The Sun.

VOL. XLIV.—NO. 117. NEW YORK, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1876. PRICE TWO CENTS.

CHRISTMAS IN NEW YORK.

WHERE THE DAY WAS MOST PICTURESQUE AND ENJOYABLE.

Elaborate Evergreen and Exotic Adornment in the Houses of Worship—The Dinners in the Institutions—What was Really Worth Seeing Everywhere in and Near the City.

The Roman Catholics have pretty generally given up the holding of midnight masses at Christmas tide owing to the possibility that the services may be interrupted by carnival parties making the spectacle their last resort before returning to their homes. Postponed as it is until three or four o'clock in the morning, the mass is less likely to be marred by unwelcome attendance, all wassailers that are not in bed by that time being in the police stations. The practice thus abandoned has, however, despite its drawbacks, been taken up by the High Church Episcopalians who follow in the wake of the Roman Catholics as close as the Rubric allows. In all the Ritualistic churches, yesterday, services were held at midnight and in every case there was a large attendance. Owing to the length of the ten o'clock vesper service, it was a little past twelve o'clock when, what Dr. Ewer, Sunday morning, had not scrupled to call the "midnight mass," was begun in the church of St. Ignatius, in West Fortieth street. The auditorium was filled to overflowing, the majority of the attendants at the previous service remaining through the long two hours of the "mass." The interior of the edifice was trimmed with rare good taste. Gothic arches of evergreen surmounted by a Roman cross in gilt, with the legend "Christ is born in Bethlehem" in gilt and red letters, spanned the front of the chancel, and great booths of green, like pent houses, overhung the doors. The side walls were hung with evergreen arches and banners of white silk embroidered with gold, each with an appropriate legend. The altar was ablaze with candles, and the imposing ceremonies were those of the Church of Rome rather than those of the Church of England. In the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the chancel was crowded for more than half an hour with the participants, those who had received being followed the latter full devoutly kneeling until their turn came. During the celebration the congregation knelt. At the communion a wafer was used but it was placed in the hand and not on the tongue of the communicant.

The churches of St. Paul's and St. Chrysostom were brilliant with 128 candles and gas jets, and the music by a double choir was magnificent. The high mass was celebrated by Cardinal McCloskey, whose vestments, as well as those of the assisting priests, were of cloth of gold. The cardinal wore his red vestments, and under his exterior array, and on his head were, successively, the golden mitre, the red berretta, and the red skull cap. The last was on a cushion in the chancel, being worn only when he merely sits on the throne and does not officiate. The assisting priests were Vic Pro-Rector Quinn, Fathers Kane and Hogan, Father Morris, deacon of the mass, the Rev. Mr. Allearn, sub-deacon, and the Rev. Mr. Boddy, crucifer. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr. Kelly.

St. Thomas's church was decorated with simple but exquisite tastefulness. In the chancel were tall cedar trees, so many as actually to conceal the walls almost up to the stained glass windows. Along the galleries, at projecting points of the gallery fronts, from the supporting pillars, and in the chancel, were massive trusses of fir, cedar, and laurel were displayed. All the lines and angles of the gallery trusses were relieved with edgings of evergreens. Trailing lines and foliage adorned the lectern and reading desk, and the air was heavy with the balsamic aroma of the evergreens. The choral celebration was begun at 6 o'clock A. M. by Mr. A. F. Foulkrod's rendering of Christmas hymns and carols on St. Thomas's carillon. By a little after 10 o'clock the house was well filled with the children of the Sunday school. After the opening hymn, "Sing we merry Christmas," the Rev. Dr. Wm. F. Morgan, Rector, addressed them, and a Christmas cantata was read responsively by the Rector and the children. The remainder of the morning exercises was mainly musical, including the Christmas hymn of Luther, "Vom himmel hoch, da komm ich her," "Hark! the herald angels sing," "What child is this," "The Christmas chimes," and "A child this day is born." A very pleasing effect was produced in the accompaniment by the hanging of the melodious chimes, which are known as the silver bells, played by Mr. H. Warren—with the music of the organ. At the more important services at 11 o'clock the house was filled to overflowing. There were in the choir forty-two adults and thirteen choir boys. The soloists were Mrs. Mary D. Guion, soprano; Miss Emily Winant, contralto; Mr. Ed. B. Sewell, tenor; Mr. Thomas P. Wickes, basso. Mr. George Wm. Warren officiated at the organ, assisted by Mr. F. A. Schneider; Mr. A. F. Foulkrod was the baritone. The Rev. Dr. Morgan read the Christmas sermon from the text, Revelations xxii., 16.

Grace church was handsomely decorated. From the arches, pillars and walls, evergreens hung in festoons. The table of genius the chancel was covered with white, and against the dark background were three large crosses made of white pampas grass. The font was filled with flowers. The services were conducted by the rector, the Rev. Dr. Henry C. Potter. The music was under the direction of the organist, Mr. S. P. Tuckerman.

