

Defence of Electric Wires.

In the absence of positive evidence as to the cause of fires it is natural enough for some possible culprit to be made a sort of scape-goat, now, when certain established interests are disturbed by the growing popularity of electric lighting, there is a tendency to attribute fires to the wiring required for this purpose. The "Brooklyn Eagle" quotes Mr. Anderson, of the Survey Board, New York, as saying: "I know that there has been some increase in the losses sustained by insurance companies during the last few years, but it has not much exceeded the growth in population and the increase in building operations. I know also that nine-tenths of the insurance men take the ground that this increase is owing to ignition by electric lighting wires, but my experience has taught me that this is not the case. If there is an undue increase in fires, it is owing to spontaneous combustion. The machinery and oil that is used in nearly every large building at present necessitates the use of much wiping material. This, when saturated with oil, is not only highly inflammable, but will in itself generate a heat that will ignite any surrounding combustible material. In the inspection of the electric lighting plants of buildings this bureau is doing everything that can be done with the means and facilities at hand. The inspectors of this bureau pass upon every plant as soon as it is installed, and before the owner can obtain a policy thereon. But to carry on a general inspection of all plants at all times would be impracticable, owing to the impossibility of maintaining an adequate force of inspectors. I do not think that the case is sufficiently serious to warrant any agitation or the provision of any further safeguards, those in existence being all that the situation demands."

A Combine Failure.

A correspondent asks, "Whether any of the great combinations of recent years have passed a dividend or failed to pay interest on its bonds?" A short time ago the Maryland Brewing Company, which was organized in 1889 by a combination of 16 or 17 establishments in and near Baltimore, was compelled to go into the hands of a receiver. Its capital was \$6,500,000, one half preferred and half common stock. Upon this was piled 6 per cent. bonds for \$7,500,000, making 14 millions on which profits had to be earned. These were found insufficient to pay interest on the bonds, the capitalization being three times the actual value of the properties, and business taken over. An enormous quantity of water is used as raw material in brewing, but in this case, the superabundance of water swamped the enterprise.

Our usually sedate and chivalrous English contemporary, "The Review" has the following audacious remarks: "A search of a year's record of cases in the police courts of Chicago throws some interesting light on domestic warfare. It was Artemus Ward who said: 'My wife is one of the best wimin on this continent, altho' she isn't always gentle as a lamb with mint sauce;' and it was Lord Byron who inquired:

'But O, ye lords of ladies intellectual, Inform us truly, have they not henpecked you all?'

It has remained for the Chicago "Tribune," however, to tabulate the list of weapons which 'lovely woman' uses when she feels that way."

Here is the Chicago list:

Broom handles.....	186	Curling-irons.....	12
Table knives of all kinds ..	102	Umbrellas and parasols....	11
Stove-lid lifters.....	79	Shoes and slippers.....	9
Rolling pins.....	76	Scissors.....	8
Plates and dishes.....	72	Fork ^s	6
Hatpins.....	55	Books.....	4
Hair brushes & hand mirrors	48	Potato-mashers.....	3
Mops.....	33	Riding whips.....	3
Revolvers.....	31	Lamp.....	1
Flat-irons.....	29	Nursing-bottle.....	1

This seems a formidable list of weapons, but it must be remembered that probably, not one in the whole list ever struck the mark aimed at, though numerous accident cases doubtless arose from the above weapons going wildly astray.

Firing in Streets.

The practice of firing rifles in public streets in this city is becoming so common as to call for stern measures for its suppression. On Saturday last at 6 p.m. an estimable clergyman was so much annoyed by this that he sallied out from his study and sought to stop the proceedings of a pair of miscreants who were alarming the tenants in a certain locality and endangering the lives of passengers by discharging fire arms. They assulted him viciously, and cut his face so badly in two places that a surgeon had to dress the wounds. They escaped, but one was traced and apprehended by a detective. On Monday the offender was tried by the Recorder, and for this very grave offence was let off with the trifling punishment of a \$10 fine. Earlier on the same day the writer was within a few yards of a young man who discharged a rifle between St. Urbain and St. Lawrence Main. On a street near that location the firing of a rifle has been heard several times this month. In the case above named when, to the offence of firing in a public street there was added the crime of assault with evident intent to do grievous bodily harm, a fine of \$10 was altogether too trifling a punishment. The hoodlum element here needs a severe lesson, as their open defiance of the law and their insolence and threats to citizens who rebuke them shows that they are wholly without fear of punishment.