# THE DAILY RECORD-UNION.

SATURDAY.....NOVEMBER 12, 1881


**Meteorological Observations — Taken at Each Station at the Same Moment.**

SACRAMENTO, November 11, 1881—8:02 P. M.

| Places of observation. | Hight of Barom. | Thermom | Direction of wind. | Velocity. | Character of wind force. | Rain fall'ns | State of weather |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Olympia | 29.96 | 51 | W. | 16 | Brisk | 0.25 | Lt. Rain |
| Portland | 30.08 | 53 | S. | 6 | Fresh | 0.02 | Fair |
| Roseburg | 30.25 | 54 | S. | | Gentle | .... | Cloudy |
| Red Bluff | 30.23 | 48 | Calm | | Calm | .... | Clear |
| Sacramento | 30.25 | 53 | Calm | | Calm | .... | Clear |
| S. Francisco | 30.25 | 55 | N. W. | 8 | Fresh | .... | Clear |
| Visalia | 30.22 | 44 | N. | | Gentle | .... | Clear |
| Los Angeles | 30.17 | 53 | N. E | | Gentle | .... | Clear |
| San Diego | 30.12 | 56 | N. | | Gentle | .... | Clear |

Maximum temperature, 65; minimum, 41.
River above low-water mark, 6 ft. 10 in.

JAMES A. BARWICK,
Sergeant, Signal Corps, U. S. A.

### THE "WEEKLY UNION"

Of last week was shown by the indices published last Saturday morning to contain over 1,500 distinct articles. But that was only an average number. Frequent numbers surpass it, in variety and importance. The new serial story now running in the WEEKLY UNION is developing in interest, and promises to be not only deeply entertaining, but is profoundly philosophical and instructive, and in more ways than one gives an insight into "The Ways of the World." The WEEKLY UNION is issued in two parts each week, each of eight pages, and the whole is mailed, post-paid, to any address for one year for $2 50. Its subscription list is constantly enlarging, and every day the verdict is repeated, "It is the best family paper on the coast."

### THIS MORNING'S NEWS.

In New York Government bonds are quoted at 117 for 4s of 1907; 114 for 4½s; 101¼ for 3½s; sterling, $4 82@4 86; silver bars, 112⅝.

Silver in London, 51 15-16d; consols, 100 11-16; 5-per cent. United States bonds, extended, 105¼; 4s, 120¼; 4½s, 116¾.

In San Francisco half dollars are quoted at ⅛ discount to par; Mexican dollars, 92½@93c.

There was a small volume of business at the San Francisco Stock Board yesterday morning. Prices were about on Thursday's average level. There are large assessments pending, especially for account of Comstock mines, and it was thought something would be done to impart a little comfort and confidence to those who are expected to pay these taxes. Potosi put on an assessment of $56,000 yesterday, and the stock fell to $1 90, the lowest in some time. Northern Belle was active at $13 and upwards.

Fire at Denver, Col.; at Old Orchard Beach, Mo., and at Richmond, Va.

Mrs. Dinsmore, the former wife of Guiteau, now residing at Leadville, Col., has been summoned as a witness in the trial of the assassin.

The Orphans' Home at Womelsdorf, Pa., was destroyed by fire yesterday.

High water in the Rio Grande is causing great damage in Texas.

Frye has been chosen Chairman of the Republican State Central Committee in Maine, in place of Blaine, resigned.

A disastrous conflagration occurred yesterday at Woodstock, N. B.

A woman was beaten to death at Louisville, Ky., Sunday night, by unknown parties.

At Sedalia, Mo., a wealthy farmer on a spree resisted arrest, and was killed by a policeman.

M. H. Stanford's great stock farm in Kentucky has been sold for $60,000.

A freight train at Riverside, Texas, ran into a gang of convicts, killing twenty-three and wounding a number of others.

The Province of Ontario has lost $10,000,000 by bush fires the past season.

C. H. Jones, an old resident, died at Georgetown, El Dorado county, yesterday, after a brief illness.

Modesto was greatly damaged by fire yesterday morning.

A terrific distillery explosion took place at Aurora, Ind., Thursday night.

In a collision of freight trains near Kansas City, Mo., eighteen cars were wrecked beside the engines, and a brakeman killed.

The steamship City of Peking arrived at San Francisco from the Orient Thursday night, bringing Hongkong dates to October 5th, and Yokohama advices to October 23d.

The brush dam on Bear river is still burning.

A fire on a ranch near Wheatland, Yuba county destroyed a house and fatally burned John Walker.

William Kinch's barn and contents, in Sutter county, were burned Thursday night.

John Lasswell, an engineer, was accidentally killed near Mokelumne Hill yesterday.

At Frederick, Md., yesterday, Felix Munshoar was hanged for the murder of James A. Wectzell, his cousin.

Henry Jenkins was hanged at Fayetteville, W. Va., for killing Winfield Saunders in May last.

The overland train bound east was abandoned at Sherman, Wy., yesterday, owing to heavy snow-drifts.

