

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSES OF THE EXPLOSION.

Yesterday afternoon an inquest relative to the explosion commenced at the City Hall, before Coroner Taylor, when Mrs. Minnie Newton, and Messrs. J. H. Raddon, John Richardson, J. H. Van Na ta and B. W. E. Jennens testified. All but the witness last named were examined, for the purpose mainly of identifying the victims and showing the manner of their death.

Mr. Jennens' testimony was to the effect that the magazine of the Dupont company, for which he is agent, was strongly built, and fire-proof. No restriction was placed upon the owners as to the quantity that should be stored in the buildings. Mr. and boys had shot through the doors, and he had found a bullet in a keg of powder. Had called the attention of ex-Mayor Wells to the matter, as he considered there was danger from that practice. Had had stronger doors made to resist the bullets. Believed that Giant and Hercules powders would explode without concussion, in certain atmospheric conditions. He believed the explosion was caused by spontaneous combustion, or by a bullet being shot into the powder.

At 10 a. m. this morning the inquest was resumed.

Ex-Mayor Wells testified that some time in February, Mr. Jennens had stated to him that some boys had shot at the magazine doors, that a bullet hole had been made in one of the doors, and the ball had entered a keg of powder. Witness told Mr. Jennens if he could put a fence on track of the parties they should be punished. Mr. Jennens said he would put a stronger door on the magazine under his charge, and witness said he would endeavor to discover the parties who did the shooting. Witness instructed the police accordingly, and he understood they acted on those instructions. Mr. Jennens called on witness only once in relation to the subject. Witness believed he suggested to Mr. Jennens and other parties interested that the magazines should be enclosed by a high fence, for purposes of protection. There had been some target shooting west by north of the magazine. Mr. Jennens' statement did not come in the form of a complaint, as the parties who shot against the doors were not known. Powder men considered the location of the magazines safe. Merchants for merly stored their powder in the city, which was considered unsafe. Witness remembered expressing the opinion that they should be located ten miles away from the city, but through being situated high, they were as safe as they would be at a considerable distance away on lower ground. Mr. Jennens had stated that he would not keep any glycerine or Giant powder there, and he hoped that none would be stored in contiguous magazines, as it would be exceedingly dangerous. The magazines were not built by the city, but by the companies interested. The buildings were inspected when in progress of construction, and were considered as safe as such things could be. Parties had received permission to store a certain amount of powder in the city in temporary magazines on wheels, on account of the inconvenience of resorting so frequently to the general magazines for supplies.

Mr. Woodward, of Geo. M. Scott & Co., was the next witness. The firm made an application for permission to build a magazine, but concluded not to build, and used a space in the Walker Bros' magazine, and had in it at the time of the explosion in the vicinity of 2,000 pounds of Hercules powder. Believed that the magazines were constructed as well as any magazines are constructed. The iron on the doors was 3/4 of an inch thick, and the roof was tin. Hercules powder can only be exploded by concussion, but cannot be exploded by spontaneous combustion. The Giant powder is liable to explode without any visible or apparent cause.

Besides the Hercules powder, the Santa Cruz and Oriental Co's. powder, Walker Bros. agents, was stored there. Hercules powder is stored or put up similarly to Giant powder. A gun fired near the building would not be likely to explode Hercules powder, by atmospheric concussion. It would take direct connection with a substance.

