

THE EFFICIENCY OF STEAM FIRE ENGINES.—The destructive fire in the Twelfth Ward, yesterday, furnished a powerful evidence of the immense superiority of steam fire engines over the old fashioned hand apparatus. The fire commenced in a large factory which extended, irregularly, around a hollow square. The flames ran speedily through the combustible material in the buildings, and before it was in the power of man to stop the fire, a range of buildings, nearly two hundred feet in extent, were blazing and threatening to involve in destruction all the property in its neighborhood. The snow on the ground interfered seriously with the movements of the firemen, and when the latter got to work they were compelled to direct their exertions to the saving of the adjoining property, and to leave the burning portions of the factory buildings to their fate. Three of the steam fire engines subsequently arrived on the ground, and went into service, and they extinguished the flames which had been checked by the old fashioned apparatus. We were particularly struck with the performance of the "Young America" in the hands of the members of the Diligent Fire Company, on the occasion of what we believe was its first actual service since it was placed in the hands of the Diligent.

The engine was stationed convenient to a plug on Fourth street, above Brown, about half a square distant from the scene of conflagration. An attachment of very large gutta percha hose was run directly into the yard in the centre of the burning buildings, and word was given to start the engine. In a moment the water came on, and a perfect deluge was poured over the blazing mass. The fire was still creeping along the roofs of the buildings to portions which had not yet taken fire, and the immense body of water was directed wherever it was needed. Shingles were torn up by the fierce stream as though it had instinct, and was eager to struggle with its opposing element, and no trace of fire was left where this deluge of water was once directed. The side streams from the hand engines looked, in comparison, like the spitting of garden hose, and some of the small streams were very irregular, for the men at the brakes had become wearied out, and volunteers were not willing to take their places at the engines and stand almost knee-deep in slush while performing hard labor. There was no flagging on the part of the steamers; and up to the time the last spark of the conflagration was drowned out, their streams were as powerful and as regular as they were at the outset. Had the fire burned for days the steamers would only have had to be well fed with wood and water to have continued their important work without cessation.

The introduction of steam fire engines calls for an increase of the facilities for supplying water from fire plugs. The water mains are not sufficiently capacious, in the first place, and even if they were large enough the old-fashioned plugs will not furnish water as rapidly as the steamers will discharge it if their full power is exerted. A number of the newly invented plugs which are suitable for the use of either steam or hand engines should be placed in all parts of the city, and measures should be adopted to increase the supply of water to them.

Jan 7-59 Jan 5-59

STRANGE TASTE.—The New York Tribune sneers at the idea of having the head of an "Indian Squaw" to represent the "Goddess of Liberty," on the new cent, and expresses a desire that the head of a "nigger" feminine may be put upon our gold coins, and that of a "nigger" masculine upon the silver ones.

We do not think that changing the "heads" of our coins would make much difference to the Tribune, for it has so habituated itself to one idea that it can only see a "nigger," no matter what object comes in its view.

The New Hotel.—The large structure at Ninth and Chesnut streets is going upwards as rapidly as the weather will permit. The third story of the Chesnut street front is up, while the cornice is in its place on the greater portion of the western and southern sides. The cost of the building when completed will be about \$300,000. The edifice has already been leased to the well known hotel proprietor, Mr. Parson Stevens, of Boston, for a term of twelve years at an annual rent of \$40,000. The hotel is to be placed in the hands of the lessee on the 1st of February, 1860. It is said that sufficient funds have been subscribed to defray all expenses.

Jan 8-59 Jan 28-59

SABBATH SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY AT ST. PAUL'S CHURCH.—One of the most interesting of this class of church services we have ever attended, was held in St. Paul's (Episcopal) Church, Third street below Walnut, on last Sabbath afternoon, on the occasion of the forty-third Anniversary of the Sabbath school connected with that church. There were about five hundred children present, the entire church being crowded with a congregation to witness the exercises. Inside the chancel were eight clergymen of the Episcopal church, and Dr. Patton, of the Congregational church.

The address by the Rector of St. Paul's—Rev. Richard Newton, D. D.—was characterized throughout with that facility for entertaining and instructing the minds of children which that clergyman so eminently possesses; his subject was "The best loan—a loan to God." At the close of the discourse the missionary offerings were presented, which amounted to the large sum of \$2,614 18—a very handsome contribution, certainly, for one year, of a single Sabbath school.

