AT THE PLAY HOUSES

TIM MURPHY AT ENGLISH'S TO-MORROW IN "A TEXAS STEER."

Stuart Robson at the Grand Tuesday in "The Rivals"—Other Holiday Attractions.

For three nights and a Christmas matinee, beginning to-morrow evening, the attraction at English's Opera House will be Hoyt's greatest comedy, "A Texas Steer," with Tim Murphy in his clever impersonation of Maverick Brander, the old Texas cattle king whom Charles H. Hoyt has transplanted to Washington, D. C., and placed in Congress for the sake of showing the workings of the political machine. The story deals with the experiences of Maverick Brander, owner of a big cattle ranch in Texas, who is forced into Congress at the point of several unpleasant looking revolvers, just because his constituents want a representative. The piece has been seen here so often it is not necessary to enumerate the ludicrous events that attend Brander's acclimation to the political and social atmosphere of the Nation's capital.

Tim Murphy has scored a lasting success in the role of Maverick Brander. He has played the part upward of 1,600 times. Mr. Murphy will present the "Steer" with its original handsome scenic environment. Dorothy Sherrod plays Bossy Brander and the other characters are in the hands of actors especially selected for the parts.

Grand—Stuart Robson.

Stuart Robson's annual engagement at the Grand opens Tuesday night with "The Rivals." On Christmas day he will appear both matinee and night in his new play "Government Acceptance." In his long and successful career as an actor it is claimed Mr. Robson never had a play which gave him greater opportunities for a display of his versatility than does Daniel Hart's drama "Government Acceptance." The scene of the play is laid in Washington, and as one of the leaders in the charming Bohemian circles of that city Mr. Robson has opportunities for his delightful humor and refreshing comedy. One of the prominent characters is a United States Senator. He is not the style of statesman usually presented on the stage, but a faithful reproduction of the Senator as seen in Washington. "If merit always won," he says to the young inventor, "the world would have no use for men of influence." In a frank, honest manner he tells of committee doings, and the light of truth is turned on political life in Washington. The social life is also pictured. The life in which the author says, "Hearts break while the music plays, and where ambition mocks the ties of blood and forgets the obligations of gratitude." As N. Tecumseh Sheridan, Mr. Robson will have pathetic as well as comedy scenes. His pathos is heart reaching in its simplicity and earnestness. It is an entertaining play.

On Tuesday night Mr. Robson will give his only performance of "The Rivals," which will open the brief engagement here. This recalls the famous cast of the play at Laura Keene's theater in New York thirty years ago. William Rufus Blake was Sir Anthony, Charles Walcott was Sir Lucius O'Trigger, John T. Raymond was David, Mrs. Brougham was Mrs. Malaprop, Laura Keene was Lydia and Stuart Robson was Bob Acres. Mr. Robson is the only member of that great cast that is now living. He says: "I feel as young and active to-day as when I played Bob thirty years ago."

Bancroft, the Magician, Thursday.

At the Grand Opera House, beginning next Thursday evening and for the rest of the week, Frederick Bancroft, the magician, will be seen here for the first time in his spectacular production of magic. All who have seen his wonderful feats agree that his hands are the most skillful in the world. He is the originator of a large number of magical deceptions that absolutely defy detection, and which, because of their extreme difficulty, can be performed only by himself. In every detail of his novel entertainment he has studiously departed from the time-worn ideas which have been followed by so many generations of magicians. He carries with him a large company of competent assistants, among them being a number of fascinating young women, who are clever specialty artists, and furnish an agreeable variety to the entertainment. Special cars convey the scenery and furniture that is needful, so that nothing whatever belonging to the theater is used. The scenery which Mr. Bancroft carries is claimed to be the finest that has been exhibited in productions of magic. To the regular theater goers the production has the charm of genuine novelty and possesses a strong attraction for women and children.

"Trilby," New Year's.

The approaching engagement of "Trilby" here will excite the greatest interest among all classes of people. Indianapolis will see Paul Potter's play for the first time New Year's matinee at the Grand, where it will remain the balance of the week, including another matinee Saturday. Of the characters in the play, Trilby, the newest and most charming creation of the stage, will be enacted here by Mabel Amber, who was chosen in New York last spring from among forty-seven young aspirants as the best-fitted, physically and mentally, to play the part in the leading company to go on the road. During the long run of the play in Boston, Miss Amber was the Trilby at the Boston Theater, and she will appear here as the bewitching heroine of Du Maurier's novel. Miss Amber is gifted—first of all—with an intelligent knowledge of what she portrays. Paul Potter, the author of the play, in speaking of Miss Amber, said, "She is an ideal Trilby. She has beauty of person; she is sympathetic, responsive and radiant, and has an artistic temperament, which admirably fits her for the part." Miss Amber played for many years all the leading female roles in Mr. Nat C. Goodwin's productions. Svengali will be played by Theodore Roberts, a young actor, who, before joining A. M. Palmer's company, had done excellent work for many years with Daniel Frohman's Lyceum Theater Company in New York, and later with Fanny Davenport. The other roles are in competent hands.

The Bostonians Next Week.

