

# Intelligencer.

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LANTCASTER, PA., December 28, 1882.

A New Point To An Old Law.

The grand jury of New York has found an indictment for manslaughter against Charles W. Pierce, superintendent of the Brush Electric Light company, in causing the death by electricity of Henry Harris, a clerk in a store who was killed while carrying into the store from the sidewalk a show case whose top touched a low hanging electric light that was not properly insulated. The jury finds that Pierce's duty as superintendent was to see that the electric lamp was properly hung and that its insulation was perfect.

No objection can be reasonably made to the soundness of the proposition that anyone who by his neglect causes the death of another, may be held accountable thereto by the criminal law; for this objection that it is not naturally done, when the criminal is the employee of a corporation; which doubtless is due to the fact that the fault is in the corporation's rather than the officer's, and the corporation directors are not held responsible, because of the condition of public sentiment which treats their very culpable neglect with a degree of forbearance that it is hard to account for.

Who will deny the abstract proposition that the directors of the Brush Electric Light company, in maintaining wires conveying a death dealing amount of electricity, are the real parties responsible for the deaths they cause; and that the superintendent, whose failure to note defect in the apparatus was the immediate cause of the fatality, is guilty in much less degree than are those who entrusted to him a thing that no ordinary care would make safe?

When the case of this superintendent comes before a jury and it appears that he had no knowledge of the lack of insulation in this lamp and that he could not have knowledge at every moment of the state of every part of the many miles of wires and of the many hundred of lamps under his charge, it will say that the fault is in the dangerous system that was given to this man's superintendence, and that the really guilty parties are the men who established it and who maintain it for their gain.

It is high time that the directors of public works should be held to a criminal responsibility for their failure to establish and conduct them in a manner that will be as safe as the existing condition of human knowledge can secure. This indictment in New York is in the right direction; when the superintendents fall into the toils the directors cannot longer be behind. Suppose that the railroad superintendent should be indicted for a loss of life caused by his failure to provide safeguards that would have avoided it; he will show that this neglect was in the railroad directors. What then could save them from jail, under the new recognition of the old law that makes men criminally liable for the fatal consequences of their neglect to conduct their business with reasonable precautions against such disasters? How many railroad directors would be out of jail to-day if this law was applied to the consequences of their failure to put safety couplers upon their freight cars? Brakemen are daily slain upon the best and richest roads in the country, in going between cars in order to couple them together; when there are many well known devices that render such dangerous exposure unnecessary. A failure to promptly provide such a couple upon every car, as soon as its utility was discovered, is certainly such neglect upon the part of a railroad management as to make the continued slaughter of brakemen a criminal act on their part. But as brakemen are cheap and plenty, new men standing ready in crowds to fill the dead men's shoes, the slaughter goes on, and the last conception of duty that a railroad manager has is the protection of the lives of his employees. The passenger, who is able to reach the railroad treasury in case of its neglect, has greatest attention given to his safe carriage; but there is nothing to spare in the interest shown even in him.

La Grippe.

The cable news is getting hot upon the influenza question—which is about all that it deals with in these days; and that may be the reason that it brings us such blood curdling reports of its ravages. When the disease was spreading we were assured that it was only disagreeable and not dangerous, but now we hear that its victims are numbered by the thousand. Presently we may be made to fear it more than the cholera.

Some people say we have it among us here, but up to date we have no reports of fatalities. Colds are abundant, as usual, but now are dignified as the fashionable disease, when they have a feverish accompaniment; as they generally will have with nervous people who feel sure that they have a grippe as soon as they begin to sneeze.

The doctors say that there is nothing very new about this latest European infection in the way of disease, and that we have had it always amongst us. It is a cold with variations; only the variations are decidedly disagreeable.

The latest information about it is that it strikes most severely weak lungs and weak constitutions; which is valuable information concerning it, showing, as it does, that it is a disease which follows the fashion of all diseases in striking the weakest hardest. It would really be terrifying to be told of a disease that was particularly solicitous to demolish the heartiest persons and let the weak ones off.

Indirect Taxation.

