HARBOR MASTERS' RING.

A WORSE GANG OF THIEVES THAN THOSE AT QUARANTINE.

TAXING COMMERCE AT OUR VERY DOCKS—A SYSTEM OF BLACKMAILING SHIP-OWNERS BY STATE OFFICIALS—PROOF OF THEIR FRAUDS.

A walk along South-st. on any afternoon will convince any one that the exactions of the Quarantine Doctor, of the Port Wardens, and of the Harbor Masters are but too certainly bringing about the crises predicted in shipping circles generally. The absolute power with which the State statute invests the Harbor Masters has made them arrogant to a degree that is only equaled by the boldness with which the Health Officer commits his extortion. They are declared the judges *absolute* regarding all cases appertaining to their districts. They have the power to stop the loading or unloading of any and every vessel lying at the piers of the city, and they are the judges as to whether a vessel shall be discharging or not. Cases are frequent where ships have been forced to move to other piers than those at which they were discharging for the reason that the Harbor-Master desired to put vessels, which would pay him more money, in the berths which they at the time occupied. It will hereafter be shown to what extent and to what use they put this unwise clause of the statute. The law thus clearly defines their fees:

Banks Statutes vol. II, 423, sec. 4.—"The harbor-masters shall have power to demand and receive from the commanders, owners, or consignees, or either of them, on all ships or vessels * * which shall enter the said port of New-York and load or unload, or make fast to any wharf therein, one and one-half of one per cent per ton to be computed from the tunnage expressed in the register or enrollments of such ships and vessels respectively; *and no more*; and also on all other foreign ships or vessels which shall arrive at and enter the said port, * * double the amount of fees above specified."

This gives them an average of $5,000 per year in lawful fees. These they more than quadruple by an infamous system of "blackmailing" which, out of the City of New-York, has no parallel the world over. Many of the piers are lying idle, and if the querist, in his perambulations along the river front, will take the trouble to step into the nearest office, or ship-chandler's, or dry dock yard, or warehouse, he will be told in every case, that it is only because the owners of vessels refuse to pay the harbor-master's extra rates. The owners of the wharfs who pay to the City Dock Commissioners from $4,500 to $7,000 per annum are thus by this means prevented from receiving the wharfage due them, and, with the ship-owners, suffer severely from the corrupt city officials and their dishonest subalterns. Although the Harbor-Masters have before been charged by the Press with taking bribes, from the care with which the culprits have covered up their tracks with second parties and "stool-pigeons" it has been absolutely impossible to get direct proof of their malfeasance. THE TRIBUNE (which makes it a rule never to make charges not capable of proof in open court) has long been in search of this direct evidence, but has experienced untold difficulties from the fear with which the Harbor-Masters, like the Quarantine officers, have inspired their victims. For a time, each person approached on the subject, after looking suspiciously around their offices and carefully examining the credentials of the reporter, would shrug their shoulders and say: "Our business is all going to ruin, but we see no way of hindering the workings of our enemies. We dare not say anything to you on the subject, for if it ever comes to the ears of our Harbor-Master we shall have to bleed for it." Or this: "Your paper is doing a good work for the shipping interests, but I am really sorry that, with the number of ship-owners our house represents, I cannot risk their interests by giving you any direct information, however much I may wish to do so." Another: "I cannot tell you anything; but here is a bill we have just paid to Parker & Gibbs, tow-boat men of No. 52 South-st., of $75 for bringing our brig across from Tobin's stores. The job is worth $10 at most, but we must employ the tow-boats at their own rates, or we cannot get our vessels loaded." When asked where the extra $65 went, the gentleman replied: "That goes as a 'commission' to somebody for giving Parker & Gibbs the job."

Having a short time since given a complete and comprehensive exposition of the frauds of the Health-Office of the port, together with the figures and dates thereunto appertaining, the outrageous and destructive extortions of the Harbor Masters now demand a showing. It would appear that the officials of the City and State have united for the utter ruin of the commerce of this great port, and that where ingenuity fails to suggest a means of enriching the robbers, open force, in direct violation of law, accomplishes the work.

The history of the robbery by this gang of thieves has been thoroughly ferreted out, and the evidence herewith submitted convicts at least one Harbor Master of malfeasance in office.

THE HARBOR MASTERS AND THEIR STATIONS.

The following is a list of the Harbor Masters, and the ring which they have formed with certain tow-boatmen of the city:

First District—C. C. Ellis; office, South-st., corner of Jefferson; extends from Pier No. 41 up East River.

Second District—Wm. Penoyer, No. 162 South-st.; extends from Pier No. 26 to No. 40, East River.

Third District—John C. Suydam, No. 83 South-st.; extends from Pier No. 19 to No. 26, East River.

Fourth District—Thomas H. Ferris, No. 69 South-st.; extends from Pier No. 13 to No. 19, East River.

Fifth District—John Brice, No. 52 South-st.; extends from Pier No. 8 to No 13, East River.

