CONFESSED ARSON.

George T. Owen in Custody for Causing the Explosion Sunday Night.

WANTED THE INSURANCE MONEY.

Told the Police He Did It Because Business Was Bad.

George T. Owen, junior member of the firm of Owen & Co., grocers in the Arcade building on Bleecker street, was arrested by Assistant Chief Conkey and Officer Barry yesterday afternoon for arson in the third degree. He was charged with causing the explosion and fire which occurred in the store about 10:30 o'clock Sunday night. Since that time Owen has been under suspicion of the police authorities. He has been aware of this fact and his arrest did not surprise him. For the past two days it was known that the prisoner's arrest hinged upon a few details which the police were seeking for. The general impression which has prevailed as to the perpetration of the crime was confirmed about 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, when Owen confessed. The simple announcement that Owen had made a complete confession was all the information the police would give out. The prisoner was locked up in the chief's private office, and no one was allowed to see him.

Owen is well known about the city. That he should attempt such a terrible crime is beyond comprehension. For some time past his father, Griffith Owen, has been sick, and the young man has had entire charge of the business. Business has been bad; he confessed to the authorities, and he conceived the idea of blowing up the building and setting fire to the stock to get the insurance of $4,500.

Ever since the fire the young man has been under suspicion, and Assistant Chief Conkey and officer Barry, who were detailed to do the detective duty on the case, very quickly arrived at the conclusion that he was the guilty party. To prove this was the problem they set out to solve, and so thorough was the net of circumstantial evidence woven about the young man that it was deemed advisable to arrest him yesterday. The arrest was made at the store.

Once reached police headquarters about 2:30 o'clock, he was at once taken into the chief's private office. He appeared nervous, and it was evident to those who saw him that he was under a great strain. Owen told the chief that he had nothing to say, further than to deny the charge. Then he asked to be allowed to see his brother, William H. Owen, and the latter was sent for. In the mean time Owen was locked up upstairs.

Officer Barry was soon in a conversation with Owen, and after a few minutes he said he wanted to see Chief Cleveland. The latter visited him. Then Owen said he would tell all he knew about the matter, and he was brought down-stairs again, and detailed at length the story of the crime. Owen's confession was voluntary, and when it was over he seemed relieved. His brother visited him shortly after, and they talked for some time in Chief Cleveland's office.

Owen held nothing back in his confession, which was taken by Clerk Stetson. The police, however, refused to state its contents, and they would not allow Owen to talk with reporters. He explained about his business affairs, the securing of the fuse and applying the incendiary match. District Attorney Curtin also talked with Owen. The prisoner will be arraigned in police court to-day, and it is understood that former District Attorney Klock will appear for him.

Chief Cleveland and Assistant District Attorney Willis had several conferences yesterday. About 3 o'clock the former went over to police court and swore out a warrant for Owen's arrest for arson third degree, an offense which upon conviction is punishable with not to exceed forty years in state prison. The information states that Owen, "on or about the 5th day of February, 1899 against the peace and good order of the people of the state of New York and in violation of the statute in such case made and provided, wrongfully, feloniously and willfully set on fire, in the night time, a certain building and store wherein, to the knowledge of the said defendant, there was at the time thereof a human being; that the deponent is the chief of police of the said city of Utica; that the said defendant is the junior member of the firm of Owen & Co., grocers, having a store in the Arcade building fronting on Bleecker street in said city, and which said building is the property of the A. B. Mather estate, as deponent is informed; that on the evening of said date in the hours of 10 and 11 o'clock, with the intent to set on fire and burn said store, building and contents the said defendant did arrange underneath the stove in the store an explosive of some sort unknown to deponent, and connect therewith a long fuse of the kind usually used for blasting and firing explosives and which fuse was apparently about fifty feet in length and which would require a considerable length of time to burn the whole length and then and there set fire to said fuse; that the said fuse did burn the whole length thereof and set fire to and explode the explosive connected therewith, and which explosive did wreck the store and scatter the inflammable burning in the stove over and about the said store and set fire to the woodwork therein; that there was within the said building at the time of said explosion and fire one Charles C. Snyder, and in the buildings and apartments contiguous thereto there were many persons and families lodging therein."

