The Daily News,

WEDNESDAY EVENING, APRIL 7.

☞ SEE FIRST PAGE.

FRENCH DUELLISTS IN NEW YORK.

Considerable excitement has existed in certain circles during the past two or three days, growing out of a difficulty that occurred between Messrs. Carrier and Gabel, of the French Theatre company. It appears from the report that on Saturday a dispute arose between these actors at a rehearsal as to their relative positions on the stage during the delivery of a certain speech in "La Vie Parisienne," the quarrel resulting in a fight. The combatants were separated, and the friends of each thought no more of the matter at the time.

On Sunday, however, challenges were sent by each of the principals to fight a duel on the following morning, and the seconds were appointed. It is alleged that one was desirous of fighting with swords, but the other, who not was an adept with the weapon objected, and insisted upon using the pistols. Another "hitch" also subsequently occurred in regard to the selection of the ground—one having been in favour of Canada and the other naming Hoboken as the scene of the encounter. During the arrangement of the preliminaries information of the projected duel was conveyed to the police, when, it is asserted, one of the principals refused to fight, and the whole affair ended in a bloodless war of words. In consequence of the trouble it is reported that Monsieur Gabel has withdrawn from the French Theatre Company.

INFANTILE PRECOCITY.

I was called upon a few days ago to attend a sick child, a daughter of William and Mary Jane Hearsey, living in St. Charles township. I found the child, aged a few days under five months, very ill. After administering medicine to the child, I was startled to hear it say very distinctly, "Mamma, baby don't want any more." Completely nonplussed, I inquired of the mother how long the baby had talked. As though it were no unusual occurrence, she coolly said it commenced talking a few days before it was three months old! I watched the child with the deepest interest. It does not prattle as is usual with infants when first trying to talk, stumbling upon and straining at words. It speaks clearly and coherently, a regular sentence that clearly expresses its thought or ideas. It seems to note the anxiety and wishes of others. A little four year old brother was out of the house and several members of the family inquired where he was. He soon came in, when the baby, seeing him, said to the mother: "Otty has come home." It will lie quietly in its cradle while its mother is at work, and when it is hungry will say, "Baby wants dinner," or "Mamma, take baby up," as plainly as a child five or six years of age. I may as well mention that another of the children commenced talking at eight months old. Altogether, I consider it a phenomenon worthy of public record. Nor do I think it any the less incomprehensible that this talking wonder is a girl.—J. H. Sudduth, M. D.—*St. Charles, Minn., Herald.*

THE SUEZ CANAL.

(*From the London Times.*)

One more stage in the progress towards completion of the Suez Canal has to be recorded. On the 18th of March the waters of the Mediterranean were admitted into the Bitter Lakes with perfect success, in the presence of the Viceroy of Egypt and a numerous company. One of the chief mechanical difficulties has thus been surmounted, and there can be no doubt that, in a short time, the Canal will be opened for vessels of a certain tonnage, the whole length from Port Said to Suez. In August, 1867, the completion of the canal was fixed for the latter part of the present year, 1869. The canal had attained its full breadth of 100 metres from the Mediterranean to Lake Timsah, and would be continued to Serapeum and the Bitter Lakes. This part has been fulfilled, and already the waters of the Mediterranean are flowing into these Lakes, which they will take many weeks to fill. The remainder of the excavation does not present any remarkable difficulty, and we may therefore consider that the work will be completed within a reasonable time and the canal be opened to the ships of the world.