Sixth District—Daniel Hart, No. 26 Coenties-slip; extends from Whitehall to Pier No. 8, East River.

Seventh District—John W. Brown, No. 68 West-st.; extends from the Battery to Pier No. 9, North River.

Eighth District—A. J. Hull, No. 80 West-st.; extends from Pier No. 9 to No. 29, North River.

Ninth District—S. Sammons, Pier No. 32, North River; extends from Pier No. 29 to No. 43, North River.

Tenth District—Bernard Kenney, No. 384 West-st.; extends from Pier No. 43 up North River.

Eleventh District (Brooklyn)—J. H. Bell, opposite Fulton Ferry-house; from Red Hook Point to the extent of the port.

These Harbor Masters, wholly or in part, early in the present year, organized a ring for the purpose of levying "blackmail" in the following manner: A league was formed with C. P. Raymond, No. 261 South-st.; William Marshall, No. 69 South-st.; Parker & Gibbs, No. 52 South-st.; Chamberlain & Hewlett, Nos. 83 and 106 South-st., and Jacob Henyon, No. — West-st., tow-boat owners or agents, wherein it is said by Mr. Cushman to have been agreed that the tow-boat people, by charging exorbitant rates for towing, and paying over 10 per cent upon their regular rates, in addition to the extra charges made on the ship-owners, to some person appointed to receive the money, should have the exclusive right to tow vessels in the harbor of New-York. To explain, if a vessel is moved from Martin's Stores to Pier No. 5, the tow-boat agents render a bill to the owners of from $25 to $40—varying according to the need under which the ship-owners are suffering to have their vessel berthed. The legitimate fees for towing are, say $10. The tow-boat captains pay over to the Harbor Masters' receiver the $16 or $31—the whole sum received, minus the $10 less 10 per cent, which latter this go-between of the Harbor Master retains, and then pays the $15 or $30 over to his employer.

Under a statute, dated April 27, 1865, it is declared (section 8) that "no harbor-master shall take or receive, directly or indirectly, any money or fees in addition to those prescribed by law," &c. This clause has been violated times without number, and at this moment not one vessel arrives at or leaves her berth on the East River without a bribe to the Harbor-Master.

Gov. Hoffman has not been ignorant of the difficulties under which the ship-owners of New-York are suffering, but he has never by word or deed manifested a desire to correct such evils.

During the early part of this year Frederick Cushman, who is the owner of Piers Nos. 3 and 4, East River, preferred a complaint to Gov. Hoffman for the formal removal of Daniel Hart, Harbor-Master in his district. The complaint, accompanied with numerous affidavits, drawn up in due form, was sent to the Governor, but Mr. Cushman found only delays and obstructions of every conceivable nature, and at last, after several months of waiting for the action of the Executive, placed his case in the hands of William C. Barrett of No. 22 Nassau-st. Mr. Barrett at once wrote to the Governor, but, receiving no answer, after a month's delay prepared additional affidavits. He then made a criminal charge against Harbor-Master Hart before Judge Ledwith, and under the above clause of the statute at once procured his arrest. Mr. Davis appeared for the defense. The case is set down for a hearing this week, when it will come up for trial. Meanwhile, Hart has been at liberty on bail.

The system of bribe-taking has been continued, the Harbor-Masters laughing at and defying detection; and they even go so far as to say that the charges of the tow-boat companies are "outrageous." They have even increased their exactions in the past few weeks, and the reporter was shown numerous bills of from $50 to $105, rendered for services worth from $10 to $35. These bills do not bear on their face any connection with the Harbor-Master, as the following sample will show:

NEW-YORK, Sept. 17, 1871.

The Captain or captain of *Dark Norwegenerin*,
Bdr. to the steamers Relief and William Fletcher,
For towage from Pier 21 to Lighship..... $115 00
This charge is correct. Received payment.
Capt. CHAMBERLAIN & HEWLETT.

[The italics are written in on the printed form.]

Mail duplicates of such bills could be reproduced, all showing conclusively that money is exacted and paid for berths; but the two affidavits following, together with the statements appended thereto, make out a clear case of bribery against one Harbor-Master, who, in the words of his worst enemies, "is the squarest Harbor-Master on East River."

DIRECT CHARGE OF MALFEASANCE IN OFFICE—AFFIDAVIT OF W. K. NIVER.