Apart from the stated service, the exercises in St. Bartholomew's church were entirely music. Mr. George A. Warren and G. J. Elvey, organist to her Majesty in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, played the organ, and there was a fortnight's rehearsal of the choir, composed of Messrs. Bischoff, Remmerz, Love, and Steiner, and Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Hill, Mrs. Clark, and Miss Dunne, choir. A harp and chimes were used on occasion. The attendance was so great that, long before the beginning of the exercises, every pew, not even excepting room, the chancel, altar, and lectern were be vily draped with evergreen, trimming and wreaths, and on a pure white table-cloth stood an elaborate cross, surrounded by the massive silver service from which communion was administered.

The marble altars of St. Stephen's blazed with light. The floral ornaments on them were red and white rosebuds, in triangles, symbolic of the Trinity. Evergreen trees spread their branches over the altars, and cords of evergreen, set with red rosebuds, connected the pinnacles of the main altar and the pillars of the galleries. The Star of Bethlehem shone on high in the arch of the chancel. Beneath the great mission-cross, on the gospel side of the altar, by the Infant Jesus on a mound of coarse straw, under a crude, sparsely thatched roof. Twelve twinkled in a semi-circle before Hon. Father McGrady, assisted by Fathers McCready and Byron, sat, dais. Forty acolytes, in white cassocks, the seams hained out in cardinal silk, lace surplices, crossed by sashes of fringed cardinal silk and white slippers and gloves, attended the priests. An orchestra of voices, stringed instruments, assisted by Professor Carl Dufriche, delighted the great congregation. Dr. McGlynn preached. He had written an appeal for generous contribution to the collection, which, as in all other Roman Catholic churches, yesterday, was for the orphans.

The services at St. Paul's were awake an hour too soon, and consequently for the Christmas service, opened at 11 A. M., he failed the first violently at 10 o'clock. Service, however, was not begun until 11. The decorations were simple and effective, merely an evergreen frame in every window, the pillars of the church and garlands connecting up through to the pulpit and festooned over the industrial tables that reset in the walls. The Rev. S. Alsentin Chapin preached. The peculiarity services were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Hedges and James Mulchey. The double quartet, consisting of Mrs. Fraser, soprano; Mrs. Kemble, alto; H. R. Humphries, tenor, and J. Palmer, bass, Dr. Carl Choir; and Miss E. Childs, soprano; Miss A. De La Montanye, alto; R. Lambert, tenor, and S. P. Tuckerman, organist, sang the "Te Deum" and "Benedictus," in B flat by the organist; the anthem "The Angel Gabriel was sent" by Henry Smart; also as offertory the "Blessed be the Lord God Israel," by Farrs.

There were four services at Trinity Church. At 7 o'clock the sacrament of communion was administered to the English-speaking members; at 8 the German members of the congregation communed; at 9½ there was morning prayer; and from 10½ to 11 a full choral service brought out all the musical talent of the church. There was a double choir of forty, accompanied by the church organ and the great organ in the east gallery. The opening voluntary, played by Mr. Henry Carter, was Field's finale and variations. Then followed the mass in E flat, by Hummel, Gounod's Christmas Anthem, Gauck's "Holy Night," Dr. Boyce's "Hallelujah," Mozart's Benedictus, and the closing voluntary, Beethoven's second Symphony, by the orchestra, under Mr. Carter. Dr. Morgan Dix, the rector, delivered a short and terse appropriate to the occasion; and previous to the services Mr. Arthur Mees, organist of Trinity, gave a recital of tunes which were listened to by hundreds thronga on the sidewalks. The church was decorated with evergreens, and on both sides of the chancel large crosses were displayed.

Christ's church was in its usual grace, but, how, with unknown to your reporter, the usual to fall to be the delightful carried with views in the Howard Mission at about 1 o'clock. The order was given not to soon. An open window over their heads had been closing the poor little creatures, and the cold air on the minutes they had been obliged to stand within sight of the promised land, flowing with bees, apple, and bread, waiting for the far-off grace that was no spoken. It is to be hoped that the rest of the 800 children who enjoyed the hospitalities of the Mission were more quickly served. In addition to the 800 children, 200 poor persons who exist in the neighborhood shared the Mission's stews.

In the Five Points Mission no dinner was served, but in its stead, at about half-past 10, between 700 and 800 boys and girls had big bags of nuts, raisins, and candies distributed among them, and every one received a toy from the Christmas trees, together with a goodly allowance of flour. So weighty were the Christmas boxes, indeed, that the smaller children could not carry theirs home, and had to send their mothers and fathers for the flour later in the day.

The festivities in the House of Industry were begun at about 2 in the afternoon with a really excellent entertainment furnished by the 400 children of the institution. Its chief feature was the representation of a thunder storm that was marvellously real. Turkey in abundance with other substantial dainties crowded the dinner tables, and the gifts of the Christmas trees were many and costly.

