

PERILS OF BRIDGE BUILDING.

Chances Taken by the Men in the Business.

New York Evening Post.

No trade of the present days calls for greater daring and self-possession than that of the men who build bridges and rear the great iron skeletons of the skyscrapers. There have been several bad falls lately from the East river bridge structure. Two things go to show the perilous nature of the work. The first is the extraordinary number of fatalities—proportionately much greater than in any other calling. The second is the reluctance of the insurance companies—amounting, in some cases, to positive refusal—to take the risks on the lives of the workers. It may be added that, though the work does not require any particular skill or experience, the pay is comparatively high; and, further, that there are no old men in the business. This latter fact is particularly significant. It was said to-day; the man who remarked it could recall but one old man, and that one had his foot out off one day, when the gang was dragging buckle plates up an incline. He was not quick enough to get out of the way.

"I don't mean to say that the workmen are killed off," continued the reporter's informant. "The work requires both strength and nerve. If one or the other is lost, it unfit the workman utterly. It is common knowledge that a sudden, perhaps unaccountable, loss of nerve is to be feared. It is the great danger of the men when they are aloft; and when a man is once shaken, even if he saves himself from falling, his name, in the language of the bridge builder, 'is Dennis.' He has to quit. It is often sudden; and it may be altogether the fault of the man's liver. Seriously, a steady, sound liver is an exceedingly important matter to a man who works on a 12-inch girder 50 feet above the ground. I recall one man who was an exception to the rule I have just laid down. He had been up late—possibly drinking—and he lost his nerve, of a sudden, when he was more than 100 feet up. The foreman saw him lie down flat and hug the girder with arms and legs. The foreman paid no attention for some little time; he knew just what the matter was. Then he walked up to the man and said, in a matter of fact way, 'Say, Bill, go and tell Bob to hurry them rivets up.' Bill got right up and did as he was told. Well, he continued on the work."

Most of the workmen came from the Southern States. They have splendid health and strength; they are active, sure, and courageous, to the point of recklessness. The contractors say that they are above the average in intelligence; that they are, in every quality, above the unskilled laborer. Not many of them are married; for their calling takes them here, there, and everywhere—it may be to the ends of the earth—and, in any case, it would be a bad lookout for the wife and children. Their work calls for a clear head and steady eye; but they careen just as other laborers do—no more, no less—and take their chances in the morning. When they are disabled, they go to the hospital for a time, and then get along as best they can. The contractor usually has a "blanket insurance"; and, at any rate, it is not hard for him to prove negligence on the part of the injured man. It requires no experience to get a job; there is no apprenticeship; the experienced men, of course, are the more valuable, and, therefore, the more in demand. The demand, by the way, has increased enormously in the past few years—not so much for work on bridges as on the framework of skyscrapers.

As in all perilous callings, accidents can usually be put down to overconfidence. A man risks his life virtually for eight hours every working day. Consequently, it is not long before he acquires a certain contempt for the danger. He thinks himself superior to it; so he runs over the girders, 100 feet in the air, as though it were 10 feet. The inexperienced man can walk a four inch plank on the ground with no difficulty at all; six feet from the ground he trembles and has hard work to balance himself; 60 feet up, he would sink down in terror, grip the slender beam desperately, and never budge an inch, until he lost courage altogether and fell. But these workers run on narrow girders, from point to point, as high as bridges are reared, apparently never thinking of the space beneath. When they were building the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street viaduct, a man ascended a 70 foot column to receive a girder and put in the fastening bolt to stay it. The plate on the top of the column was 18 inches square. He had to wait for the girder, and it was a cold day. He climbed up on the plate, stood upright, and danced a jig

"What did you do that for?" the foreman asked. "My feet were cold," was the reply. Some of the men are given to sky-larking up in the air. "When we were building the viaduct," said Martin Gay, of the bridge commissioner's office to-day, "I saw as foolhardy a trick as ever came within my experience. It was noon time and the men were resting. One fellow went up on the bluff to get a pail of beer for the others. He might have come down by the somewhat shorter way. We were just building out from the abutment. Some girders stuck out into the air. They led to nowhere, and their ends were perhaps 80 feet from the ground. The man ran out on a 12-inch girder, carrying the pail of beer in his hand. Near the end there was a tackle hanging from a derrick boom. Evidently, he intended to slide down the stationary rope, and the men below all looked up to see him do it.

