

A SUBWAY MANHOLE EXPLOSION FOLLOWED BY A GAS FIRE.

On Friday, June 13, a gas explosion, followed by a conflagration of many hours' duration, took place on the corner of Broadway and Fulton Street, in this city, which is the worst of the many street explosions which have yet occurred here. For a number of days a gang of men in the service of the New York Steam Heating Company had been at work at this locality excavating the street where one of their manholes is situated. The excavation had been pushed to a considerable depth below the lines of water and gas mains, and the workmen early on Friday morning, having finished their work, were filling the excavation. At about 3:30 A. M. a gas explosion occurred. Stones and bricks were sent flying in all directions from the neighborhood of the electric subway manhole across the street. Complaints of gas leakages in the neighborhood have been frequent. After the explosion it was found that there was enough of a leakage to maintain a considerable flame from the neighborhood of the manhole. It seems to have been left to itself, as it continued to burn for some time until it suddenly increased, and for a number of hours a blaze higher than a man was produced, which indicated a consumption of perhaps 5,000 feet an hour. The sudden increase is attributed to the melting of the lead calking of the gas mains. The original cause of the fire is supposed to have been an overturned lamp. One of the workmen is believed to have upset a lamp, which, falling down into the trench, lighted the gas and caused the original explosion.

As the gas companies' representatives reached the scene they commenced bagging the mains in the vicinity. Small holes were made in the pipes and India rubber bags were inserted, which were then expanded by air or by water forced into them. In this way the gas was gradually cut off, and the fire was eventually extinguished.

The damage done to the electric subways and to the wires in them was very great. A quantity of the structure is wrecked. Much of the wire is destroyed, and the loss is placed as high as \$70,000. The whole occurrence emphasizes the necessity for some better system of subterranean distribution of light, heat, and electric energy than this city now possesses. The present electric subways with leaky gas mains near them are a constant source of danger. The excavations made by the steam company in the present case undoubtedly disturbed the overlying gas pipes, and caused leaks which were largely responsible for the extent of damage and of risk to life and property.

Uses for Coffee.

It is asserted by men of high professional ability that when the system needs a stimulant, nothing equals a cup of fresh coffee. Those who desire to rescue the drunkard from his cups will find no better substitute for spirits than strong new-made coffee, without milk or sugar. Two ounces of coffee, or one-eighth of a pound, to one pint of boiling water makes a first-class beverage, but the water must be boiling, not merely hot. Bitterness comes from boiling too long. If the coffee required for breakfast be put in a granitized kettle overnight, and a pint of cold water poured over it, it can be heated to just the boiling point, and then set back to prevent further ebullition, when it will be found that while the strength is extracted, its delicate aroma is preserved. As our country consumes nearly ten pounds of coffee per capita, it is a pity not to have it made in the best manner. It is asserted by those who have tried it that malaria and epidemics are avoided by those who drink a cup of hot coffee before venturing into the morning air. Burned on hot coals it is a disinfectant for a sick room. By some of our best physicians it is considered a specific in typhoid fever.—*The Epicure.*

IN a recent speech Congressman Atkinson, of West Virginia, said: "If all the ports of entry on both oceans were to-day blockaded so that no vessel could enter them bearing the products of other countries, and war should be declared against us, we could, with our present facilities, produce every munition of war, and every article that we might need for our sustenance for a thousand years."

Consumption.

We adverted recently to the apparent anomaly that, while it is impossible to trace any direct connection between climatic peculiarities and the prevalence of phthisis, there is a practical unanimity of opinion that no remedy for that disease possesses an efficacy at all comparable to change of residence. A fuller consideration of this paradox will not be without interest and profit. The problem is to account for what we take to be accepted facts—viz., that, on the one hand, phthisis prevails in all countries and in every variety of climate, that St. Petersburg and Naples, Glasgow and Madrid, Bombay and Melbourne, New York and New Orleans, show an approximately similar mortality from this disease; while, on the other hand, all experience proves that change of residence involving change of climate generally effects some good, except in advanced and hopeless cases, and that, after making every deduction for its numerous failures, it remains our most potent therapeutic resource. It was too long the current opinion that when a patient benefited by a sea voyage or a visit to Davos, Colorado, Algeria, or Egypt, it was because he had exchanged a damp climate for a dry one, or a cold for a warm one, and it was somewhat carelessly assumed that the British