The history of the undertaking shows the strength of national traditions. The piercing of the Isthmus of Suez has been a favourite idea with three generations of Frenchmen, and descended as a kind of heirloom to Napoleon III. When General Bonaparte was in Egypt in the last year but one of the last century, he conceived the project and had a survey made. His engineers reported that the level of the Red Sea was some 39ft. higher than that of the Mediterranean. This remained unquestioned for more than forty years, and was always taken into account in the references which were made as to the possibility of cutting through the Isthmus. In 1840 a new survey threw doubts on the existence of this inequality. In 1847 a commission of English, French, and Austrian engineers was sent out, and some years later a complete survey was made by Linant Bey. The result of these new examinations was to explode the notion of a difference of level, which had been looked upon by some as an obstacle and by some as an advantage. It was at the time of the Crimean war, when the influence of France was highest in the East, that the then Viceroy, Said Pasha, gave a concession for the construction of a Ship Canal between the Mediterranean and Suez to M. Ferdinand de Lesseps. Whatever the success of the enterprise, the name of this gentleman will be always reckoned among those of the boldest pioneers of practical science. He had certainly the protection of a powerful Government with the good-will and confidence of his countrymen, who believed him to be adding a new glory to France, and gave his canal a financial support which he could hardly have expected. Yet he had many difficulties to contend with. The first estimates of the labour, time, and cost had been wonderfully rose-coloured, and as the work progressed its colossal proportions became manifest. For fifteen years M. de Lesseps has kept up his own courage and that of his shareholders. He has got as much money as he has needed, and will no doubt be able to get more. His engineers have done their work with extraordinary skill, and the Suez Canal will ever remain one of the marvels of modern science.

The northern end of the Bitter Lakes is 59½ miles from Port Said. The Bitter Lakes are 23½ miles long, and from their southern end it is 14 miles to Suez. Thus, when the Bitter Lakes are raised to the level of the Mediterranean by the influx of the water from that sea, there will remain only 15 miles to be traversed before the two seas are united, and it is evident that we may look forward to an early communication between one sea and the other, although not perhaps immediately available. Provided the Canal be maintained in full depth and efficiency, and the charges not unreasonable, "the steam passenger and mail traffic now carried on between Europe and India will chiefly pass through the Canal;" but "sailing vessels, which would not only require steam tugs through the Canal, but also down the Red Sea, will not use the Canal." If, however, new sailing vessels with adequate auxiliary steam power specially adapted to the Canal and the Red Sea were to be constructed, they might divert the large traffic now being carried round the Cape; and Mr Fowler thinks that enterprising firms will try his experiment, which will secure for the Suez Canal a great position both for usefulness and profit. The only doubt in this respect is as to the capacity of the Canal to admit the large-sized vessels in which the commerce of the world tends more and more to be carried on. We have already in the Mediterranean traders of much greater tonnage than the largest which visited its ports in the days when the Canal was planned, and there can be little doubt that the distant trade with India and Australia will in future years employ vessels of 4,000 and 5,000 or more tons burden. What is the capacity of the harbours and the Canal of the Company for admitting these enormous vessels?

Engineers tell us that everything is a question of money, and if the Canal be, as seems certain, scientifically practicable, and really receive the patronage of the commercial world, we may hope that its proprietors will be encouraged to enlarge it. The more recent opinion of engineers is not so much against the durability of the Canal as some years ago. One of the chief dangers apprehended was the choking up of the harbour of Port Said by the Nile deposit. According to Mr Fowler, large and almost constant deposits of alluvium will be made, and great care must be taken to prevent these accumulating year after year. But, though "considerable expense in dredging "will be constantly required," still "no apprehension need be entertained as to the "channel and harbour being silted and "destroyed." If, then, the Canal prove successful, the fortune of Point Said will be made. This place is the creation of M. Lesseps, is on a dreary sand reef, and must be wonderfully altered before it can become even tolerable. At present it consists of nothing but wooden huts, and has a close resemblance to a settlement in the American wilderness, while the sun glares down on the parched and treeless soil with an intensity peculiarly African. Yet this is the place which every Frenchman declares with some plausibility is to rival, nay, to destroy, Alexandria. A Hebrew prophet of old never uttered more dreadful vaticinations against Babylon or Tyre than the partisans of the Suez Canal against Alexandria. They believe that in a few years its streets will be deserted, its long lines of new buildings crumbling into ruin, while the riches of East and West will choke the warehouses of Port Said. On the other hand, Alexandria, secure in its present prosperity, and proud of its twofold preeminence as the chief port of wealthy Egypt and the first halting-place on the journey to the far East, is inclined to view with indifference if not with contempt its upstart rival. The result will, perhaps, prove that each place has grounds for its confidence. Though Port Said does not appear to have the capabilities of a great city, it must, if the Canal prove really successful, become of the most busy and thriving spots on the road to India.