William K. Niver being duly sworn, says that he resides in the City of Brooklyn, Kings County, and is a wharfinger, and that his place of business is at No. 31 Coenties-slip, in the City of New-York; he further says that he is acquainted with Daniel Hart, the Harbor-Master of the district in which he, this defendant, has his place of business; he further says that Milton Knapp is a lessee of the east half of Pier No. 7, East River, in the city and port of New-York in the district in which said Hart is Harbor-Master; that after the said Hart was appointed Harbor-Master, the said Hart requested this deponent to go and call upon the said Milton Knapp, who had an elevator on said pier, used in unloading and loading schooners and other vessels; and, further, that the said Hart stated to the deponent that he required and should have $500 from said Knapp, and that, unless that sum of money was paid to him in some way, the said Knapp would not be allowed or permitted to use his elevator at that place, nor would schooners or vessels be permitted to load or unload from said elevator. The said Hart stated to deponent that he could not nor would not receive the money directly from said Knapp, but that deponent should receive it and pay over the amount to him, said Hart; that deponent, being the friend of said Knapp, and being desirous of saving him from loss and his business from injury by the threatened interference of said Hart, did call upon said Knapp and then stated to him the amount demanded by said Hart, which amount the said Knapp refused to pay, but did pay to the deponent the sum of two hundred dollars ($200), which amount deponent paid over to said Hart for the privilege of said Knapp having his elevator at the pier above mentioned, and of loading and unloading schooners and other vessels from said elevator. That the said Hart has frequently talked to deponent about said payment to him, and of his demanding the same.

(Signed) WILLIAM K. NIVER.

AFFIDAVIT OF MILTON KNAPP.

Milton Knapp, being duly sworn, says that he resides in the State of New-York, and that his place of business is at No. 94 Broad-st. in said city; that he is the lessee of the eastern half of Pier No. 7 in the City and Port of New-York, and has been such lessee for about four years last past; he further says that he knows Daniel Hart, who is the Harbor-Master in the district where said pier is situated; he further says he is a dealer in grain, and the owner of an elevator which is located or situated at said pier, and is used by him for the purpose of carrying on his said business and for loading vessels with grain, and discharging grain from canal-boats.

That on or about the 3d and 17th days of December, 1870, the said Hart said that he must see William K. Niver if he did not want to be interfered with in the transaction of his business in discharging canal-boats and loading vessels with grain. The deponent further says that he had frequently conversed with said Hart previous to that time about said interference, and had informed said Hart that he only wanted to have his rights and did not want to be interfered with; that said Hart informed deponent that *he must see William K. Niver, and that any arrangement which deponent could make with said Niver would be all right;* that deponent did pay said Niver for said Hart the sum of $200 at two different times, on condition that he was not to be interfered with in the said business for several years at said pier; that he has not been interfered with by any other Harbor-Master, and has always obeyed and observed the laws.

He further deposes that notwithstanding his observance of the laws, the said Hart, for the purposes of interference with the business of deponent, and as he believes for the purpose of obtaining money from this deponent, has ordered vessels that came to said pier to be loaded with grain from deponent's elevator to remove from said pier, and has put other vessels in their places.

That said interference has greatly damaged the business of this deponent, and that the said interference has been for the mere purpose of obtaining money from the deponent or from others. That deponent has always paid all legal claims, and is willing to do so.

(Signed) MILTON KNAPP.

The following facts are stated on the authority of affidavits in every case, and these are at the command of Gov. Hoffman any moment he sees fit to call for them. They refer to the case of Harbor-Master Hart, and are selected not because his offenses are any more grave or numerous than the other Harbor Masters, but because they are more ready of access. Each is a direct violation of statute law, and demands immediate Executive attention.

Frederick Cushman, who has been the lessee of Piers Nos. 2, 3, and 4 on East River for the last 12 years, states that he suffers continually, and that the ship-owners in his district suffer from the demands of Daniel Hart, Harbor-Master, who in conjunction with William Hewlett, a tow-boat owner, levies blackmail upon vessels which are docked at piers within his jurisdiction.

About the middle of last January, Daniel Hart, Harbor-Master of the Sixth District, demanded and received from A. D. Hoyt, the agent of Jeremiah Austin's line of tow-boats, the sum of $200, by the threat that unless the same was paid, he would remove certain vessels from piers where they were discharging. Afterward, notwithstanding that the money extorted had been paid and the outrageous demand satisfied, Hart, through his agent, William Hewlett, caused the vessels to be moved before they were loaded or discharged. No cause was assigned, and none can be given, except that the ship-owners refused to pay additional blood-money.

During the month of December last, Joseph E. Williams of No. 39 South-st. paid Hart $75 for a berth for the bark Evelin, and was forced to pay this sum or could not have obtained a place at which to unload.

The bark Daphne came into this port on Jan. 5, 1871, and her master desired to take in cargo at Pier No. 4, East River; there being plenty of room there, as four berths were vacant at the time. He had no sooner made fast to the pier than William Hewlett came on board and told the captain that he must move or pay for the privilege of lying at that place. The captain was forced to pay.

On the same day Capt. J. W. Hill, of the brig Teresita, applied for a berth at the same pier, but he was refused a place until he paid to Hart and Hewlett $20. This bill was put in the bill of the stevedore, F. B. Brownlow, No. 10 South-st., and was paid by the owners of the vessel.