The forty inmates of the Girls' Lodging House in St. Mark's place, had turkey and plum pudding, and, in the evening, presents of clothing. The games, recitations, and refreshments in the evening were participated in by twenty additional girls, for whom situations had been found. The institution gives free board and instruction for six months to a constantly replenished class of ten pupils in dressmaking, and teaches the use of the sewing machine gratis to any outsiders that may apply.

The Wilson Industrial School for Girls, also in St. Mark's place, will celebrate Christmas on Friday next, and will thankfully receive any second-hand Christmas trees that may be sent. The institution is a day school for poor girls who cannot regularly attend the public schools, and gives them a free dinner every day, and clothing also.

The boys of St Vincent's Home had a glorious Christmas. The first mass was said at 4 o'clock, A. M. At about 8:30 o'clock clothing was distributed, and at about 2 o'clock nearly 50 boys marched into the lecture-hall, which had been beautifully decorated, and sat down to a bountiful dinner that had been provided by Matthew Leary, Esq.

The managers of the "Old Gentlemen's Unsectarian Home" gave its inmates a bountiful dinner and a musical entertainment.

Lebanon Sunday School, in Columbia street gave its 250 children a collation.

St. Barnabas Home, in Houston street, gave dinners to its Sunday school, its industrial school, its forty female inmates, and to the boys frequenting the free reading room—300 in all. It also gave dinners of turkeys and vegetables to about sixty families for consumption in their homes. The Sunday school children will enjoy their Christmas tree in St. Ann's Episcopal Church on Thursday evening next, and the Christmas tree for the inmates is to be planted at the House on the following evening.

For the boys of the Rivington street Lodging House wreaths of evergreens and pots of rare flowers were sent from the hot house of Mrs. Calder, the wife of the Superintendent, Mr. George Calder. At about 2 o'clock 150 boys, all uniformed in bright red shirts, presented as a Christmas gift by Messrs. M. D. and A. D. Smith, were given a bountiful dinner of turkey, presented by Major Philip Schuyler.

Three hundred newsboys Imperilled their Water Street quarters to a bountiful dinner given in that evening by the wealthy importer and philanthropist, William M. Fiess, in the Newsboys' Lodging House.

All the wards in the Roosevelt Hospital were decorated with wreaths of greens and flowers, and the chapel was a bower of evergreens, and on the altar was a cross made of choice flowers. Every sick room had a small Christmas tree, covered with gilt prints and presents. Dinner was given to 164 patients. In the evening a select choir under the direction of Mr. William Dennis sang Christmas music.

The matrons of the Sheltering Arms, at 129th street and Tenth avenue, gave their children an excellent dinner. On Thursday next the children are to have their Christmas tree.

Mr. H. L. Stuart supplied the money for a dinner and Christmas tree for the Protestant Half Orphan Asylum in Tenth street.

The new home of the Holy Infirmery, branch of the St. James Industrial School, under the direction of the Rev. F. H. Farrelly, was opened with a dinner to over two hundred poor children of the fourth ward. Dinners are to be given to the children every day this week, and on Tuesday next the school is to be opened.

The inmates of the city's charitable and correctional institutions were well supplied with Christmas cheer and dinners. In the Tombs yesterday, the Rev. Mr. Betker conducted services from the bridge in the main corridor. The women attended services in the chapel. Promptly at noon the poultry dinner was served to prisoners in the yard, and there was enough for every one of the 445 prisoners. Bellevue Hospital added a few delicacies to its bill of fare, and so did the Charity Hospital. The musical entertainments enlivened the evening. The patients in the fever and erysipelas pavilions were treated with as much good cheer as the physicians would allow. The services in the hospital were performed by Father Vetter, a Roman Catholic clergyman, and the Rev. R. H. Bourne, an Episcopalian. In the fever wards the patients had a mild repast from work, and a holiday dinner was served. Father Vetter said mass early in the day, and other clergymen followed him with brief sermons. In the Almshouse Father Chambron said mass at 4 A. M., and the Rev. Mr. Searles, a Methodist, and the Rev. Messrs. Bourne and French, Episcopalians, officiated later in the day, and a Christmas dinner was served. The Workhouse prisoners, numbering over 1,000, also had a good dinner, and were ministered to by Father Chambron, and by the Rev. Mr. French. The Lunatic Asylum furnished the most conspicuous examples of delighted people and demonstrative gratitude. Their dinner was followed by a characteristic dance in their little theatre. Sumptuous meals were given to all the inmates of the Penitentiary on Hart's Island. The children in the Nursery on Randall's Island Mrs. Wm. H. Wickham and Mr. Gibbons presented dolls and other toys.

The old John Street M. E. Church was brilliant last evening on the occasion of the Christmas anniversary of the Sunday school. After the entertainment a collation was served.

