A MODERN BONIFACE.

ONE OF NEW-YORK'S CURIOUS CHARACTERS.

THE CAFFE MORETTI AND ITS PROPRIETOR—INTERESTING REMINISCENCES OF FAMOUS MACARONI-EATING ITALIAN OPERA SINGERS, ACTORS AND OTHERS—AN EXCELLENT CHEAP DINNER IN A DINGY ROOM.

There is nothing particularly inviting in the aspect of the place nor the appearance of the proprietor. The entrance to the long, low and dingy dining room is by a narrow staircase, and then through the larder and kitchen. The proprietor is a burly, unshaven, brigandish Italian, who is never known to wear a coat, or for that matter clean linen. But once within one may get for $1 25 the best cooked and most elaborate Italian dinner to be had in America; and he cannot often visit the place without getting interested in the character who presides over it. The place is in Fourteenth-st., near Third-ave.; it is called the "Caffè Moretti," and its proprietor is Steffani Moretti, who calls himself a "spoiled priest," having been educated in Italy for the church.

Moretti himself is not more curious in his character than some of his customers have been or now are. In times past he has had for guests who have praised his macaroni, Salvini, Grisi, Ristori, Mario, Brignoli, Susini, Campanini and Galassi. Commodore William de Rohan, a brother of Admiral John A. Dahlgren, who assumed his mother's name in consequence of some family affair, is a frequent visitor. Henry Ward Beecher comes occasionally with his sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe. Every now and then Chief Justice Charles P. Daly and his wife are to be seen there. Among other familiar faces frequently to be seen there are those of ex-Governor A. R. Shepherd, of Washington; Managers Mapleson, Maretzek and Strakosch, Sarah Jewett, of the Union Square; Laura Don, ex-Speaker Galusha A. Grow, of the House of Representatives; Police Commissioner MacLean and scores of others almost equally prominent.

On the walls of the room hang pictures, taken years ago, of Carlotta and Adelina Patti, Mario, Albani, Annie Louise Cary, Tietiens, Nilsson, Campanini, Ronconi, Aimée, Rosnati, Salvini, Max Strakosch, Ristori, Brignoli, "Charlie" Backus and others. The picture of Brignoli is a laughable caricature, representing the tenor, with one shoe off, and with an inspired expression on his face, seated at a piano, upon which he is playing vigorously. The idea of the artist was to burlesque Brignoli's passion for extemporaneous composition, while he was calling on his friends. Adelina Patti's portrait represents her as she looked when at sixteen years of age she began to sing. A long picture giving a bird's-eye view of Rome at one period of the Garibaldi wars, a gift to Moretti from Commodore Rohan, hangs conspicuously on one side of the room.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE HOST.

Moretti himself is of rather short stature, thick-set, with large, pleasant brown eyes, straight, black half-combed hair, a short curling mustache and a black stubble of a beard that always seems to have needed a razor for three days at least. From one of his waistcoat pockets hangs a single string by which he fishes up his eye glasses whenever he has to figure up a customer's account.

Despite his uncouth appearance, Moretti is a most jovial host. Always in good humor, except when by some one's carelessness a pot fish is ill-cooked, he is on terms of easy familiarity with all of his patrons, who seem to delight in calling him to a table so that he may listen to some one's praise of his culinary skill. The secret of Moretti's success is the fact that he is an indefatigable worker, and attends personally to all the details of his business. He goes to Washington Market every morning at 6 a. m., and selects the finest venison, game, fish, vegetables and fruit that can be found. He handles all the money, and has no "assistant cashier to rob him." Two waiters and three women do all the service to be done. He has apparently spent nothing for years on the interior of his caffè, and his rent cannot cost him much. He laughs good-naturedly when people comment on the dirty appearance of everything except his table linen and dinner service, is always ready to explain the mysteries of his small kitchen and hot ovens to his lady visitors, and is highly amused at their expressions of astonishment that such wonderful results can be accomplished by such apparently inadequate means.

THE BILL OF FARE.

At the present day Moretti's bill of fare is varied enough to suit the taste of an epicure. His specialty is macaroni, of which he imports larger quantities every year. Moretti's patrons require an average of five boxes of macaroni each week, or three and a quarter tons each year. The dish is served in most tempting form, with tomato sauce, bread, celery and with grated imported Parmesan cheese, six or seven years old, which Moretti claims is the "best in the world." His shelves are filled with the best of Italian as well as French wines—Lacrima Cariati, Capri and other brands. With his course dinner for $1 he serves a bottle of Italian claret, "Vino Ordinaire," and for $1 25 he gives a finer brand. His customers drink from forty to forty-five gallons of Vino Ordinaire each week. He also supplies any who may wish wine at their houses.

Moretti's bill of fare for his course dinner with wine, is as follows:

Celery, Radishes, Olives.
Anchovies.
Soup.
Macaroni.
Fish with Vegetables.
Veal chops breaded, calves' kidneys.
Kidneys à la mode or chicken, game and fowl.
Roast quail, turkey, pigeon,
Venison or squab.
Chicken salad.
Fruits, cheese, dessert.
Coffee.

