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The Weekly Messenger.

SAILING THROUGH HELL GATE MADE EASY.

It was a mere child—a girl who has not yet reached her teens—who set in motion the forces that shattered Flood Rock, one of the great impediments in the way of large ships entering New York harbor.

Nine years ago an explosion on a much smaller scale had occurred in the same place and it was the same person (then two years old) who had the honor of being the direct cause of it. This first explosion was caused by 42,000 pounds of dynamite and more than an acre of solid rock was blown to pieces. For weeks previously people had been talking about the great event which was to take place, and the most absurd opinions as to its dangers were freely expressed. Last Saturday morning things were quite different although six times the amount of explosives was to be used, and nine acres of rock to be blown up. People flocked from all quarters to see the grand sight which was expected. All along the shores of the East River, as far as the eye with the aid of an opera glass could see, were crowds of men, women and children. Fully fifty thousand people must have witnessed the spectacle and were not disappointed with its grandeur.

UNDERWATER GALLERIES.

Immediately after the explosion at Hallet's Point, which removed one of the obstacles in the way of ships passing Hell Gate, work was begun on Middle Reef, one of the most prominent parts of which is that called Flood Rock. In this rock a shaft sixty feet deep was sunk. From the material thus excavated they built an island on and about it, which they made the base of their operations. This was about half an acre in extent, and was covered with buildings containing engines, steam-pumps, hoisting apparatus, machine-shops, and all the appliances necessary to mining. From the bottom of the shaft, galleries were driven in every direction. The ground plan of the excavations shows twenty-three galleries, some of which were four miles long, running nearly north and south. These were crossed at right angles by forty-six galleries. All the passages were twenty-five feet apart, but differed greatly in height and in some places it was necessary for the workmen to stoop to prevent knocking their heads against the stone roof. In this roof and in the walls and pillars supporting it nearly 15,000 holes were drilled and filled with copper cartridges, containing dynamite and rackerock powder. But of this immense number of cartridges only two or three thousand were connected with each other, as it was supposed, and the conjecture proved to be correct, that the concussion produced by those which were connected would explode the remainder. The handling of the dynamite and rackerock cartridges had to be conducted with the utmost precaution. One of a company of gentlemen who went to examine the underwater galleries describes the scene thus: "As the visitors

followed their guide in Indian file through the long straight galleries, holding their flaring lamps above their heads and splashing through pools of black water, the effect was that of a small and forlorn torch-light procession parading through muddy streets on an intensely dark and very rainy night. The ominous silence was unbroken save by the rush, splash, or steady drip of the encroaching waters, and the throb of the great pumps that worked unceasingly to the very end to keep the mine from being flooded; there was no noise of busy steam-drills, nor rattle of stone-laden cars. The men who handled the cartridges were a grave, sober lot, who worked in silence with a full consciousness of the awful hazard they were running, and a knowledge of the terrible

checks glowing, and the breeze waving her loose brown hair. The others moved back exposing her to the scrutiny of thousands of eyes turned on the pier. Presently Gen. Abbott stepped to the side of the child, holding the keyboard that was to control the circuit in his hands. Before it was attached to the wires he allowed the little girl to examine it, and showed her the key which under the pressure of her finger was to discharge the mine.

"You must just touch it like this," he said, giving it a tap with his finger.

The child looked at him with sparkling eyes, but without evincing the slightest nervousness.

"I know," she said, "like this." And she tapped the key with a tiny gloved finger.

little group of spectators, and, with a choked crash and muffled roar, the great volume of seething and foaming water sprang into the air.

All eyes were turned toward Flood Rock until the first commotion had ceased, and then the officers rushed up to congratulate Gen. Newton, and at once turned to shower compliments upon the little girl, who seemed a very well poised little girl indeed. She only smiled brightly in response to their pleasantries, and turned to her father, who kissed her tenderly, remarking, as a great tidal wave rolled in upon the beach, "There, just see what you've done!"