When the police found the fuse in the store Sunday night, Owen was very well aware that the only way that he could account for the explosion was that a man, whose name he did not know, had been bribed to commit the crime. The prisoner used strong language to Owen and left, stating: "I will get even with you you ——." Owen's actions caused the police to be suspicious. They at once began to gather facts as to his movements on Sunday night, which, it is said, did not agree with what Owen told the police. The officials then started their investigations about Owen. Efforts were made to ascertain the person from whom the fuse was secured. Police officials went to places on Frankfort Hill and at Clinton, where similar fuse was used. What was discovered along this line in respect Owen the police would not say, but it was stated yesterday that the fuse was similar to that used by canal contractors. Chief Cleveland, Assistant Chief Conkey and Officer Barry worked hard on the case until yesterday afternoon, when their chain of circumstantial evidence was completed.

Insurance men were evidently confident that Owen had attempted to set fire to the store, for they not only refuse to pay the insurance but assured the owner of the Arcade that policies on the building would be canceled if the firm was allowed to continue in occupation. Owen's policy is said were insured for $4,500. Paul recently the stock was insured for only $1,000, but about Feb. 1 it is said, Owen increased the amount $1,500. It is said that the stock in the store is worth from $1,500 to $2,000. The firm's lease of the store runs out on May 1, and Mr. Mather, the owner, has advertised the store to rent after that date.

Owen & Co. at one time had a large trade. Within recent the founder of the firm and father of the present was an excellent man at the business. Father and son lived at No. 24 Elizabeth street. The firm had occupied the store for a good many years, and until recently Mr. Owen, sr., had charge. Sometime since he was taken ill. The management of the store then devolved upon the son. The latter on several occasions told friends that business was bad. When the Arcade was built, the tenant of the store refused to give up his lease and asked a new building to be constructed. Then the Arcade was built over and around the store occupied by Owen & Co. On Jan. 7, 1897, there was a fire in the oil room in the store, and there was considerable gossip about it at the time. Owen did not mention this fire in his confession.

Owen is about 31 years old and is a member of several organizations. He has borne a good reputation. His friends claim he was out of his right mind when he committed the deed. It certainly seems that no young man with advantages which have been young Owen's could, while sane, commit such an act. Owen is a member of the First Presbyterian church and for several years past he has acted as an usher.

BREVITIES.

The new electric elevator which was placed in the Arcade building about a month ago is again out of order.

Carnival of nations at Oneida square skating rink to-morrow evening. Music this evening.

The members of the Masonic club met last evening and decided to move into the new Masonic Temple.

Robert J. Mather, a traveling man who was taken ill in this city, is at the Utica public hospital. Dr. Hand attends him.

The shoot which was to have taken place yesterday at the grounds of the Oneida County Sportsmen's association was postponed until next Saturday.

The sophomore hop at Hamilton college occurred in Soper gymnasium, college hall last night. The collation was served by Sharps.

The ladies of the Masonic club will give a social tea, to their invited guests, between the hours of 5 and 7 this afternoon, at their club room Devereux street. After the tea dancing will be indulged in.

The primary Sunday school union will meet at the chapel of the First Presbyterian church this afternoon at 4:15. The lesson will be given by Miss Frances Robinson. The special topic, "The Flora of Nature in Illustration," will be by Miss Alice Smith.

Fifty members of the chorus, under direction of A. J. Barnes, which will present the "Stabat Mater," at St. Agnes church next month, rehearsed the music at Bagnall hall last night. The rehearsal will occur Sunday afternoon at 4:15, at St. Agnes church, and it is hoped all the singers will be present.

The election of directors to serve for three years at the Y. M. C. A. will occur on Feb. 13. The list of nominations and those who will probably be elected are: E. L. Wells, D. C. Hurd, F. F. Ellinwood, C. W. Darling, C. S. Fuller and E. J. Millaugh.

In Association hall Friday evening Miss Helen Kelleher will lecture on "California." Her lecture will be illustrated by a fine series of dissolving views. Miss Kelleher has reached as far east as Chicago, and the press of the cities where she has stopped has noticed her most flatteringly.

