

THE CONCEPTION-BAY MAN.

SELECT POETRY.

THE ROMAN SIGH.

BY W. CARROLL.

O, tempora! O, mores!
O, the times! O, the manners.—CICERO.

As Time rolls on, each passing age
Stamps some vile blot on history's page;
Each with its virtues adds anew,
Remorseless vices each pursue;
Still canonizing as divine
The sins of all compounding time.

The world grows old in its own shame,
As duly as in honest fame;
And fate as duly oft decrees
A host of human miseries;
Yet, though it doom the most to bear
The burthen of a heavy snare,
Hope bids us look with smiling eyes
At heaven's sunshine and the skies,
Still trusting to another day
To see life's sorrows melt away;
Despondence only salts vain tears,
And brings a pack about our ears
Of worldly curs all bound to be
Sworn foes in sad adversity:
While Truth and Time, those steady friends,
Have gained the most important ends:
The will that has some task begun
Has oft some desperate battle won.

Advice like this in days of yore,
Our fathers took when times were sore,
And drove the world along with ease,
Despite capricious fortune's breeze;
'Twas then, when fortune smiled, the pack
Swelled out in chorus on their track;
And now, should fortune chance to frown,
As vile a pack would hunt us down.

O, Cicero! If Cæsar's hour
And thine were burdened with the power
Of vile distraction, still the same
Old Latin curse is ripe again!
"The Times"—"the Manners," are no more
The wise—the virtuous, than before!
The faults the errors of the past,
Are—Greek or Roman—bound to last.
The echo of thy Roman sigh,
Fortells no sorrow, born to die.

MISCELLANEOUS.

HOW THINGS ARE DONE IN BOSTON.

Americans can show no other city so full of mature systems, useful contrivances and odd conveniences as this same Boston.—Their maxim seems to be, that "there's a best way of doing all things." In public and domestic affairs the "solid men of Boston" are not content with simple achievement, but they must have achievement by the best methods.

The latest illustration of this is their scientific way of giving a fire alarm, and calling out and guiding their fire department. A very simple matter, one would think, to raise the window sash and shout *fire* two or three times and leave the alarm to spread. Every villager knows how to pull a bell-rope, and ring till he's tired. Every New Yorker knows how to count the blooming strokes of the bells as they tell of the distinct number. A very simple thing! One way just as good as another, so long as a rousing alarm is started.

By no means. These Boston men have found out a best way.

If your house takes fire, and gets past domestic control, and you feel it necessary to appeal to the municipal authorities for help, do not be excited or alarmed. Do not make yourself red in the face, or hoarse with shouting. Put on your hat and run to yonder corner, where you see that little iron box fastened up against the wall; step into the store, ask quietly for the key, adding, "My house is on fire," by way of apology for the intrusion; now unlock the little iron door, and remembering that the longest way round is sometimes the shortest way home, obey the inscription, and "turn six times slowly." Your responsibility is ended. You've done all you need to. Boston will take care of your house. Hurry home, or the engines will be there before you.

Every bell in the city and several more

across the water are telling people where you live, and that your house is on fire. In other parts of the city men with glazed hats and brass trumpets may be seen running to the same little iron boxes; they seem to whisper a moment, then they lock very knowing, and slap the door to; and here they come all pell-mell, to your help. How much time has elapsed since you need help? Perhaps three minutes. This is the best way of giving an alarm, that's a fact.

But how was it done?
That little iron box you opened was a telegraph station; you can see the wires where they come down through those two iron pipes into the box. The crank you turned is merely a contrivance that enables an experienced person to send the only message ever sent from this box—its own number. Just so a hand organ enables the grinder to play one tune well, though he is no organist. You turned it six times. Once would have been enough; but six times over, and every time the same number, there would be no mistake. The central office knew in an instant of your distress.

Yes, but how did that make the bells ring all over the city, and East Boston too? Do they keep a sexton at every bell rope all the time, ready to pull when any one telegraphs? No. That would be fully as bad as the New York plan of keeping watchmen up in the fire-towers, on a perpetual lookout. That would not be scientific enough for a "best" way. But you know a church clock strikes the hours without any help from the sexton, except to wind it up. Just so the bells are rung for fires in every steeple there is a machine like the striking train of a clock. These machines will strike several hundred blows each with their heavy hammers by being wound up once. When you sent off your despatch it went direct to a third story room on Court square, and was read by a man whose business it is to attend to such messages. From this same room, he can, by touching a key, send by another set of wires a current of galvanism to every steeple in the city. If you look you can see those wires entering every steeple that holds a good bell.

When the galvanic current passes into the several steeples, it circulates in each around a bar of soft iron, which instantly becomes a powerful magnet, strong enough to lift the detent that keeps the striking machine from running. Now the machines are made so that they would strike one blow and stop, unless the magnet keeps the detent back and leaves the wheels unlocked and free to run. So the man in the third story room by the Court House, (he'll show you how it is done, if you will call upon him, for he is very courteous to visitors) can, by pressing the proper knob or key, make these heavy bell hammers strike any number he chooses. And he makes them strike the number of your ward.

The foreman of every company has a key to those little iron boxes, and so when he's got the ward signified by the bells, he runs to the nearest box, and sends a private signal to the man in the Court Square, asking just "where is the fire?" and then he listens while the answer comes back in little taps, *one, two, three, four, &c.* till he learns the number of the very box you opened when you gave the alarm in the first place. Every box has its own number. The bells tolled the foreman what ward, and the telegraph taps whispered what station box the alarm came from.

I see. But is it worth all this trouble of wires and machinery, and boxes and batteries.

Yes, indeed. Five minutes at the beginning of a fire are very precious. But oftentimes so rapid is the system, an alarm will be given, bells rung, boxes consulted, fire found, hose procured and screwed to a Cockittate fire plug, and the fire extinguished ere the family in danger are well awake.—Many a time the first thing a man knows of his danger by fire, is that his room is flooded with water.

But this Municipal telegraph is used for more purposes than one. In case of riot the police captains can send for help to headquarters. To catch an absconding thief by setting a guard at every railroad and steamboat, can be done in five minutes. Then, too, very soon all the city clocks will be hitched together by these wires, and all of them go by one central pendulum, accurately, five hundred clocks alike to a second.

Go it, Boston! We shall soon hear of newer notions still. The next move will be to introduce into every first class house, city (time as well as city water and city gas. Telegraphic time wires will be introduced, just as now the water pipes and gas fixtures are. What a millennium of punctuality! Twenty thousand clocks ticking together! Yes, and next we shall hear of a refinement of the fire system. Philips' annihilators will be built into the walls, the nozzles just peeping out into the room.

Convenient wires will be arranged, so that a man waked at midnight by a smell of fire or a red light in his room, will only need reach out his arm to the fire knob and pull it "six times slowly," and instantly that wakeful, watchful, handy man on Court Square will touch his wires, not to frighten sleep from all the city with his dinging bells, but quietly he'll touch the wire, and smash go the acid bottles in the ambushed annihilators; phiz, squiz, fush-sh-h, inshed the humid, fire destroying, life preserving vapor. The unseasonable fire surrenders and goes out. But long ere this the solid man has rolled himself back into bed again, tucked the blanket snug under his chin, fallen asleep, blessing the best, the very best, the Boston way of putting out fires.

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Is Edited and Published every Wednesday morning, by GEORGE WEBBER, at his office, Water-street, opposite the Premises of W. DONNELLY, Esq.
TERMS:—Fifteen Shillings per annum, half in advance.

VOL. I.

PROOF OF A WITNESS

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