"When the man got to the end of the girder he could not reach the tackle. We saw him stretch for it and fail to grasp it. He tried again, and failed again. Then he balanced himself and slowly stretched his arm out, balancing all the while—80 feet in the air! It was an extremely delicate feat. Out his arm went, and at last he touched the rope; but he could not hook his finger around it, try as he would, to draw it to him. He took a rest; then reached again and touched the rope—pushed it a little—pushed it again, balancing himself cleverly. The block at the end of the tackle began to swing back and forth. With every touch of the man's hand, its swing was greater. Soon he caught the rope and drew it in. Then he picked out the standing fall—which doesn't move—twined it around his leg, and came down like a flash, holding the beer out—poising the can, in fact, on the tips of his thumb and fingers. And he didn't spill a drop."

For accepting this continuous risk of death—which is no less imminent on the high buildings—the bridge builders are paid from 30 to 35 cents an hour. For all the strength and nerve and training they possess they receive, for a day's work of eight hours, not more than \$2.80. That is at the rate of \$18.80 a week and (if they work the year round, which is doubtful) \$873.60 for a year's labor. They have a union, but it is a struggling organization at present, it is said.

How to Cure Croup.

Mr. R. Gray, who lives near Amentia, Dutchess County, N. Y., says: "Chamberlain's Cough Remedy is the best medicine I have ever used. It is a fine children's remedy for croup and never fails to cure. When given as soon as a child becomes hoarse, or even after the croupy cough has developed, it will prevent the attack. This should be borne in mind and a bottle of the Cough Remedy kept at hand ready for instant use as soon as these symptoms appear. For sale by Hill-Orr Drug Co."

Flogging is still practiced in the English schools. The boys feel no sense of wounded personal honor in a sound thrashing and prefer it to other forms of punishment. In the early part of the century a master at Eton enjoyed the distinction of having flogged half the ministers, secretaries and even the bishops in the kingdom.

No one can reasonably hope for good health unless his bowels move once each day. When this is not attended to, disorders of the stomach arise, biliousness, headache, dyspepsia and piles soon follow. If you wish to avoid these ailments keep your bowels regular by taking Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets when required. They are so easy to take and mild and gentle in effect. For sale by Hill-Orr Drug Co.

Replying to an inquiry from the adjutant general, General Chaffee reported the American artillery was superior to any taking part in the attack on Peking.

If you would have an appetite like a bear and relish for your meals take Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets. They correct disorders of the stomach and regulate the liver and bowels. Price, 25 cts. Samples free, at Hill-Orr Drug Co's.

Sir Alfred Milner proclaimed that all the east coast ports of South Africa, between the tenth and fourteenth parallels, were infested with the bubonic plague.

Mr. Peter Sherman, of North Stratford, N. H., says, "27 years I suffered torture from chronic indigestion, but Kodol Dyspepsia Cure made a well man of me." It digests what you eat and is a certain cure for all stomach troubles. Evans' Pharmacy.

The total arms-bearing population of Europe is about 35,000,000

VOTING IN 'SEVENTY-EIGHT.'

How the Negroes Were Fooled at the Edgefield Box.

GREENWOOD, Dec. 15.—Those who are familiar with the history of this State since the civil war recall that there was an election in 1876, at which considerable voting was done. A goodly number of the ballots that were polled on this occasion were cast at Edgefield Court House; indeed, it is conceded that Edgefield saved the day for the Democracy and the White Man's government.

The election two years later, in 1878, was also an important and exciting affair, and was as fiercely contested by the contending political parties as the election of '76; indeed, this was the crucial test, as the negroes made a last desperate effort to get back into power, and it was only after another superhuman struggle on the part of the whites that they were prevented from doing so. In this election, as in '76, Edgefield did her whole duty.

Many stories have been told of scenes and incidents during this contest, but this correspondent recently heard a new one, or, at least, one that has never appeared in print. Mr. Jasper Rush, who now lives in Greenwood, was the hero of the story. Mr. Rush is now about 65 years old, grizzled and gray, and in all respects comes up to all that can be meant by the term, "a case." He was living at Edgefield in 1878, and was, probably, somewhat more of "a case" than he is now.

On the morning of the election, so the story goes, the negroes congregated early and massed themselves around the ballot box. There were several hundred of them, and they were packed so closely around the polls that the whites were completely shut out—in fact, that was the scheme of the negroes, to hold the polls so long as possible and thereby prevent the whites from voting.