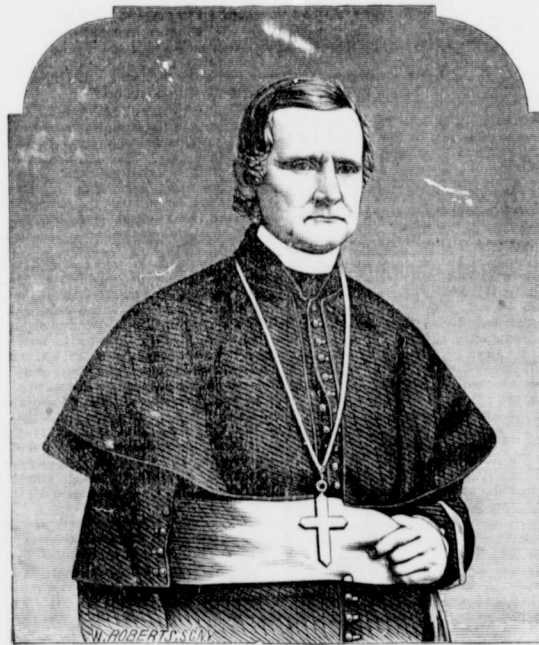
"Yes, indeed," said Gen. Abbott. "You have probably created more commotion this morning than any other little girl in New York."

One account of the scene of the explosion says:

The contortion of the wreathed waters was like the dumb agony of some stricken thing. For a trembling moment the sublime spectacle stood sharp against the sky, like a mighty vision of distant snow-capped mountains. Then down, down, and still down the enormous mass rushed with a wild hissing, as if ten thousand huge steam valves had been opened. The yellow waters of the river were riven and torn into immense boiling masses of white foam. Great waves, ten feet high, rolled outward. Big streaks and spots of deep brown mingled with the white and made ominous shadows under the silver lights. All around the rocks the river swirled and rolled and leaped upward like the whirlpool of Niagara. A dazzling yellow cloud—the pent up gases of that subterranean convulsion—spread over the spot. Then it widened and turned to a brilliant green, then to a faint blue, and floated slowly away. Showers of spray all like summer rain through the air and returned to the river. The big hoisting apparatus over the shaft had toppled over and lay broken and smashed on its side. It had not risen into the air. Not a stone was seen to go upward. The wall of ghost-like waters was unbroken. And when the spray had sunk down and the waters of the river filled with brown mud lay boiling around the site of the great explosion, there lay the old rock, torn into myriads of pieces and scattered with debris, a ragged, smoking, dun-brown mass.

Those in the public institutions on Blackwell's Island, except a few bedridden people whom it would have been absolutely fatal to move, were turned into the open air. It was a strange sight. Ambulance surgeons, staff physicians, and trained nurses in the Charity Hospital wrapped nearly 900 patients up in warm blankets and moved them from their beds in the wards to cots ranged in double rows on the lawn, where the sick people could get most of the warm sunshine. Persons too ill to be moved had nurses watching around their beds. Male prisoners in the penitentiary were marched out on the parade ground and made to stand shoulder to shoulder, with arms close at side, under the surveillance of watchful keepers. The almshouses, including the incurable wards, were emptied of the lame,

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THE LATE CARDINAL McCLOSKEY.

consequences that might follow a single misstep or careless motion. Some of them, mounted on ladders or rude platforms, received the cartridges as they were handed up to them, and carefully inserted them in the holes that had been drilled for their reception, pushing them home with wooden rammers."

THE EXPLOSION.

When the mine had been flooded and everything was in perfect order, Gen. Newton, under whose superintendence the work has been carried on, indicated by a nod as he landed that the time had come when he should ascertain whether his long and anxious work was to be a success. Then he turned toward his wife and daughter. A path was made for them in the gathering. The child stepped quickly forward, her

When the cable leading to the mine had been connected with the keyboard, the ladies and gentlemen near where the end of the cable was moved back, leaving only Gen. Newton, Gen. Abbott and the little girl alone, Gen. Abbott still holding the keyboard in both hands, taking care to keep it well away from him lest his clothes might touch the knob and complete the electric current.

Almost involuntarily the spectators behind the trio of principal actors shrank closer together as Gen. Abbott nodded to the child, who stepped up to the instrument and, after the merest moment of hesitation, touched the key.

There was a single instant of breathless silence. Then there came a sudden jar of the solid rock underneath the feet of the