logical feature has any preponderant efficacy, and that we must rather look to the *tout ensemble*, the general features of a climate, and its net influence upon the system. Thus, a climate, advantageous by reason of possessing a high average of bright, sunny days, may be spoiled for the purposes of the phthisical by sudden perturbations of temperature, or by high winds, or by dust storms. On the other hand, equability, which is so desirable, may be purchased too dearly if, as for instance in the Hebrides, it is found in conjunction with almost constant rain and a minimum of sunshine. The sufferer from phthisis requires, speaking broadly, sunshine, fair equability, shelter from much wind, especially from cold winds, facilities for spending the maximum of time out of doors without risk of inflammatory complications, good food, and reasonable comfort. The difficult point is to determine what climate and what locality afford these conditions in conjunction one with the other. Negatively, we may safely lay down the rule that no climate will in the long run benefit if it is sunless or characterized by sudden perturbations of temperature and hygrometric conditions, or if it is very windy, or if its net influence is to encourage an indoor life and habits of invalidism. Our embarrassment in making a choice for an

individual case of phthisis arises from the fact that a climate may act beneficially through one of its characteristics and injuriously through another, and the difficulty of striking a balance is often very great. The high altitudes are dry, sunny, and tonic, but the extremes of temperature are great. The interior of some parts of Australia have much to recommend them, but the summer heat is too great, and dust storms are frequent. The ocean islands, such as Madeira or Teneriffe, have much equability and a high average of fine weather, but they often unduly depress the nervous system or upset the digestion. The problem becomes more complicated the more fully it is considered. General rules are of little value, and each case must be considered on its merits and in the light of practical experience.

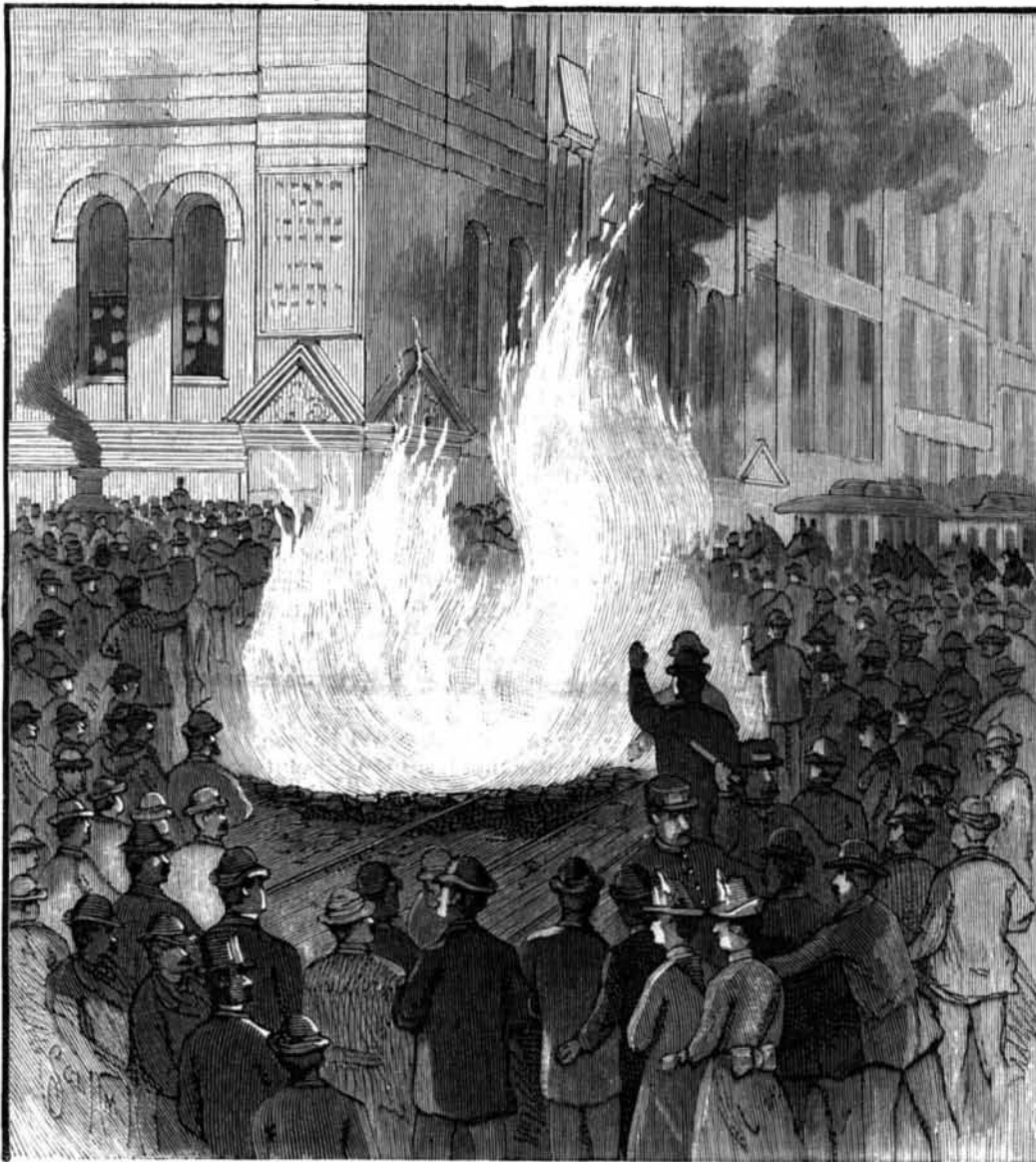
Change of climate is of value to the phthisical, in the next place, because it usually involves changes of habit. It helps the invalid to shake off his invalidism. It tempts him from his warm corner, easy chair, and self-centered, self-indulgent life, into some participation, however slight, in the interests and pursuits of others. The most signal successes in climatic treatment have been in the cases of patients who have exchanged the invalid's room at home for cattle ranching in Colorado, tobogganing at Davos, *trekking* in the Orange Free State, or sheep farming on the Riverine plains or Darling Downs of Australia. Here climate has not been the

