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**ARCHITECTURE OF THEATRES.**

A hand, *facile princeps* in such matters, sends the following hints on this subject to the editors of the New Orleans *Picayune*, which seem to us worthy of consideration: **37-1**

I perceive that a plan for a new theatre at Philadelphia has been decided upon. I presume that the plan for the new theatre in New Orleans, to replace Placide's Varieties, will shortly be selected. I trust that some person practically acquainted with theatrical architecture will be consulted before any definite resolution is come to upon this point. Architects know nothing of theatres; if brought into contact with the merest stage-carpenter, they would betray the most complete ignorance of even the names, much less the ordinary requirements, of the stage. All the architect thinks of is the comfort of the audience—that they may have room, a clear view of the stage, and, he hopes, may hear well. But these are the very last things to be considered. I dare say your readers may be startled at this assertion; but I repeat it. Who goes to the theatre that he may simply stretch his legs? Who ever selects an evening's amusement at a particular theatre, because in that theatre he can see one or two feet more of the stage than he can in another? What theatre in the world has ever been condemned and deserted because the audience could not hear in it? Not one. The public go to the theatre to see the performance, and they will prefer a good performance and reasonable comfort, to a slovenly dull performance and all the comfort to enable them to go to sleep. Now, sir, to insure a good performance, the first essential is, the proper disposition of all those rooms that serve as offices and receptacles for stage purposes. A convenient scene dock, whose scenery, when it has served its purpose on the stage, may be instantly and easily shifted; a handy property-room and closet; a quick change dressing-room; a green-room with double doors. These rooms must be on the stage floor. These are self-evident matters to a theatrical man; yet such is the utter and gross ignorance of the architect, that he never stops to inquire the stage requisites, but crams them higglety-pigglety into his plan afterwards. What is the result? Long waits between the acts, bad set scenes, imperfect working of all the machinery. Then the critics say the theatre is badly managed. No. It is simply—badly built; for it was built by an architect who knew nothing about it, and whose plan was selected by a committee of gentlemen who knew less. Even in the great new Boston theatre, which cost \$250,000—of which \$100,000 were spent in pulling down and rectifying stupid mistakes—well, in this model theatre the property-room is down two flights of stairs in the cellar; the green-room, such as it is, is on the wrong side of the stage; and there is no scene dock at all. I tell you, sir, that there is not a single theatre in the United States which is not the contempt of its stage carpenter, in consequence of its bad arrangement. And what is the result of this bad economy? Why, nothing is ever in its place; everything is smudge and smear, and hurry and patch, and scramble and mess; everything goes to rack and ruin; the architect only exhibiting one instance of foresight, and that is—he always takes care that there shall be no windows on the stage that can throw any light on that dark scene of riot and wanton destruction, of which he alone is the author. I fearlessly appeal to every actor, stage-manager, prompter and stage carpenter in the Union; to say if I have not spoken the truth.

Yours, &c., **CALL-BOY.**

**POLITICAL FEELING.**—Much excitement prevailed among the members of the "American" party yesterday, on account of the defeat of the caucus nomination in Councils, for Chief Engineer of the Water Works, Mr. Frederick Erdman. Threats were freely made against the "bolters," and "dodgers," and a general "flare-up" was anticipated. Those who take things more philosophically asserted, as a relief, that the Democratic members had been seduced into the support of a man who is a member of one of the American Orders. **37-2**

**LOCAL AFFAIRS.**

**Want of Water.**—In some parts of the city, but more particularly the northern and western sections of the Twentieth Ward, and in portions of the old district of Spring Garden, the supply of water is insufficient. Upon some days of the week there is especially the case, and on Saturdays there is a clean stop of the water. In vain does the patient housewife urge the lever of the hydrant in the yard. If she happen to forget that this is the day for a short crop, or none at all, she is in a terrible plight for want of the means to wash up and fix things for Sunday. It may be, that, late in the afternoon she is enabled to get a few drops. She is not as fortunate as some who, in other parts of the city, open their wash-pans at 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning and keep the water running until 11 o'clock, if not later in the day, to the annoyance of passers-by, and to the prejudice of those who are without the necessary supply. We say prejudice of these, because, when complaints are made, the excuse is given, "that so much is used in the city. Here is a matter for City Councils to look at and apply a corrective. This is not as it should be. The water-rent payers in those sections are as much entitled to a sufficiency of water as others, and they have great cause of complaint against the authorities of the city.

This however, is not the whole of the evil. The property owners and residents of these sections are not protected against fire. Many of the fire-plugs when opened are as dry as a plug. How often have we heard it said and saw it reported, that the firemen could do much on account of the scarcity of water. The public authorities should look to this matter. Can the city expect that people with a quarter or half supply of water will pay as much into the city treasury, as those who are fully supplied. This want of water has affected the public interests by preventing improvements, and to a great degree has inflicted great private injury. A year or two ago, a project was started to secure a proper supply of water to these sections, particularly the northwestern, by laying another main, but for some reason the work was not done. Under the new government it was hoped the matter would receive early attention, and the comforts and interests of a large number of our people advanced by prompt action on the part of the city authorities. **37-3**

Let us have *More Light*.—For a year or more contests in the Councils upon the

**LOCAL MATTERS.**

**Waste of Water.**—On Monday morning, a communication from Mr. Graeff, Engineer of the Water Department addressed to the Mayor, was read to the Lieutenants. Mr. Graeff complains that the Fire Plugs are allowed to run, thereby causing an unnecessary waste of water, at this the very season of the year that it is most difficult to keep a supply in the Reservoir. He further complains that Police officers, in most instances, are the ones that start the plugs. After the reading of the communication, Lt. Mecke, of the Eleventh Ward, informed the Marshal, that he had received permission from Mr. McMahon, the Register of Water, to allow plugs to run in the various alleys in his Ward. The Lieutenant further stated that no provision is made for the removal of offal in his Ward, consequently it is thrown into the street, and cannot better be removed under the circumstances than by washing it away by means of the Fire Plugs.