The same dinner of equal quality and quantity would cost $8 or $10 at Delmonico's or the Café Brunswick.

MORETTI'S TALK ABOUT HIS PATRONS.

It is amusing to hear Moretti talk of the men of keen appetites who have left him bills that never can be collected. "I lose a great deal of money," he says, with a characteristic shrug of the shoulders. "You see an opera troupe comes around with some such man as Maretzek for manager. Well, he pays two or three weeks' salary in advance, and they buy some clothes and pay their washerwoman, and then come here and persuade me to board them until their next pay day. Before that time comes the company breaks up—bad season—and I'm lost," with a laugh. One man, a Frenchman, who died in Chicago, owed Moretti a bill of $883 for meals.

"Brignoli," says Moretti, in his broken English, "is a good fellow and good pay. Many a time he used to bring all the singers in the cast over here for a dinner, and he paid for them, too. Campanini is tiring himself out, and I wonder will Mapleson bring Brignoli back here?"

From the days when the opera was given in Castle Garden, Moretti has heard all the great singers who have been to this country, and still remembers the delight with which he used to hear the operas sung in Milan. He is an unsparing critic of the singers of the present day, and at times he becomes so earnest in talking about them, that he startles the sleepy birds in the corner with his exaggerated imitations of the defective methods of singers over whom the public is raving. He speaks with a sort of unmingled regret and disgust in regard to what he calls the decadence of the opera, and loves to recall the evenings he has spent in listening to singers like Lagrange, Grisi, Carozzi-Zucchi, Nilsson, Tietjens, Mario, Mirate, Salvi, Maurel and Carl Formes. "Lagrange," said Moretti a day or two ago, "was the greatest primadonna that ever came to this country. She was never ill, would sing five or six times a week, and never disappointed the public. She was good in all operas, 'Il Barbiere,' 'Les Huguenots,' 'Roberto il Diavolo,'—singing to-night in a great dramatic part and to-morrow perhaps in the 'Barbiere.' She was tall, of fine figure, with a somewhat long face, and was splendidly educated—what in America you would call a lady in every sense of the word. Now-a-days managers have singers that can appear only in what are called light operas—like 'Sonnambula,' 'La Figlia del Reggimento,' and 'Dinorah.' We have no great dramatic singers for operas like 'Les Huguenots,' 'Norma' or 'Ernani.' 'Norma' was one of Lagrange's best operas. Some 'newspaper fellow' brought her over here first. Her husband was a Russian who used to come here often.

"Grisi was the first great singer to come to New-York. Her manager was an actor who used to play at Niblo's, as near as I can remember. Her favorite operas were Semiramide, Borgia, and Norma. She was supported by Mario and Susini in the performances that were given at Castle Garden. The company opened the Academy of Music afterwards, then went to Boston, and on their return they found that another company was here, so Grisi broke her contract and returned to Europe. She was a great woman, with a large, tall figure like Salvini's," and Moretti, throwing his head and shoulders back, assumed what he meant for a tragic expression, "even a little taller than Pappenheim. When she left New-York she gave $12,000 to be distributed among the Italian poor. Mario, too, was very charitable, and gave much money to help the cause of Italian freedom. He was finely educated. Often he used to come here to dine in the little room upstairs. He was over forty years old when he sang in New-York, was of a noble family, and was once an officer in the Spanish Army. Mario's voice came from his chest and not from his throat. The tenors now-a-days may be good actors, but," with an expressive look, "they sing from their throats and heads."

The "little room upstairs" is Moretti's only private dining-room. It is deliciously dirty, and it is approached through a long and dark passage-way in which one runs the risk of hanging himself with the stretched clothes-lines, for here is the only wash-room in the building. It has a table big enough to seat ten or a dozen. Salvini used to eat his macaroni and other Italian delicacies here. Moretti says that Salvini tried to live at a hotel, but couldn't endure the fare. "He used to come here for his Italian dishes, and went away saying that he 'felt good.'" At this time he was playing to crowded houses at the Union Square. This "romantic place," as Moretti calls the room, is generally given over to private parties.

"Nilsson," Moretti continued, "is a great tragedienne on the stage—aristocratic, high-bred, and a fine singer. Carozzi-Zucchi came here with Biacchi, Bettini, Lorini and others, and showed herself to be a great dramatic prima donna. Her success was almost equal to that of Lagrange. When she was here she stopped at the Belvedere House, and I used to send her macaroni and other fancy Italian dishes. Her husband died in Italy while she was in America. She sang in such operas as 'Africana' and 'Don Sebastiano'—ah, we don't have such sopranos now. Our singers are what you call amateurs."

SCENES AT CASTLE GARDEN.

HOW IMMIGRANTS ARE RECEIVED.