The famous Bostonians are easily the first light opera company in America, and their performances are the standard by which all others are measured. Their engagement at the Grand Opera House, next Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 30 and 31, will excite unusual interest among theater-goers. The engagement will be ushered in with the production, for the first time here, of their latest success, the new romantic opera, "A Wartime Wedding." On Tuesday evening a revival will be made of "Robin Hood." The roster of principals for the present season finds the following artists in the role: Henry Clay Barnabee, William H. MacDonald, Jessie Bartlett Davis, Helen Bertram Henley, Eugene Cowles, George Frothingham, Harold Blake, Jerome Sykes, Josephine Bartlett, Alice Nielson, C. E. Landie, Cora Barnabee, Charles R. Hawley, Leonora Guito and others. One of the most effective choruses ever assembled in light opera is said to be a feature this year, while a well-trained orchestra, under the baton of S. L. Studley, is an equally important adjunct. The advance sale for these two Bostonian nights will open next Thursday at the Pembroke.

Park—"The Captain's Mate."

Commencing with to-morow's matinee, the Park has a bright Christmas week attraction in the well-known actress Florence Bindley, who appears for the first three days in "The Captain's Mate" and the last three in "The Pay Train." The former is a sensational comedy-drama, in which Miss Bindley is the clever heroine. Miss Bindley, in her knickerbockers, makes an interesting character, and shows all the agility and dash which has characterized her previous portrayals of her dual role. Miss Bindley's specialties in the singing and dancing line form a choice part of the play. She is equally entertaining in playing musical instruments. The story tells of the abduction of a little girl from her home, and her adventures on land and sea in pursuit of her father's murderer. The company includes W. H. Pendergast, John Sheehan, Dora Norman, Viola Crosley and a dozen others. It will be a strong Christmas card, and the Park will entertain its usual big holiday crowds every afternoon and evening this week.

Empire—Semon's Extravaganza.

Manager Fennessey announces as coming direct from the Gaitey Theater, New York, where it had a long run, the appearance at the Empire Theater for one week, commencing to-morrow matinee, of Harry W. Semon's Extravaganza Company. This company consists of a number of European and American artists of the vaudeville stage. Among the foremost of the forty odd members are the Crawford brothers, Julia Melrose, Dee and St. Clair, sketch artists; Sapphira, a beautiful young woman and clever juggler; James E. Black, the terpsichorean high kicker; the four Angela sisters, the only "lady quartet" on the vaudeville stage; Baggesen, contortionist; Bertina Leslie; Demora, the hand balancer; Martie Semon, six-year-old impersonator of prominent artists; the sisters Ray, and the "Imperial Ballet Troupe," under the direction of Signor Peri, introducing the beautiful Mile. Maud Garnello, with a bevy of beautiful coryphees. The performance closes with the Crawford brothers' satirical comedy, entitled, "Two Old Sports Among the Bloomer Girls." This company comes this season with gorgeous costumes and scenic effects and all the popular songs. A special feature with this great company will be the first appearance in this city of the latest New York success, Nillson's Aerial Ballet. Six girls form a beautiful picture dancing and floating in midair. It is a positive novelty.

Paderewski's Polish Fantasie.

Paderewski's famous Polish fantasie, which was such a success in Paris, will be included in the programme of his Indianapolis recital Saturday evening, Jan. 11, at English's Opera House. The fantasie was written in the summer of 1893 and first played at the October festival in Norwich, England. The composition is a thoroughly characteristic work, illustrative alike of the composer's own temperament and his poetic ideality. It is fitful and moody, but general rhapsodical—extremely brilliant and equally difficult. The slow movement is exceedingly beautiful and grand, while the finale is characterized by a brightness and vigor in which is reflected national sentiment and feeling.

Mrs. Gen. Tom Thumb Coming.

Mrs. Tom Thumb and her company of little and big people are coming back to Indianapolis next Friday and Saturday, at English's Opera House. There will be a matinee each day and the prices will be made so low as to let everybody—children and all—see this famous little woman. The whole world knows of Mrs. Gen. Tom Thumb and her fame as a midget will never be forgotten.

Notes of the Stage.

Yvette Guilbert says only "stupid" people believe her songs are shocking.

Francis Wilson is said to have met with wonderful success in Sir Arthur Sullivan's new opera "The Chieftain."

Stuart Robson has another new play called "Mrs. Ponderbury's Past." He will produce it in New York next month.

Eastern critics seem to think that Olga Nethersole wears the worst fitting costumes on the stage of any woman now starring.

The New Year's week attraction at the Empire will be Harry Morris's entertainers, one of the best variety shows on the road.

Thomas Q. Seabrooke announces that he will resume his starring tour in a new play, "The Speculator," in Albany on Christmas day.

Richard Mansfield has announced that his present tour will be his last. After this season he will play only special engagements in the large cities.

Helen Bertram, the soprano of the Bostonians, announces that hereafter she will be known professionally as Helen Bertram Henley, her married name.

There is said to be excellent authority to the effect that Virginia Harned said last week that it is absolutely settled that she and E. H. Sothern are to be married.

Sol Smith Russell is resting at his home, in Minneapolis. He resumes his tour Dec. 30 at the Grand Opera House in Chicago, where he is to play a two weeks' engagement.

"Arlie" Latham, the third baseman of the Cincinnatis; "Joe" Kelley, the left field of the Baltimores, and "Tim" Hurst, the National League umpire, have been added to the cast of "A Runaway Colt."