William Kern, a teamster, was found dead on Dry creek, Yuba county, and the body was in an advanced state of decomposition.

The police sold $2,342 worth of tickets in New York city for the benefit of the Michigan sufferers.

The Mexican Congress has prohibited the issue of nickel coins.

Joe Harris (colored) was hanged for murder yesterday at Greensboro, Ga.

In the Schneider murder trial at Stockton the prosecution has closed and the defense opened.

### WANTED—A CHRISTMAS STORY.

The RECORD-UNION will pay fifty dollars ($50) for the best Christmas Story, not less than ten nor more than fifteen columns in length. To assist competitors in gauging the length of their compositions, we may as well state that a column of the type in which the story is to be set contains about 1,600 words, and that a legal folio contains 100 words. Those who wish to compete for the prize will be free to choose their own subject and to place their stories wherever they please. The stories must be delivered at the RECORD-UNION office by the 15th of December, in order to allow sufficient time for their examination. This is a good opportunity for aspiring authors who feel that they would be the better for a little extra pocket-money at Christmas.

### THE ELECTION IN NEW YORK.

The election in New York appears to have astonished everybody. The Republicans have carried the State ticket, but have lost both branches of the Legislature. The contradictory nature of the "lessons" which are being evolved from the issue indicate that after all there is very little to be learned from the facts. There were so many undercurrents at work that they produced results which nobody had either foreseen or sought. The "Stalwart" Republicans seem to have surprised themselves by voting more generally than they had intended. They certainly cannot taunt the "Half-Breeds" with impotency under the circumstances. Still they have lost the Legislature, and this may have a larger significance hereafter. Tammany has been hit hard, but it has shown its teeth, and quite enough probably to assure itself its own way at the next election. Taking the general average, the Republicans have the best of the situation, but they have not so very much the best that they can afford to take any fewer precautions when the next campaign arrives.

### SHARP WORK.

They try murder cases in England much quicker than we do. Lefroy, who murdered an old banker in a railway carriage on the London and Brighton line a few weeks ago, has just been tried, found guilty of murder, and sentenced to death at an early date. The jury were out only ten minutes, and evidently they had before them no baffling theories of irresponsibility for insanity. They believed that whether the prisoner at the bar was mad or not, he was sane enough to be punishable, and so they found him guilty, and there is no doubt that he will be duly and sufficiently hanged when the time comes. That way of administering justice tends to check crime. The hanging of Lefroy, if he is not altogether sane, will serve to prevent other half-crazy men with homicidal tendencies from indulging them. That is to say, prompt punishment and adequate punishment tends to protect society, and the protection of society is the only justification for the taking of human life by law, or the incarceration of human beings in penal establishments.

### THE CLASSIFICATION OF CRIME.

A considerable percentage of the discussion about criminal reform is wide of the mark, for the reason that amateur penologists do not understand the elementary facts of the subject. And one of the most common mistakes and sources of confusion among them is the loose use of the word "criminal." For the purposes of their reasoning this word includes all who have been convicted of any breach of law; but when reform is talked of the very first thing to be ascertained is the mental and moral condition of the people to be operated upon; and the endeavor to ascertain this at once develops the fact that there are the broadest conceivable differences between those who nevertheless may be roughly lumped together as "felons." At the outset one clear and sharp line of demarcation exhibits itself. This separates the class which has adopted the criminal career from the class of what may be termed impulsive law-breakers. In the first of these classes belong what are properly termed the habitual criminals. These are the people who for the most part have been educated and bred to lawbreaking as a business, and for the reform of whom the severest disciplinary and persuasive measures are none too cogent. This class includes the majority of those who are convicted of house-breaking, robbery from the person, and larcenies of various kinds, and it includes persons of all ages and both sexes. It is upon this class that the most powerful reformatory agencies require to be employed, for they are the professional offenders, and they furnish the bulk of the convictions, and of the cases of multiple punishment. In the longest settled communities the percentage of this class in the prisons is the largest. Thus in London the proportion of professional criminals is much larger than it is in California, while in this State the percentage of what we have termed crimes of impulse is larger than in England or the Atlantic States.

The class of impulsive criminals is a very difficult one to deal with. It embraces all those who have been convicted of a single crime, as for instance murder, manslaughter, assault to murder, highway robbery, embezzlement, forgery, rape, etc. It must be observed that any of these crimes may be committed by a man who has led a comparatively upright and blameless life up to the time of his fall. It is true that in some instances these crimes are the culmination of profligate and immoral courses, but they are not so necessarily. The embezzler and the forger of course cannot originally have been men of strong principles, but it does not follow that they underwent a regular course of degradation, and that their final perpetration of crime marked the complete demoralization of their characters. In a great many cases the crime has been the result of impulse. It has not even been premeditated. Some sudden occurrence suggests the act of immorality, and the specious hope of repairing the wrong speedily smooths over the offense at the instant of commission. In many of these cases the moral aberration may have been very brief. The realization of the nature of the deed may have been attained almost at once, and remorse have supervened. To class criminals of this kind with the callous, case-hardened ones who have never known the least compunction about crime, and who literally possess no moral sensibility, is manifestly absurd and mischievous, and it is equally irrational to apply to them the same reformatory agencies as are exhibited in the other cases.