EXAMINATION ON THE VESSEL—ADMITTED TO THE ROTUNDA—LABORS OF THE EMIGRATION DEPARTMENT—ADVANTAGES OF THE LABOR BUREAU SYSTEM.

Castle Garden frequently presents picturesque scenes of life and activity when the European steamers each bring from 400 to 500 immigrants. Not infrequently a thousand or more immigrants will land on one day, and then come bustle and confusion for the employés of the Emigration Department from early morn until late at night, Sundays and holidays included. In fact, it is said that the largest numbers are perversely certain to arrive on a holiday or on Sunday. The Emigrant Commissioners, who, contrary to the general belief, do not receive any remuneration for their services, seldom fail to visit Castle Garden daily, and the islands and hospitals under their charge once a week.

When the rotunda at Castle Garden is filled with immigrants of various nationalities, all speaking in their native tongues, and marvellously attired in garments of most fantastic shapes and of most remarkable fabrics and colors, they present a motley but interesting scene. They represent the strong, sturdy element of humanity, most of them being from the peasantry of their native countries. A group of Germans may be distinguished by the close-fitting caps, the long coats, and other peculiarities of dress. The Mennonite wears an alpaca shirt extensively figured, while the women are dressed in the picturesque peasant costume of Russia, and either barefooted or wear high leather boots. The Italian, the Englishman and the Irishman may as readily be distinguished, each by his dress. The hand language of the Mennonite, the Prussian and German is a curious combination of boxes filled with cooking utensils, dry hard bread and cheese; that of the Italian is a harp or a fiddle; while that of the Irishman, whatever it is, is generally tied up in a huge red handkerchief.

The landing depot at Castle Garden is divided into several bureaus, each with well-defined duties to perform, under the direction of the Board, and under the supervision of a special committee. The arrangements for landing the immigrants are complete, the rotunda of the building being divided by a railing into two parts, that on the east side being for the reception of all immigrants from French and German steamers, and that on the west side for all arriving by English steamers.

BOARDING THE STEAMERS.

Upon the arrival of each passenger vessel from a foreign port, it is boarded by officers selected by the Commissioners, who are required to make a thorough inspection as to its condition; to ascertain the extent and nature of any sickness that may have occurred on the voyage; the number of alien passengers; the number of births and deaths; and to receive and report to the Superintendent all complaints that may be made by immigrants. The same officers also take charge of the landing of the immigrants, and protect them from the approach of all "runners," unauthorized and evil disposed persons. After their baggage has been inspected by the Custom House officers they are then transferred from the steamer to a barge which conveys them to the landing depot at Castle Garden, where they are subjected, as they enter, to a thorough examination by the doctor and Colonel Coonan, chief clerk of the bureau, in order to ascertain if any sick person has escaped the supervision of quarantine, and also to discover those who may be likely to become a public charge to the State—such as the blind, the crippled, the paupers or lunatics. If any sick persons are found they are sent to the Emigrant Hospital, and all those likely to become a public charge are reported to the Mayor and the agents of the steamships upon which they arrived.

Upon the completion of the examination, the immigrants pass into the spacious rotunda, which is kept scrupulously clean, disinfected, well warmed, lighted and ventilated. It is large enough for 2,000 persons. Here they are assembled, and passing along in single file in front of the registry clerk's desk, the name, occupation, age, birthplace and destination of each, with other particulars, are recorded. Those desiring to take any railroad or steamboat route are freely given all necessary instructions by agents licensed by the Commissioners, and may select the route they prefer without danger of being misdirected, and at the lowest possible rates of fare. Their baggage is checked to its destination, and, with the immigrant, is conveyed, without extra charge, to the railroad or steamboat station. The names of all immigrants expected by friends and relatives are announced, and all answering to the call are transferred to such friends and relatives. Letters which have been received are also delivered and a receipt taken for them. Young girls unaccompanied by friends or relatives are taken under the special supervision of Colonel Coonan and Matron Esslinger until such time as they are ready to depart; and then they are accompanied to the station by one of the officers.

SCATTERING THROUGH THE CITY.

After the usual rules of registration have been complied with, regularly licensed boarding-house keepers are permitted to enter the rotunda and seek their customers. They are required to provide suitable board and lodging at such rates as are approved by the Board, a copy of which is to be presented to each customer. Upon any sustained complaint of violating the rules, by extortion or otherwise, the agent is liable to have his license suspended, had for a second offence to have it revoked. For the transportation of baggage to any part of New-York or adjacent cities, the Castle Garden Express Company has the exclusive privilege. Its arrangements and rates enable the Commissioners to obtain redress for the immigrants in case of loss or injury.

To spare the new-comers annoyance and even danger in leaving the building in search of necessities, facilities for supplying every immediate need have been provided. Restaurants furnish plain food at reasonable prices, as stated on the cards at the stands, and washrooms and cooking stoves are for the immigrants' use. Exchange brokers are on hand to change their foreign coin, notes or drafts into United States currency. To guard against any possible extortion, the brokers are duly licensed by the Commission, and required to keep posted up the current rates of exchange, and to give to each customer a written memorandum of each transaction. The depot is carefully guarded, both by day and night, and thus affords a safe and comfortable temporary lodging for those who expect to start for their destinations in a short time.

