Amusements To-Night.

ACADEMY OF MUSIC—2—Symphony Rehearsal. 8—"Crispino e la Comara."
ASSOCIATION HALL—8—Matthew Arnold.
BIJOU OPERA HOUSE—8—"Orpheus and Eurydice."
CASINO—8—"The Beggar Student."
DALY'S THEATRE—8—"Seven-Twenty-Eight."
GRAND OPERA HOUSE—8—"Tourists."
HAVERLY'S COMEDY THEATRE—8—"La Jolie Parfumeuse."
MADISON SQUARE THEATRE—8:30—"Rajah."
NEW PARK THEATRE—8—"Passion's Slave."
NIBLO'S GARDEN—8—"The Pavements of Paris."
STAR THEATRE—8—"Hamlet."
THALIA THEATRE—8—"Die Afrikanerinnen."
THEATRE COMIQUE—2 and 8—"Cordelia's Aspirations."
UNION SQUARE THEATRE—8—"Storm Beaten."
WALLACK'S THEATRE—8—"Old Heads and Young Hearts."
3D AVENUE THEATRE—8—"Three of a Kind."
5TH AVENUE THEATRE—8—"The Glass of Fashion."
14TH STREET THEATRE—8—"In Paradise."

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Business Notices.

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New-York Daily Tribune.

FOUNDED BY HORACE GREELEY.

NEW-YORK, FRIDAY, JAN. 4.

THE NEWS THIS MORNING.

FOREIGN.—Three victims of the disaster on the Grand Trunk Railway near Toronto died yesterday. ==== A French fanatic who attempted to kill M. Ferry was sentenced. ==== The English Cabinet considered the programme of the Government for the coming session of Parliament. ==== Mr. Lowell has accepted an invitation to lecture at St. Andrew's University. ==== Two men have been arrested in St. Petersburg for the murder of Colonel Sudsikin.

DOMESTIC.—The annual report of the Adjutant-General of New-York has been submitted. ==== Before the Proteus Board of Inquiry yesterday argument was made for Garlington and General Hazen read a paper in self-justification. ==== Captain Pike and Mate Norman gave advice respecting Greely's relief. ==== A serious wreck occurred on the Annapolis and Elk Ridge Railroad. ==== A large cot on warehouse in Augusta, Ga., was burned yesterday. ==== Miss Frances Willard is planning a prohibition petition, with a million signatures, to the coming Presidential conventions. ==== The Postmaster-General has ruled that money cannot be retained for money-order clerk hire, by postmasters. ==== Two men were poisoned by beer at Ithaca. ==== At Brainerd, Dakota, yesterday, the mercury was 30° below zero. ==== The ice and wind wrought great havoc at Buffalo. ==== E. H. Kobbe, who forged drafts of Sperry & Barnes of this city for over $100,000, has been caught in Chicago.

CITY AND SUBURBAN.—The Charity Ball took place last night at the Metropolitan Opera House. ==== Matthew Arnold lectured in Brooklyn on "Emerson." ==== The Aqueduct Commissioners gave a final hearing in regard to the size of the aqueduct. ==== Martin and Graves, the murderers, were hanged in Newark. ==== Dr. John R. Paxton lectured on "Battle and Bivouac." ==== There was a fierce glove-fight at Clarendon Hall. ==== The complaint against the opening of the Art Loan Exhibition on Sunday was dismissed. ==== Gold value of the legal-tender silver dollar (412½ grains), 85.51 cents. ==== Stocks were dull but feverish; early advances were followed by declines, and the closing was unsettled at partial recoveries.

THE WEATHER.—TRIBUNE local observations indicate clear or fair and slightly warmer weather. Temperature yesterday: Highest, 29°; lowest, 19°; average, 24¾°.

The Grand Trunk Railway Company is plainly having a run of ill-luck. Close upon the heels of the fatal collision of Wednesday, near Toronto, came two more accidents on the company's line yesterday: one was at Glencove switch, where an engine and baggage-car were thrown from the track by a broken switch; the other was a collision between freight trains, near Stevensville. Several persons were seriously hurt. If the company would change some of its employes perhaps it would have a change in luck.

The main result of the changes which were announced in the Health Department yesterday, will be to destroy the former simplicity of the Sanitary Bureau, complicate the routine work, and provide easy duties for the heads of divisions, who draw the largest salaries. It is easy to see why larger quarters are now demanded. An officer who is paid $3,000 a year, and has the privilege of making reports directly to the Board of Health, can hardly be expected to be satisfied with a desk in the office of the Sanitary Superintendent. So much dignity requires a separate room.

The main points of Adjutant-General Farnsworth's report on the condition of the State militia were referred to in the Governor's recent message. Several important suggestions are made, however, which deserve notice. One of these is that some arrangement be made by which the National Guardsmen shall be trained in sea-coast defence. It ought to be possible to bring this about, especially for the divisions in and near this city. The necessary drill would be a pleasant variety for the men. Another suggestion is that the War Department shall detail a United States light battery to attend the Camp of Instruction, that the civilian soldiers may receive the best possible example of drill in this branch of the service. The presence of such a battery in the Camp would doubtless add to the efficiency of the instruction given there. Moreover, anything which brings the State militia and the soldiers of the regular Army in contact is a wise move.