A strong detachment of the North American and West India fleet is ordered to cruise off the coast of Cuba, to protect English vessels from Spanish outrages.

It is cited in favour of the universal adoption of a phonographic system of writing, that there is no principle in the spelling of English words. When a child or foreigner has learned to spell one word, he may not be sure that another word similarly spelled is similarly pronounced. Thus, for example, compare now with snow; hoe with shoe; eight with height; love with move and rove, and rove, and so on. In fact, of 50,000 words, only about 50, or one in a thousand, are pronouced as might be expected from the spelling. So that, to be an accurate speller of English words, nearly every separate one requires a special effort of memory.

Horse-eating does not seem to agree with the public: it produces nightmare, perhaps. At a meeting at Troyes it came out that horse did not go down with the public; but we are informed that "the equine population" of the country, together with "mules and asses," might supply 55,000,000 kilos of food annually. They are cultivating a new animal here, who is, as the late Mr Richard Tattersall would have said, "quiet to drive, quiet to ride, and a good *roti* into the bargain." The "Yock," from Thibet, is very like venison to eat (*on dit*), and is very sure-footed, gives excellent milk—that is, of course the female Yock does—carries heavy weights, and has no objection to town or country." The *Journal Officiel* proclaims it as a new meat; and really any one who will add something to beef and mutton—pork and veal are fit only for savages, and then only in cold weather, and if a doctor is to the fore—will confer a favour—and flavour—on society, for which society cannot be too much obliged. But, if we get a new meat, we shall have to teach our cooks to cook it. It gets worse and worse, does the cannibalism of the French cooks.—*Paris Letter.*

In Bulgaria, we are told, when women wish to go into mourning they simply turn their garments inside out. We can't help thinking that this is an improvement upon our custom. Thus, when any of our people die there is at once a tremendous panic among their female friends in order to find out what to wear and how to make it, perhaps how to pay for it, that their grief may gush respectably. It divides up the sorrow of the hour to such an extent that no ambitious lady can do entire justice to the departed; a widow can grieve for her late husband no more than five minutes out of every hour, and when the funeral is over a great load is positively lifted from a heart that would otherwise be legitimately affected. We suppose, if such things could be measured, it would be found that for every regret for the one who has passed away there are moments of intense agony lest this dress or that bonnet should not arrive on time; and such a division of the mournful is by no means just to the living or the dead. Let us have a change.—*American paper.*

Athleticism, pursued with so much devotion in the English schools and universities, is now becoming the subject of severe criticism in the English journals. Young men, it is asserted, go the universities professedly to read, but instead of attending to their books, pass their time in rowing, cricketing, jumping, running, throwing hammers, and "putting" weights. Athletic sports are practised to an extravagant excess, and time and money are wasted, while the opportunities of acquiring a finished education are lost. Not only are the ordinary course of politics and contemporary history beyond the knowledge and interest of these muscular young students, but the young men, it is asserted, grow up to manhood painfully simple and loutish. The hardening, vulgarizing effects of athletic amusements, pursued beyond the point necessary to preserve health, it is contended, are visible in the rising generation of Englishmen. A disagreeable coarseness of thought and action, it is stated, is impressed upon the young men of the schools and universities, and accompanies them through life.

Henry Dando, of Skaneateles, has fallen heir to a large fortune by the death of a relative in England. The sum is said to be about $80,000. Mr Dando leaves this week for England. He has been a hard-working, industrious man, and his good fortune is accordingly the more appreciated. So says an exchange. We congratulate Dando regarding his great expectation.

Holloway Gaol in London is so well kept that it is usually called among thieves "Tuffnell Park." The prisoners have good beds and good books; they are allowed pens, ink, and paper; they have the occasional luxury of a bath; and if they want anything, they have only to ring a bell and an officer in uniform waits upon them. A recently discharged inmate was met the other day by a friend, who saluted him with "I say, Tom, how fat and well you look!" "Yes," was the reply; "I have been spending three months at my country house in Tuffnell Park, and it does me a world of good."

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