Fay Templeton's royalties on the sale of her song, "I Want Yer, Ma Honey," have already exceeded, it is said, those received by the authors of "A Bicycle Built for Two" and "Sliding Down My Cellar Door."

"The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown" is said to be playing to the capacity of the Standard Theater, New York, under J. M. Hill's management. Last week he sent out invitations to everybody by the name of Brown to see the play and the theater was packed.

Henry Clay Barnabee, W. H. McDonald and Frank L. Perley will go abroad early in June to witness the production of the new Strauss opera in Vienna. The Bostonians hold the American rights for this work and will give it an early production next season.

For the one-hundredth performance of the Frank Daniels opera company in "The Wizard of the Nile," which takes place at the Casino Friday, manager Kirk La Shelle has chosen as a souvenir a bronze facsimile of one of the divinities of the ancient Egyptians.

There is jealous rivalry between Cissy Fitzgerald, now starring in "The Foundling," and Mabel Love, another English sprite, who has made a New York hit in "His Excellency," Gilbert's latest opera. Each declares that she never heard of the other amounting to anything on the other side of the Atlantic. Both are probably correct.

THE CHRISTMAS SAINT.

Nicholas Really Lived and Was as Good as Could Be.

Monthly Illustrator.

A most cheerful, loving and lovable saint was Nicholas. Pious tradition has it that even when he was a baby, before he could speak or know what was spoken to him, he always fasted of his own accord on Wednesdays and Fridays. A man who started in this way could scarcely fail to become a bishop, and Nicholas became Archbishop of Mysa in Asia Minor. He died in the year 343, and his bones remained at Myra until 1307, when they were removed to Bari, in Italy, where they still remain.

St. Nicholas was the patron saint of children, of virgins and of sailors, and countless stories have come down to us of his tender and constant protection of those under his care. One of these legends deals with a certain man who had three daughters, and whose fortunes were so reduced that he could give them no marriage portions and scarcely the necessities of life. When he was at last at the point of desperation, St. Nicholas heard of his need, and, coming to the house at night, threw a purse of gold in at the window. With this the father portioned his eldest daughter. St. Nicholas the next night threw in a second purse. The father portioned his second daughter, and then watched, and discovered the saint as he was about to throw in a third purse on the next night.

A writer in Chambers' "Book of Days" interestingly describes the celebration of St. Nicholas's day at Bari, where his bones lie under the crypt of the church which bears his name. On that day the town is thronged with pilgrims from all the country round. When they reach the church they show their devotion by walking all around it—if it can be called walking—on their knees and some of them even do it with their foreheads to the floor, each being guided by a child, who leads the pilgrim with a handkerchief of which he holds a corner in his mouth. Each pilgrim is entitled to a meal without cost, and on the especial occasion described over nine thousand were fed. Water comes up through the floor of the crypt over the grave of St. Nicholas, and this is supposed to have great curative powers. It is gathered in sponges, squeezed into bottles and sold to the pilgrims. It is called the manna of St. Nicholas.

The observance of St. Nicholas day which connects it with the Christmas customs of the present era is the ancient one of filling shoes with little gifts which were supposed to have been left there by the saint. It was also the custom of old in certain convents for the boarders to leave each a silk stocking at the door of the abbess on the eve of St. Nicholas, and these they would find in the morning filled with sweetmeats or other trifles to show that they were held in remembrance. Both these habits are supposed to be derived from the story of the three purses given to the three virgins, though the question may be suggested whether the story was not rather derived from the customs. Children were told that St. Nicholas threw the presents for them in at the window, and the main point is clear enough—that he is the same person who, as Santa Claus, rides on Christmas eve all over every part of the world where good children live, with his sledge and his reindeers, and comes down the chimneys to fill the stockings hung up to await him with all sorts of things to delight childish hearts, spending all the rest of the year at his home, somewhere far up in the arctic circle, making toys and boiling sugar into candy to distribute the next Christmas.

Book Banks.

Boston Journal.

A new fad has recently taken quite a strong grip on the community, and it has disposed of many 10-cent pieces. This is the 10-cent book, a volume shaped something like a scrapbook, with holes in each page. If you place a 10-cent piece in one of these it is held in place until every hole in the book is filled, and there are $5 saved. Many church societies started these books, and the young ladies belonging to them carry these books around with them and try to get contributions from every one of their friends. It is surprising, too, how many 10-cent banks are in daily use in the city. They may be found in thousands of homes, and many men and boys carry them about in their pockets. It is said that there is quite a demand for these banks in the stores where they are sold.

TEXAS PRAYER TEST

THE SINNER NOT CONVERTED, THE CHRISTIAN DOESN'T RECANT.

The Wicked Man's and the Prayerful Woman's Reasons for the Failure of the Prayers to Be Answered.

Dallas Letter in Galveston Daily News.