Mr. Matthew H. Walker, of Wal-

ker Bros., next testified. The firm were agents for the California Works and the Oriental Works. The buildings were of brick, with iron doors and fire proof. About 30,000 pounds of their powder was stored there. It was common black powder, blasting and sporting. Scott, Dunham and Co's Hercules powder was not located in a direct line with the door, but to the left of it. The two magazines were about 100 feet apart. Scott & Co. had permission from the California Powder Company's magazine to store Hercules powder there. Walker Brothers had been, several years ago, agents for the Giant powder, but gave it up on account of the danger, having heard of many accidents resulting from it. The Hercules caps are more liable to explode from concussion than the powder itself. He believed there was glycerine in the composition of the Hercules powder. A ball fired into the magazine and striking the caps would be likely to cause explosion. The day previous, the 4th, a car of black powder was delivered by Walker Bros., at the magazine. Did not think that powder could have leaked from the kegs, being iron, and formed a train leading to the building. If a bullet reached the Hercules caps through the door it must have been an oblique shot. Had been told by workmen that the door of one of the magazines had been perforated by bullets, and in consequence one of the doors had been lined with iron. The firm had been in the habit of receiving reports from the magazines at short intervals, and the men who had occasion to enter them were required to put on rubber shoes. No guard was kept at the magazines. Walker Brothers got the privilege of building the two magazines from the city, and then sold them to the powder companies. There was a small quantity of Hercules powder in the magazine that was not used by Scott & Co., which had been obtained by Walker Brothers for their mine, but it was also out of the line of the door.

Mr. H. B. Clawson, Supt. of Z. C. M. I., agent for the Hazard Powder Company, was next examined. The Hazard powder was the only kind they had stored in the magazine. There was about 10,000 pounds. It was black powder, blasting and sporting. The building was of rock, with tin roof, and the door was faced with iron on the outside. There was no other kind of powder there. They had not been near the building for several days, not having occasion to store or take away from it. Hercules and Giant powder is dangerous, and liable according to his understanding, to explode from spontaneous combustion, or atmospheric causes. That opinion was general among powder men. The Institution had refused to handle those powders for a considerable time, excepting on special orders, which were delivered to the parties as soon as received. Had nothing of that kind in the premises. A small quantity of powder was kept in the city by Z. C. M. I., in a galvanized iron wagon, bottomed with soft material. Black powder is not dangerous, except from fire. A gentleman in the powder business had said "that, owing to the relative position of the magazines, if one exploded all would go. They were within about a hundred feet of each other. Magazines were general built in small gorges. The magazine had been fired into, and bullets had been found inside, having perforated the kegs, but had not heard of anything of that kind recently. Witness was of the opinion the Hercules and Giant powder should be stored a long way from other and less dangerous powders.

Mr. J. R. Winder testified that he accompanied Mayor Wells, the surveyor, and Mr. Whitehouse and Mr. Jennens, the two latter being interested in the Dupont Company, to select a site on Arsenal Hill, for a magazine. Mr. Whitehouse then stated that he considered the location safe for magazines, but was not willing to build one if Hercules or Giant powder were kept in either of the others. The Mayor stated that he was not prepared then to state whether such material was kept in the building alluded to. The lot was sold to the party and the magazine was built. About that time Walker Brothers were granted the privilege of keeping in a movable magazine in the city a quantity of powder, not more than 400 pounds, and, on petition, a similar privilege was granted to B. W. E. Jennens.

Remembered Mr. Jennens stating

to Mayor Wells that while himself and others were in the vicinity of the magazine a bullet came very near to him, but he knew nothing about who fired the shot. The Mayor had instructed the police to try to find out the parties, which they endeavored to do, but failed. Did not remember the Mayor suggesting to Mr. Jennens to offer a reward for the persons who did the firing. Mr. Whitehouse considered the city safe from explosion at the altitude of the magazines. The Mayor immediately took steps to discover the parties who did the shooting, and to put a stop to it. Had not visited the magazines since being there with Mr. Whitehouse and others. Did not see any bullet holes in the doors of any of the buildings then.

Mr. J. Nicholson testified to having been standing on the bench east of City Creek, south-east of the location of the magazines, facing in that direction, in the act of closing a gate, when he saw two huge masses of flame shoot into the air, being so near as to appear to rise almost simultaneously, and close together, and were followed by a dense cloud of smoke, and immediately by two other similar and distinct flashes, one of which, the last, appeared to be slightly south of the others, its flash being in front or south of the other smoke. The first report he heard was, as near as he could calculate, almost simultaneous with the last or third flash and simultaneous with that, a shower of missiles whizzed through the air in the vicinity of where witness stood.

