration was extinguished, or, as our fanciful friend phrased it in his published report, "while the Lebanon street fire was yet smoldering in its ruins," another alarm was given.

The second fire was at the blacksmith shop at Merrick & Son's foundry. As there were no colored folks to save in this building, and no chance for describing stairs giving way under a living burden (when the stairs were, in fact, not damaged at all), or of reveling among blazing night clothes, skin peeled off, and blood oozing from half-burned flesh, our reportorial romancer "spread himself" upon the Hope's steam fire engine. Hear him:

"It was but the work of a moment to put the engine into service. The stream, almost as thick as a flour barrel, was thrown with immense force on the burning roof, and in a short time the lurid glare of the clouds above faded, even quicker than a crimson cloud in the sunset borne."

"At one time the main building was threatened, so fiercely were the flames and sparks whirled by each eddying gust of wind; but the immense amount of water thrown steadily on the burning combustibles, soon checked the further progress of the fire."

A steam fire engine throwing a stream "almost as thick as a flour barrel!" We put the words in italics in the extract from the item. The reader will appreciate the vastness of the hyperbole, and infer the magnificent exaggeration of the whole affair from this obvious specimen.

Mr. Russell, the famous Crimean correspondent of the London Times, was generally conceded to be a pretty fair hand at a description. The immortal Don Quixotte had imaginative powers sufficient to construe a windmill into a giant, a barber's basin into a helmet, and a flock of innocent sheep into a horde of remorseless robbers; but in the way of high-colored descriptions and fantastical imaginings, some of the reporters for the Philadelphia press put a complete extinguisher upon the Times man, and upon the lanky hero of La Mancha. We suppose it is all right, particularly if, as our friend first referred to says, people read local items to be entertained and not to be instructed.

Dec. 23-58

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THE POLICE INSPECTION.—We have already stated that a Commission appointed by the Academy of Natural Sciences, have in hand the inspection of the police force with a view to ascertaining the average physical condition of the men of this city. The inspection is progressing rapidly, and several of the divisions have gone through the testing ordeal. From some particulars which have leaked out, it is evident that there are some "good tall fellows" on the Police force. Of thirty men, who form what is known as the Reserve Corps, there are six who weigh over 200 pounds each. One of the six weighs 247 pounds. The tallest of the party is six feet three inches in height, and the stoutest measures 48½ inches around the chest. Last evening the men of the Fifth Ward division were inspected. One man in that division is six feet two and a quarter inches in height, and another weighs 230 pounds. Officer Charman took the palm as the best "blower," having "done" his 300 inches with the dynamometer or lung-Tester.