Several months ago one of the most remarkable challenges as to the efficacy of prayer known to history was entered into by Mrs. S. J. Sweeney and John R. Charlesworth, Mrs. Sweeney agreeing that if after a given period Mr. Charlesworth was not touched by the power of her prayers that she would make a statement acknowledging her defeat as public as the challenge had been. The challenge at the time created quite a sensation in Dallas, and not only in Dallas, but to the uttermost parts of the earth, both among Christians and the advocates of free thought. Both the religious press and the free-thought papers took up the subject and by many religious papers Mrs. Sweeney was severely censured for entering into an agreement where she had nothing to gain and everything to lose. Mrs. Sweeney has received upward of 1,000 letters from all parts of this country and Canada in regard to the affair. Yesterday a reporter called upon the principals in the challenge and asked them how it had resulted. When the question was put to Mr. Charlesworth he said:

"The incident to which you refer happened at the close of one of my public lectures in this city. It embraces what had always been a very serious problem to me, and contained elements of so grave a nature that I felt the matter ought not to be treated lightly. As a student of scientific and religious problems, I am ever willing to abandon a conclusion when I perceive it to be false as I am to accept a new truth, no matter how much it may clash with my previous convictions. It was in this spirit, a spirit of candid and honest investigation, that I was prompted to accept the very extraordinary challenge, held out to me by the lady in question, that I would subject myself to her prayers for my conversion.

"There was nothing very remarkable in the terms offered by Mrs. Sweeney, in fact, nothing of a nature to which any honest man could possibly object, but the notoriety which the incident has attained arose out of the counter proposition that was suggested to her and ultimately accepted by her, in case of failure upon her part.

"She at first merely requested that I would place my name upon her prayer roll and accord to her the privilege of praying for my conversion to the Christian religion, and asking that in case she succeeded I would make as public an acknowledgment of the fact that I had been converted, as I had already done concerning my unbelief. It was felt that all the consideration was upon my side with none upon her side in case of failure, and feeling that some consideration was due me from her in case she did fail, it was suggested that a time limit should be set, during which the lady was to pray for me every day. That limit was set at three months, commencing on the 6th day of June last, and expiring on the 6th day of September following. The counter proposition was to the effect that in case my conversion was not wrought in consequence of the lady's prayers within the prescribed period, or at the time of its expiration, she on the other hand was to publicly acknowledge that there was no efficacy in prayer; that prayer was a failure, and that no prayer-answering God could exist. Mrs. Sweeney accepted the conditions on both sides, and it was upon this understanding that I cheerfully placed my name upon her roll.

"From the lady's published statements and from her personal letters to me I am convinced that she did not grasp the meaning or import of the agreement. I believe that Mrs. Sweeney was earnest and sincere in what she undertook to perform, firmly believing in the truth of her position, honest in her intentions toward me, and that she faithfully labored to bring about my conversion by her prayers. The excitement of the moment during which the contract was made was probably too much for her, which prevented her from seeing the gravity of the situation in which she was placed. That she did not understand the situation properly I gather from one of her subsequent letters to me, in which she stated 'that if all the world should deny her God yet would she still believe in Him, and even though He should slay her, yet would she trust Him.' One thing, however, is absolutely certain, for if the lady did not understand the nature of the consideration demanded from her she undoubtedly agreed to accept the limitations set for her prayers, and even upon this understanding alone the prayer test has achieved a widespread notoriety.

STILL UNCONVERTED.

"That she did not succeed is apparent from the mere fact that I am still of the same religious opinions that I held prior to the time when she commenced to pray for me. I have experienced no change in my attitude toward the Christian religion or any other religion, nor have I felt or experienced any incentive toward that change. In this the lady is bound to acknowledge her defeat, which she has done through the medium of a personal letter to me, in which she says: 'Your name has been so continuously on my thought and prayer that when the time limit was out I found myself very loath to believe that God had not revealed Himself to you, and yet I find my faith stronger in Him than ever.'

"Of course, this confession of failure upon her part has so far only been made to me in private, but the conditions of the agreement were that all should be made in public on both sides. On the first Sunday in September, following immediately after the expiration of the allotted time, I gave my experience in public; sending the lady an invitation to be present; but she declined the invitation and was not there. At that meeting I made the announcement that I had not been converted to the public.

"In my judgment this was by far the most remarkable prayer test ever made, even exceeding the one made by Professor Tyndal in London, some years ago. In Tyndal's case the challenge was made by himself, a skeptic, and was refused by the Christians. In this case the challenge was made by a Christian and accepted by a skeptic. It was certainly a bold and daring undertaking on both sides, and I have the warmest admiration for Mrs. Sweeney for the part she has played in it. I do not and cannot believe that there is a God who answers prayer. The voice of human supplication has ascended heavenward in all ages and from all climes, but I have never known of a solitary instance where a helping hand has been extended from behind the veil. The sufferer has prayed for some mitigation of his pain, the captive has prayed for deliverance, but nowhere has an answer been vouchsafed. It was to combat this idea that the lady undertook the task of affording me an opportunity for conviction, in which she has signally failed. I do believe that the true salvation of the human race will never be accomplished by prayer, but by the valiant efforts of men under the guidance of reason and the inspiration of knowledge. I have no quarrel with religion providing it implies the embodiment of the human virtues, but when I am told that I must abstain from eating meat on Friday, or that I must be dipped in a tank of cold water that I might curry favor with the Creator of this universe, if one there be, then I do assert my attitude against these postulates, and affirm that it is not our creeds but our deeds that shall form the standard by which our characters shall be measured and weighed at the gates of eternity."

When the reporter called on Mrs. Sweeney for her version of the test of her prayers she said that she had long been wanting to talk about the affair, as it had gained such world-wide notoriety. Her correspondence had grown to such an extent she wished to put an end to it.