It will be observed, from the evidence, that previous statements that have appeared that Giant or Hercules powder had been stored in nearly all the magazines were incorrect, the only powder, other than ordinary sporting and blast, being about 2,000 pounds of Hercules belonging to Scott, Dunham & Co., in the California Company's building, and a small quantity of the same kind in the Oriental. In the remaining two were Hazard and Dupont powder exclusively.

The coroner's jury were E. T. Mumford, Jos. Gorlinski and S. W. Sears. After hearing the evidence, and considerable deliberation, they rendered a verdict to the effect that the parties deceased, over whom the inquest was held, came to their death by the explosion of powder magazines, and that, to the best of their judgment, according to the evidence adduced, they were led to believe that said explosion was caused by loose powder strewed in the vicinity of the magazines being ignited by a burning paper wad, from a shot-gun, supposed to have been fired immediately preceding the explosion. Also that no blame could be attached to any person or persons, the explosion being purely accidental. The jury recommended that additional precautions be taken regarding portable magazines kept in the city.

AN UNSATISFACTORY SESSION.

THE Utah Legislature worked without pay, as the British Parliament does, last session, and did a satisfactory amount and kind of business too. The California Legislature is paid handsomely by the State, but judging from the following, from the Sacramento Record-Union of April 1, that body did not give very great satisfaction by its just expired session—

"It has not been a particularly successful one, and though at the beginning many important issues were in agitation, few of them have been acted upon. No general irrigation bill has been passed, nor has an Irrigation Commission been appointed. The clear duty of taking action concerning the injuries to agriculture from mining debris has been disgracefully shirked. Weeks have been worse than wasted in discussing the railroad question from a demagogic standpoint, and finally a law has been passed in that regard which is altogether unsatisfactory and mischievous. Something has been done towards the suppression of quackery, on the other hand. The West Side Irrigation bill has been passed. A salutary and much needed bill for the retraction of libels has been rejected. A most absurd and contemptible bill forbidding the removal of Chinamen's bones from the State, has passed both houses, after having been once rejected by the Senate. San Francisco has a water bill and a very foolish gas bill.

Several attempts to change the educational system of the State have, fortunately on the whole, been defeated. An effort has been made, with what success we cannot yet say, to change the divorce law of the State in the interest of adulterers. Sundry abortive efforts have been made to handle the Chinese question. A couple of hundred local bills have been passed. The promises of retrenchment and economy which graced the beginning of the session have not been carried out. A committee of inquiry has found huge frauds in the State Land Office. And this is nearly all that the session has produced. When the Legislature adjourns it will be impossible to say that it has disposed satisfactorily of any question brought before it, though it has not passed any conspicuously bad or immoral laws. When, however, we reflect upon the cost of one of these sessions to the taxpayers, and then examine what it has produced, we are compelled, necessarily, to question whether the game is worth the candle, and whether septennial parliaments would not be much better for the public interests than biennial ones."

Political Corruption.

A Free Talk with Christian Voters and Political Managers.

It was very refreshing, and rather amusing, to read the admirable resolutions recently adopted by the Union League Club of this city, looking to reform in the mode of making nominations to public office. Those manly, patriotic and sensible resolves struck a powerful blow at the manipulation of nominating conventions by office-holders and professional politicians, and they set forth, in emphatic terms, the necessity and duty of the performance of that particular service by the "people," as a distinct race of beings from the class of men into whose hands this business is now committed.

We say these sentiments are refreshing. So far has the "body politic" gone into corruption, and so deep the coma into which the nation has sunk, it is like a gale of pure air in a dungeon, or a stream of light in its pitch darkness, to hear from any intelligent and influential body of citizens such a protest and appeal. We are assured, when such a hail is heard from the ship of state, that all on board are not insensible to her danger, and that she is not going down without making at least a sign.

It is amusing also. Such resolutions are not new. They have been in substance made and reiterated and published annually by reforming committees and conventions and clubs, and what good have they done? While they are in process of adoption, and the eloquence of speeches in their support is yet vibrating on the air, the men whom those resolves are intended to extinguish are quietly holding their "primary meetings," putting in nomination the regular party candidates, packing the coming convention, and laying the rails on which the trading politicians expect to run their men into office at the ensuing election. The men, the intelligent, honest, patriotic Christian citizens who ought to be at work at the primary meetings, are passing patriotic resolves at the clubs, or toasting their feet in their snug chimney corners at home.