proximate cause of restoration to health, but it has been the *condition*, without which the other causes could not have come into operation. As a general rule, change of climate without change of life is a failure, and can never be recommended with any degree of confidence. It is to the neglect of this rule that many failures may reasonably be attributed.

Lastly, we cannot afford to ignore a consideration which the modern advances in the pathology of tubercle force upon our attention—viz., that change of climate may often act beneficially by removing the patient from foci of contagion. Even when the disease has become thoroughly developed, it is reasonable to suppose that those conditions which gave it origin may increase its activity.

Change of climate, which a superficial survey of the facts might lead us to regard as likely to be wholly inoperative in phthisis, may in these various ways be theoretically justified, but its chief claim upon our attention is the practical one. It often fails, no doubt, but not seldom it is productive of benefit which we should vainly endeavor to procure by any other means with which we are at present acquainted.—*Lancet.*

I ALWAYS keep ready for use a six ounce bottle of potassa-alum water, made by adding two or three teaspoonfuls of the potassa-alum to the bottle of fresh water. Use equal quantities of this and fresh water for mixing your plaster. It hardens the plaster and keeps it from shrinking, and after vulcanizing, your plaster will not stick to the rubber.—*Dr. Penny, in Archives.*



A GAS FIRE IN NEW YORK.

Islands were hotbeds for the growth of tubercle, and that escape from the British climate was the chief desideratum. A fuller knowledge of the prevalence of phthisis puts an end to such crude notions as these. We know that the disease is excessively prevalent in the large cities alike of temperate, subtropical, and tropical latitudes; that it is as prevalent in the West Indies as in Great Britain, that the West Coast of Africa may compare in this respect with Ireland or Massachusetts, and that, in fact, we get involved in hopeless difficulties when we attempt to trace any regular or direct connection between the meteorological characters of a country and its proneness to tubercle. Yet, withal, it is utterly impossible to question the evidence of the benefit which accrues from a judicious change of climate.

The seeming anomaly begins to become more intelligible if we distinguish between the direct and the indirect effects of climate. Heat and cold, dryness and moisture, have but a slight, if any, effect upon tubercle; but a climate that by reason of sunlessness, variability, cold winds, or other such characters prevents regular outdoor exercise, and depresses the nervous and digestive systems, may be taken as uniformly injurious to the consumptive; while, on the other hand, a climate that, by reason of its high average of cheerful, sunny days, without excessive heat or undue extremes, permits regular outdoor exercises, and acts as a general tonic to the system, may be counted upon with considerable confidence to act beneficially. We think there is strong evidence that no single meteorological