

## EDITORIALS.

In the middle ages, in Europe, to murder by poison, so that it was impossible to detect, in the stomach of the deceased the existence of the deadly drug or compound by any test then known to the chemist, reached a perfect mania; and if various writers and historians tell the truth the victims to this fearful art were legion. A similar mania seems just now to be developing itself in this country, the details of which seem to go beyond belief. For the past two or three weeks the public mind has been shocked with the horrible recital of the poisoning, by Mrs. Sherman, of Birmingham, Conn., of some eight or ten individuals,—her husbands, and their and her children; and before there has been time for this horror to be temporarily forgotten, another shock, almost as intense, and very similar in character, comes from Baltimore, the suspected criminal this time being, it is said, a lady by birth, education and social position, and among those whom she is accused of having killed and attempted to kill are her husband, son and daughter. The name of this woman is Mrs. Wharton, and, previous to her committal to prison to await her trial, she moved in the very highest circles of the city in which she resides.

During the rebellion her husband, Brevet Col. Harry W. Wharton, paymaster of the Maryland military department of the U. S. forces, was stationed in Baltimore, and resided there until he died, in 1867. His death was sudden and attended with very peculiar symptoms; but on account of the high standing of the parties no suspicion of foul play was entertained. The family of the deceased consisted of wife, son and daughter, the son, Major H. W. Wharton, being also an officer in the army. At the time of his father's death he was twenty-seven years of age, and shortly after that melancholy event he left the army and went to live with his mother and sister at Baltimore. Something like sixteen months ago he died suddenly, his symptoms being similar to those attending the death of his father. A very short time before his decease he insured his life for \$40,000, and having no heirs the benefits arising from that transaction went to his mother.

Each time her house was visited by death Mrs. Wharton evinced the most intense grief, and, there still being no suspicion of foul play, she continued to move in and enjoy the friendship of her upper class acquaintances.

Two months after the death of young Wharton, his sister, aged twenty-three, fell ill, and lingered for a long time in a critical state, but ultimately recovered. It is now said by those best able of judging that her symptoms were those of poison.

Among the very intimate friends of Colonel Wharton, and his family, was General William Scott Ketchum, formerly a distinguished army officer, but on the retired list at the time of the Colonel's death. The intimacy between the Whartons and General Ketchum continued until the death of the latter, which took place very suddenly at the house of Mrs. Wharton on the 28th of last month. Shortly before, the General had lent Mrs. Wharton \$2,600, for which she gave him her note, and four days before his death he arrived from Washington, in Baltimore, on a visit to the Whartons, and it is believed for the purpose of collecting the amount of the note he held. Two days after his arrival he was taken seriously ill, and two days after that, although under skillful medical treatment, he died. His funeral took place at Washington on the 30th ult. Still suspicion of foul play on the part of Mrs. W. does not seem to have arisen in the minds of any.

But at length came the straw that broke the camel's back, and stayed the murderous hand of this wretchedly wicked woman. Among the regular visitors to her house was Eugene, son of Col. Van Ness, and one evening while Gen. Ketchum lay sick, he visited the Whartons, there being several other visitors there at the time. Mrs. W. handed beer to her guests, which she said contained gentian. They all partook, and shortly after Van Ness was taken so ill that a medical man had to be called in, who declared him too bad to be moved. A milk punch was prescribed and administered, and at the bottom of the cup a white sediment was noticed by some one present. This was commented upon, when Mrs. Wharton said it was only white sugar. A relative of the sick man tasted it, and

found it unpleasant, and when a fitting opportunity presented this sediment was removed from the cup, and was subsequently placed in the hands of a chemist, who, in a day or two, pronounced it tartar emetic.

This circumstance in connection with the sudden death of General Ketchum, then lying unburied in Washington, aroused strong suspicion of crime, and his friends being communicated with, the contents of his stomach were analysed, when twenty grains of tartar emetic were found. This led to the arrest of Mrs. Wharton, and she has since been committed for trial on the capital charge; and it is feared that further developments will show that her husband and son both died of poison.

Such a recital reads more like the creation of the horror-stored brain of a romancer of the most sombre school, than truth; and yet there seems to be little reason to doubt that in each of these cases a murder most foul has been perpetrated. But what motive, if any, could have prompted the suspected murderers to commit such a series of atrocities it is impossible to imagine. She was surrounded with affluence, comfort and refinement before her husband's death, and, it is said, was left in good circumstances by him. She is described as being unusually attractive and graceful, and in manners, appearance and conversation a perfect lady; has moved, with a character above reproach, in the very highest society in Baltimore, and has been a regular attendant and member of the Episcopal Church. The character and course of such a woman present some strange anomalies; but however willing charity may be to hide her sins, it seems scarcely possible, in the light of present developments, that they can be concealed.