William Russell, No. 7 State-st., was compelled to pay Hewlett $30 for "towing and berthing" the bark Stella, at pier No. 3, East River. The charges for towing were exactly $8, the additional $22 being blackmail for a berth. The agent of the brig Ricardo was forced to employ Hewlett to tow the brig to pier No. 4, East River, and to pay him $20 for the service—worth $7—in order to secure a place at the pier. This, too, although there were plenty of vacant places.

If any further proof be desired by Gov. Hoffman, he has only to attend the hearing of the case to come up before Judge Ledwith, during the present week. Let the evil be remedied at once.

GENERAL NOTES.

An American circus company is now performing in Constantinople—the first circus that has ever visited the domains of the Sultan.

The Freshmen (classic) class of Yale College at the coming session will contain about 150 students, and in the scientific department over 60 students. Some 60 applicants have been made for admission to the theological school of Yale.

A Californian eccentric named John Russell has lived for a number of years near the mouth of the Sacramento River without kinsfolk or neighbors. He says he is fascinated by the beauty of the scenery thereabout. He cultivates bees, follows trapping, and makes considerable money by sending honey and skins to the San Francisco market. He is known in the Golden State as the lone man of Twitchell's Island.

It is now thrown out by newspapers at the South, as a brand to fire the Southern mind, that Webster's Dictionary is gotten up in the interests of the Radicals, and intended by its definitions to "justify the damnable usurpations now driving the country into the vortex of consolidated despotism." On the other hand, Worcester's is said to present explanations perfectly harmless to the sensitive Southrons.

A scheme for robbing Senator Morton during the visit of Gen. Grant to Indianapolis is divulged in *The Cleveland Leader*. A notorious Western outlaw, "Sam Rivers," in collusion with three others of his kind, after a profitable raid on some lonely homesteads in Ohio, made a start for Indianapolis, and the leading ruffian had possessed himself of the confidence of a servant in the Senator's house, when a detective, who had been on the track of the robbers, discovered the plot, and at once gave notice to the Washington Secret Service Bureau, and the ruffians were arrested in Cleveland.

If aged clergymen will color their silver locks, it only proves that they have erroneous notions of the picturesque, nothing being fitter for the father of a flock than a "frosty pow." At a late meeting of the Baptist Association, at Oneida, a shepherd with raven hair and beard, who was known to be pretty well advanced into the vale of years, proposed a resolution deprecating the use of tobacco. He was countered at once by a reverend devotee of the Indian weed, who begged leave to offer a resolution against hair dye! It is not stated how the matter was settled, nor is it a matter of much consequence. It is not treating ministers of the Gospel fairly to expect them to be perfect.

There is said to be a great difficulty in obtaining operatives for the mills of Lowell, Fall River, Lawrence, and other manufacturing cities in Massachusetts. The Lowell factories have for some time been running, we are told, with about one-quarter their usual supply of hands. In Fall River several new mills are in process of erection, and it is not easy to see from what quarter enough skilled labor can be obtained. The agents there are now considering whether it would be more expedient to increase the rates of wages or to diminish the hours of work. Perhaps, for obvious reasons, the latter course would be the most effective.

There is no limit to human enterprise, and there seems to be no limit to the number of legs which our unfortunate fellow creatures are destined to lose. To meet the demands occasioned by past and to be created by future amputations, a joint stock company for the manufacture of wooden legs has been organized in Portland, Me. This is not to supply any mere local deficiency, but the corporation will make legs for the whole world, including show-legs for organ-grinders to lay upon the top of their instruments. It is even whispered that contracts have been arranged with several of the more belligerent European monarchs for a constant supply of the legs.

What a curious matter of chances human life is! Here we read of Hannah Roberts, late of Philadelphia, and a woman of color, who, at the age of 130 years—it is so stated—has just been accidentally burned to death. She escaped measles, and cholera, and small-pox, and careless drivers, and drowning, and hanging, and poisoning—for over a century she dodged all these fatalities to be consumed by fire in her dotage. There must be luck in it; at least it is not an easy task to discover any law. "For fear of death some people physic and diet themselves at an early age into the sepulcher; while others disregard every rule of health and self-preservation, and beat three score and ten handsomely."

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE.

WASHINGTON'S PRIVATE CHARACTER.

A CONCLUSIVE BIT OF NEW TESTIMONY.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: I noticed recently, in THE TRIBUNE, a communication on the vexed question, if it really be a question, of Gen. Washington's private character, in which there was a citation of authorities not altogether accurate. It is a subject on which, having made a thorough investigation of it, my judgment is very clear; and I confess I have no sympathy with the iconoclastic spirit which finds vent in this direction. From the days of Sam. Adams and James Lovell to this there has been a disposition in certain regions to pick flaws in Washington—a Virginian, a gentleman, and no lover of puritanical institutions—and in spite of Mr. Sparks's industry and Mr. Everett's rhetorical formalism, it has constantly manifested itself. Within a year, a Boston writer, translated to Philadelphia, has made it a matter of boast that he had tried to convert Thackeray from his "idolatry" of Washington! I confess I yet bow down in reverence for him who was, morally, as in every other respect, perfect chrysolite. But to the evidence:

Your correspondent referred to a letter of Charles Lee in 1778 to Gen. Joseph Reed, reflecting on Washington—adding, however, that Gen. Reed expressed his disbelief in the charge. There is, I think, no such letter, though Lee, vituperative and reckless, was quite capable of writing one. But there is a letter from Mr. Reed which has always seemed to me conclusive. It was, forsooth, written November 5, 1778, to Gen. Greene. In it this passage occurs with reference to Lee and Washington. It says of Lee: "We are utterly out. After laboring to convince me he had great merit at Monmouth, and I to convince him that he had behaved very ill, which I knew from his own mouth and my own observation, we have parted mutually unconvinced. I only added one piece of advice to him, to forbear any reflections on the Commander-in-Chief, of whom, for the first time, I have heard slander on his private character, viz., great cruelty to his slaves in Virginia and immorality of life, though they acknowledge it is so very secret that it is difficult to detect it. To me, who have had so good an opportunity to know the purity of the latter and equally believing the falsehood of the former from the known excellence of his disposition, it appears so nearly bordering on frenzy that I can pity the wretches rather than despise them."

The value of this letter, as matter of evidence, results from its being private, and not written to be seen—that the writer was a man of entirely pure private character, as is abundantly shown by his familiar correspondence now in print, and that he had full opportunities of knowing Washington thoroughly and well.

Mr. Reed was Washington's first Private Secretary, accompanying him from Philadelphia on his appointment as Commander-in-Chief in June, 1775, and remaining with him on terms of the closest personal intimacy, occupying the same quarters, often the same apartment, at Cambridge till the 29th of October. They were separated for the next few months, and it was in this interval that occurred the private correspondence which has attracted so much attention, and of which Mr. Irving says, "How precious are these letters. And how fortunate that the absence of Reed from camp should have procured for us such confidential outpourings of Washington's heart at this time of its great trial!" In January, '76, Mrs. Washington joined her husband at camp. In May, Mr. Reed, at Washington's instance, was made Adjutant-General and rejoined the army, again becoming a member of the family of the Commander-in-Chief on the 16th May, at New-York. From May till December they were together. In the Autumn of '77, after the fall of Philadelphia, Mr. Reed joined Washington as a volunteer, remaining near him till after the battle of Monmouth, in 1778, and in November of that year the letter in question was written. A STUDENT.

Orange, N. J., Sept. 24, 1871.

ANOTHER COMPLAINT CONCERNING THE MORRIS AND ESSEX RAILROAD.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: By the malice of the arch enemy—rather than by the grace of God, I fancy—it has come that I reside in the State of New-Jersey. Now, against New-Jersey itself I have no complaint to make. It is true that the soil is not eminently adapted to crops, and a good deal more of it has stuck in mine than seemed either agreeable or necessary, but this matters very little to one whose lines do not lie in the agricultural way. The people are decorous, hospitable and manly, willing to give what they take and take what they give—to take considerably more, in fact, rather than have any dispute about it. 'Tis the Morris and Essex Railroad which constitutes the curse of New-Jersey, a salt and bitter curse by the side of which musketoes dwindle down their ineffectual bills, if they do not become comparative blessings. The amount of imposition which the average American public will quietly submit to, I never fully understood until I became a traveler on the M. and E. R. R.—which might not inappropriately be considered an abbreviation for Miserable and Exasperating Railroad. The phrase of being "treated like a dog" ought to give place to "treated like a Morris and Essex Commuter," if one wishes to express the measure of indignity which can be put upon a human being. Of the minor grievances to which we are made subject I will not now write; the catalogue has become more wearisome than a twice-told tale. But I do wish to narrate one monstrous outrage, and request you to call attention to it, in the hope that by banding together a combination may be effected which shall break this iron "Ring" which is imposed on our Jersey necks.

Last Saturday afternoon the 4:50 train, known on the time-table as "the South Orange Express," went out from Hoboken with less than half enough cars for the passengers carried. Not one in two had seats; we were compelled to cluster in the aisles and swarm over on the platforms like bees. Aside from the inconvenience and discomfort entailed, we were exposed, in event of an accident, to the danger of being thrown out of the doors and sifted down under the wheels. To say that this is treating men, women and children like cattle, is not to state the case correctly, for room for cattle is always found *inside* their pens.

Now, what excuse is there for this treatment of passengers? Having contracted to carry us to our respective destinations—and received the pay in advance—by what right can the Railroad Company condemn us to this discomfort and danger? Are there no gentlemen of the legal profession who reside on the M. & E. R. R. who will give an opinion on this case and take the matter in hand, that we may know if there is no remedy in law to be had? I know of at least one commuter who will contribute his proportion to a fund for the purpose of testing whether or not human passengers—Jerseymen though they be—have any rights which this corporation is bound to respect. C. H. WEBB.

Orange, N. J., Sept. 25, 1871.