There are numerous petty offices and alleged labor bureaus in the neighborhood of Castle Garden, nominally for the purpose of getting workingmen and working women employment; but they are all partial in their operation, and many are fraudulent in their intent and practice. Many are plainly swindles in the hands of unprincipled men. The most successful adjunct to Castle Garden is the Labor Bureau, which, since June, 1875, has been maintained by the German and Irish Emigrant Societies of New-York. Having official recognition as a free labor market to employers and employés, it has in many ways been mutually beneficial. Employers are furnished in all parts of the United States with skilled laborers, mechanical and agricultural. Employers at a distance need only to state the kind of working-people they want and what wages they will give to be quickly supplied. The employer generally defrays the cost of transportation and deducts it from the wages. Destitute immigrants seeking employment through this agency are furnished with lodgings and meals, also food to maintain them while travelling. Applications have been received recently for fifty miners for the Buffalo Coal Company, McKean County, Penn., for silk ribbon weavers, warpers and winders, woollen and cotton weavers, and also iron moulders.

William Connolly is Superintendent of the Labor Bureau, and his annual report, presented yesterday, shows a considerable increase in the number obtaining employment through this bureau, the total being 16,533, of which 11,014 were men, and 5,519 women. Among the men 1,329 were employed as mechanics, and 9,685 as farm hands and common laborers. The women, as a general rule, were engaged as house servants.

WESTERN STATES SELECTED AS HOMES.

Illinois seems to be the first choice of most of the emigrants. From August, 1855, to January, 1879, one-tenth of those who arrived settled in that State. Ohio was formerly second choice, but now is not so popular. Iowa is next favored. Missouri, while ranking fourth in the twenty-four years, has also declined in favor. California was at one time in favor with the immigrants and now much is being done to encourage agriculturists and miners to go there. The emigration to Utah, owing to the peculiarities of the original settlers, has been spasmodic and mostly confined to Mormons. Kansas has offered many inducements to immigrants with success. There seems to be a spirit of rivalry between Nebraska and the Northwestern States to secure a desirable foreign element, and just now the State Board of Emigration of Wisconsin is doing much to secure immigrants.

The Commissioners are now endeavoring to secure national legislation for the protection of immigrants, and for the relief of the City and State of New-York from the expenses attendant upon the reception of immigrants, and to prevent the shipment of paupers and criminals to this country. Such a bill is now before Congress.

A VOICE FROM THE SAND LOTS.

EFFECTS OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION OF CALIFORNIA—THE CHINESE MUST GO—PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.

Dennis Kearney arrived in this city yesterday on his way to Washington to attend the National Workingmen's Conference January 8th. In conversation with a TRIBUNE reporter yesterday Mr. Kearney said:

"The Workingmen's party in California now numbers 50,000. Since the election for Governor it has increased largely. Kalloch took his seat on the first Monday in December as Mayor of San Francisco. He is going to make a first-class officer, and will make a general clearing-out of the old ways. At the time he was shot by Young I addressed 40,000 angry men, made desperate by having their leader shot down in cold blood. The power of Young's paper is gone."

"What changes will the new Constitution make?" was asked.

"Our new Constitution went into effect on the 1st of January, and the first change under it was ousting the Chinese. It compels all corporations to discharge their Chinese employés. There were 60,000 Chinamen employed in California last month and now their places are open to the workingmen. If employers refuse to discharge their Chinese workmen, our party will see that the law is enforced. The railroad corporation, which employs 10,000 Chinese, may 'kick' but they will be compelled to yield. You see, we have two of the three Commissioners who have charge of the Central Pacific. They are C. P. Beerchter and General Stoneman. We look for big things under that Constitution. Why, those who opposed it bitterly at the start are now favoring it. Of course the Chinese feel badly, but it can't be helped. They are nothing but machines, anyhow. But the Constitution don't suit us yet. We propose to tax the income of United States bonds, and we are going to amend it so that the limit of ownership of land after 1885 shall be 340 acres. It won't take over a year to get these changes made."

"What will be the tendency of your party in this year's campaign?"

"We shall go with the National Greenback party. The workingmen pay all the interest that is paid, and we must reduce this interest. We began to organize directly after the last campaign. We and the Democrats will probably nominate the same man. That message of Hayes about retiring the greenbacks stirred up the West. They believe the Republican party is run by Wall Street. They haven't any such business 'boom' there as you have. But yours is a farce, and it will prove so before long."

"What would be Grant's and Tilden's chances in California, if nominated this year?"