The whites soon saw that something had to be done or they would lose the election, and some of the leaders were discussing the advisability of an armed attack, when Mr. Rush stated that he believed he could run every negro away from the polls without firing a shot. He was laughed at at first, but after he explained his plan it was agreed to let him try.

Mr. Rush selected a few discreet men and told them his plan in detail and instructed them as to what he wanted them to do. He then went to a drug store and purchased a stick of shaving soap, being particular to specify a kind that would "lather freely." Cutting the piece of soap in two, he put half of it in his mouth and commenced chewing vigorously. He soon had a copious froth, or lather, around his lips, to which he added a pinch of dye stuff to give it the color of blood, and was then ready for business. In the meantime those who had been posted had been circulating among the whites and telling them what was coming, so they were in a measure prepared for what followed.

In a few minutes Mr. Rush came running wildly down the street, frothing at the mouth and apparently having a convulsion at every jump. Some of those who were on to the scheme began shouting, "Madman! Madman! Hydrophobic! Get out of his way!" while others closed in with him and a seemingly terrific struggle followed but Mr. Rush threw them off and continued his wild career, still foaming at the mouth and snapping at every one he passed. He headed straight for the negroes.

The lamented Dr. Bill Jennings, in his day one of the leading citizens of Edgefield, was one of the arch conspirators, and was dancing about in the crowd brandishing a colossal horse pistol and shouting at the top of his voice, "That man has been bitten by a maddog and has hydrophobia. Get out of the way and let me shoot him before he bites somebody. It's the best thing to do; get out of the way and let me shoot him before he bites somebody."

The remainder of the story is best told in Mr. Rush's own words: "The negroes didn't seem to realize what was up till I got right on them, and I put my hands on one's shoulders and gave a jump and landed on top of the pile. They were packed so closely that I couldn't get to the ground, so I just crawled around on the heads and shoulders of the negroes and chewed my soap and spit red suds and lather all over the whole shooting match, all the time howling and screeching to beat the band. After I got started I thought I would play the game to the limit, so I picked out the cleanest looking car I could find and reached down and took hold with my teeth and stayed there. I figured that the soap in my mouth would keep me from suffering any harm, and I didn't much care what became of the negro. It wasn't long before the negroes stampeded and began to scatter, and pretty soon the only one left on the hill was the one who had his ear clamped in my teeth. I pulled him around a little, same as you've seen a dog pull a sow by the ear, and then

He went off like a shot, and then the white people came up and we started to voting, and—and—well, we voted enough to carry the election, and I reckon we would have been voting till yet if Mart Gary hadn't stopped us.

"The negro that struck his ear in my mouth went home and went to bed and swore he had been bitten by a maddog, and it took all the doctors in Edgefield to save his life. I got comfortably drunk that night, and didn't suffer any bad effects and I'm here yet," said Mr. Rush laughed as he walked off.

This is a true story in every detail. The incident occurred at Edgefield Court House in 1878, just as here narrated. Gen. M. C. Butler, ex-Gov. Sheppard, and a host of others now living, will vouch for its accuracy. One reason why it has never been published is that not until recently have the white people cared to talk about their methods of carrying elections in the 70's.

And thus did it come to pass that a piece of shaving soap in the hands, or, rather, the mouth of a man who knew how to use it, was an important factor in the redemption of South Carolina from negro misrule and the restoration of the white man's government.—A. M. Carpenter in Columbia State.

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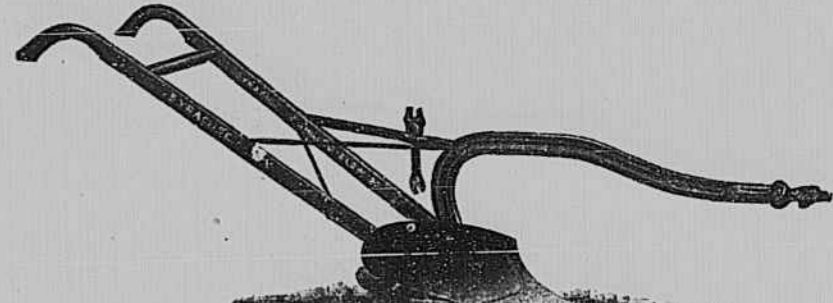
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