Again, take a great many cases of homicide. These are committed by men who may have had no criminal tendencies before in their lives. The homicides are frequently the result of momentary passion, or of intoxication. In a number of cases there has been no desire to kill when the fatal blow was delivered, but merely a passionate purpose to resent and punish some affront or wrong. To say that a man who has committed what the law calls murder or manslaughter under such circumstances, is a criminal in the same sense that the habitual thief or burglar is a criminal, is to abuse the term. It is evident that there is scarcely any point of contact between the cases, and that they require to be treated quite differently. In the case of the impulsive criminal it may indeed be questioned whether the attempt at systematic reform is not a mistake. In such a man's character there may be no need of artificial props. His fault has been his impulsiveness, which may arise from an excess of vital energy. If he has lived a well-ordered life up to the time of the commission of his own crime, and if the commission of that crime does not necessarily imply the degeneration of character, to what good purpose can he be put through a course of reform treatment? If he is weak such a line of treatment is very apt to make a hypocrite of him. If he is not weak it will have no effect at all, save to annoy him.

As the impulsive class of criminals predominates in our prisons, however, it is clearly important that we should preface any serious effort at the creation of a reform system by separating this class from the habitual criminals, and by determining what ought to be done with it. And we think it ought to be recognized that though Society has no option in the premises, and must punish law-breakers without respect of persons, yet there are offenders to whom imprisonment does unmixed harm, wholly apart from any question of bad associations. It is to these persons a degradation and an intolerable burden. It is really vastly in excess of the offense, as regards suffering. It breaks them down, and, so to speak, spoils them for life. To such as these reform systems are absolutely useless. Nay, more, they are aggravations of the original penalty. We do not see that any way of escape from this exists, but it is to be regretted that it is necessary to inflict so much suffering in the interest of society, and the fact that it is so serves to show still more fully the necessity of having a clear understanding of what is meant by "criminals," and also of what is meant by "reform." It appears to us that the Prison Reform Convention has made the mistake of failing to settle these important preliminaries before it began to discuss the means of reform, and that because of this forgetfulness a great deal of the discussion is likely to remain unintelligible, or without any practical bearing upon the actualities of prison life.

### THE BELIEF IN THE SUPERNATURAL.

Belief in the supernatural has remained unaffected by the advance of knowledge. It has possibly been abandoned by a comparatively small number of followers of the most modern philosophy, but it has not been shaken in its hold on the masses of men. The rapid growth of Spiritualism, and the solidity of its structure notwithstanding the assaults of Science, show how firmly implanted the tendency to believe in the supernatural is, and how little reliance is to be placed on the common expressions of incredulity which most men employ to conceal their real thoughts on the subject. And indeed almost everyone, if brought to make a frank confession, and if certain of protection against ridicule, can be got to recall either something in his or her own life, or something related by a friend, bearing out the common—we might almost say the general—belief, that death does not end all, but that there is another life beyond the grave, from which occasionally dim echoes and signs and manifestations come back to men. And though the belief in the supernatural is explained away by scientists and philosophers as the result of various natural phenomena, as for instance survivals from the superstitious age of barbarism, subjective illusions, unconscious cerebration, and so forth, it is evidently quite useless to try to convince the generality of men that the mass of what they suppose to be evidences of the reality of the supernatural, is after all but evidence of the extreme liability to deception of the human senses. The Scientists may be right, but the people will not for all that abandon their desperate hold upon another world. And this absolute credulity is perhaps less discreditable than it seems at first sight to the popular intelligence, for in reality it is the heart of man speaking against his head. It is the presence of Death everywhere that has made the vision of another world so dear. It is the yearning for comfort under bereavement that has caused even the strongest-minded to reject the rational hypothesis of the finality of the end of life. It is the reluctance to admit that they have parted with their dead forever that reinforces the legends of supernaturalism, and keeps alive the common faith in the reality of "the other shore."

A curious illustration of the depth and universality of this belief in the supernatural is just now being afforded in England. A London journal (the *Daily Telegraph*) not long since sought to ascertain whether any evidence of apparitions, or fulfilled predictions, or double sight, or any of the various alleged phenomena of "occultism" could be gathered by a direct appeal to its readers. They were promised complete anonymity if they desired it, and were invited to come forward and tell what they knew. To the surprise of everybody there was a perfect rush in reply to this invitation, and for weeks not one but many journals have been publishing several columns each day of what purport to be authentic narratives of the supernatural. The moment the supposed discredit attaching to a confession of credulity was removed, everybody seems to have hastened to bring forward fresh evidences of the reality of supernatural phenomena, and the result has been a mass of statements sufficient to make a considerable addition to the literature of the subject.