"On June 6 I attended the Free-thinkers' meeting to see and hear for myself what kind of a doctrine was being promulgated in our midst. My daughter took down the lecture in short-hand, and as I listened to the orator, for such Mr. Charlesworth surely proved himself to be on that occasion, I was grieved beyond expression. At first I felt a spirit of anger and indignation, then there came to me such a feeling of pity that at the close of the lecture I arose and asked him if he would give me his name on my prayer roll. All this the public has read in the papers from time to time. The whole religious world became interested in the result. Ministers pledged the united prayers of their congregations, individuals and families joined the prayer circle until thousands of prayers ascended each day for the conviction and conversion of this man, while other professed Christians held up their hands in holy horror that I should dare to enter into such a contract with infidels, but I never felt any conscientious scruples in reference to the matter; in fact, my religious experiences were deeper and sweeter during the time than at any time during my long Christian experience and when the time limit was out my faith in the efficacy of prayer was as strong as ever, for while he was not converted or even convicted, so far as I know, still there was a reason which, to every Bible student and Christian, is more than satisfactory, for there are conditions to be complied with before we can plead the promises of God's word or claim the answer to our prayers. At the close of the time limit I was invited very kindly by their president, Dr. Lincoln, to attend their meeting and discuss the result, but there was such a strong opposition brought to bear upon me by my friends that I refused to do so, which I very much regret.

THE CORRESPONDENCE.

"Several letters have passed between us, the last one I append:

" 'Dallas, Tex., Sept. 17, E. M. 295.

" 'Mrs. S. J. Sweeney:

" 'Dear Madam—Your letter addressed to me in care of Dr. Lincoln has been placed in my hands, and I have given it all due consideration. I am grateful for your admission to me in private, which you refused to make in public, that you now recognize the folly and futility of prayer, especially in such an undertaking as we have just gone through. When you say that "You will not believe that, with my bright intellect and wonderful powers of mind, I can possibly believe what I teach," it does seem to me that you are deliberately charging me with an act of the greatest possible maliciousness and dishonesty. I had not hoped for such a statement from you, and I hope you did not mean what you have said, for I wish to state that instead of finding a pleasure in prosecuting infernal plans against humanity, atheist as I am, I can mean better and can do better than thousands of the worshipers of that God to whom you have been praying in vain for my conversion.

" 'I have read the tract you inclose, long before you sent it to me. It is not a new one. Sentimental women will cry over such things as that, but thoughtful men will light their cigars with it. Look again over page 4. While one man may save another from the burden of a debt of honor by discharging that other's liabilities, still he could not relieve him from the responsibilities of a crime. You may pay my debts and so relieve me, but if you should suffer jail for my sins I should be still held morally responsible for having committed them. A million Christs may die, but the natural and inevitable issues of men's actions must be faced by themselves. I can have no faith in a crucified bill of indemnity salvation. Your religion would give to the seducer of your daughter a harp and a crown of glory if he would only repent; but for me, though a moral man, and without crime, but an unbeliever, must suffer eternal flames. For such a religion which places repentance above virtue I have only the most profound contempt, and for the God who would tolerate such proceedings I have no desire to obtain his respect, for he certainly could never have mine. I pay no heed to the direful warnings you are pleased to underscore about hell, trembling, blood, perishing, everlasting fire; it seems to indicate the thoughts in which you delight to revel. For my part, I can find more enjoyment in the contemplation of the beautiful face of nature, and with the study of her laws I am content to pass into the silent grave. The very methods you employ repel instead of attract.

" 'To your first question I answer with an emphatic "yes." A perfect peace permeates my life, and I am as happy in all my daily transactions as it is possible for a man in my station in life to be. To your second question, I answer "no." On the contrary, I rejoice in the thought that "my bright intellect and wonderful powers of mind" may have been the means of winning away one poor soul from the corrupting influences of a corrupt religion. To your third question, I must say that you are not, evidently, in a position to understand what is meant by science. It is not creed. It is not an ism. It is but the method employed for an investigation into the facts of the universe. If those facts do not agree with revealed religion it is not the fault of the facts, but of the revelation. I have the utmost confidence in the beneficent results that are bound to flow from a compliance with scientific methods for the alleviation of human suffering. Respectfully yours,

"JOHN R. CHARLESWORTH.'

"After reading this letter every Christian reader will understand why prayer was not answered in his behalf. He was in no condition to receive the influences of the Holy Spirit and no prayer (and I say it with all respect), no power on earth or in heaven ever has or ever will be able to convert a man that takes the stand that he does, and yet I can but believe he is honest in the position he has taken in science, but science is not religion but experimental; religion is a science that the most ignorant may understand, while the highest educated man can never solve the problem unless he opens his heart and understanding to the teachings of the Spirit, which I admit are supernatural. Take the supernatural out of religion and you would have only science left. I positively deny entering into a contract such as Mr. Paget represents, or to my going back on my lifetime belief in the efficacy of prayer if they were not converted, and I ask the papers that have printed and circulated this report to please copy my correction, made June 7, and give it the same publicity they have done the article from the pen of the 'Free Thinkers.' I do not think they intended to do me the harm that has resulted from the mistake they made concerning the stipulations. They have always treated me with perfect respect, even more than some religious papers have done."

The correction Mrs. Sweeney alludes to was published June 6, as follows:

"Please give me space to make a few corrections on the Free Thinkers' meeting, as reported in yesterday's issue:

"1. I am not at present president of the Dallas union, but am State evangelist for the Texas W. C. T. U.

