

**Chain Letters.** The desire of our people to assist the families of killed and wounded soldiers is most laudable, and we hesitate to condemn any of the methods adapted by sympathetic friends for providing for the families of our own "absent-minded beggars." Yet it is questionable if the "endless chain letter" business is deserving of encouragement. If any citizen wishes to subscribe to the Patriotic Fund, it is certainly better that his contribution should be sent to a treasurer appointed for the purpose of receiving subscriptions, rather than to some well-meaning but self-appointed collector for this patriotic purpose.

**Absolutely Fireproof.** Such an experiment as that recently described in THE CHRONICLE when some parties interested in Electric Fireproof Wood submitted as a test of their faith in its non-inflammability to be shut up in a building, under and around which a fire was kindled of sufficient heat to melt metal and glass, is interesting enough, and leaves little to be desired. But it lacks the force of the practical example of the protection to life and property afforded by the fire-proofing process applied to the woodwork of buildings given at the fire in the Dun Building in New York. The story seems incredible; but what are the facts?

The fire apparently originated in a desk or a waste paper basket in one of the offices, on a Saturday afternoon, when the majority of business men had left for their homes. There was a fierce blaze, and every stick of furniture in the room was consumed. Yet the building itself contributed nothing to the flames. The fire is said to have burned itself out as harmlessly as a fire in a grate. Even the fire department remained ignorant of what was happening, and we are told that a few hours of carpenter work and some varnish soon made the room what it was before the fire.

All the public demonstrations in the world, even when followed by elaborate luncheons and much advertising, will not furnish more remarkable testimony to the extraordinary qualities of Electric Fireproof wood, than this fire in the Dun building in New York city.

**The "late" President Steyn.** Even the fall of Humpty-Dumpty was not greater than that of the "late" President Steyn. Not all of the burghers can put this gentleman's broken schemes of ambition together again. Careless of the consequences to his people, carried away with the vision of a Dutch-African Republic, to the presidency of which he undoubtedly aspired, Steyn, in October last, joined forces with the Transvaal. The Orange Free State never had any difficulty with the British, with whom they were living in amicable relations. It had no wrongs to

revenge, it had no pending disputes, its people had never shown even private animosity to those with whom their president made them fight. And now the British army, instead of being driven into the sea, is in possession of the Free State capital, and Lord Roberts' headquarters are in the house of poor Mr. Steyn. The same sun which gilds all nature, and exhilarates the whole creation, does not shine upon the disappointed ambition of this modern Humpty Dumpty. However, he can very well be left to the tender mercies of the poor deluded burghers now being made happy under the British flag. Reflection upon his responsibility for the death and desolation in many Free State homes can inspire him with nothing but gloom and melancholy.

**Lest we Forget.** In November last Mr. Steyn issued a proclamation announcing the annexation to the Transvaal of Bechuanaland. Events have shewn it was not an effective transfer of sovereignty. Even among the sons of the Empire who had become accustomed, although not reconciled, to reverses, the main effect of Mr. Steyn's proclamation was to raise an amused smile at his colossal impudence. But there was much more than impudence in the act, as we remarked at the time.

The motive was evidently allied to that which prompted Mr. Kruger to offer burgher rights to such Uitlanders as would fight for him—viz., to relieve them of the danger of subsequent arrest for high treason by the British authorities. It was Mr. Steyn's desperate endeavor to get some of the Afrikaners to rise and reinforce the Boers' none too numerous army; for Dr. Leyds' 100,000 fighting men exist, we imagine, only in that gentleman's lively imagination. But the act will have to be remembered when the day of reckoning comes; as will also the infamous attempts to incite the Basutos to take arms against their British protectors. There is always a danger, among a generous people, of displaying too great magnanimity in the hour of victory; and it is certain that much magnanimity would be wasted on Mr. Steyn. Not unlikely, when the full history of the South African trouble comes to be known, it will be found that this man, even, perhaps, more than the diplomatic Leyds, has been the evil genius of the piece. It has not been a desperate struggle to defend the independence of his State (which was never threatened) that induced this ambitious scheme to embroil his Republic in the fray; and his prompt "annexation" of country outside his borders rather spoiled the picture of a little State in arms to protect itself against invasion. It will be a shocking mistake if Mr. Steyn be treated with in any way at the conclusion of hostilities; the only possible way to regard him is as a prescribed rebel, who had best make himself scarce with all the expedition he can.