One thing demonstrated by this avalanche of ghost stories is that modern education has as yet scarcely touched the capacity and tendency for acceptance of the marvelous which form such conspicuous features in the savage intellect. In fact it is rather difficult to understand how the belief in witchcraft should have disappeared among a people so given over to credulity, and so easily deceived by their own senses. Nor does there seem to be any distinction between the educated and the uneducated. All who write to the papers are alike impressed with the truth of what they relate, though all are not equally willing to acknowledge the completeness of their belief. It is, however, by no means a bad plan which our London contemporary has adopted in this connection. For if there is nothing in the popular belief but popular fallacy, the best way to expose and overcome that fallacy is to bring together the greatest quantity of supposed supernatural evidence, and analyze it until nothing remains. If on the other hand Science is at fault, and the popular instinct is a true one, still the best way to demonstrate the truth is to bring the whole subject forward into the light, and discuss it fully and dispassionately.

And in order that it may be seen whether the people of California are more advanced than the English people, or reflect the ideas of the latter on the supernatural, the RECORD-UNION proposes to open its columns to communications of the same kind. The conditions are, that there shall be no argument, but simply recitations of fact. Whoever knows of any alleged supernatural incident, or can tell of any such incident at second-hand, provided some authentication is attainable, is invited to communicate the circumstances to us. We presume that, allowing for the difference of population, the field ought to be as fertile here as anywhere for supernatural evidence, and we desire to find out if this is so or not. Those who write to the RECORD-UNION on this subject can if they so desire have their names suppressed in publication, though of course the credibility of a story will generally seem to be increased, for the average reader, by the fact that the real name of the narrator accompanies it. Stories of apparition both before and after death, of other indications of coming events or deaths, of doubles and wraiths, of family spirits of the Banshee kind, in short of every orthodox description of supernaturalism, will be welcomed. Everybody knows that such stories are constantly told in social circles, and they may just as well be told through our columns.

### DR. PLATT'S GLOOMY VIEW.

The reports of the proceedings of the Prison Reform Convention in the San Francisco papers are so meager and unsatisfactory that it is nearly impossible to ascertain from them what is being done. If, therefore, we should do Dr. Platt any injustice in what we are about to say, we must ask him to charge it to the lack of journalistic enterprise on the part of the press of his city. From all we can gather, however, it appears that he read a paper before the Convention on Thursday, in which he took the ground that as a rule it is hopeless to attempt the reform of criminals, and that on a second conviction they should be sentenced to life imprisonment. We are encouraged to believe that Dr. Platt did say this, or something like it, by the assertion that his paper produced quite a consternation in the Convention, and was freely dissented from and even denounced as "worse than the Calvinistic "hell." We gather also that notwithstanding Dr. Platt's extremely gloomy view of the condition of the criminal classes, or rather of the convicted criminal class, he made many statements in regard to the relations of the criminal with the world which cannot be controverted. It is, for instance, perfectly true that the world never willingly forgives a man who has been convicted of crime. The recognition of this depressing fact was the originating cause of the institutions known as Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies. Society is very irrational in this, beyond doubt. It tolerates men whom it knows to be criminals, and even gives them all it can confer of honor and external respect. But if a man is unfortunate enough to be found out and condemned it has no mercy upon him. This shows that its condemnation of the convict is not the effect of moral repulsion. There is no moral sentiment connected with it, in fact, since for crime *per se* society manifests no detestation. It welcomes with open arms the cowardly and brutal seducer, the scoundrel who has secured wealth by the most flagitious methods, the swindler of widows and orphans, the cold-blooded villain who has betrayed all his friends to secure his ends, the greedy and infamous wretch who has forced scores of better men to ruin; it opens wide its doors to all of these unconvicted criminals. But for the poor man who makes one false step it has no bowels of compassion, and as Dr. Platt says, it acts upon the cruel maxim, "Once a convict, always a convict."

So far then we cannot dispute the truth of the Doctor's positions. It is undeniable that society does not if it can help it allow the convict to reform, and that by its blind and unrelenting severity it does all it can to force him back into evil ways. But when all this is admitted it does not follow that reform is impossible. Indeed when anyone takes that position we are free to point to the ascertained facts of the situation as a conclusive refutation of it. For as a sober matter of fact the reformation of convicts is being constantly achieved, and as an equally sober matter of fact convicts are constantly going back into the world, regaining positions of independence and honest industry, and creating ultimate success out of careers which seemed to have been utterly ruined. To say that it is impossible to reform convicts is therefore nothing less than preposterous; and for this reason we cannot believe that Dr. Platt really went to such a length. It is no doubt a kind of work which is made very difficult by the prejudice and cruel cowardice of Society, but it is not for all that impracticable, and it is quite certain that it may be made very much easier by the application of easier methods. And indeed if we should admit Dr. Platt to be right as to the impossibility of reform under existing circumstances, we should merely claim that this was an evidence of the need of radical reform in the existing conditions. For it is certain that the infliction of an infinite punishment for a finite offense is opposed to reason, and that however theologians may delude themselves with word-jugglery, human affairs have to be conducted by the light of reason alone. If, therefore, it were capable of demonstration that the convict has no hope, all that this could prove would be the necessity of a revolution in penal administration and social theories.

