

IN AND ABOUT THE CITY

A NOTED SALOON KEEPER DEAD. HISTORIC FACTS ABOUT TOM AND JERRY AND OTHER PLEASING DRINKS.

Jerry P. Thomas, one of the best known of the barkeepers of this city, died in his residence, Sixty-third-street and Ninth-avenue, on Monday afternoon of apoplexy. Soon after noon he left the Hotel Brighton for his home, and within five minutes after reaching it he dropped to the floor dead. He leaves a widow and two children.

"Jerry Thomas," as he was familiarly called, was at one time better known to club men and men about town than any other bartender in this city, and he was very popular among all classes. He was a native of New-York, where he was born in 1832. He received some money on his father's death, and made an extended trip in California and Europe, where he developed quite a taste for pictures and bric-à-brac. On his return, in 1869, he opened a saloon at Broadway and Twenty-second-street, which soon became the most famous resort of its kind in the city. He afterward moved to where the Bijou Opera House now stands, and his taste for art led him to decorate the walls of his new place with pictures, which were so thickly hung that the saloon became practically an art gallery. Some of his paintings were really fine, and he had a collection of large cartoons by Thomas Nast representing prominent men of the city, which attracted great attention and drew business to the saloon. Jerry was of an inventive turn of mind and was constantly originating new combinations of drinks, some of which, like the "Tom and Jerry," which he named after himself, became very popular, and, as they could not be patented, were quickly adopted by other saloons for the benefit of their patrons. This drink was first quaffed in 1847, and Mr. Thomas never wearied of telling the story of its first concoction. In repeating it to a friend a few months ago he said:

"One day in California a gentleman asked me to give him an egg beaten up in sugar. I prepared the article, and then I thought to myself, 'How beautiful the egg and sugar would be with brandy in it!' I ran to the gentleman and said, 'If you'll only bear with me for five minutes I'll fix you up a drink that'll do your heartstrings good.' He wasn't at all averse to having his heartstrings improved, so back I went and mixed the egg and sugar, which I had beaten up into a kind of batter, with some brandy. Then I poured in some hot water and stirred vigorously. The drink realized my expectations. It was the one thing I had been dreaming of for months. I named the drink after myself. I had two small white mice in those days, one of which I called Tom and the other Jerry. I combined the abbreviations in the drink, as Jeremiah P. Thomas would have sounded rather heavy, and that wouldn't have done for a beverage."

This was in 1847, when a mere boy, that Mr. Thomas invented "Tom and Jerry," but he continued to make novel combinations of drinks after he had established himself firmly in this city as a saloon keeper. He always sought some striking name for his new beverage, and "Blue Blazes"—Scotch whisky burned in the glass—"Buck and Brick"—a concoction of brandy, sugar, and champagne—"Lamb's Wool"—Curacoa, Jamaica rum, and sweet butter—and "Champarelle"—another combination of champagne and brandy, were among the numerous mixed beverages which he introduced to his patrons. Jerry's business prospered, and he made money rapidly. He was not content with his profits, however, and undertook to increase them by speculating in Wall-street. This was the beginning of his downfall. He was unsuccessful in the Street, and soon lost all that he had more rapidly than he had acquired it. He was obliged to give up his Broadway saloon, and he moved to a less pretentious place in Barclay-street, but his up-town business did not follow him, and after a time he took a place in Sixth-avenue, nearly opposite Jefferson Market. Bad luck followed him here, and he was finally obliged to sell out. His collection of pictures, which had become famous, was disposed of at auction. They were eagerly sought for, and several prominent saloon-keepers secured one or two each, some of them bringing very good prices.

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