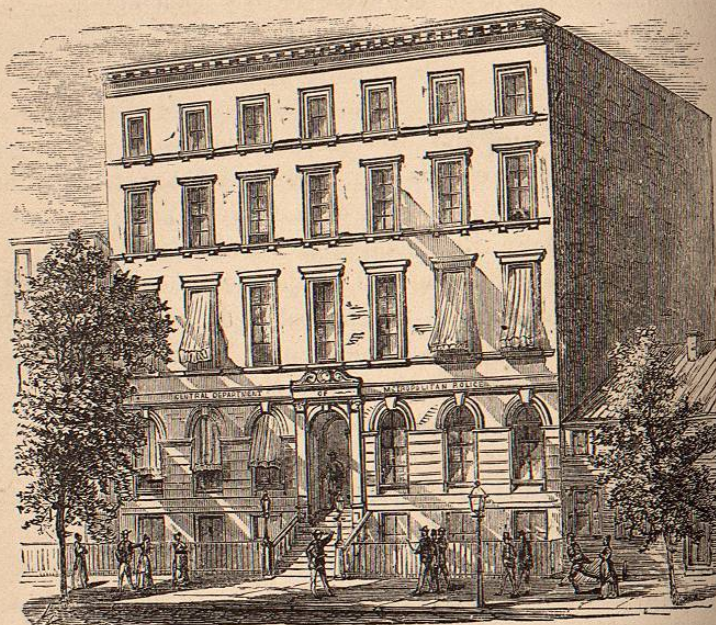


X.

PUBLIC SECURITY.

METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT—METROPOLITAN FIRE DEPARTMENT—THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT—QUARANTINE DEPARTMENT—MARITIME DEFENCES—UNITED STATES NAVY YARD.



METROPOLITAN POLICE HEADQUARTERS.
(300 Mulberry street.)

THE Metropolitan Police service has grown, from small and imperfect beginnings, to be a great and effective department of the city government. Many experiments and numerous changes of government and reorganizations have contributed

to bring the force to its present efficiency. Twenty-eight years ago, portions of the city were patrolled at night by laborers, porters, cartmen, &c., each carrying a lantern. When a regular police force was at length provided, it fell under the control of corrupt officials and rings, and was of uncertain service to the city, until the Legislature in 1857 took the matter in hand, and provided for the appointment of Police Commissioners, independent of all city control. Since that, the department has rapidly improved in discipline and efficiency until now; but as the new charter of 1870 has again lodged the appointing power in the Mayor of New York, it remains to be seen whether the same untrammelled efficiency in the maintenance of public order shall be continued. The metropolitan district was, until 1870, composed of the cities of New York and Brooklyn, and of portions of Richmond, Kings, and Westchester counties, which were divided into 43 precincts and several sub-precincts. At the close of 1869, there were on duty in New York, 2,232; in Brooklyn, 446; in Richmond Co., 29; and in Westchester, 22; making a grand total of 2,729, including captains, subordinates, and patrolmen. These patrolled incessantly about 500 miles of open streets in New York, 350 in Brooklyn, the villages of Yonkers, Tremont, and Morrisania, while a few on horseback scour the suburbs of the two cities mentioned, and others floated around the rivers and bay.

A squad of forty are on service at the various halls of justice, called the Court Squad, and twenty-two are detailed for special service. Four are in charge of the House of Detention, at No. 203 Mulberry street. This is a prison for the detention of witnesses who are to give evidence in the trial of culprits, and one of the rankest legal abominations of New York. During 1869, 194 men and 52 women, or 246 witnesses, were detained in this gloomy tenement an aggregate of 10 years, 7 months, and 13 days. During the seven years just passed, 1,955 persons have here been detained as witnesses, and the aggregate of such detention has amounted to

29,714 days, or nearly 85 years. One poor victim of this oppressive law was detained 269 days awaiting the trial of the case, about which he was supposed to know something, leaving his family, wholly dependent upon him, to suffer every form of destitution. He was an honest mechanic, charged with no crime, but unfortunately knew something of the crimes of others. During 1869, 5 persons were detained over 100 days each, 16 over 60 days each, 25 over 40 days each, and 45 over 20 days each. It is due to the Commissioners to say, that they have again and again appealed to the Legislature for the modification of this system, by allowing the depositions of these witnesses to be taken in due form, after which they might be allowed to return to their homes and occupations.