Invitations have been issued for a private dancing reception to be held in Curtis' dancing academy next Tuesday evening. The committee in charge consists of Charles Barthum, Ray H. Whitten, Artaxmas B. Sheldon, John W. Elchman and James Coughlin.

The second meeting of the Old Maids' league was held at the home of Misses Flora and Clara Ulrich, No. 34 Elm street, on Monday evening. Several new members were installed. After the regular business and election of officers, which occurred at that time, a social session was enjoyed.

PERSONALS.

Miss Lockerby of Montreal is the guest of friends in town.

Supervisor Fred W. Wasmuth of Augusta was in the city yesterday.

Miss Hannah J. Van Horne of Fonda is visiting her uncle, W. B. Smith of Scott street.

Miss Libbie Seigman and Mrs. William A. Palmer and daughter Ruth, who have been visiting friends in Syracuse, returned home.

Mrs. L. H. Green of Paxton street entertains from 3 to 6 o'clock this afternoon. The function is to be a "thimble party."

Charles S. Kellogg, with his daughter, Miss Mary H. Kellogg, and Mrs. P. D. Mathews, have left for southern California, to remain until May.

The Entre Nous Pedro club was entertained Tuesday evening by Miss Mary Murphy at her home in Lansing street. Prizes were won by Miss Anna Murphy and John Seifert.

A. E. Brown, owner of the Utica base ball team, left for New York on the Empire State Express, yesterday afternoon, to attend the meeting of the Eastern league at the Fifth Avenue hotel to-day.

Miss Ella Miller entertained the Aaron Pedro club at her home, 64 Green street, Tuesday evening. Several games were had and refreshments were served. Miss Maggie Graham won first prize, and Miss Ida Jacobs second prize.

Hon. James A. Sheffield and his bride, are visiting their parents on Cottage street, coming from Augusta, Ga., where Mr. Sheffield has been enjoying convalescence from a severe attack of typhoid fever.

A. E. Tanner, representing the Peck-Williamson company of Cincinnati, O., who has been in this city for the past month, has gone to Pittsburg, Pa., where he will superintend some construction work.

Gruhib B. Roberts, formerly of Utica and a member of Shenandoah lodge, I. O. O. F., now a soldier in Company K, Fifth Massachusetts, at Camp Wikoff, S. C., writes that he is recovering from an attack of pneumonia.

A merry party of the friends of C. C. Adams of 27 Miller street, gathered at his residence last evening and assisted him in celebrating his birthday. The evening was passed with cards. Refreshments were served. The occasion proved a thoroly enjoyable one in every way.

The Kappa Theta society had a sleigh ride Tuesday evening. The merry party started from the home of Miss Minnie Hooker of No. 41 Steuben street, and were entertained by Miss Hughes. Games and music and a collation served to make the evening a pleasant.

The Occident, a religious journal published at San Francisco, prints a full page portrait of Rev. E. H. Jenks of that city, who has just been called to a pastorate at Los Angeles. Rev. Mr. Jenks formerly resided at Deansboro and is a graduate of Whitestown seminary and Hamilton college. His brother, from San Francisco, the Occident says, is a prosperous and progressive young man.

Be So Wonder.

The Busiest Dry Goods Establishment in town gives Our Stamps with every 10c cash purchase, and no matter what prices are quoted by competitors, will find them lower. Be convinced under the sky are crowded every day with delighted buyers. Start a book of Red Star Trading Stamps. It's interesting. Robert Fraser, 114, 116, 118 Genesee st.

SOLD ON EVERY BOTTLE

Of Scott's Consumption Cure is the guarantee: "All we ask of you is to use one-fourth of the contents of this bottle faithfully, then if you can say you are not benefited return the bottle to your druggist and he may refund the price paid." Price 50 cents and $1.00. Sold by Fitzgerald, Burrell & Co., corner Genesee street. Anthony Scratuss, 161 Varick street, and Arthur S. Evans, 72 Genesee street.

Everybody liable to itching piles. Rich and poor, old and young—terrible the torture—the only sure cure, Dean's Ointment. All can't fail.