"2. This was my proposition to the lecturer: 'Will you place your name on the W. C. T. U. prayer roll and let us call that name before the God of the Bible, which we acknowledge and believe to be a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God, and if at any subsequent time you are convinced of His existence and power over you as an individual, will you take back the assertions you have made against Him and the religion of the Bible to-night?'

"His answer was: 'How long do you wish to pray for me? Are you willing to time your God? What say you to three months? Are you willing to stand the test for that length of time? And if at the end of said three months no impression is made on my feelings in this regard you will allow me to deny the power of this mysterious so-called God that you profess to believe in?'

"I accepted the challenge; but they wrong me when they say that if God does not convict and convince them of His existence I will deny His existence and also deny His power over my heart and life. I would not deny my Master if every being on the inhabitable globe embraced the infidel belief; for as I partake of food and my physical strength is renewed, so I have partaken of the hidden manna of God's word, and my spiritual hunger has been satisfied. I have only the kindest Christian solicitude for the two men who placed their names on my prayer roll, and I shall remember them each day at a throne of grace, and I believe that if they are honestly open to conviction they will gladly acknowledge God as their God and Jesus Christ as their Savior before the end of the stipulated time.

"MRS. S. J. SWEENEY,
"State W. C. T. U. Evangelist."

WITH THEIR MINDS' EYES.

People Who Saw Visions of Things Happening Far Away.

Topeka (Kan.) Letter.

Now that the greater part of the excitement over the body-snatching discoveries has died away, the people are discussing the strange manner in which the discoveries were brought about. It has been related how Mr. I. O. Van Fleet sat at his fireside last Sunday night brooding over the loss of his wife, who had been buried but a few hours, when a vision came to him in which he saw two men digging at her grave. This was not a simple impression, nor a dream in the night, but a clear and detailed premonition of something which was taking place to a man wide awake and in possession of his full faculties.

So deeply was Mr. Van Fleet impressed with this vision that he went to a neighbor's with his story. The neighbor endeavored to pooh-pooh the whole affair as the work of a grief-distracted brain, but Mr. Van Fleet was so entirely convinced that he had seen the vandals at work at his wife's grave that he proceeded to the cemetery, where every detail of his vision was verified.

This story is so straightly told by both Mr. Van Fleet, his family, and the neighbors to whom he went with it, that no one here doubts its truth. While he is certain that he saw two men working at the grave, in his vision, Mr. Van Fleet is unable to give any description of them. He says he could see but indistinct forms, but is sure there were only two of them.

Naturally, this strange occurrence has given rise to much talk over visions, and dreams and supernatural warnings of all sorts. It is surprising how many people have full and implicit confidence in the verity of dream warnings. Go where he pleased in Topeka this week, one could hear stories related with all the solemnity of perfect belief of instances similar to the Van Fleet affair.

Possibly the best-known of similar instances in Kansas is what is known as the "Stewart vision." It became famous at the time of its occurrence, and was widely discussed in religious and scientific publications. In 1856 John Stewart was a stalwart young free State advocate in the city of Lawrence. On May 29 a farmer by the name of Jones had been murdered while en route from Lawrence to his farm on the Waukarusa bottoms by some of Sheriff Jones's border ruffians, who, on the 21st, sacked the town of Lawrence. When news of the murder came to town young Stewart, with two companions, went out to investigate it. They in turn were assailed by the border ruffians, and Stewart lost his life.

At exactly the same moment Stewart was shot down in far-away Kansas Mrs. Jane Stewart, his mother, who lived in Rochester, N. Y., sprang to her feet with the cry:

"My God! they are killing John."

Then, as she stood clutching her hands to her bosom, she continued: "They have shot him. He is running. Now he falls. A man gets off his horse and puts his pistol to his head"—and, with a wild shriek, the woman fainted away.

But little attention was paid to this by Mrs. Stewart's family, for the reason that she had been anxious about her son from the time he first went to Kansas, and frequently predicted that violence would befall him; but presently a letter came from Kansas friends in which the death of John was announced, together with details precisely tallying with the vision of his mother. It was also discovered that the vision was had at the moment the desperate affair was taking place in Kansas. The papers took up the occurrence and gave it wide publicity, as will be remembered by any of the pioneers of 1856.

Colonel Cope Gordon, proprietor of the Copeland Hotel, is a firm believer in visions, and he has had a personal experience which warrants that belief. In the early days of western New York, his father was away from home engaged in building a State road. One night in camp he was impelled by a power he could not resist to go home, a long distance overland. He could reason out no excuse for the trip, but a something forced him out of bed and started him homeward. He had proceeded but a portion of the way when he met a messenger who was bearing the sad tidings to him of his wife's death.

Every other man one meets in Topeka nowadays has a story of similar purport to relate, and the capital city is really enjoying what might be denominated a renaissance of the supernatural.

HUMORS OF THE POSTAL GUIDE.

Some of the Queer Names of Towns and How They Were Given.

New York Morning Journal.

A glance at the postal guides from year to year shows that some hundreds of new towns and postoffices are springing into birth in the United States with every fresh issue. Of course, every new town or village or hamlet must have a name—and what shall that name be.