WORK FOR INTELLIGENT WOMEN.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Many women of intelligence and culture who are now dependent on fathers, brothers, or other relatives, would gladly find some congenial and remunerative employment which would afford them an independent living. Short-hand reporting is a business on which but few women have as yet entered, yet in all its branches it is well adapted for them. Quickness of thought and action is the chief constitutional requisite for its successful practice. A fair knowledge of English grammar and composition, and of the meaning and use of the words which represent the current thoughts of the age, together with the ability to write a fair, legible long-hand, are also essential. There is a rich field of labor opening in this direction, and it will be well for woman to enter her claim and prepare for her share of occupancy. For the past 10 or 12 years the demand for stenographic writers has been steadily increasing in advance of the supply. Many people suppose that most of the short-hand work is done for the newspapers, but this is a mistake. It has been principally in connection with the courts of law that stenographers have earned reputation and money. Judges, lawyers, and litigants, all require their service, and are willing to pay liberally for it. Many phonographers of limited experience are employed as amanuenses in places of public business, such as the custom-houses, &c., in large cities, and in the Departments at Washington. Many more are engaged in law, insurance, and banking offices, and as private secretaries.

A few statistics may be interesting. The Superior, Supreme, Common Pleas, Marine, and Surrogate's Courts of New-York City, employ altogether 14 official stenographers at salaries of $2,500 or $3,000 each. An act has recently been passed empowering the six or seven District Courts to supply themselves with like assistants, and pay a salary of $2,000 to each stenographer. In the eight Judicial District Courts of the State of New-York, and in the Courts of Maine, Illinois, Pennsylvania, California, and probably other States, official stenographers are employed. This system has recently been adopted in the Courts of South Carolina, and will no doubt soon be in every State of the Union. The certainty afforded in disputed points by reference to the notes of a competent short-hand writer, who takes down not what might have been said, but what really was said, is an invaluable aid to the administration of law and justice, aside from the great saving of time in the majority of trials. Other departments of short-hand work are equally well paid. Twenty-five cents a folio (100 words) is charged for reporting and furnishing copy of testimony, or the speech of counsel, or any one else on an important matter. Five dollars is charged for attendance at any reference case, no matter how short. Not less than $10 is paid to any first-class reporter for a day or night's work, and most frequently $20. Dictation work, of which there is a large quantity done by younger phonographers, is paid six cents a folio, and the same price is paid for writing out from original notes. From $20 to $30 per week can easily be made in the busy season, at this work alone, by those who can write their notes readily, and translate them into legible, well-spelled long-hand. Salaried amanuenses receive from $20 to $35 per week, according to capacity.

Women are by nature well qualified for this kind of work. The preparation for it will take from six to ten months according to capacity and previous mental discipline. The study and practice are somewhat analogous to that required to make an expert pianist, but the time necessary is much shorter, and the remuneration much larger and more certain. The system of phonetic short-hand has been greatly simplified and improved during the past ten years, so that its study, especially if carried on under the guidance of an experienced teacher, is by no means the task it was formerly. It would be of great public benefit if classes for the thorough instruction of women in phonographic reporting were established in the High and Normal Schools, and in the Colleges where women are admitted. E. B. B.

New-York, Sept. 20, 1871.

WALTER SCOTT CENTENNIAL—A SUGGESTION.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: In your paper of Aug. 10 you devote considerable space to the centennial celebration of Sir Walter Scott, of whom it may be truly said, "None knew him but to love him, nor named him but to praise." I have seen none that can compare with the sketch alluded to for completeness and fullness. It is an invaluable record, and deserving of a more permanent place than the evanescent pages of a daily newspaper. Why not have the proceedings and publications on this memorable occasion collected together in a book form, with suitable illustrations? Surely is it not as worthy as a "Tour of the Prince of Wales," or the "Shakespeare Jubilee?" Every admirer of Scott would like to have a copy, and its circulation would be immense, as a cherished additional tribute to the genius and worth of one "who lives in all memories, though with the buried gone." I would here advert to a marked peculiarity in the Waverley novels, and most, if not all, of his poetical works: how studiously he has avoided introducing the relation of Mother. Every reader may have noticed that all his heroes and heroines, with but trifling exceptions, are motherless, from Waverley downward; the mothers are not creditable, as Lady Ashton or Meg Murdeckson. The omission is evidently not accidental, but the result of premeditated design. It is very apparent that the relation in life Scott most loved to dwell upon was that of father and daughter, as in the filial devotion of an Isabel Wardour, Di Vernon, and Alice Lee, and the lines in Lady of the Lake:

"Oh, if there be a human tear
From passion's dream refined clear—
A tear so limpid and so meek
It would not stain an angel's cheek—
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a daughter's dutious head," &c.

New-York, Sept. 21, 1871. E. L.