"The workingmen there don't go for Grant. He wouldn't poll one-third of the vote in the State. Tilden wouldn't get the ghost of a show. He is thought a fraud, and his defeat would date from his nomination. But he won't be nominated. The convention is going to repudiate New-York. Grant will probably be nominated, but he won't get elected. His reception in San Francisco was a complete farce. Office-holders, policemen and interested friends made up the procession. The accounts sent East were greatly exaggerated. Not a solitary cheer was heard on the streets. In regard to the next President I think the workingmen and Democrats will unite on a man who represents the Western ideas of money, and will elect him. Thurman would be the best man. Hendricks might do. One thing is certain; the Western people are going against you Eastern and New-England people, and before long you will find the West breaking off and forming a solid West. This will unite with the South, and then New-England will be made to submit. Then the first man who shakes the bloody-shirt flag will have it tied around his neck so tight that he will be choked to death."

ESTATES IN COURT.

CHARLES MORGAN'S LAST GIFTS.

ANTE-MORTEM GIFTS TO MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY TO BE CONTESTED.

Charles Morgan, who, at the time of his death in this city in May, 1879, had an estate estimated at $12,000,000, left a very brief will. Its provisions read: "All my property, real and personal, is hereby given and devised and bequeathed as provided by the laws of the State of New-York in cases of intestacy." Singularly enough, after the will had been admitted to probate a contest was begun by some of the grandchildren, the children of a deceased son. It was found that a few days before the will was made in April, 1879, Mr. Morgan had distributed about $3,000,000 of his stock in Morgan's Louisiana and Texas Railroad and Steamship Company between his wife, two of his daughters, two sons-in-law and a grandson, to the prejudice of the other children and grandchildren. The contest was begun for the purpose of proving that Mr. Morgan, who was eighty-four years old at the time of his death, was weak-minded and easily influenced and incompetent to make either the gifts or the will. It was claimed that the relatives who immediately surrounded him at the time had unduly persuaded him to make these gifts in their favor. It was finally concluded, however, that as these claims would eventually have to be prosecuted in the Supreme Court, the expense of a litigation in the Surrogate's Court ought to be avoided. A stipulation, therefore, was obtained from the proponents that the admission of the will to probate should not prejudice any rights of the contestants in the other proceeding. Yesterday John E. Parsons and Charles W. Dayton, representing the contestants, appeared before the Surrogate at the time for the adjourned hearing, and formally withdrew the objections to probate. Joseph H. Choate appeared on behalf of the proprietors.

The persons who were the contestants requested the widow as executrix, to begin an equity action in the Supreme Court to have the gifts made before the will set aside. She refused, but the action is to be begun by them, the widow to be a defendant. A complaint has been drawn, and the suit will be begun at once.

MRS. LEWIS'S CAREER.

SOME EVENTS IN HER LIFE RELATED BY JOHN E. DOS PASSOS, THE LAWYER.

Another hearing in the contest over the will of Joseph L. Lewis, of Hoboken, who left $1,000,000 toward the payment of the United States debt, was held yesterday afternoon at the office of Master in Chancery See, of Jersey City. John E. Dos Passos, a lawyer of this city, was sworn and testified as follows:

From 1870 to 1876 my office was at No. 11 Wall-st., New-York City. I identify Mrs. Lewis, the alleged widow, as the woman whom I met in the Winter of 1876-'77 at my office. She then claimed to be the widow of Joseph Hammond. In November, 1876, George H. Read, a Paymaster in the United States Navy, and who was then attached to the steamer Swatara, came to my office, and said he had been informed that he was to be subpœnaed as a witness in the suit for divorce instituted by Joseph Hammond against his wife. He consulted me as to what action he should take. He showed me a letter addressed to "Dear Cardinal," and signed "J. H." It was to the effect that the writer was in great trouble and must see Mr. Read at once. Mr. Read first met the woman in Washington, D. C., and subsequently met her frequently in New-York. At my request, as his lawyer, Mr. Read caused the woman to visit my office. She told us that her husband had instituted a suit for divorce from her on the ground that she had been intimate with Mr. Read. She was greatly worried over the matter for fear publicity should be given to the case, and said she wanted to save her reputation as she had a child eight years of age living in the West. My suspicions were aroused and I told Mr. Read I thought the woman was engaged in some blackmailing operation. When Mrs. Hammond or Mrs. Lewis called at my office on November 15, 1876, I asked her to write a letter for me denying that she had been intimate with Mr. Read. She wrote one, stating that all charges of an improper intimacy were "absolutely and wholly false, unfounded, and they must have originated in furtherance of some conspiracy or design to defame my character and obtain from me some property." This letter was signed "Jennie Hammond."