In Jersey City there was a signal celebration of the day by services in the churches. The Episcopal houses of worship were lavishly decorated. The musical programmes attracted many to the services in St. Ann's Chapel where Dudley Buck, the Centennial Festival composer, plays the organ. Mrs. Kate Reed was the soprano. One feature of the programme was an ancient melody sung to the litany hymn, "Hear our Salem Litany." Dr. Noah Hunt Schenck preached the sermon. In the Church of the Messiah, at Greene and Clermont avenues, there was a joyful service in which Arbuckle, with his cornet, and Miss Emma T. Thursby, took part. Miss Thursby sang the recitatives, "There were Shepherds," "Lo, the angel of the Lord," "And the angel said," "And suddenly there was with the angel," "Glory to God," and "Hallelujah" choruses from the Messiah. In Christ Church, at Clinton and Harrison streets, three quartets, with Miss Esther Burton as soloist, and a chorus of twenty-five joined in a musical programme. In the Catholic churches there were the usual masses, and in each church the sweet notes of "Adeste Fideles" were reproduced, in King's carols, of tribes in all the city. In St. Peter's Church, in the musical programme, arranged by Augustine Cocchia, the organist, was the grand mass of Alexandre Guilmant, the organist of Trinity Church, Paris, that had not before been sung in America.

The Christmas of the jail occupants was made pleasanter by an extra meal and a supply of cigars and cider. The 600 inmates of the penitentiary were given an extra meal, and in the Essex and county buildings an effort was made to add a little cheer to the dull life of the patients and the unfortunate.

In services in the Roman Catholic Churches of Jersey City there especially impressive. In St. Mary's the decorations were unsurpassed for richness and elegance of design. The solid mass of the altar was covered in evergreen, and in front of the sanctuary was a festooned arch, with variegated flowers, surmounted by a cross of camellias and tuberoses, ornamented with small x. On the left of the shrine of the virgin was a miniature cave of Bethlehem, with two angels on the wing and an ox and an ass in the background, grounded with roses. The pillars were draped in festoons of evergreen and smilax, as were the chancel rail and organ loft. Father Rence celebrated mass.

In St. Aloysius Church Vicar-Gen. Fathers Vietto, Lawrence, and Palmer celebrated mass and vespers. Thousands visited the church to look at the crib, arranged near the altar, containing a babe in wax representing the infant Jesus. In the background was a picture of the Madonna and Child Bethlehem. The crib was sent from France at considerable expense, and may be seen for seven days.

The inmates of the Penitentiary, Almshouse, and Asylum for Lunatics, at Snake Hill, were treated with turkey and the luxuries of the holiday. The members of the Board of Freeholders visited the asylum, and Conklin's band played while the lunatics danced on the main floor of the reception ward.

When the convicts in Sing Sing prison were called out for breakfast yesterday an oyster stew with coffee, coffee with milk and sugar, and wheat bread were given to them. At 10 o'clock they were again brought from their cells, and, in silence unbroken except by their tread, they took their rations of corned beef with a rusk, two apples, and four ounces of cheese. This was the Christmas dinner to be served subsequently to their cells. There was no religious service.

The noticeable, distinguishing, and sympathetic character of New York's Christmas yesterday, was the absence of target festivals, grand, gray omnibuses, or mammoth sleigh-loads of poor people to be entertained at a day's recreative pleasure. It was plain that this meant hard times for the poor. Men without work cannot afford to play. Politicians, who, at other corresponding seasons, were wont to get up pleasures for the people, and afterward to rain sleet upon the pleasured weather is still a threat long. In short the poor are feeling the condition of things that is the legitimate harvest of a nearly finished term of bad national administration.

NEW YORKERS ON SKATES.

WHERE THE CHRISTMAS DAY FUN WAS AT ITS JOLLIEST.

One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Visitors to the Central Park—All the Public and Private Ponds Covered with Merry Skaters.

Such a Christmas for skaters as yesterday was, has not been seen in New York for many a year. Every skating pond in the parks glittered with smooth ice, and rang with the merry laughter of the skaters. Central Park in its most gorgeous summer hues never attracted a greater multitude of pleasure seekers than were on its snowy avenues and its ice-covered lake yesterday. The park police estimated the number of visitors on foot at nearly 150,000, of whom 100,000, or more, were skaters. Then about 15,000 sleighs, the police say, entered the park gates. The day was perfect for skating. No sun to blind the eyes, or to soften the steely surface of the ice; no wind to pierce through warm wrappings, or to interfere with the fine figures of professional skaters; no "cold wave" to bite the ears and noses of the pleasure seekers. The temperature was just that for enjoyable skating. The very atmosphere seemed tuned to carry the most melodious sounds from the jingling bells and the ringing skates, and infinitely to multiply and prolong them.

Early in the morning boys and men and a few girls, with skates slung over their backs, began to wend their way to the Central Park lake, where twenty acres of beautiful, blue, crystalline ice lay smooth as a mirror awaiting them. Gradually the number increased. They arrived by twos, by fours, by the dozen, in flocks, on foot and in sleighs, old and young, rich and poor, wrapped in furs, and shivering in their cheap cloth. By 3 o'clock P. M. the lake was almost black with human beings, sliding, gliding, circling, pirouetting, backward and forward, round and round, twisting and turning about one another in a wonderful maze of motion, and the whole moving field changing and shifting its colors like a view in a kaleidoscope. The low, wooded hills shutting the Lake in echoed with merry laughter, and over the surrounding roads shot the sleighs and cutters with their bells and their delighted loads of merry-makers.