PUBLIC OPINION IN TEXAS.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: At the late Washington County Fair, held at Brenham, I made on a sudden call an impromptu speech, the sentiments of which were, however, well matured. *The Houston Union* unjustly ascribes to me the following expressions:

"I fought four years in the Confederate Army for principles dear, near, and sacred to me, and as old as I am to-day, I would gladly shoulder my musket and go forth to fight the battle over again if *needs be*."

As my speech was favorably received, this report would imply that the people approved of Rebel sentiments; and as my correction of the misprint has not been published by *The Union*, a wrong impression will be entertained in the North of what I said and of public feeling in this State. In my letter I gave the following, which is the true version of that part of my speech:

This Government, in all or nearly all its leading features, is consolidated, solidified, permanent in its present condition. I do not like the present Constitution as well, not nearly so well, as I did and as I do the old one—the Federal Constitution, its interpretation, and the administration of its government before the war. But still it is our Government, it is our Government, and with me this feeling, this conviction is so final and complete, that if the United States Government were engaged in a war with any foreign nation whatever, old as I am, disfranchised as I am, I would shoulder my musket in its defense, if need there should be.

These views are held by the great majority of our people. ASHBEL SMITH.

Evergreen, Harris Co., Texas, Sept. 13, 1871.

THE LEGAL LIMIT OF FARE ON RAILROADS.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Mr. Greeley says "a railroad has no legal power to exact from a community rates of freight and fare limited only by its fear of driving away business." Is that so in this State? Is there any legal maximum rate per mile of fare? If so, who is empowered to see that that rate is not exceeded? Of course each passenger robbed by extortionate, illegal overcharge cannot sue the railroad company, and it is the poor many and not the rich few who suffer most by such extortion. Please give us the law, if there is any; and if not, don't let us rest until there is a good law, well enforced.

Brooklyn, Sept. 25, 1871. R. D. DOUGLASS.

A QUERY FOR THE LABOR REFORM LEAGUE.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Ten hours' pay for eight hours' work will necessarily enhance the price of every article to the extent of the difference in the cost of labor entering therein. The supply thus lessened will provoke speculation, raising prices still higher. What, then, will be gained, unless wages are raised above even the present rate, to cover the increased cost of living inevitable from the proposed exaction? A LABORER.

Seneca Falls, N. Y., Sept. 25, 1871.

THE COURTS.

PROMINENT BROKERS IN TROUBLE.

THE DEFAULTER HODGE—ARREST OF HIS ALLEGED ACCOMPLICE.

Assistant United States District-Attorney Purdy has made an affidavit from information and belief, charging James A. Polhemus and Eugene J. Jackson, composing the firm of Polhemus & Jackson, brokers, at No. 66 Exchange-place, with having, on or about the 20th of April last, advised J. Ledyard Hodge, the defaulting army paymaster, to commit the crime of embezzlement, of which he acknowledged himself guilty, and with having conspired with him to commit that crime. On this affidavit warrants were issued against the accused, and United States Deputy Marshals Parvis and Robinson arrested Jackson, yesterday, in his office. He was taken before United States Commissioner Stilwell and held in $25,000 bail for an examination. His partner is sick in bed, and has been for several months, and will not be arrested at present.

The present arrest is simply on the charge of advising and coöperating in the embezzlement. Another arrest of Jackson will be made on the charge of conspiring with Hodge to commit the alleged crimes. On this charge, the bail of $10,000 has been fixed. Mr. Jackson seemed to feel his position keenly. He and his counsel strongly assert his innocence and court a searching investigation.

THE BONARD WILL CASE.

ECCENTRICITIES OF A BENEVOLENT FRENCH MISER.

The examination of witnesses in the Bonard will case was continued before Surrogate Hutchings yesterday.

Frederick Mumond testified that he was intimately acquainted with Mr. Bonard during the 15 or 16 years previous to his death; deceased told him he was born at or near Rouen in France, and remembered seeing the allies come to Rouen in the time of Napoleon I.; his father died when he was about 2 years old, and his mother sent him to a priest to be educated; witness had often heard him use Latin words in conversation; when witness first became acquainted with Mr. Bonard, he spoke of a little girl in France as his niece or godchild, but during his last years he said he had no relatives; said he left France in December, 1849; had been in California; was in South America during 1852-53; never heard him say he brought away any property from France; heard him say he lost 30,000 francs by the French Revolution of 1848; the money was invested in Government bonds; did not say that he lost all his property; said he received the money from his mother; when witness first became acquainted with him he was considered a rich man; he was living at a boarding-house in Leonard-st.; occupied a small room on the second floor; he dressed and lived like a workingman; the house was perfectly respectable; witness regarded him as a miser; he invented a machine for making brick, and one for making hats; witness did not know of his being engaged in any other work; he kept kegs of gold under his bed until an attempt was made to rob him, after which he took his gold to a bank, and subsequently bought a house; he was very pleasant and agreeable in disposition, and continued lively and cheerful to the last; he had but few friends, however, and kept aloof from people generally.