Lucrezia Borgia, daughter of Pope Alexander VI, who lived four centuries ago, has the unenviable reputation of having been queen among woman-poisoners in her own or any subsequent age; but it is not unlikely that some mental monstrosity of the feminine gender in this country will yet deprive her of the fearful pre-eminence which history and public opinion have so long accorded her. Whether, in the various migrations of the people of the nationalities of Europe her descendants or some of the collateral branches of the family have found homes in the new world and, true to the instincts and traditions of their race, are re-enacting their vile crimes, it is hard to tell; but, at any rate, the fame of the Borgia's as poisoners seems in a fair way to be eclipsed.

A MEETING of a highly interesting character, to those who participated therein, was held at Paris, Ky., on the 21st ult.,—namely the annual reunion of the veterans of the war of 1812. The number present was seventy-two, among whom were representatives of about every battle fought. The gallant old fellows formed in procession at the Bourbon House, whence, preceded by a band of music, they marched to the Court House, where the ceremonies consisted of prayer, speeches, and the election of officers and other business transactions. The law passed by Congress last February, granting pensions to the soldiers of 1812, except those who had shown sympathy with or participated in the late rebellion; also to the widows of all soldiers of 1812 who were married prior to the time of enlistment, was commented upon in no favorable terms, and was denounced in a speech by General Coombs, and a resolution was adopted petitioning Congress to remove the proscriptive clauses of the act, by extending its benefits to all the veterans of that war, now living, and to the widows of all deceased, irrespective of the time of enlistment.

The company returned in procession to the Bourbon House, and partook of a splendid dinner provided for them by the City Council, after which the Hon. Garret Davis, delivered a very eloquent and touching address. During his remarks the honorable gentleman took occasion to denounce the act of Congress referred to above.

Most of those present were residents of Kentucky, there being some few also from Indiana and Illinois. Their ages ranged from seventy to ninety years, the youngest man present being seventy and the oldest ninety, the former being Mr. Joseph Zinn, of Grant Co., Ky., the latter Gen. Sam. L. Williams, of Montgomery Co., Ky. The following are the numbers of the several ages present:

Seventy years 1; 73 years 2; 75 years 2; 76 years 5; 77 years 7; 78 years 9; 79 years 4; 80 years 10; 81 years 3; 82 years 8; 83 years 4; 84 years 4; 85 years 1; 88 1; 90 years 2.

Their average age was seventy-nine years and six months; their aggregate ages 5,724 years. Such an assembly, we think it may safely be said, can not be paralleled in any country in the world.

Since their last annual meeting five of their brethren in arms in the war their gathering commemorated, had died. Their next annual gathering was fixed for the 18th of June 1872.

## The Maories.

Few savage races have attracted more of the world's attention than the New Zealanders, not more on account of the rich, inexhaustible gold mines which their country is known to possess, than from their stubborn resistance to British rule during the last thirty years; their indomitable spirit in a series of sanguinary wars with the British government; their tenacity and assertion of "native rights," and their strategy and bravery—remorseless, it is true, and savage, but nevertheless effective. Reconcilable, but defiant, they hold much of what they originally claimed. Their chiefs have, many of them attained to opulence, and several of them are representatives of their race in the Colonial Parliament.

Less than thirty years ago, the Maories (Mouries) were not only fierce savages, but cannibals; and, with the solitary exception of infanticide, were steeped in every vice and crime peculiar to savage warriors. They have now a native literature, can read and write their own language, and are, almost all of them Christianized. They cultivate the soil, have their own flour-mills, and pasture flocks and herds. Many of the chiefs keep their carriages, own gold mines, and are among the richest men of the country. The daughters of these wealthy New Zealanders are trained in modern accomplishments, such as music, singing and drawing, and in the ball-room are as much distinguished for their politeness, as admired for their exterior attractions. Few women in any part of the world, not excepting even the Andalusian damsels, possess greater natural attractions than the half-breeds of this arlike race, where, by the admixture of white blood, the sombre olive is tinted into piquant brunette, the gross native habit of body attenuated into symmetrical development, and the large, dark, liquid eyes are instinct with passion, but flashing with intelligence, and subdued by decorum.

New Zealand, which comprises several islands in the Indian Ocean, denominated respectively North, Middle and South islands, with others of less note, extends 800 miles from north to south, and varies from 50 to 150 in breadth. The geographical position of the country, as well as its physical features, account in a great measure for the characteristics of the race; for, fanned by warm breezes from the Indian Ocean on the one hand, and tempered, on the other, by gales from the Atlantic, the climate is eminently calculated to develop the physical powers, and ripen the intellectual faculties.