On Prospect Park lake you heard a musical hum unlike any other, as though millions of tiny silver bells were ringing all together in the resonant air. It was the music of thousands of skates cutting the flinty ice.

It was intimated that 10,000 or more skaters were on the lake at one time. From the where the whole flat surface seemed to be covered with gayly dressed men, women, and children. Little boys glided around in chase of one another under the shoulders of the larger skaters. Men and women, boys and girls, played tag in apparently impossible ways, bravely escaped knocking one another, and everybody around them from their feet. There was many laughing, rosy-cheeked girls, hand-in-hand, sweep gracefully in a train over the ice. In one place an expert skater, with his arms akimbo, resembled astonishing transformations of the "inside" and "outside edge," making his two steel-shod feet do the work of twenty, and getting a round of applause for risking his neck in impossible feats. In another place a pair of lovers glided gracefully hand-in-hand, keeping time to the music as naturally and unconcernedly as though the lake were a quiet parlor. The upstart, with his unnecessary eyeglass and his dancing master's gestures; the miss just learning to skate, and screaming violently every time she puts her foot down; the old veteran, with his bald head and his companions; the belle who knows how to skate and flirt at the same time; the small boy whose pleasure is in a straight course and reckless speed; and the dignified middle-aged man, who scates as if he feared his dignity takes no risks for its sake of showing off—these were some of the children.

The police had not so much as a broken leg or a cracked skull to care for, and only three pickpockets were arrested during the day although sharpers were plenty on the lake in the afternoon.

At 6 P. M. the ice, whose surface was then covered two or three inches thick with a fine ice dust ground up by the skates, was cleared for the night, and the skaters wended their way homeward.

On the Harlem lake, a sheet of twelve acres in the upper part of the park, thousands enjoyed the skating.

Prospect Park lake was not entirely ready for skating yesterday. The fine twenty-acre at the upper end of the lake was not finished, and the ice, although very good in places, was cracked and in some spots full of dangerous hollows. But the fine bracing air drew out thousands of skaters, and from 10 o'clock to 3 o'clock they enjoyed the exercise to their heart's delight. Unlike Central Park, which is divided into two main lakes with rounded shores, and separated by a narrow strait, the Prospect Park lake is narrow and winds about among the most picturesque little hills, covered with native growth of trees. Among these trees, whose leafless branches are almost as round and soft, on account of their innumerous gray twigs and branches, as when covered with summer foliage, wind roads and paths, and these were alive with gay sleighing parties.

The skaters good-naturedly made the best of such ice as they found. The cracks and holes in it did not much trouble the plain skaters, who wanted nothing better than to glide straight ahead on their narrow runners, and they added diversion to their sport by making the clumsy figures of the professional skaters. When a "fancy man" whirled himself like a top on one skate, and wrote Spencerian on the ice with the other the plain folks only gazed and wondered, but when in the middle of a graceful turn on the "serpentine" he suddenly sat down and began backward into a hole, and thereupon performed a series of old-fashioned somersaults, the spectators held their sides to laugh, and thought it the best part of the show.

The Mount Skating Park, in Madison avenue, near Forty-second street, was the animated scene when several hundred skaters congregated on its acre and a quarter of smooth ice. It is shut out from view by high fences. It was kept open until half past 10 last night, and was covered with skaters all the time. An immense torch at the entrance to the park on Madison avenue and the lower end threw a glaring light over the ice, and the frozen crystals that streamed from the strokes of the flashing steel runners glowed with all the colors of the rainbow.

All the other parks in the city, ponds and rinks in New York and Brooklyn were covered with happy skaters. It was everywhere emphatically a holiday on the ice.

PRIZE BOWLING IN HOBOKEN.

The Catcher of the Mutual Base Ball Club Carrying Away the Trophy.

The great bowling match that had been in preparation for weeks between the clubs of New York and New Jersey was contested yesterday in Gerdt's Otto Cottage Hotel, Hoboken. The alleys were crowded with players, and among the spectators were many politicians of Jersey City and Hoboken. Mayor Russell and Recorder Bohnstedt were among those representing Hoboken. The games began early in the morning, and it was nearly dark before the last ball was thrown. Beer flowed freely, and the utmost harmony prevailed.

Among the clubs that struggled for the honors were the Atlantic of Hoboken, the Young Germania of New York, the Hudson of Hoboken, Young Men's Social of Hoboken, Gracelers of New York, Germania of New York, Enterprisers of New York, Castle Point of Hoboken, Gotham of New York, Wednesday Evening of New York, Saturday Night of New York, and the German American of Jersey City.

The Atlantic Club of Hoboken led the score at 849. The Young Germania had 836, and the Young Germania 832, Castle Point at 835, and the Growlers and Gramercy tied at 340. The others were below 340.