Senator Stanford went to Canada for a Christmas trip, and has been telling a mournful reporter what he knows about the tariff and other things. He says that the people of the United States would not put up with direct taxation. This is a very remarkable statement to come from a senator of the United States

and a millionaire of California who knows that the people, and himself among them, do now stand direct taxation for local and state purposes, and have often borne heavy national taxation of the kind. He probably means that the people would not relish paying down to a tax collector the money they now pay in the increased cost of taxed goods. But this is not without doubt right. Men like to be bamboozled. Indirect taxation is not so obtrusive and, the amount being equal, it is natural to prefer it to the direct method. There is more resentment felt towards the man who picks a pocket for a dollar than towards the man who gains that dollar by tricks of trade. But because indirect taxation is so easily levied there is always danger that it will be, as it now is, greatly in excess of the needs of the government. It is well for the purity of government and the safety of our institutions that taxation should be so felt that no more shall be levied than is absolutely necessary for the legitimate expenses of the government economically administered. In America our growing industries need protection from European cheap labor and this justifies indirect protective taxation, but a people trained in self government should be so regulated as to do its work without piling up a dangerous surplus, complicating financial difficulties and smothering commerce.

THIS MORNING the twentieth anniversary of the organization of the Knights of Labor, but the vigorous youth of the order seems long past.

PHOTOGRAPH, Germany and Italy will press against the naturalization of foreigners by the Brazilian government. It is understood that no term of residence or other restriction will hereafter be imposed by Brazil, but that all foreigners who are willing to become Brazilian citizens may do so.

A NATIVE Congress of Indian potentates now in session at Bombay is being watched with great interest by the English and appears to deserve attention. It has just agreed upon a scheme of home rule for India which Mr. Bradlaugh has promised to introduce in the British Parliament. The essential features are that there shall be a popular representative body formed upon the basis of twelve members for every million of the population, controlled by an inner one selected from its own number, and an imperial council.

KATE FIELD'S WASHINGTON, VOL. 1, No. 1 is about the size of the old "Forney's Progress," which had for a time a brilliant career in the field that may now be taken by this publication. It is certainly a little startling to see a woman's name in heavy type at the top of a journal's title page, but Kate Field aims at startling effect and generally hits it. In fact she announces in the first paragraph that her paper is pledged not to be conventional in any respect. She says that the name of the publication was chosen by advice of Miss Gilder, of *The Critic*, and by the same advice it is printed by contract. This wise advice is thus repeated: "You've no knowledge of practical printing. There is hardly a weekly paper in New York that does its own printing. This is true also of every magazine except *Harper's*. Your paper can be printed by contract. Then you'll have nothing on your mind but in make-up and advertising." This is true and forcible, and there is no reason why weeklies should not multiply and doles do their printing. They are not in rival lines and can work very well together. The INTELLIGENCER with its complete and improved facilities for publication does a great deal of work of this kind to the satisfaction of all concerned.

"Twas Johnny's turn to break his pie: He said, with unctuous hand, "Under a spreading blackthorn tree The village chestnut stands!" —From *Puck*.

THE "National Conservatory of Music" announces examinations for entrance early in January for classes in singing, piano, violin, chorus and orchestra. This institution, at 128 East 17th street, New York, has been liberally endowed with the object of placing the best obtainable musical education within the reach of all, and as it offers instruction free, if circumstances warrant, it should bring to light plenty of musical genius. Of course charges are made in all but very needy cases, but the conservatory seems to have a just claim to consideration as established for the advancement of musical art and not for profit.

The institution is open to those of every race, creed and color, upon the one condition that they give proof of sufficient natural talent to justify the examiners in admitting them. The successful candidates will enjoy the tuition of the best teachers that can be engaged, and, after graduation, will be afforded opportunities of making known their accomplishments and thus securing engagements."

Why Money Failed.

THE following interesting story of a leading citizen of Hartford is told in a paper of ample wealth and is fond alike of fish and fishing. With a party of friends he drove out into the country on a fishing expedition. As they neared the pond they met a small boy, beaming with the pride of success, who carried in triumph an immense black bass which he had caught. It was one of the rare five-pounders.

"Here, my boy," said Mr. B. "I'll give you 50 cents for that fish."

"No, sir," said the boy. "I guess not."

"My boy, I must have him," he said.

"Come and give you \$5 for him. Let me have him."

"Mister," said the youthful fisherman, "you hasn't got enough money to buy that fish for I'm goin' to eat him."

He did, with unctuous hand,

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