

### The Latest New York Fire.

In the reports of the terrible explosions which accompanied the recent destruction of a large wholesale druggists' establishment in New York, no definite information as to the cause of the disaster has yet been given. It seems to be admitted that a fire had broken out in the building which was known to be a veritable store-house of chemicals and alcohol for the making of perfumes. With what followed our readers are familiar.

To insure freedom from similar danger in the heart of great cities, what will now be done? Have we the same dangerous surroundings in the Canadian metropolis? The destructive power of some explosive compounds is too apt to be overlooked by insurance companies. A few years ago, a Boston paper told a story of a sea captain belonging to that port, who, finding a suspicious box on board his vessel, marked "sodium," flung it overboard. "As soon as the package touched the water an explosion occurred, lifting the sea into an immense column to the stern of the vessel." It was conjectured that this dangerous parcel must have contained nitroglycerine, but enquiry showed that it was a new chemical mixture called sodium amalgam. This material, it is said, is never manufactured in very large quantities, though it had been advertised for sale in San Francisco, one firm claiming to have as much as two hundred ounces for sale. The amount does not seem large, but when it is understood that the explosive power of one ounce of sodium is equal to that of about twenty-five pounds of gun-powder, or two and a-half pounds of nitroglycerine, it can readily be conceived that even fifteen or twenty ounces, exploded in one place, would create immense havoc. And when one further reflects that even so little a thing as a spoonful of water coming in contact with two hundred ounces of sodium would occasion an explosion equal to that which would be occasioned by the ignition of five thousand pounds of powder, or the concussion of five hundred pounds of nitroglycerine, we can form some conception of its tremendous destructive power."

Without knowing aught of the explosive in question, we reproduce the story as an illustration of the possibility of storing death and destruction in very small quarters, and also for the purpose of arousing the interests of fire underwriters in a question of grave importance—the destructive power of the contents of chemists' warehouses. What this New York fire means from the stand-point of the insurance companies may be judged by the comments in yesterday's *Bulletin* :—

"The explosions having been caused by the fire which preceded them, the fire insurance companies are liable for both the fire and explosion loss on pro-

perty, including the plate glass damage for blocks around the scene. It is a hard blow to the fire underwriters, coming as it does in the last quarter of what has been an abnormally bad year for them."

### The Madness of Joy

If the reports which have been sent across the ocean of the reception accorded to the City Imperial Volunteers on Monday last are couched in the language of truth, the streets of London (especially the historic Fleet) were filled with a raving, frantic multitude of people, frenzied with violent and irrational excitement. Life and accident companies would have been quite justified in asking an extra premium of any one who expressed his intention of participating in such a "merry-making" as that outlined by the special correspondents in their cablegrams. We are told that "*shrieks and groans filled the air; people were hurled to the ground and trampled upon.*" Then, less the reader should still retain a belief that *he* would be able to retain his presence of mind, and incidentally, his footing, on such an occasion, we are told that the strong, splendid-looking Life Guards, the delight and admiration of visitors to London, were "*swept off*" and with their horses "*lost in the struggling mass of humanity.*" That settles it. We here and now absolve from reproach, any life company found prohibiting its policyholders from taking part in such "receptions." The fact that "*two men fell from a scaffold on a building in Finsbury Circus and were killed,*" is apparently thus briefly referred to as proof that the madness of great joy was not confined to the surging crowds in the streets, but extended to those who occupied positions of vantage up in the air.

Thoughtful Lord Wolseley's request that returning soldiers be spared the temptation to worship at the shrine of Bacchus, is evidently based upon knowledge of the sanguine temperament and convivial habits of the Londoner. In any event, the warning seems to have been necessary. However, the City Imperial Volunteers are said to have shunned the night's celebration. Indeed their hiccupping hosts are reported to have almost forgotten their gallant guests "*in the general desire to take advantage of the opportunity of unbridled debauch and the defiance of all laws.*"

The story of the reception to the City Imperial Volunteers is a remarkable one, and we desire to hear more before giving entire credence thereto. In the meantime we venture to hope that the welcome extended to the heroes of the approaching demonstration in this Dominion will not drift into such a perilous Pandemonium as that in which the Londoners revelled in the madness of their joy on Monday last.