If a state of things is discouraging we are not called upon to submit to it. On the contrary, it is our duty to improve it. But Dr. Platt's alleged theory is opposed to all experience as well as to all reason. He appears to assume the absolute impracticability of changing the inclinations and dispositions of men in one direction, though his own doctrine requires the practicability of changing them in another direction. According to him, in fact, men may change for the worse, yet they cannot be changed for the better. The convict who has only committed one offense may easily degenerate into an habitual criminal; but he cannot abandon crime altogether. Such a proposition as this contains its own refutation. It is not logical any more than it is in accordance with experience. It is simply fantastic. In truth convicts are capable of various changes according to their training and disposition. No doubt some are quite irreclaimable, having inherited the criminal diathesis, and having also been bred in criminal habits and practices. But, as we have shown in another article, this class constitutes but a small percentage of the whole convict element. The average convict is amenable to the same influences inside prison walls that the average man is amenable to under all circumstances. The commission of crime does not take away the criminal's humanity, nor make of him a monster. He remains, save in exceptional cases, an impressionable creature, and if his character is strengthened by wise discipline in self-reliance, and he is not spoiled by being taught that he has nothing to do to reform himself but believe a number of fanciful statements about incomprehensible subjects, he may be reformed, and he may take his place in the world again as an honest man, and keep that place for the remainder of his life.

### BLAINE AND THE ISTHMUS QUESTION.

The *Nation* directs attention to a circumstance which shows that Mr. Blaine's circular on the isthmus question has committed him, and through him the country, to a perfectly untenable position. Mr. Blaine has taken the position that the United States cannot consent to a joint protectorate over the Panama Canal, and has declared that this country intends to control that enterprise. In saying this however, he has also declared that it is "not the development of a new policy," but that "it is nothing more than the pronounced adhesion of the United States "to principles long since enunciated by the "highest authority of the Government, "and now, in the judgment of the President, firmly invoven as an integral and "important part of our national policy." Now of course if this is a traditional policy with the United States it must be easy enough to prove that fact. But unfortunately for Mr. Blaine's theory all the proof is in the opposite direction. The evidence of the past policy of the United States is to be found in our treaties; with New Grenada (now the United States of Colombia) in 1846, and with England, by the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, in 1850. According to the provisions of the last-named treaty, the United States and Great Britain jointly guarantee the neutrality of any canal made across the Isthmus of Panama, and not only that, but expressly invite other powers to join them in this protectorate "to the end that all other "States may share in the honor and advantage of having contributed to a work "of such general interest and importance." This treaty is still in force, and as has been shown, it traverses in the most decided manner the position of Mr. Blaine, at the same time proving that he has made a most extraordinary blunder in claiming the new policy as traditional with the United States. Of course it is not possible for our Government thus coolly to ignore the existence of its own solemn treaties. It must stand by its own voluntary engagements, or if it sees reason for changing its foreign policy, it must declare its intentions frankly, and state why it proposes to withdraw from its previous engagements. In the present case the interests of the United States in the Panama Canal are undoubtedly great, though we do not agree with the position that they are so very much greater than those of all the rest of the world as to warrant us in insisting upon an exclusive protectorate. We think, moreover, that a country which intends to take so haughty and domineering a position ought to have the means of backing its strong words by as strong deeds; and this power the United States does not possess at the present time. To claim an exclusive protectorate therefore is to make a demand which cannot be enforced, and which, unless it is granted as by the good will of the other powers, will not be accorded at all. As regards the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, it is evident that Mr. Blaine has got himself into a very embarrassing position, for, as the *Nation* observes, "if, in reply to his dispatch, England or "any foreign government inquires how his "statement of the position of the United "States can be reconciled with the provisions of that instrument, he will have no "answer to make;" and in all probability the country will be driven to withdraw from the Clayton-Bulwer treaty in a manner which will reflect no credit upon the State Department, if it does not entangle us in serious difficulties with England.