Mr. Dos Passos produced the letter and also the summons and bill of complaint filed by Mr. Hammond's counsel in the New-York Supreme Court. He also produced several letters from the woman to Mr. Read. In one of them she requested him not to show the denial, which she wrote at the request of Mr. Dos Passos. At her request, Mr. Read visited her counsel's office, accompanied by Mr. Dos Passos. At this interview the latter became confident that it was a pure case of blackmail, and he advised Mr. Read not to have anything to do with the woman. In another letter, the woman said she was threatened with another suit, and that, although she wished to avoid making a confession she would be obliged to make it as she had no money with which to defend herself. On the same day the divorce suit was discontinued and a copy of a complaint alleged to have been made by Mr. Hammond in a civil suit to recover $10,000 damages from Mr. Read for breaking up his home, betraying his wife, etc., was served upon Mr. Read. On January 22, 1877, Mr. Read put in an answer in which he refused to pay any more attention to the case. January 15, 1877, Mrs. Hammond sent a letter to Mr. Read, in which she stated that she had made a full confession, so as to save herself, and that she would leave New-York forever. Mr. Dos Passos testified that as Mrs. Hammond said detectives in the employ of her husband were watching her, he allowed her to leave his office by a private door leading to New-st. A letter was also shown that Mrs. Hammond had sent to a man named Stanton. Mr. Dos Passos positively identified the woman who claims to be the widow of Lewis as the woman whom he knew as Mrs. Hammond, and who wrote the letters he produced.

IMPROVED TENEMENT HOUSES.

The "Improved Dwellings Association" is the name of a company made up of wealthy citizens, organized with a capital of $500,000, for the purpose of erecting improved tenement houses for the poorer classes of the city. The nine men who form the association are D. W. James, S. D. Babcock, R. T. Auchmuty, H. E. Pellew, C. Vanderbilt, W. Bayard Cutting, J. W. Pinchot, J. T. Metcalf and Bowie Dash. James Gallatin is the secretary. They have just made the purchase of twenty-one lots bounded by First-ave., Seventy-first and Seventy-second-sts. It is vacant property near the river, with excellent drainage facilities and good air. The building to be first constructed will be built upon a square of sixteen lots, and it is expected that it will be finished within a year. Efforts will be made to erect tenements upon the most improved plans, which yet can be rented at from $8 to $12 per month for each set of apartments. The land was purchased from the Colford Jones estate. The association are looking for some suitable place down town where they can put up similiar buildings.

INTRIGUES OF THE ALDERMEN.

The Board of Aldermen did not hold a session yesterday, owing to the absence of a quorum. The only persons present were President Mott and the Anti-Tammany Aldermen. This was considered a verification of the rumor that an attempt would be made to complete a "deal" for the confirmation of Police Justice Murray, for Police Justice, and Thomas H. McAvoy for Superintendent of Buildings. A caucus was held in a Bowery hotel at 9 a. m. yesterday morning at which several Aldermen were present, and it is said that eleven votes were secured for Mr. Murray. The inability to secure the twelfth vote, however, caused the scheme to fail, and therefore a quorum was not present at the meeting of the Board. An effort was made later in the day to secure the signatures of twelve members to call a special meeting of the Board to-morrow, but it was not successful. It is probable that the old Board will not meet again.

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE.

ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

PROFESSOR RICHARD OWEN GIVES SOME INTERESTING FACTS.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: In your Semi-Weekly issue of November 28, a correspondent, signing himself Q. R. S., asks for objective facts regarding answers to prayer. At the same time he seems to intimate that the answers must show a change of the natural laws, when the Divine Person, if ever, gives assistance "as an earthly father helps his child."

I reply: No intelligent child will ask his earthly father to violate the laws of the land; neither will an intelligent Christian ask his Heavenly Father to reverse or set aside the laws of the universe. Q. R. S. will perhaps cite me to Joshua, who prayed that the sun might stand still. I suggest in response that the necessary effect of daylight to continue the fight may have been produced by various causes in accordance with law, and provided for this occasion by omniscience, which foresaw, and omnipotence, which provided the desired means. Joshua, not being an astronomer, may not have known that his prayer, if granted literally, would disturb the harmony of the planetary worlds.

But if the desire of Q. R. S. is really to arrive at useful truths in this respect, I can give him, from my own experience, three cases, at least, in which the result, although delayed, seems a direct answer to prayer, and yet wholly objective.

A person not related to me had for several years been the victim of intemperance. I became strongly interested in his welfare and commenced a systematic appeal, night and morning, to the Great Physician for the reform of my friend. I, however, neither directly nor indirectly, then nor since, intimated to him that I was praying for him, nor did I ever offer him one word of advice or warning. Soon after, I spent seven months in travelling, and went as far as Egypt and the Holy Land. On my return, at the expiration of about a year from the time I commenced praying for him, I learned that he had reformed. That was ten years since, and the reform still holds good.

The other two cases can be embraced in one description: On parting from two of my church associates, both in bad health, one over seventy years of age and the other not much younger, they asked me to pray for them.

I have never seen either of them since, nor had any communication from them, until recently I had a letter from a relative of the younger, stating that the older was quite well for a person of that age, and the younger very much better. My prayer each night and morning had been for their restoration to health. In all these cases there was no contravention of the laws of nature; but in the first there was a reformation, which is very difficult, and in the two others there was restoration to health at an advanced age after a long prevalence of chronic disease.