In playing off a tie on N. W. Hicks, catcher of the Mutual Base Ball Club, and member of the Atlantic Bowling Club of Hoboken, won the prize, a handsome solid silver flagon, weighing fourteen ounces. His score was 198 out of a possible 120, which was considered remarkable bowling. The games ended in a feast.

HAVOC IN A BOILER HOUSE.

An Explosion that Causes a Loss of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars.

OIL CITY, PA., Dec. 25.—At 2 P. M. to-day the boiler-house of the American Transfer Company's station took fire, and was followed by the explosion of the boiler, which was thrown against an iron tank containing about 15,000 gallons of oil, burst the tank and setting the oil on fire. The loss of oil is about 5,000 barrels. Five hundred barrels were destroyed, two of which were owned by McWhinney Bros., two by Cocolane and one by the American Transfer Company. There were also five Erie Railway boiler cars burned. The loss is estimated at $200,000, which is partially covered by insurance. The American Transfer Company will commence rebuilding at once.

The Murderers of Mr. Birch.

SINGAPORE, Dec. 25.—The Maraja Lela and six others, implicated in the murder of Mr Birch, the British resident in the Malacca settlements, some months ago, have been sentenced to be hanged. Five prisoners the sentence will be commuted.

Cognac bottled at Jonzac distilleries; also in wood. Victor R. Slemmer, sole importer, 119 Reade st.

CATCHING A MARINE TARTAR.

Some New Yorkers off the Coast of Florida Measuring the Devil.

MAYPORT, Fla., Dec. 20.—The New York Aquarium has for some time had an expedition in Florida for the special purpose of capturing a shark, or devil fish, for its tanks. In the way of excitement, mosquito bites, and chronic duckings, we have had the full worth of our money; but the last mentioned monster has played the adjective part of himself with us.

He is variously known here as the sea-devil, the unicorn devil, and the red-devil; all of these names are well chosen. When we first arrived on the shore of this marine hades, an extremely dark darkey informed us that here was the home of the monster, and that he grew to unknown dimensions. In our mind's eye we saw his huge form wending up Broadway, followed by small boys innumerable. The fish in question is a huge ray, that often reaches a width of twenty feet. He has a long, whip-like tail, and, as we subsequently found, is about as pleasant to meet as a roaring lion. No net was strong enough to hold him, and he would not take any notice of a shark hook.

In a dark hour we decided to try the effect of a spear in one of his side wings, that we supposed would heal quickly. Our boat was a dug-out, the forward part of which had been extended downward to the entire neglect of the beam, so that we were just able to fit in, five in a row, after the manner of a huge coffin. We pushed off, and moved down the shore, the man in the bow, harpoon in hand, thirsty for the fray. A large shoal of mullets were jumping ahead of us, about half a mile off, and in the centre of them a heavy wave was seen moving around that told of something out of the common run. Coming nearer, the man in the bow whispered that it was the devil fish himself, and no mistake.

We drew closer and closer, until a huge black spot was visible. We rose up to look, and at the same moment the man threw the harpoon. For the next moment all was a dreary void. The immense creature rose from the water like an exploding torpedo, and came down like the weight of a pile driver, one wing striking our boat in the bow, crushing the frightened darkey into both lee and windward scuppers at once, coating him over with a beautiful coat of paint, and threatening to serve us in the same manner, floats and jetsam. Yells of "Cut the rope" and "Get to the windward," whereever that was, were heard above the rush of water and hiss of the line that was going out at a rate of forty miles an hour, our brave harpooner keeping time in a wonderful series of back and head posturing in his attempts to keep clear of it. As near as I could judge we were headed for Spain, but full of water and one man missing. Looking around, we discovered him standing up to his waist on a shoal not a mile off. He had been picked up by a passing boat, and there on the shoal he remained for over an hour, feeling, as he told us, like a condemned lighthouse. It takes risks.

It was evident something must be done, and a second boat was sent after the fish to haul the line, or dually we threw buoys to our men who gave us signs of giving out. It was evident that he never could be caught live, so the agony was increased by a fresh harpoon in his back. This brought the fish, and we gradually came down to a point where we could see the spray from the fish and yells from the men, we got fairly over him and sent a third line whale harpoon into him. Next minute the long whip of a tail came over the boat, striking old Ham, a colored man, and causing a general and nasty sliding down. Ham was the only one hurt, he had all his black mass, about three miles from where we started, victorious, but yet not happy. That one lash of the tail had laid one man's cheek open to the bone and broken the skin completely around his head; another was prostrative food for crabs, and the balance of the boat's crew of us came out of the race without bangs and bruises enough to start a fair prize fight.

We cut a silk handkerchief, in one wing, and in two hours had our fish on the edge of the sand. A mule was tied to his tail, and the great devil fish for the New York Aquarium was floated to the sea, dead as the traditional door nail. We measured him, and found from wing to wing eighteen and a half feet, and from the tip of the tail to the nose twenty-three feet. The tail alone was eleven feet long, and as large at the base as a man's wrist, tapering down to a most delicate lash. Immediately above the base of the tail are three bony serrated stings that are terrible weapons of defence.