The progress of these offerings was highly interesting. Each class was called by its missionary name, when one of its members—generally its youngest—stepped forward and presented in a neatly designed casket the collection of that class for the year. One of these offerings was in the form of a mustard tree, the fruit on it being represented by gold dollars. Another was presented in a little basket, containing five barley leaves and two small fishes. Another was presented in a tiny model of a sloop, the cargo consisting of ninety dollars in gold, accompanied by an invoice. The Dudley A. Tyng class presented its offering with the following inscription wrought upon it: "We have not been long from the infant school, but our teacher hopes we will soon all learn to 'Stand up for Jesus.'" One hundred and fifty-two dollars were presented in a life-boat, named "The Faith," manned by ten sailors, in commemoration of one of the vessels of the gallant Kane.

When this was presented, Dr. Newton gave the children a brief account of the five sailors on board the Tuscarora, on her last voyage to Liverpool, who nobly risked their lives to rescue twelve sailors from a watery grave who were clinging to a wrecked vessel which they met, and proposed that they should present each of those five brave men with a handsome copy of the Bible when they arrive in our port; which suggestion was agreed to by the children by a unanimous vote. Two thank-offerings were presented, amounting to two hundred dollars, as a mark of gratitude that the ties between the pastor and people of this church, which lately came near being sundered, still remained unbroken.

A COLD MORNING.—The mercury rarely succeeds, in this latitude, in shrinking almost entirely into its thermometrical bulb, and marking zero on the weather scale. This morning it accomplished the feat, and even some considerable time after sunrise it ranged from zero to five and six degrees below that point, according to the exposed positions in which the thermometers were placed. The effect of this excessive cold was to congeal all bodies of water that were not of great depth, or which had not too rapid currents, and the ice men are already making ready to commence operations. In the docks of the Delaware a good deal of ice formed, and the wheels of the ferry boats were clogged with it.

There was not much loitering in the streets this morning, and those who were compelled to go abroad and face the cutting wind, muffled themselves up as completely as possible, and ran along at a dog-trot. Heads were drawn down into standing coat collars in the terrapin style; hands were plunged elbow-deep into overcoat pockets; the wearers of full beards had their mouths surrounded with an icy wreath—the condensations from their moist breath—and all noses were adorned with a glittering drop. The weather is cold, bitterly cold, and the hard season has now come when the very poor suffer most for the want of those ordinary comforts which are so much needed at a time when the weather is so severe.

The weather grew colder after daylight. Near the Tioga Street Station of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the thermometer stood at 2 degrees below zero at 7 o'clock. At 8 o'clock it stood at 2 degrees below at the same place. We were assured that at Germantown the mercury stood at 10 degrees below zero, in an exposed situation, at eight o'clock. A self-registering thermometer, in the southwestern part of the city, indicated 6 degrees below zero, which it had attained during the night. At 7 o'clock this morning, in the same location, it was at 5 degrees below zero. At McAllister's, Chestnut street, below Eighth, the thermometer at 7 o'clock was at zero. It went down lower subsequently. The Schuylkill is frozen over, and another such a night as last night will, we fancy, form ice sufficiently thick to cut.

Below Bristol the Delaware is tight, and below there is considerable floating ice, but not sufficient to interfere with the navigation opposite the city and below it. The up-river steamboats were laid up on Saturday.

The mercury at Mount Airy stood at ten degrees below zero, this morning.

We heard of an old gentleman who has for several years past, carefully noted the degrees of heat and cold by placing a thermometer out of his chamber window, and in the morning recorded the results of his observations in a book kept for the purpose. Last night, before retiring, he opened his window and hung in the accustomed place what he supposed was the trusty little thermometer. His chagrin can be more easily imagined than described, when, on inspection, he discovered that, instead of the thermometer, he had hung out a small spring balance, very much resembling the weather indicator in appearance, but being sadly deficient in the mercurial appendages. Whether the balance was placed in the room accidentally, or for the purpose of playing a trick on the old gentleman, deponent saith not, but the record will fail to note at least one bitter cold night this winter.

Jan 10-59

Feb 2-1859

Telegraphic Conciseness.—At the celebration of Franklin's birthday, Mr. W. H. Fry responded to the toast of the Telegraph, the Pen and the Press. In speaking of the Telegraph, he said he thought it would have a beneficent effect in correcting our tendency to verbosity. A friend of his went, the other day, to St. Louis, and, wishing to be especially endearing, sent a despatch to his wife, asking, "What have you for breakfast, and how is the baby?" She telegraphed back, "Buckwheat cakes and the measles."

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