In conclusion, as I have long been a student of natural science, I suggest that there often seems to me some analogy between the physical and the psychical laws. If it be, for instance, reverently compare what is called conversion, or the drawing of a soul toward its Maker, with the attraction exercised by the earth on magnetic needles. A true and delicate magnetic needle may fail to point to the magnetic pole, if under the influence of iron or magnets in proximity to it. Let any intelligent operator remove these perturbing causes and the needle is at once righted to its true magnetic meridian.

So it appears to me to be with the human magnet, whose psychical attraction to the great Central Magnet of the Universe, our Creator, has been distributed by various unfavorable associations. A friend, strongly interested, intercedes. The Omnipotent Creator can surely answer that prayer without contravening any of His own laws, and by the removal of the perturbing temptations and influences, the erring human magnet is drawn toward its true home and is attracted to its great First Cause.

If even only subjectively we are strengthened by presenting our wants and wishes at the throne of the Most High, why should Q. R. S. seek to destroy that source of comfort and power? RICHARD OWEN.

New-Harmony, Ind., Dec. 24, 1879.

AN EXAMPLE FOR MAINE.

A CASE WHICH CAME UP IN NEW-JERSEY AT THE LATE ELECTION.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: In the late election in New-Jersey, in the 1st Assembly District of Mercer County, something took place similar to that which has occurred in Maine. The candidates for the State Assembly were Bayard Stockton, Democrat, and Charles S. Robinson, Republican. The returns made by the judges of election in one of the precincts, Eastern Hopewell, two of which judges were Democrats and one was Republican, showed in words written out at full length that the total number of votes polled was 312. These returns also stated that Stockton received 237 and Robinson 99. Here was a discrepancy and a manifest error somewhere. When the Board of Canvassers met at Trenton, as provided by law, objection was accordingly made to the reception of these returns. Two of the judges of election in the precinct, one of them a Democrat, were present, and both positively affirmed that their recollection was clear that the statement as to the number of votes polled, 312, was correct. As the poll-book, tally-sheet and ballots were locked up under seal in the County Clerk's office, and could only be opened by the canvassers on an order obtained from a Judge of the Supreme Court, no appeal could be conveniently made to them. The Canvassing Board, therefore, threw out the returns; by a vote of fifteen to thirteen they also gave the certificate of election to Mr. Robinson. It now goes before the Legislature for decision. There will, however, be no contest, as it has since been discovered where the mistake was made, which, being rectified, will give the seat to whom it has been assigned by the Canvassing Board.

While the nature of the mistake was undiscovered it was still uncertain, however, to whom the certificate legally belonged, and Mr. Robinson issued in his paper, *The Princeton Review*, the following card, which has secured for him the esteem of all right-minded men in both parties:

I thank my friends throughout the district for their enthusiastic support during the election, and congratulate them upon the Republican successes in New-Jersey. In regard to myself, I will not retain the position for which I have received the certificate of election unless I am certain that the votes polled elected me; and I am ready to unite in any effort to ascertain the exact truth, if possible before the meeting of the Legislature, so that if Mr. Stockton should be found entitled to the seat, he may secure it without delay. In fact, until such examination is made, I consider the result undecided. I should not have contested Mr. Stockton's right before the Canvassing Board, unless I had been assured that I certainly was legally elected, and that an error had been made, giving him 24 or 28 votes more than he was entitled to in Hopewell. I will countenance no effort to secure or retain the seat upon any mere informality or technicality. If elected, I will take it—no otherwise.

If, now, those who have been counted into the coming legislative bodies of Maine on mere technical grounds, it being suspected or absolutely known that they have no just right to seats, will manifest the spirit of the above card, it will not only be honorable in them, but may secure an easy solution of a question which threatens most serious consequences.

WILLIAM C. ULYAT.

Princeton, N. J., Dec. 26, 1879.

ANOTHER REASON FOR POOR BUTTER.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: There are always two sides to every story; and on the butter question only one side is generally presented, and that is how and why farmers should make good butter, especially. Few people, even in good circumstances, are willing to pay a fair price for good freshly made butter, even in the Summer-time, and much less in Winter. The very rich buy a few pats daily or weekly of some very expensive gilt-edged make, and destroy their stomachs by allowing large quantities of a very poor quality to be cooked in their food. It would be much wiser in them to buy a really good article for a price between these two kinds and use it for all purposes. Good butter cannot be made, during the Winter, fresh every week, and sold for less than 40 to 50 cents a pound. The creameries can barely afford to furnish it at 40 cents; and the individual maker, whose processes are cleanly from the start, and whose butter, if rightly made, should have a better flavor than that of the creameries, is not paid for his outlay and trouble unless he receives 50 cents a pound. There enter into the manufacture of good butter a great many factors, such as cows adapted to the purpose, proper pasture in Summer, good early cut hay and grain in Winter, the strictest attention to cleanliness in the care of the cows and stables, milking, setting, straining, churning and putting into form; and those people who are fond of good butter and yet haggle about a few cents a pound in the price would hesitate no longer if they could compare the process on most farms with those connected with very few where the strictest attention is paid day in and day out to all the details of the business. To give the true flavor to butter, even from the milk of Jersey cows, the cream should be as spotless as the reputation of Cæsar's or any other man's wife, and the butter-maker, male or female, must know the business so as to gather up the real soul of the cream before it is soured or dissipated, and then not churn or wash it away.