The North Island is the stronghold of the natives; and in the fertility of its soil, the equability of its climate, and the number of its commodious harbors, as well as the richness of its gold mines, is by far the most important of the whole group. There are reasons for believing that the natives, whose ancestors are supposed to have emigrated from the Sandwich Islands, have occupied these islands for five hundred years, and that those "ancient mariners" landed first on the North Island, not more than twenty miles from the present city of Auckland, whence their descendants spread into the valley of the Waikato river; thence into the country of Taranaki, now the province of Wellington; and ultimately possessed themselves of the whole of the North and Middle islands.

The New Zealanders are able-bodied, of dark brown color, and manly bearing. They have well-formed, intellectual heads, a good muscular development, and admit neither beard nor whiskers. They are quick observers, have the tact of accommodating themselves, for the time being, to the tone and temper of those with whom they come in contact, whether in the open field, the market, or the counting-house. They are implacable enemies, and faithful friends; once injured, they never forgive; once deceived, they never confide. They will stop at no falsehood, cunning, or hypocrisy, to circumvent a foe; they will share their last meal with a friend, and protect him with their lives. In addition to these good and bad qualities, they are strictly temperate.—*Overland Monthly for July.*

## About Words.

It has been calculated that our language, including the nomenclature of the arts and sciences, contains 100,000 words; yet, of this immense number, it is surprising how few are in common use. To the great majority, even of educated men, three-fourths of these words are almost as unfamiliar as Greek or Choctaw. Strike from the lexicon all the words nearly obsolete—all the words of special arts or profession—all the words confined in their usage to particular localities—all the words of which even the educated speaker uses only homoeopathic doses—and it is astonishing into what a Lilliputian volume your Brobdignagian Webster or Worcester will have shrunk. It has been calculated that a child uses only about one hundred words; and unless he belongs to the educated classes, he will never employ more than three or four hundred. A distinguished American scholar estimates that a few speakers or writers use as many as ten thousand words; ordinary persons, of fair intelligence, not over three or four thousand. Even the great orator, who is able to bring into the field, in the war of words, half the vast array of light and heavy troops which the vocabulary affords, yet contents himself with a far less imposing display of verbal force. Even the all-knowing Milton, whose wealth of words seems amazing, and whom Dr. Johnson charges with using "a Babylonish dialect," uses only 8,000; and Shakespeare himself, "the myriad minded," only 15,000. These facts show that the difficulty of mastering the vocabulary of a new tongue is greatly overrated; and they show, too, how absurd is the boast of every new dictionary maker that his vocabulary contains so many thousand words more than those of his predecessors.—*The Lakeside Monthly.*

## Piano With neither Strings nor Reeds.

One of the latest and most successful inventions of the day is a piano-forte without strings or reeds. The patent bears the date of July, 1871, and the patentees are Cincinnatians, Messrs. Atkins and Drew, the former a dealer in pianos, and the latter an ingenious German musician and artisan. The invention has been in progress of development for many months, but only within a few days has a perfect instrument been completed and tested satisfactorily.

The action of the new instrument is the same as in other pianos; it has the usual number of octaves and pedals. The tone can be varied from soft to loud, and is far superior in richness and depth, and is clear and sweet as can be imagined. The peculiar feature of the invention is that, instead of strings stretched across a sounding-board, small steel tongues, each with a hook, or arm, on either side, are attached to the sounding-board, and struck by hammers similar to those of the ordinary instrument, only the tongues and hammer are worked perpendicularly. One hook of each tongue being half the length of the other, yields a tone an octave higher; thus each stroke of the hammer produces two notes, an octave apart. The vibration produced is full as continuous as that obtained from strings, and the tone is readily stopped by the application of a check or damper. Of course, such an instrument can never get out of tune, and may be moved with much less danger of injury than stringed instruments. It will be more durable, also from the fact that the hammers strike the tongues in such a manner as to wear less than those striking strings.

It is entirely practicable to manufacture instruments of this new pattern much cheaper than those of the ordinary style, but it will require some time to bring many of them into market, or meet the demands for them, at any price.—*Times and Chronicle, Cincinnati.*

## Population of the city of New York.

Full returns of the census of New York city give a grand total of 942,292 as the population of that municipality. Of this number, 510,553 are white, of native birth; 418,646 are white, of foreign birth, and 13,093 are colored. Of this last element only 448 are of foreign birth. The proportion of native Americans, born outside the state of New York is not so large as may have generally been supposed, all the rest of the Union furnishing only 35,207 population to the city against 475,846 born in this state. New Jersey sends the largest contri-