### PAGE, SPAULDING & CO.

The *Examiner* the other day published what purported to be an interview with Mr. Spaulding, in charge of the Sub-Treasury of the United States at San Francisco, concerning his removal of several office-holders in the Sub-Treasury without cause. According to the *Examiner* Mr. Spaulding denied that he had been compelled to make these removals by Congressman Page, but maintained that he had a perfect right to make a clean sweep on going into office, though he admitted that none of the removals referred to had been made for cause. Of course this is a preposterous theory. It is the old familiar spoils theory over again, but it derives new offensiveness from the fact that it is put forward under the mark of Civil Service reform. The *Examiner* might perhaps have invented some of its alleged interview, but it could hardly have ventured to fabricate the letter which it prints a copy of, from Secretary Windom to "The Assistant Treasurer of "the United States, San Francisco, Cal.," and in which Congressman Page is referred to as having communicated to the Department "why the changes recommended "in your letter should be carried into "effect," and in which the obliging Secretary goes on to say that "these reasons "being deemed sufficient," the nominations which follow are approved. Now it is, we think, evident from this letter that Congressman Page has been asking the removal of officials against whom no charges had been preferred, and that he has sought to remove these persons, and to put in others of his selection, not at all in the interest of his constituents, not at all because he believes that the public service will be carried on better, but solely because he thinks he can strengthen his position and improve his personal prospects, by making these changes. And thus we see that first Page, and then his appointee, Spaulding, undertake to make use of the United States Treasury precisely as though it were their private property, and reward their friends out of the public funds with a perfect indifference to the claims of the country. This is the spoils system in its most impudent and revolting aspect, and it is necessary that the public should understand how these things are done. It is by this indecent and shameless traffic in public offices that men who have no personal fitness to recommend them, and who are not intelligent or able enough to protect the interests of their constituents, seek to maintain themselves in Congress in defiance of the popular will. That kind of usurpation, however, has been carried too far, and the people will no longer tolerate it. Mr. Page would do better to try and demonstrate his right to the position he holds, to the satisfaction of his constituents, than to manufacture material wherewith to pack conventions, while injuring the public service for his selfish ends.

### WASTED SYMPATHY.

A great deal of unnecessary gush has been wasted over the fact that there are several boys in the State Prison. It has not occurred to one of the papers and persons indulging in this cheap sentiment that until they learn something of the character of these boys they cannot form a rational judgment about them. The truth is that age in these relations is not necessarily of any significance. There are thousands of boys of fifteen who are older in vice than other thousands of men of thirty. There may easily be boys of fifteen who are more hardened and irreclaimable than half the convicts of forty in the State Prisons. To say how old a criminal is really conveys very little information. The presumption, however, is, that none but incorrigible young rascals would have been sent to the State Prison, and we expect that the presumption is in accordance with the facts. It is the veriest nonsense to exclaim against the sending of "boys" to the State Prison, on no other ground than that they are boys. The Industrial School and the House of Correction at San Francisco contain scores of quite young boys who are competent to teach half the old convicts at San Quentin new wickedness. The children of the street acquire experience very rapidly. Their education is finished long before more fortunate boys are sent to college. And it is the experience of all large prisons that these boys are invariably the most refractory and intractable of criminals. They are far more reckless than the men, more mischievous, and less amenable to reason. Their youth is no evidence to their character. Boys of this kind are for the most part utterly irreclaimable. They take a positive pride in criminal careers. They have no higher ambition than to be a celebrated thief or burglar or highwayman. They are deaf to all the ordinary means of addressing embryo criminals. They are in fact as completely veterans in crime as though they had become gray in it. To denounce the sentencing of boys to the State Prison without knowing whether this is the kind of boys concerned, can only bring ridicule and confusion upon our gushing contemporaries. It by no means follows that all boys are too pure to be associated with adult felons. In fact there are many felons at San Quentin who would have the most to fear from being associated with many boys of the class we have described.

### THE COMMUNISM OF THE LAND ACT.

When we hear it said that the farmers of Ireland would do well not to accept the Land Act, and when it is spoken of as an imperfect and unsatisfactory concession, we feel it necessary to point out that this law is the most revolutionary and communistic measure the world has seen during the Christian era. It is also proper to state that there is nothing like it in the United States, and that it is based upon principles which, if proposed in this republic, would be at once denounced as striking at the very roots of society. Our Constitution expressly prohibits the enactment of any law impairing the obligations of a contract. A copy of the Irish Land Act would therefore be inadmissible here, for that law does unquestionably impair the obligation of contracts. In fact it wrests from the land-owner a large share of his ownership, and undertakes to fix for him the usufruct of his property. The separation of ownership and control has here been carried farther than has ever been attempted in the United States, and the only parallel instance, as regards the principle enunciated, is the Supreme Court decision in the Chicago Elevator cases. Destructive as that ruling was in theory, however, it has never been applied in practice, and this is the great distinction between American and English communism. Mr. Gladstone has actually gone farther in practice than our Supreme Court did in theory. He has denied the right of ownership in land, and has created a Court which appears to have for its principal object the transformation of tenants into landlords, and of landlords into paupers. That this desperate remedy, which is very much like blowing up houses to stop a conflagration, will have the effect intended, we do not believe. Mr. Gladstone has certainly shown his willingness to wrong the Irish landlords for the sake of placating the Irish tenants, however, and it may well be asked, if this does not satisfy that class, what will. It is to be hoped that when the tenant farmers have all got their rents lowered, the tenant laborers will in turn be permitted to take the benefits of the Land Courts, and that thus the martyrdom of the land-owners may be repeated on the grade next below them, until the same even-handed justice has been distributed to all sides. The true test of the Land Act, however, will not come until a fair opportunity appears for ascertaining its effect upon the value of land in Ireland.