Butter-making at the best is a high art, and it cannot be found on every farm, any more than the best pictures are found in every studio; and no amount of invention of machinery or ingenious processes can ever prove more than aids to good cows and sweet feed, cleanliness from the start and all through, and strict attention to detail. For these things those who want good butter must pay. When the murmuring citizen has rectified the milk business and rotten that into a healthy state, he may turn his attention to butter, and discover that if pure milk is worth 8 to 10 cents a quart, a pound of good, clean, new-made butter requiring from twelve to twenty quarts of milk to make it is worth at least 50 cents. A BUTTER MAKER.

Berkshire County, Mass., Dec. 30, 1879.

EXPLAINING THE NEGRO EXODUS.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: In your issue of December 23 I read the reasons given by C. A. Scott for the exodus of the negroes of North Carolina. From ten years' observation, I think the whole trouble arises from a surplus of labor and lack of capital to employ it. For the first six years of my residence in this county it was the same here. Many left, and others would have done so if they could have got away; and they had reason to go, for many were badly treated by their employers, and in politics they were cheated. But within the last four years a railroad running into the interior of the county has opened up a large lumber interest. The company has employed several hundred hands, paid liberal wages and paid them promptly. Several smaller enterprises have been started. The result has been that all our surplus labor has been employed and laborers have been better treated by their employers; and holding the balance of power in politics, both parties in the late contest courted them for their influence and votes, and I have no doubt will continue to treat them well so long as they want their labor and political influence. At this time you can hardly find a more contented and well-to-do set of unskilled laborers in the country. As to the negroes leaving other parts of the South, I have no doubt they will continue to do so for a long time, since capital is not likely to flow into a neighborhood or State where men propose to dictate to which party a man must belong in order to be respectable. Men of capital usually like to do their own thinking. B. B. DUMVILLE, P. M.

Suffolk, Va., Dec. 28, 1879.

THE "CONTENTMENT" OF THE NEGROES.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: I shall never forget a scene I witnessed a number of years ago. It was a day when all nature seemed attuned to peace and tenderness; the blue sky, the outspreading china trees, with their rich clusters of lilac blossoms; the myriads of emblazoned humming-birds darting from branch to branch; the erect pecan trees laden with their fruit; the broad, open prairie stretching far away; on the left, the magnolia glade where the gay plumaged red-birds were sporting; the picturesque clumps of water-oaks with their glossy, dark green leaves; and, all alone by itself a tall lightning-scathed cypress, like a solitary mourner with its mourning robes of Spanish moss trailing upon the ground—that was the picture of enchanting beauty spread out before me.

In the foreground, under one of the china trees stood a block, and on that block an old woman sixty-five years of age: she was sold at auction; she was nearly white. Her purchaser was very black, the village blacksmith. After the sale, when the crowd had dispersed, she walked slowly across the street to the open doorway where we were seated, and a Southern woman began to expatiate very volubly upon the happiness in store for her in having "so kind a master as Joe." Marcelline did not reply; but in her eyes as she lifted them to mine was that distinctively wistful look I have never seen anywhere except in the eyes of a slave turned toward a person "from the North"—a mute beseechement for sympathy; I can never forget that scene.

Neither have I forgotten waking long after midnight and hearing the negroes pounding corn for the corn-bread of the morning's breakfast; nor have I forgotten the owner of those slaves—the excessively suave and courteous French gentleman, whose chivalrous manner toward "the fair sex" did not prevent him from chaining a negro woman to the ground and beating her till her bowels gushed out; nor, just before my rather precipitate departure from the beautiful Opelousas country, how the "boy" Sam, a very intelligent young man, besought me to take him North. And when the chances of impending war forced me to eat my last meal in what was then very rapidly developing into rebeldom with a company of Confederate soldiers, breathing red-hot venom against the Government, to whom had been accorded a public dinner, where the toasts to "Jeff" Davis and Beauregard were fast and furious, and the maudlin speeches about "firesides," and "graves," and "altars," and "homes" still more fast and furious; and when, three days after the terrible riot in St. Louis, I passed through that city and found the citizens all aflame with that event, and at last reached home, and once more drew a free breath, I could not forget the many pictures I had seen of the "contentment" of the slaves.

In these latter days we hear again of the "contentment" of the negroes; their contentment is like the tranquillity of France under Louis Napoleon. How would the great heart of Lincoln be pained if he could see this "contentment." He would ask, "Is this the freedom that I gave them?" MARY L. GOTT.

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