We thing the statement of the Lieutenant, that offal is suffered to lay about the alleys, is perfectly correct, and approve of allowing the plugs to run in them to purify them. If Mr. Graeff wishes to do the most good with the smallest quantity of water, we suggest to him that he issue an order preventing the daily waste of water used in unnecessarily washing pavements. If this evil is stopped there will be an abundance of water to wash out the filthy lanes and alleys throughout the city. There is no city in the world where more water is wasted than in our good city of Philadelphia. If a window is to be washed, the water is turned on and allowed to run into the gutter, both while the servants are holding a long conversation with their neighboring "help," and long after the glass has been cleaned. It requires in many instances hours to cleanse front door steps and pavements, during all which time the water is permitted to flow with a perfect looseness, without fault being found, yet when the alleys are knee deep with offal, well calculated to breed some horrible disease, fault is found if a plug is allowed to run a few minutes to wash it away and purify the atmosphere, breathed by hundreds who must necessarily live in our courts and lanes. **37-4**

in Convention, and elected the following gentlemen as heads of departments:—

For Chief Commissioner of City Property—Geo. J. Hamilton received 50 votes; Paul Pohl, 43; and R. A. Parrish 3. Mr. Hamilton was declared duly elected. **37-5**

For Chief Commissioner of Highways—Thomas Birch, 23; A. J. Westler, 42. Mr. Birch was declared duly elected.

For Chief Engineer of the Water Department—Frederick Graeff, 49; Frederick Erdman, 45. Mr. Graeff was, therefore, declared duly elected. Considerable applause was manifested in the gallery at the announcement of Mr. Graeff's election.

For Commissioner of Wharves and Landings—James Horner, 51; Joseph Horniker, 40. Mr. Horner was declared duly elected.

The consideration of the bill reducing the taxes

*July 29/55*

**MUST'N'T WASTE WATER.**—The Water Department has directed the attention of the Mayor, and through him, of the police, to the waste of water daily practised all over the city, particularly in the old districts. Allowing the fire-plugs to run is considered, by the Department, a great evil. Unfortunate citizens! No scavengers to clean the streets, and water too scarce to permit its use in washing away filth. In the present position of affairs an occasional flood will be a providential visit. **37-6**

The several Know-Nothing Councils of Philadelphia are at present in a happy state of conflict. It will be recollected by our readers that FREDERICK GRAEFF, Esq., was recently elected Chief Engineer of the Water Works, which post he had long filled with distinguished ability, over the caucus nomination of the Know-Nothing party, FREDERICK ERDMAN. This fact excited the most bitter malignity in the minds of the bigoted members of the Secret Order, against several honorable and high-minded gentlemen, who regarded their own self-respect and conscientious feelings, as of much more consequence than the mandates of the Secret Lodges to which they, in a moment of thoughtlessness, had joined themselves. In the joint Convention of Councils, Mr. GRAEFF received 49 votes, and Mr. ERDMAN 45 votes. There were absent from the Select Council, ALBERT J. WATERMAN, THOMAS J. PERKINS, DANIEL S. BRIDEMAN, BENJ. R. MILLER, and JEREMIAH L. HUTCHINSON. From the Common Council, RICHARD M. BERRY and ALFRED HOPPEL. Five members of the Secret Order voted for Mr. GRAEFF, as follows: PETER A. KEYSER, ALGERNON S. ROBERTS, and NATHAN HILLES, of the Select Council, and HIRAM MILLER and JOHN M'MULLIN, of the Common Council. These five are all gentlemen of respectability and intelligence, and could scarcely be expected to be long controlled by the ignorant and designing members of their respective Ward Lodges. Their vote for Mr. GRAEFF provoked the most violent censure among the proscriptive crew, and we believe they are all to be expelled from the Order.

On Monday night last, the Fifteenth Ward Lodge expelled HIRAM MILLER for voting for Mr. GRAEFF. We understand that twenty gentlemen thereupon immediately withdrew from the Order. Mr. MILLER was formerly a Democrat. He is a gentleman of fine abilities, large property, and great respectability, and it was a matter of sincere regret to us, when we heard that he had joined the Secret Order. No man in the community maintains a higher character for probity and philanthropy than HIRAM MILLER, and we regard the attempt of the Fifteenth Ward Lodge to heap indignity upon him, as impotent in the extreme. Wherever he is known, he is respected, and the expulsion of such gentlemen from the Order, will ensure its speedy destruction. It is in contemplation to expel the other members who voted for Mr. GRAEFF.—"Whom the Gods wish to destroy," was never more applicable than in the case now before us. The reputation of Mr. MILLER is unblemished, and it will take something more than an expulsion from a Know-Nothing Lodge, because he refused to be a slave in both body and mind, to tarnish it.

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