THE PARK QUESTION.

Arguments For and Against the System Proposed by the Chamber of Commerce.

OBJECTIONS TO ANNEXATION.

Hearing Before The Council Committee to be Continued.

Ald. Sullivan, Mosher and Weimer, President Beaty and Corporation Counsel Morehouse, the committee appointed by the common council to consider the [illegible] hearing on the council chamber last night, considering the weather there was a good attendance and those present fully expressed their opinions as to public parks. Ald. Sullivan, chairman of the committee, called the meeting to order.

President Beaty's Arguments.

President John T. Beaty of the Chamber of Commerce was the first speaker. He said he desired to submit a system of parks to the committee which had been [illegible] by the Chamber of Commerce. He was there to say that he knew of a few reasons why the council committee should favor the plan. They were: The opportunity to acquire land in localities needed, natural advantages of land recommended by the Chamber of Commerce, with few exceptions the reasonable cost of land required and options on land covering the same, and awaiting completion of Mr. Proctor's generous offer, extreme needed cost of construction to place entirely in line with other civic and social [illegible], proposed non-partisan and executive management, employment of Utica labor, increased business to the city and value to real estate to promote and encourage progressive public improvement and establish a metropolitan [illegible] in the city of Utica. To [illegible] the city a committee was appointed by the Chamber of Commerce to [illegible] and report on the matter. [illegible] and selected a certain localities. Then the committee obtained possible prices and then options on the land [illegible] and report to the Chamber of Commerce. [illegible] before the people. Options were obtained only on lands suitable for park purposes. Some offered land at $50 per acre in lots the price made and the property came up to the city lines. These lands were admirably adapted for parks, as they would not require much grading. The Waterworks company offered a right of way 100 feet wide above the reservoirs, and this would save considerable money. In parks throout the country the idea is to keep them as near nature as possible. This is more attractive than flower beds and lawns, upon which children can not trespass. After looking the ground over and obtaining options, the committee decided upon [illegible] Turner's block—in York street, south of the Mohawk river, and went east. The Turner property contains [illegible] acres, the Grant Jewett property 15 acres, Swan property 45 acres, the cemetery property 60 acres, the Roberts property 32 acres, the Phillips property 39 acres and Davis farm 120 acres, making 439 acres in all. A viaduct could be built over the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western and Ontario and Western railroads. The lands can be bought on an average of $225 an acre. Add Mr. Proctor's 67 acres and there would be about 500 acres, costing about $207 an acre. In some options the committee is not obliged to pay the price, as it could acquire the land by condemnation. Passing around the reservoirs to Silver Spring glen, thru Proctor's property to the Masonic home grounds, making a beautiful drive of about seven miles. One can walk to this park system from any part of the city in twenty minutes.

Mr. Beaty read from the report of the board of park commissioners in Rochester giving statistics of park systems in Albany, Washington, Buffalo, Peoria, Ill., Toledo, O., Springfield, Mass., Des Moines, Ia., Hartford, Conn., Rochester and Watertown. He said the Rochester report said that parks are going to increase taxes. Mr. Davis, in a report a short time ago, says it will cost 11 cents on a $1,000. A man assessed at $10,000 will have to pay $1.40 more taxes than now. It seems to be an unwise thing to fling back in Mr. Proctor's face his generous offer. It would take from us all cause for pride and benefaction. The city has got to progress like a [illegible] horse. I have heard that Syracuse, with a bonded indebtedness of $8,000,000, is agitating a park system. It is fair to assume that a non-partisan commission of six will try to run the parks on a business-like plan, and the employment of Utica labor is also considerable.

Judge Morehouse asked if it was proposed to name the commissioners in the bill, and Mr. Beaty said it was. Mr. Beaty then spoke of the efforts to annex a part of New Hartford, and the people there are satisfied with the line agreed upon. He urged the committee to prepare a bill and send it to Albany as soon as possible. If the city is going to have parks, work must be done at once. Funds can be floated at 3½ per cent, and there will be no burden to anybody.

Josiah Perry Opposed.

Josiah Perry addressed the committee in opposition to the scheme. He said: I am not in accord with the project from one end to the other. They were.