Perhaps the reader thinks it is an easy thing to find a new and appropriate name. For instance, if a place stands in an elevated position, commanding a fine view of the surrounding country, the name of Fairview is suggested to the settler or owner who has burdened himself with the duty of christening the place where he owns land, and Fairview it becomes, heedless of the fact that there are already many other places bearing the same name. If it occurs to him that there are a good many oaks thereabouts, down it goes as Oakville, and one more is added to the twenty-seven places similarly named, thus increasing the chances of missives directed to any one of them ultimately finding the way to the Dead Letter Office by several per cent.

But while natural aspects often determine the choice of a name, old associations have still more to do with the matter. Hence the vast number of places beginning with the prefix "New." There are already more than five hundred postoffices bearing this prefix, and every year the number grows. Before the writer had made a systematic study of our national nomenclature he was disposed to cavil at this state of things, and to think that an unnecessary amount of unoriginality and conservatism was shown in thus following blindly in the old ruts. But after he had traveled to the stars with one ambitious name, and to the bowels of the earth with another, admired the fancy that culled the choicest flower of heathen mythology and set it over against the name of the founder of Rome, marveled at the taste which condemned a place to bear the name of a beast of burden, and smiled at the idea of sending down to history a town labeled like a bottle with the name of some one's favorite drink, he began to think that, perhaps, after all, this matter of finding a pretty and appropriate name for a given spot might be a more difficult task than it seemed.

Most pioneers look back with affection on the home of their childhood. That is why between six and seven hundred places in the United States have names beginning with the adjective "new." In the same class are 122 "Littles," ninety-four "Bigs," six hundred "Norths," five hundred "Souths," 516 "Easts" and seven hundred "Wests."

Dead and gone Presidents have contributed many names. There are sixty-six Jacksons in the country to only forty-seven Washingtons. There are also forty-seven Jeffersons. Buchanan is the least popular with eleven, and Cleveland is near the bottom of the list with eleven. But perhaps this is because Cleveland is not dead yet. Twenty-seven States have postoffice towns named after them. The number of women's names that have been used almost passes computation. Alphabetically they range from Ada to Vivian, and euphonically from the Puritan Samantha and Hepzibah, through the romantic Amanda and Angelica, to the Shakspearian Rosalind, Viola and Olivia. Marion comes out ahead with thirty-one. But among men's names William is far more popular, with one hundred. The others range from Aaron and Cain to Zephaniah. Among authors Byron, Bunyan, Burns, Dryden, Darwin, Milton and even Ossian and Virgil have all been requisitioned. Heroes of the war like Hancock, millionaires like Astor, ancient mariners like Hector, foreign notabilities like Bismarck, singers like Jenny Lind and actors like Booth figure impartially in the postal guide. There are seven Napoleons and twenty-five Bonapartes.

Stars, planets, gods, goddesses, birds, beasts and fishes do not figure quite so strangely as such names as Bacon, Cream, Sauce, Ham, Honey, Whisky, Brandy, Rum, Porter, Wine, Coffee and Tobacco. There are nearly two hundred Oaks. Then there are one hundred Blacks, 112 Reds, 248 Greens, nine Grays and Vermillions, 200 Whites and twenty-seven Yellows. Hardly less grotesque are Hart, Hood Overall, Shoe Heel, Broom, Kettle, Oven, Files, Sawdust, Shovel, Organ, Violin, Clarion and Drum.

Amo and Amour appeal to the tenderest sentiments, and so do Amiry, Charity, Delight, Friendship, Grace, Harmony, Hope, Joy and Love.

The names falling into no class at all, and which are therefore only to be classed as "miscellaneous," show that here the names in search of original titles were apparently reduced to despair, and took almost the first one that came to hand. Or, perhaps, they took the very last—as was the case in the town called "Nameless," in Georgia. In this case, after submitting to the government a long string of names by which it was desired to have the place officially called, the person in charge of the matter added, "If a name cannot be selected from this list the town will have to remain nameless." "All the other names are pre-empted—let it be called 'Nameless,'" was the reply. So Nameless it is.

BLACK BOYS OF SAMOA.

Robert Louis Stevenson Describes the Plantation Workmen.

St. Nicholas for December.

There are here a lot of poor people who are brought to Samoa from distant islands to labor for the Germans. They are not at all like the King and his people, who are brown and very pretty; for these are black as negroes and as ugly as sin, poor souls, and in their own land live all the time at war, and cook and eat men's flesh. The Germans make them work, and every now and then some run away into the bush, as the forest is called, and build little sheds of leaves, and eat nuts and roots and fruits, and dwell there by themselves. Sometimes they are bad and wild, and people whisper to each other that they have gone back to their horrid old habits and catch men and women in order to eat them. But it is very likely not true, and the most of them are poor, half-starved, pitiful creatures, like frightened dogs. Their life is all very well when the sun shines, as it does eight or nine months in the year. But it is very different the rest of the time. The wind rages then most violently. The great trees thrash about like whips, the air is filled with leaves and branches flying like birds and the sound of the trees falling shakes the earth. It rains, too, as it never rains at home. You can hear a shower while it is yet half a mile away, hissing like a shower bath in the forest; and when it comes to you the water blinds your eyes, and the cold drenching takes your breath away as though some one had struck you.