Sharks are found in Tampa bay in the summer of much greater dimensions; but we do not complain. This one was quite large enough for us. We only wish our friends in New York could have seen him.

Fernandina was troubled with sharks with poor results. Mr. Brockmeir, where we succeeded in capturing a pair of huge fellows, that have already been mentioned in THE SUN. The cold spell came in, on us, however, and the sharks died on our hands. Others were caught and served in the same manner, but this has almost devastated this fish, we fear, so far as to show the extent of the cold, in Tampa Bay thousands of fish were picked up dead upon the beach—the beautiful anglesh side by side with sawfish, sharks, etc.

SMASHING A BANK.

A Gas Explosion that Shattered the Windows in Cedar Street.

At about six o'clock last evening, as Edward W. Condon, a messenger of the American Exchange National Bank, was sitting in the banking-office, he smelt escaping gas, and, fancying that there might be a leak in the gas meter, at which plumbers had been at work in the afternoon, he went down into the room in the rear basement to examine the meter. There being no light in the room, he struck a match and applied it to a gas jet near the meter. The act was instantly followed by an explosion that was heard throughout the lower part of the city. The iron bolts on the doors opening to the banking-office and to the alley in the rear of the banking-house were bent nearly double, and the walls and the furniture in the office overhead were shattered and otherwise damaged. Through the windows burst a volume of burning gas a foot in diameter, filling the atmosphere with its pungent odor. The panes in the six windows in the Cedar street front of the banking-house were broken and blown in small pieces into the street.

Condon was stunned and knocked down, his whiskers were singed, and his face, neck, and hands were burned by the gas, and his head was cut out by plaster that fell from the ceiling. He was taken to the Chambers Street Hospital.

So violent was the concussion that it awoke to frightened life nearly every pane in the forty five windows in the Cedar street front of the Equitable Life Assurance Company's building, and damaged the windows in the Internal Revenue building, at 81 Cedar street, and in the British American Assurance Company's building, at 81 Cedar street. Nearly all of the window panes broken were of plate glass. The damage is estimated at $10,000.

GEN. STEINMETZ'S DOUBLE.

Who Made Much Trouble by Representing Himself as Another Man.

The personator of Gen. Steinmetz was arrested last night in Williamsburgh. He caused the General such trouble and a law suit, by writing letters to Amelia Kurn and Metta Scribber, and signing Steinmetz's name, also in representing that he was Steinmetz. He was arrested last May on the General's complaint, but fled to Germany, jumping his bonds. In August he returned, and victimized, it is alleged, Mr. Mr. Michael Hetzman, a jeweler, of 518 Broadway, out of $152, by signing on false representations two gold watches and a gold chain. From John Brockmeir, a tailor of 51 Grand avenue, he stole a coat. Last night Mr. Brockmeir had him arrested. Officer Worth recognized him. He described himself as Julius Alwin Wurnbe. When questioned about the trouble he had brought upon the General, he denied that he had purposely given the General's name, saying: "I was on the lookout for a broken coat, in answer to an advertisement in the Herald. Seeing that the President was in Ninth street, New York, I saw right away what she was, and did not on introducing myself give my right name. Metta is a fortune teller. We went to Mrs. Kaiser's house at 212 Second avenue. I think, and had a good time, and then left until the Kaiser came home. He is a letter carrier. I then left the house. When I heard the trouble these women were giving the General, I called on him and made an exposition. That is all there is to it."

Mr. Hetzman on being informed of the arrest made complaint against him for stealing the two watches.

Shooting in a Barroom.

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn., Dec. 25.—George Pease and Chas. Smith quarrelled in the latter's saloon to-day. Pease went to a gun store, procured a pistol, returned and fired Smith in three places. Smith fired twice, wounding Pease twice. Both are supposed fatally injured.

GOODWINE'S AT $1.25 A GAL.—Rhine, claret, sherry, port, Madeira, Malaga, Catawba, Cognac, Jamaica rum, Holland gin, Old Tom, Monongahela rye, whiskey, at Goodwine's, 111 Fulton street, and 207 Washington street, basement.—Adv.

NEW PLAYS ON THE BOARDS

TWO VERY ATTRACTIVE NOVELTIES FOR HOLIDAY WEEK.

Romance from the Seventeenth Century Presented in Booth's Theatre—The Kiralfys in a Brilliant Spectacle in Niblo's Garden.

As a contrast to the rich glitter of "Sardanapalus" and "King Lear," Booth's Theatre presented, last night, in "Daniel Druce," a simple village story, appropriately mounted and well acted. The piece is in three acts. The scenes embrace a hut, a blacksmith's shop, and a cottage. With the exception of a few soldiers in red and yellow coats and a richly arrayed nobleman, the characters are rural. The humor was afforded by Mr. J. W. Jennings, who illustrated what might have been the dandyism of two centuries ago.