### BISMARCK.

A rumor of Bismarck's intention to retire from public life comes very appropriately to cap the intelligence of the German elections. The voting has gone against the Chancellor's programme, and he finds himself with an insufficient backing in the Reichstag. It is not the first time that this has occurred to him, and each time he has proposed the same course, though he has never yet followed it. In doing this he really manifests a sort of sub-consciousness that a Prime Minister under a parliamentary government ought not to remain in office after his party has been defeated at the polls. A Minister who feels himself under obligation to try to govern the country without a parliamentary majority is from the very nature of the situation certain to employ arbitrary methods. It is impossible to take a moiety of the parliamentary system and a moiety of the autocratic system, and join the two together in a working scheme. Either the parliamentary requirements will overcome the autocratic, or the latter will get rid of the parliamentary system. Prince Bismarck is always impelled to the latter course when he is beaten at the polls, but before he proceeds to govern without a ministerial majority he always offers to resign. If he were taken at his word, and if another German statesman were permitted to take his place for a time, the change would, we think, be equally beneficial to himself and his country. As it is, he has grown into a belief that he is necessary to Germany as no individual however talented ever was necessary to a country, and therefore he thinks that all systems and constitutions must give way to this imperative requirement. It is no more probable that he will retire now than at any former time, but it is truer than it has been before that he has lost ground in public confidence; that his intrigues with Rome have brought him only loss; and that his fantastic commercial and fiscal experiments have both injured the country and crippled him politically. Under the circumstances therefore he has a very difficult prospect before him, and a more timid man might well think seriously of final retirement at such a dispiriting juncture.

### THE VIRGINIA ELECTION.

The Readjusters have carried Virginia, and the Mahone faction is in high feather. The victory, however, is one of those which are worse than defeats. It has committed the Republican Administration to the support of immoral and dishonest financial doctrines. It has shown the Republican members of the United States Senate in the most servile partisan attitude. It has justified the belief that Republican leaders are just as ready as the Democrats to trade off principles for votes. The presence of such a man as Mahone in the Senate must have a distinctly mischievous effect, moreover. When either chamber of Congress is practically controlled by one or two men of slippery principles, national legislation degenerates into gambling, and bribery is employed on both sides with scarcely an effort at disguise. This sort of situation has occurred before, and we know what to expect therefore. All the consequences of the Virginia election, indeed, threaten to be disastrous to the morals of the Republican party, and though political managers do not think much of that kind of injury, they would know, were they a little more farsighted, that party supremacy is always ultimately a question of superior morality. Let the Republican party sink as low in this respect as its opponent has done, and the result may easily be a Democratic President in 1884. So far we see nothing in the Virginia election to feel happy about.

### DR. BOYNTON MAKES INCREDIBLE STATEMENTS.

A Kansas reporter appears to have obtained from Dr. Boynton some statements concerning the case of President Garfield which the doctor will have to repudiate unless he is desirous of destroying his own reputation. He is represented as saying that the late President's wound was not washed properly until the fifteenth day after its infliction, and that pyæmia was the result of gross carelessness and negligence on the part of Dr. Bliss. Now this is a charge of malpractice such as Guiteau's counsel have been wishing for, but it is much more than a charge of malpractice against Dr. Bliss. It is equally directed against Drs. Agnew and Hamilton and Reyburn, and it is positively not credible that the first two of those gentlemen at least should have been consenting parties to any such gross neglect as Dr. Boynton alleges, or that they would have allowed themselves to take on trust the condition of their patient. In fact we do not believe that there is one word of truth in the statement made by Dr. Boynton, but we regard it as a scurrilous and malicious libel, which ought to damn the perpetrator in the estimation of all honest men, and in the eyes of the whole medical profession.

*The* WEEKLY UNION *is the only paper which employs first class literary ability in writing original stories. The next serial story will be entitled "THE WAYS OF THE WORLD."*

### PRISON REFORM CONVENTION.

**Continuation of the Proceedings at San Francisco.**

In the Prison Convention, a paper prepared by the State Prison Commission was read. It recites that:

First—Society is in some measure responsible for the ignorance and weakness of parents as such. More should be done to enlighten them in regard to their duties, and to make them feel their responsibility as parents to their children, to the world, and to God.

Second—For not acting more completely *in loco parentis* (in the place of parents) in the care of neglected children, and supplying the protecting agencies and the means of culture not provided by the parents.

Third—For not keeping the young away from improper places of resort, such as those where corrupting amusements are provided, where liquor is sold, where evil examples are presented, where bad habits are contracted, and where they are exposed to bad influences generally.

Fourth—For not making better provisions for the industrial training of youth.

Fifth—For not providing for more thorough education of children, an education of the right sort, one better caculated to fit them for the duties of respectable citizenship.

Sixth—For the failure to provide and put in operation means for the more effectual suppression of gambling in all its forms.

Seventh—For the extravagance already presented as one of the causes of crime.

Eighth—For failure to secure the proper enforcement of laws for the suppression and punishment of crime.

Ninth—For the lack of suitable refuges and reformatories for children, youths and young men.