In that kind of weather it must be dreadful, indeed, to live in the woods, one man alone by himself. And you must know that if the lean man feels afraid to be in the forest, the people of the island and the black boys are much more afraid than he, for they believe the woods to be quite filled with spirits, some like pigs and some like flying things; but others (and these are thought the most dangerous) in the shape of beautiful young women and young men, beautifully dressed in the island manner, with fine kilts and fine necklaces, and crosses of scarlet seeds and flowers. Woe betide him or her who gets to speak with one of these! They will be charmed out of their wits, and will come home again quite silly and go mad and die. So that the poor runaway black boy must be always trembling and looking about for the coming of the demons.

Sometimes the women-demons go down out of the woods into the villages, and here is a tale the lean man heard last year. One of the islanders was sitting in his house, and he had cooked fish. There came along the road two beautiful young women, dressed as I told you, who came into his house and asked for some of his fish. It is the fashion in the islands always to give what is asked, and never ask folks' name. So the man gave them fish, and talked to them in the island jesting way. Presently he asked one of the women for her red necklace, which is good manners and their way; he had given the fish, and he had a right to ask for something back. "I will give it you by and by," said the woman, and she and her companion went away; but he thought they were gone very suddenly, and the truth is they had vanished. The night was nearly come, when the man heard the voice of the woman crying that he should come to her, and she would give the necklace. He looked out, and behold! she was standing calling him from the top of the sea, on which she stood as you might stand on the table. At that, fear came on the man, he fell on his knees and prayed, and the woman disappeared.

It was said afterward that this was once a woman, indeed, but she should have died a thousand years ago, and has lived all that while as an evil spirit in the woods beside the spring of a river. Sau-mai-afe is her name, in case you want to write to her.

A Golden Opportunity.

Washington Star.

"I'm afraid," said one member of Congress, "that this is going to be a particularly trying session."

"Oh, I dunno," replied the old-timer.

"But they say it's going to be very hard to get any business transacted."

"That's what I'm lookin' forward to. We can have all the time to make speeches in."

Wednesday Will be—

Christmas

For good gifts for Man and Boy, come to us. Gifts that will outlast the Holidays and give satisfaction for many months. Our Holiday inducements continue.

A good gift for a boy is one of our Reefer Jackets—for all ages, from 3 to 14 years, prices $2 to $5.

For a man—One of our Handsome Suits or a Choice Overcoat or Ulster.

Silk Umbrellas....

At $2, $2.50, $3, $4 and $5.

Mackintoshes....

A good line for boys at $3.50.
For men at from $4 to $15.

Silk Handkerchiefs, with colored borders, 25c and upward.

Initial Handkerchiefs, (Silk), handsomely embroidered, only 50c.

A fine Line of Linen Handkerchiefs.

Fleece-lined Kids at 50c, 75c and $1.

Fleece-lined Mocha Gloves, $1.25.

Cashmere Jersey Gloves, 25c and 50c.

Fleece-lined Bear Skin Gloves, especially adapted to driving, only $3.

Scarf Pins, 25c and upward.

Link and Lever Cuff Buttons, 25c and 50c a set.

Silk Mufflers, in polka dot and solid colors, at 50c, 75c and $1.

Silk Suspenders at only 50c.

Neckwear

No other house can give you as good values in neckwear as we now offer.

Band Bows at 25c and 50c. Tecks at 25c and 50c—very choice, latest designs and colorings. Four-in-Hands at 25c and 50c. A choice line of Puff Scarfs in the newest patterns, only 50c.

☞Rich imported Neckwear at 75c and $1, which is less than one-half the usual price.

Original Eagle

5 and 7 West Washington Street.

COBLENTZ'S

Oxygen Tobacco Cure Working Wonderful Results—It Is Tried by 16,000 Persons in Indiana, and Not a Single Failure Reported—Every Tobacco User Should Try It.

On Sept. 23, 24 and 25 there were five thousand packages of Oxygen Tobacco Cure given out, free, through the office of the Indianapolis Sentinel. On the 26th, 27th and 28th of October three thousand packages were given out from the office of the Evansville Journal. On the 24th, 25th and 26th of October five thousand were given out from the drug store of Freese & Ranke, of Fort Wayne, and on the 14th, 15th and 16th of the same month three thousand through the office of the Terre Haute Express. The conditions were that the persons receiving the remedy should use it as directed and report the result to the paper or office from which they received it, to be published at the expense of the proprietor of the Oxygen Tobacco Cure. Of these, more than 75 per cent. have reported, and yet out of this great number not a single failure has been announced.

No more flattering testimonial could be offered than this. Do you want a stronger proof of its virtues? It will cure you beyond a doubt. The question is, do you want to be cured? If so, give it a trial.

Do not waste time on doubtful experiments. The longer you aggravate the tobacco habit by uncertain remedies the harder it is to cure. Try a medicine that has been tested and found to cure beyond a doubt. If it cures you what else do you want? If it has cured thousands of cases why will it not cure you?

There is no doubt about you wanting to be cured of the tobacco habit. Many would like to be rid of it, and yet not make a cure a public exhibition like the old-fashioned whisky cure. You can use the Oxygen Tobacco Cure and no one need know of it but yourself. Try it.

Oxygen Tobacco Cure is for sale by all druggists at 25c, 50c and $1.

N. B.—All persons desiring information as to the cure of morphine, opium or whisky habits should consult

J. W. COBLENTZ, M. D.,
Fort Wayne, Ind.