The Sanitary Squad consists of a captain, four sergeants, and fifty-seven patrolmen. A detachment of these look after the safety and workings of the numerous ferry lines communicating with New York, and tell us that about ninety million people cross on these lines to or from the metropolis in a year. Others test hydrostatically at intervals, and by course, every steam boiler on the island; causing defective ones to be repaired or removed. They examine and license suitable persons as engineers. Others execute the orders of the Board of Health. Still another detachment looks after truant children, compelling thousands to return to school, and conveying some to the Juvenile Asylum. Some members of the Sanitary Squad have ranked among the most pious, benevolent, and useful men of New York. The Detective Squad consists of a captain and nineteen subordinates. These are all shrewd, adroit, and skillful men of good reputation, whose business it is to unravel the deepest schemes, ferret out the darkest crimes, and entrap the shrewdest villains. Their knowledge of polite thieves, counterfeiters, forgers, and burglars, is very extensive. Great thieves are continually watched by them, so that they know at once whether they were in a city at the time of a robbery or not. They scent

crime across a continent, even across the ocean. A man hitherto considered reputable is arrested for forgery or burglary, and it comes to be known that the detective can tell how much money his wife has expended in the city for twelve months. Though living in private quarters all her movements have been watched, and all her purchases ascertained and recorded. They grasp at every clue, and follow it to its result, often discovering the perpetrator of crime from the slightest accident. When men who have spent their money set up the plea of having been robbed, the detective is sure to search them out, and expose them. Millions of dollars worth of stolen goods are annually recovered by this force, but with all their art, some great rogues escape. Horrible murders and bold robberies remain veiled in impenetrable mystery. Much of this detective work is performed by the "Merchants' Independent Detective Police," established in 1858, and by members of the several other detective organizations.

The headquarters of the Police department are a fine marble structure, at No. 300 Mulberry street, containing elegant offices for all the officials, with telegraphic communications with every station-house in the department; rooms for the instruction of candidates for the force, and for the trial of offenders. The Commissioners are very strict with the members of the force, fining and discharging many for dereliction, intemperance, or other vicious habits. The pay of a patrolman is \$1,200 per annum, but as he has no Sabbath, or other privileges, such as most men enjoy, his compensation is not large. Men are selected and distributed according to their fitness for the different undertakings. The tallest are stationed along Broadway, those with mechanical knowledge tend toward the Sanitary, and those of penetration and adroitness, toward the Detective squads. Their appearance is always that of tidy, well-dressed, courteous officers, erect and manly in bearing, and in the prime of life, the average age being about thirty-five years.

During the last nine years, the police have returned over 73,000 lost children to their parents or homes, and found above 40,000 houses left open, through the carelessness of inmates, affording unembarrassed opportunities for the entrance of thieves and burglars. That policemen are sometimes rash, unduly severe and evil, we doubt not; yet the regulations and discipline of the department are so severe, as to render them generally effective, and without them nothing would be safe for a day. They are distinguished for their valor, and their numerous bloody encounters with rioters, and villains of every grade, are well known and startling. During 1869 they arrested no less than 56,784 males, and 21,667 females, making a total of 78,451.

METROPOLITAN FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Manhattan has several times been sadly impoverished with conflagrations. On September 21st, 1776, while the British were in possession of the city, a fire broke out in a wooden grogshop, near Whitehall Slip, and as there were then no engines in the city, and the men were mostly in the army, little resistance could be offered. 493 buildings were destroyed, reducing the impoverished population to great suffering.