Tenth—For the neglect to build properly constructed prisons, to introduce into them the right systems of discipline, to separate prison management entirely from political influences, to secure the selection of prison and reformatory officers, with reference to their known fitness for their duties, and the retention of such, and only such, as prove their qualifications for their respective positions, regardless of influences of any kind and from any source.

Eleventh—Failure to provide for the proper training of officers for prisons and reformatories.

Twelfth—For the existence and present condition of the liquor traffic, which all acknowledge to be such a fruitful source of crime.

G. H. Atkinson, of Oregon, contended that grading of convicts would necessarily interfere with the profits of prison labor; but it would in the end prove profitable to the State and beneficial to the prison system.

A review of the Michigan system of providing for dependent and helpless children was presented by C. B. Randall, of Michigan. This system provides schools and homes for children without protection.

Dr. F. D. Elliot, of Oregon, spoke in commendation of the paper read by Mr. Randall, and related his experience as Superintendent of the Industrial School in St. Louis, Mo.

Mrs. Laura De Force Gordon followed in an argument favoring the investigation of the causes of juvenile crime, and urged a more earnest support of institutions designed to save children from contact with crime.

Rev. Dr. Briggs read the declaration of principles or platform prepared by the State Prison Commission. The paper advanced a theory for the elevation of the condition of prisoners. It discountenances physical influence and advocates moral suasion for the government of prisons. Suggests that education should be combined with industrial occupation to promote the welfare of prisoners. Prison discipline to be effective must secure the co-operation of the convict. The extraordinary inequality of the terms of service was denounced. The indefinite term, subject to extension of the time, is urged as better than set terms of servitude. Political appointment of prison employees was deprecated as destructive of prison discipline. The pardoning power should be more restricted; the Governor should be required to report all pardons to the State Legislature, and the reason therefor. Care should be taken that discharged prisoners are aided to secure work on their release from prison. The architecture and sanitary regulation of the prison should be all that health and science require. The transportation of prisoners to the State Penitentiary should be by State officers instead of by Sheriffs. The laws on criminal insanity should be revised so as to insure the care of criminal lunatics. Parents should be made partially responsible for the support of their children while in industrial houses and places of reformation. Capital and labor should combine to prosecute crime. Criminal capitalists should be prosecuted more energetically than the mere operatives or employes. Education in the State should be made obligatory and compulsory. The declaration of principles was very lengthy.

Dr. Levison favored a central head of the department of justice as proposed in the platform. He advanced the opinion that all Boards or Commissions were mere cloaks for wrong. He denounced the present system of associating prisoners of all kinds in the same cells in city prisons.

C. A. Murdock read a paper on child-saving institutions, and illustrated his subject with a historical sketch of the child-saving institutions in New York. At least seventy per cent. of the children placed in these reformatory institutions have been saved from lives of crime. A quarter of a million of boys and girls have been rescued by these institutions in New York and Massachusetts alone; 3,700 boys and girls went West to homes provided for them. Over 45,000 boys and girls have been provided with homes in the West, and not five per cent. have gone back to lives of vagrancy and crime. By preventing vagrancy, these juvenile institutions have cut off one of the main sources of supply of crime.

Mr. Baker, the Superintendent of the Boys' and Girls' Aid Society, explained the theory and the benefit of arresting crime in youth. He said this is the proper way to save the city from hoodlumism and diminish taxation by the reduction of the number of juvenile criminals.

Governor Perkins explained in relation to former remarks as to Judges who petitioned him to pardon criminals, that he did not refer to Judges of the Supreme Court, but when he said they were Judges receiving $6,000 salary, he referred to late District Judges.

Chancellor C. Hartson read a paper upon the "Duty of the State to neglected children and youth, and the best modes of preventing the creation of youthful criminals."

Mrs. Cooper delivered an address upon the subject of "Kindergartens." The kindergarten is a preventive of crime. The kindergarten child is taught to be good, kind, moral and industrious. The child is the principal factor of this nation; the hope of the world is its children. We do not begin soon enough with our little children. Her argument was that if the State would devote more time and money to the establishment of homes for neglected little children, and giving them trades and kind, moral training, there would be less use for jails, scaffolds and criminal Courts.

The Rev. Dr. Platt read a paper on "Crime and Its Causes." He argued that the character of a man was determined by the character of his home associations. The unconvicted criminal has hope, the convict none. Society is ever afterward his unappeasable enemy; it never forgets or forgives the crime. Once a convict, always a convict. The speaker argued that the world would never readmit a convict back to respectability. The convict thus shunned will naturally seek associates who will receive him; these lead him back to crime. What in mercy should the State do for such wretches? Provide him a home. Society should take care of what society has disgraced.

### TO AGENTS.

Large extra editions of the issues of the WEEKLY UNION and the daily RECORD-UNION, containing the opening chapters of the new serial story, to be commenced November 1st, will be printed. Back numbers of the papers containing the story from its commencement can therefore be had at any time during its publication

A detachment of the Fourth Regiment, U. S. A., while en route East had a free fight among themselves at Colfax. One private was s'