Ernest Pariaot testified that he first became acquainted with Mr. Bonard in 1866, at the boarding-house in Leonard-st.; he had very few friends; never knew of any one's going into his bed-room; he generally took care of his own room; heard him say he was born in Rouen, France, or near there; had heard him speak of a sister living there; he was very reticent concerning his family; had often discussed politics and religion with him while playing dominoes; he was atheistical in opinion, and was very unfriendly toward the Catholic religion; they often discussed the doctrine that after death the soul passes into the body of an animal; Mr. Bonard always argued in favor of this doctrine, and was an ardent believer in it; often became very much excited when discussing it; he got his ideas from the writings of Fourier and other philosophers; witness understood that Mr. Bonard made his money by trading with the Indians of Nicaragua in jewelry, firearms, liquors, &c.

Mr. Verger testified that in 1866 he resided during six or seven months in the same house with Mr. Bonard, who lived very retired, and never admitted any one to his room; Mr. Bonard never drank intoxicating liquors; he lived like a workingman; when asked why he did not live in a hotel he said his manners were such that people would laugh at him; he said that when he died he would leave his money to some benevolent institution.

Adjourned to Oct. 9.

RESISTING BROOKLYN WATER BOARD FRAUDS—THE ATLANTIC-ST. NICOLSON PAVEMENT ASSESSMENT.

A motion was made before Judge Pratt, yesterday, at a special term of the Kings County Supreme Court, by William A. Coit, to have the assessment for repairing Atlantic-st., from Henry-st. to Flatbush-ave., with Nicolson blocks vacated, because of alleged frauds and irregularities on the part of the Brooklyn Board of Water Commissioners. The petition of Mr. Coit alleges that on the 29th of May last he was assessed $490 72 on each of two lots, of which he is the owner, for repaving Atlantic-st. He charges that there were frauds and irregularities in the assessment as follows:

I. All the acts of the Water and Sewerage Commissioners on such proceedings were invalid for the reason that the Act of April 3, 1869, was unconstitutional and void.

II. Upon the assumption that the Act of April 3, 1869, is valid, the proceedings of the Commissioners were invalid:

1. In substituting the repaving of Atlantic-st. without any petition therefor by a majority of the owners of the land along that street, between Henry-st. and Flatbush-ave.

2. In undertaking the repaving of said street without some official declaration on their part that the public wants or convenience required it.

3. In selecting the Nicolson pavement as the pavement with which to repave said street, the same being a patented pavement not open to public competition.

4. In entering into a contract for the said Nicolson pavement at an excessive price, and at a price greater than the same was reasonably worth.

5. In entering into a contract for such Nicolson pavement, after they had received proposals according to their advertisements for the same from responsible persons, to repave said street at prices much lower than the contract price of said Nicolson pavement.

Several other irregularities are specified, and Mr. Coit concludes his petition by asking that the assessment be vacated, and that the lien created thereby, or by any subsequent proceedings, may cease and be discharged. The papers in the case were served upon Corporation Counsel DeWitt, and an order granted that the proofs and allegations of the parties to the action be heard on Monday next.

CIVIL NOTES.

The following notice is posted in the room of the Superior Court, Special Term: "On the first Monday of October, at 10:30 a. m., the entire Special Term calendar, except cases marked 'reserved generally,' will be called. The causes may be set down for any day during the first two weeks."

Judge Barnard dissolved the injunction, yesterday, in the case of Sarah B. Hunt agt. William B. Hunt, in which the former, while seeking to set aside a divorce obtained by the latter in Louisiana, on the ground of its illegality, and to obtain a divorce herself from the defendant, also sought to have an injunction continued, which had been temporarily granted, restraining defendant from selling certain property in Columbia County, N. Y., in order to give her security for alimony in case of her success in her suit. This is substantially a decision that the Louisiana divorce was lawfully obtained.

CRIMINAL COURTS.

John W. Stud, charged with drawing whisky from unstamped casks, was committed yesterday by Commissioner Osborn.

Herman Frangott, charged with passing a counterfeit $20 bill, was honorably discharged, yesterday, by Commissioner Stilwell.

At the Essex Market Police Court, William Donohue was committed, yesterday, for stealing a watch from Thomas Goodfriend of No. 26 Ludlow-st.....Louisa S. Killan, for stealing $25 from Henry Belascke of No. 231 Thompson-st.

In the Court of General Sessions, before Judge Bedford, yesterday, Richard Dooley, the porter of the North River Bank, who claimed a few days ago that he had been knocked down and robbed of $5,000 belonging to the bank, confessed that he appropriated the money himself. At the request of the cashier of the bank, and as the money has all been returned, sentence was suspended.....Joseph Lewis, charged with burglary, was acquitted, but was remanded to await trial on another charge of burglary against him.....Thomas Howard, colored, charged with stealing a watch from Mary Thompson, was acquitted.....Henry Isaacs pleaded guilty to grand larceny; sentence postponed.

DECISIONS—SEPT. 26.

Supreme Court—Chambers—By Judge Cardozo.—Tinkham agt. Dan