But the time has come for action, and the time for talk has passed by. This country, our form of government, the ark of Republican freedom, is in greater danger of total destruction now, than it was in 1860. The danger is the greater now because it is a moral ruin that impends. War, even civil war, may sweep over the land and cover the harvest fields with the bones of our first born. And the flowers will bloom again over the graves of the dead, and harvests be increased by the fertilizing blood of citizens. But for National moral corruption there is no resurrection. Nations that sink in their own rottenness go down into everlasting shame and contempt, living only in history as warning lessons to succeeding ages.

He must be blind and deaf who does not know that we, as a people, have reached the verge of that precipice over which no Nation ever fell and rose again. It may be exaggeration to apply the language of the prophet to the American Nation. "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint; from the

sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it."

But it is as safe as it is sad to say that the party politics of the country are corrupt beyond the possibility of exaggeration. There is no need of any very nice discriminations as to who or what is most in the slough. One points to the other with the finger of shame, and it is but a question of opportunity. "The Washington ring beats the Tweed ring out of sight," is the sententious confession and retort by which corrupt men in the two great parties are stigmatized in the same line. It is not important to make political capital out of stock in which the bold, bad men of all parties trade, and will trade until they are driven to their hiding places and prisons. The most disheartening feature in the whole case is the unwillingness of the people to regard it as anything more than a party fight. The painful truth is apparent in the manner of conducting investigations in Congressional committees. Party advantage, more than public virtue, seems to be the ultimate end of much of the work that is done.

The party that hesitates to vote supplies when the enemy is approaching the capital is confessedly in league with the foe. The enemy that threatens the Nation now is corruption, and all hands should join in the patriotic purpose of reaching its sources, drying up its foul streams and saving the country.

This is the year of all years for such a revival, and such a regenerating and saving work. It is of all years in our National life, the one to be made memorable and glorious in our history by the redemption of the government from the grasp of politicians, and its establishment in the hands of the people. This is the year, first, because it is our centennial year; and, secondly, because it is the year of the Presidential election.

The patriotic, national, old-time sentiment of the fathers of the republic is stirred as it was never before. Every principle of honor, virtue, faith and courage that made our independence a boon to Americans and mankind, comes to the front and appeals to us to be wise and brave, and independent now, when the country reels under the staggering influences of base, venal, trading politicians.

Both the great political parties have named the day for their National Conventions to nominate Presidential candidates. It is not to be expected that any third party will be in the field. The political millennium has not come when good men of all parties will rush to a common standard, and unite on one true great statesman in whom all men trust, and say to him, "Be our leader and defense." We expect no such miracle of healing for the Nation. Our hope is, and toward this declaration of hope, all this discourse tends, that the revelations of corruption have been so timely and so startling that BOTH parties will be compelled by the pressure of a roused public opinion to call to the head of their ticket the best man they can find in their respective ranks. It is on all hands admitted that there has been no time since 1860 when the issue of a Presidential election was more doubtful. Both sides figure a major victory. And there was never, in our recollection, a canvass in which each party was more divided on questions of National and private interest, such as currency, revenue, etc., so that the ties of party sit lightly on the limbs of its adherents. In this state of things, the interest and the duty of each party are to subordinate merely political questions to the higher sentiment of character. Integrity of statesmanship, that lofty sentiment of honor and right which made Washington the model for all countries, and the living example for successive ages, is the type of man for the times on which we have fallen. The party that finds such a man, or even one who suggests the possibility of such virtues in himself, will command the intelligent, grateful appreciation of millions of American citizens. If there are two such men to be found, we hope (alas, how faint the hope) that one of them may head the ticket of each of the political parties, and that with the success of either we may hail with gratitude the reign of sensitive honor, integrity that, like seasoned timber, neither gives or takes, and that righteousness which exalteth a Nation. Then shall sin cease to be our reproach, and God, even our own God, shall bless us.—New York Observer.