On the ninth of August, 1778, the second great conflagration occurred. This began in Dock, now Pearl street, and consumed nearly 300 buildings. In May, 1811, another fire broke out in Chatham street, when nearly 100 houses were destroyed. In 1828 a large fire occurred, and nearly a million dollars of property was destroyed. The most destructive fire, however, occurred in 1835. It began on the night of the sixteenth of December, in the lower part of the city. The weather was colder than it had been known for over fifty years. The Croton had not yet been introduced, little

water could be obtained, and that little froze in the hose before it could be used. The buildings were mostly of wood,



HEADQUARTERS NEW YORK FIRE DEPARTMENT.
(127 Mercer street.)

greatly favoring the work of destruction. For three days and nights the flames raged furiously, sweeping away 648 houses and stores valued at \$18,000,000, and leaving 45 acres of the business portion of the city a desert of smoking ruins. To crown the disaster, the insurance companies unanimously suspended. On the 19th of July, 1845, another great conflagration occurred, second only to the one just described. It began in New street, near Wall, sweeping onward in a southerly direction, until 345 buildings were consumed, inflicting a loss of at least five millions.

The Fire Department of New York has, in some form, existed since 1653, but never attained to any eminence in

point of discipline or quiet efficiency, until within the last few years. For many years it was composed of volunteer forces, who served gratuitously; the engines were worked by hand; the force, though large, was undisciplined, frequent collisions occurred between the different companies, and the noise, riot, and plunder at the fires became intolerable. On the 30th of March, 1865, the Legislature created the paid "Metropolitan Fire Department," the commissioners of which, after some litigation and much opposition, proceeded to reorganize and suitably discipline the force. This has gone steadily forward until New York can at length boast of as intelligent, disciplined, and vigilant a Fire Department as can be found in any city in the world.

The force, at this writing, consists of a Chief Engineer, an Assistant Engineer, ten District Engineers, and five hundred and eighty-seven officers and men. Each Company consists of a Foreman and his Assistant, an Engineer, and nine firemen. Each Company is provided with a house, with appropriate rooms for rest, drill, and study. The basement of the building contains the furnace which keeps the water in the engine hot; the horses are harnessed, and everything ready so that when the signal of a fire is received, ten or fifteen seconds only elapse before the whole company is flying to the scene. These twelve men accomplish with six times the dispatch, and with no noise, insubordination, or theft, what forty but poorly accomplished under the old regime. When on duty they have the right of way, taking precedence of everything, save the U. S. Mail, and their smoking engines go dashing through crowded streets at a fearful pace, but as everybody takes pains to clear the track, few collisions occur. The men undergo the most rigid examination, both physical and moral, before they are admitted, and are only discharged on account of failing health or bad conduct. No nationality, political sentiment, or religious belief is taken into the account; but good moral

conduct, tidiness, subordination, and fidelity to duty are always required, and compensated with timely promotions.

The Department has thirty-seven steam-engines, second size, costing four thousand dollars each, and manufactured by the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company of Manchester, New Hampshire. It has also a floating engine which throws several powerful streams, which is used to extinguish fires on the piers, or in vessels anchored in the bay.

The horses, which now number one hundred and fifty-six, are the finest and best-trained in America. They are large, well-formed, fleshy, and perfectly docile. They understand their business as well as the firemen. The sound of the gong puts them on needles until they are fastened to the engine, which they whirl through storm, mud, or snow-banks with a speed which is often surprising.

Occasionally an unhappy circumstance occurs. A false step in the haste of departure precipitates a poor fireman near the door of the engine-house, just in time to be crushed by the ponderous wheels of the engine in its rapid exit, and his sorrow-stricken comrades toil on for hours against the raging element, before they have a moment to return and shed a friendly tear over his remains. Sometimes New Yorkers sit down to their breakfast-tables, and glancing at the morning paper, read of an immense fire that has occurred during the night, where several devoted firemen were crushed beneath the falling walls, or went hopelessly down into a sea of flame from the roof or floor of a building, while in discharge of a perilous duty. Sometimes an engine bursts, spreading terror and death on every side. The means of public safety are attended with private toils and woes that would fill volumes.