The pith of the story is that *Daniel Druce*, an English blacksmith of the seventeenth century, lost his wife *Dorothy* at the moment when she has discovered the promise of an heir. He does not know the particulars of her flight, and consoles himself in his despair solely with amassing money. His wife has eloped with *Sir Jasper Combe*, a colonel in the army of Charles I. Four years afterward, pursued with his sergeant, *Reuben Haines*, by the troopers of Cromwell, he takes refuge with his companion and his wife's child in the hut of *Druce*, who, on going out to seek food for them, betrays their hiding place. *Haines*, who goes to seek *Druce*, returns with the news of their betrayal, and *Combe*, taking sixty golden pounds that he has discovered in *Druce's* dwelling, and placing a chain and locket on the neck of the child, departs with his Sergeant. Before his departure he pins a paper to the child's dress, requesting *Druce* to take care of her, and adding that his gold has taken her form.

Druce had not previously seen the little one. She had been sleeping in wrappers. He had long prayed that his treasure might be transmuted into a child, and believes in his simplicity that his prayer has been miraculously answered. He renews his happiness in the companionship of his adopted daughter, whom he names *Dorothy*, and fourteen years pass. *Combe* escaped into France, whither the child's mother preceded him, but she died in Paris, leaving that the child had not been brought.

In the second act *Druce* is living in another section of country, and *Combe* purchases the surrounding estate. Although not at first recognizing *Druce* nor *Dorothy*, it is evident that he misses the latter. He wishes to take *Dorothy* to his home, but she refuses. He then informs *Druce* that he was the betrayer of his wife, but that *Dorothy* is his own daughter. *Dorothy* claims the rage of her father, brings about a reconciliation, and married to *Godfrey Wingfield*, a young suitor, whom *Combe* makes the steward of his property.

Mr. Lawrence Barrett gave to *Druce* all the power that the part demanded.

"Azurine, or a Voyage to the Earth," is the title of a burlesque extravaganza produced by the Kiralfy brothers at Niblo's Garden, yesterday. It boasts a plot, a feature that is lacking in nearly all the spectacular plays presented within the past few years, and a better recommendation is that it contains nothing worse. The element of the piece is very beautiful, the action good; and while there is an abundance of real humor in it, the ballet, which in most plays of the kind forms the chief attraction, takes up no more of the spectator's time than the intelligent reader cares to extend upon it. The dancing by Miles. De Rosa, Latarnier, and Gang is much better than the average, and these graceful and athletic artistes are well supported by a troupe of coryphees almost a hundred in number.

Miss Florence Hills, with the advantage of a pretty face, good figure, a sweet voice, and much grace of movement, plays the part of *Azurine* to the manifest satisfaction of the house; Miss Marion Fiske, as *Eolin*, is bright, quick, and sparkling; W. H. Fitzgerald makes the most of Jupiter; and W. H. Lytell, as *Aquilloent, the North Wind*, overflows with crisp, and mellow humor, and keeps his audience on the broad grin all the time. The gentlemen who represent the amorous turtle, the sea bass, the eel, the perch, the periwinkle, oyster, and the waltzing cephalopod, are not famed in the bills; but justice requires that they should be mentioned with praise as lending no little aid in rendering "Azurine" a most enjoyable play for the holidays.

HIPPODROME SPORTS.

The Boston Club Winning the Honors at Polo over the Californians.

An abundance of sport was given in the Hippodrome yesterday afternoon and evening. The first event was the polo game of the Californian and Boston teams. The Boston Reds won.

In the trotting race, for $100, the contestants were John Murphy's ro. g. Frank, William Gallagher's b. g. Frank, and Thos. Walker's bl'k g. Yorkville Boy. Bay Frank won the first heat in 2:46¾; roan Frank took the second in 2:41¾; bay Frank won the third and fourth heats, and trot in 2:42½ and 2:45. In the third heat roan Frank wrenched his ankle, and was drawn. Yorkville Boy was awarded second money.

For the grand Mustang hurdle race, half-mile heats, two out of three hurdles, four started. Bayou won in 1:10½ and 1:11.

The evening polo game, by the California and Boston clubs, was won by the latter by a score of 6 to 2. The trotting was for $100, mile heats, best 3 in 5, under the saddle, four started—Frank, Myron Perry and Fred Tyler. Myron Perry won the trot in three straight heats, in 2:44½, 2:45 and 2:47½. The second was a hurdle race, best two in three, over seven hurdles. Wide Awake, Village Blacksmith, and Jack Horner started. Village Blacksmith won the first heat for the second time in 1:06. The second was a dead heat between Jack Horner and Wide Awake in 1:09. Jack Horner won the third heat from Village Blacksmith by a neck. The rider of Wide Awake was thrown heavily, but was not injured. The fourth heat and race was won by Village Blacksmith in 1:07½.

THE EASTERN CONFERENCE.

**An Adjournment Until Thursday—Sir