The signals are now mostly given by telegraph, and few people hear of a fire within a few blocks of their door, until all is over. The police have charge of the order to be observed in the vicinity of a fire; they frequently draw ropes at a proper distance, inside of which none are allowed but the

firemen, and those directly interested. Though the city is constantly enlarging, the loss by fires is steadily diminishing. In 1866, there were 796 fires, with a loss of \$6,428,000. In 1867, there were 873 fires, with a loss of \$5,711,000. In 1868, there were 740 fires, with a loss of \$4,342,371; and in 1869, there were 850 fires, with a loss of but \$2,626,393. But forty-three of the 850 fires of the last year extended to adjoining buildings, which gives some idea of the rapidity with which the work of extinction is conducted. The headquarters at 127 Mercer street contain the offices of the Commissioners, Chief Engineer, Secretary, Medical Officer, Telegraph, Bureau of Combustible Materials, and Fireman's Lyceum. The last-named, organized quite recently, now contains a library of over 4,000 volumes, besides many curious engravings, and relics of the Department. Beside the thirty-seven engine-houses, and fifteen truck-houses, the Department has a repair yard in Elizabeth street, where most of its work is now done, a number of hospital stables in Chrystie street, and eleven bell-towers. All fines imposed on firemen, and all imposed on citizens for violating the hatchway and kerosene ordinances, go to the "Fire Department Relief Fund," for the relief of the widows and orphans of firemen.

THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

Every great center of population is occasionally overtaken with pestilence, and with various local and travelling diseases. Manhattan has not been the exception. In 1702, the yellow fever was brought from St. Thomas, of which over six hundred persons died, about one-twelfth of the entire population. In 1732, an infectious disease appeared, of which seventy persons died in a week. In 1743, a bilious plague prevailed, of which two hundred and seventeen died. In

1745, malignant fever prevailed; and in 1747, the bilious plague reappeared. Yellow fever returned in 1791, 1794, 1795, 1797, 1799, 1801, 1803, 1805, 1822, 1856, and 1870.

Over thirty-five hundred died of cholera in 1832, nine hundred and seventy-one in 1834, five thousand and seventy-one in 1849, three hundred and seventy-four in 1852, and a small number in 1866. There are a few cases of cholera nearly every year. A great city, unless carefully guarded, soon becomes a sink of putrefaction, which not only aggravates but engenders disease. To prevent as far as possible this unnecessary waste of human life, the sanitary interests of the metropolis have been for some years committed to the care of a Board of Health Commissioners, vested with large power, who have given their entire attention to this branch of the public service.

THE NEW HEALTH DEPARTMENT, under the present charter, consists of the Police Commissioners of New York, the Health officer of the Port, and of four Commissioners of Health, appointed by the Mayor, for the term of five years, with a salary of \$5,000 each, two of whom must have been practising physicians in the city, for a period of five years previous to their appointment. The Department is divided into four bureaus. The chief officer of one is called the "City Sanitary Inspector." This officer must be selected from the medical fraternity, having practised ten years in the city. Complaints against fat or bone-boiling establishments, or other questionable buildings or practices, are made to this officer. Another is styled the "Bureau of Sanitary Permit." This Bureau grants licenses for burials, without which a dead body cannot be brought into or removed from the city. Another is the "Bureau of Street Cleaning." The chief officer of the fourth Bureau is called the "Register of Records." This is the bureau of vital statistics. He records without charge all marriages, births, deaths, and the inquisitions of the coroners. It is the duty of every clergyman, or magistrate, solemnizing matrimony, to report the