The more evidence is taken at the Proteus Court of Inquiry in regard to the so-called "supplementary instructions" to Lieutenant Garlington, the more complicated does the matter become. It is a comedy of errors—if indeed it does not prove to be a tragedy for Greely. As it now stands, all the officers who had anything to do with the unlucky paper, from General Hazen, Secretary Chandler and Admiral Walker down, tell different stories about it. These are all honorable men; and if they were not the amazing contradictions they utter would be proof enough that they were telling the exact truth so far as they are able. No made-up story could possibly be so bungling. It will be interesting to see what finding the Court of Inquiry reaches on this point. Meanwhile, it is safe to say, better evidence could not be asked for to show that expeditions like this one now under examination ought to be entirely managed by one department.

That veteran editor, General James Watson Webb, takes almost as much interest now in the great questions of the day as he did years ago in the noonday of life; and it will be seen by the report of a talk with him on "Protection," which is printed on another page of THE TRIBUNE, that he is still able to express his opinion as vigorously as of yore. General Webb rejoices to have the issue between Free Trade and Protection forced upon the people of the United States. He considers Protection absolutely necessary for the prosperity and welfare of the country, holding that our former experiments in low duties have always resulted in checking the Nation's growth and in impoverishing the people. Moreover, he believes that the mass of the people take the same view of our policy, and that, for that reason, the Free Trade party in the contest of 1884 is doomed to defeat. General Webb does not overlook the share which the Solid South has had in forcing the Free Trade issue; and he evidently thinks that in settling it next fall the people of the North will settle the Solid South, too.

WHO THE BOSSES ARE.

The Sun says that "Warner Miller is now the boss of New-York." Other newspapers over the country are indulging in the same sort of talk, just because a Herkimer County man has been elected Speaker of the Assembly. There are no bosses in the Republican party of this State now. Some have been retired. Others have resigned. The fact that Mr. Miller's neighbor has been elected Speaker does not make the Senator a boss. Probably Mr. Miller was glad Mr. Sheard was elected. Many of the men who labored for this result were close friends of both. But nobody has been able to show that Senator Miller exerted any undue influence in Mr. Sheard's behalf, or indeed that he took any personal part in the contest. The only definite story on this head was that he had asked the Republican Congressmen to write to the Republican Asssemblymen in their districts in behalf of Sheard, and this was promptly denied by the Congressmen themselves. The Senator may have done quietly what he could for Mr. Sheard, but it could hardly have been in the way of "bossing." A "boss" usually works by means of patronage, and the amount of patronage which a Senator can use, as Senators have sometimes used it, has been a good deal reduced, both by the Civil Service law and the general tendency of public opinion.

Senator Miller has acquired a position of influence in the Republican party, which THE TRIBUNE has been glad to recognize because the manner in which it was obtained shows the change in the times. Senator Miller's methods have always been the opposite of those of the boss. One incident, very little known, is characteristic of the man. He refused to be a candidate for the Legislature after the adoption of the new oath requiring members to swear that they have not "directly or indirectly paid, "offered or promised to pay, contributed, or "offered or promised to contribute, any money "or other valuable thing as a consideration or "reward for the giving or withholding a vote," and "had not made any promise to influence "the giving or withholding of any such vote." Mr. Miller took the ground, but without ostentation, that he could not conscientiously take this oath after having paid a campaign assessment, and so declined to run again. Many good men have differed from him, as they have proved by freely taking the oath, but the incident showed a scrupulousness which has not always been associated with the idea of a boss. Last fall the Senator demonstrated how different his methods were from those of a boss by proposing that the entire system of party machinery be remodelled so as to make it more popular and more amenable to the will of the masses of the party.

In one sense the Republican party is made up of bosses. Since the unit rule was broken, district representation adopted and the party in this city reorganized, every Republican is his own boss.

CAPTAIN TYSON'S PLAN.

The joint military and naval board appointed to devise a scheme for the relief of the Greely Colony is receiving many practical suggestions. The most sensible plan is that outlined by Captain Tyson, the companion of Captain Hall. He recommends the selection of a small steamer which can reach Cape York and Littleton Island early in July. If Greely be not found at either place, the steamer will then cross Smith Sound and push on to the edge of the ice. Two whaleboats, each manned by six men, will be drawn across the ice barrier to the "land water," through which they can make their way to Lady Franklin Sound. Captain Tyson is confident that the voyage in the open boats from Cape Isabella or Cape Sabine to the signal station at Discovery Harbor can be made in twelve or fifteen days. The return of the boats may be expected in twenty-five or thirty days. Captain Tyson sees no reason for sending a naval tender with the relief ship, which he thinks will be safe so long as it does not enter the ice in Smith Sound. In this respect his judgment is probably at fault. A vessel cannot reach Littleton Island by the first week of July without running through a sea filled with icebergs and floes. Melville Bay is always a terror to Arctic navigators, and from Cape York to Littleton Island the coast is dangerous. There ought to be two ships, so that if one of them be disabled or wrecked, the other will be available for the purposes of the expedition. It is not desirable, however, to have the second ship a naval vessel like the Yantic.

With the single exception noted, Captain Tyson's plan seems to us to meet the requirements of navigation in the upper waters of Smith Sound and the urgent necessities of the case. If the colonists are not found at Littleton Island or Cape York, there will be no time to spare. The chance of a break in the ice barrier obstructing Smith Sound is not one for which the relief expedition can afford to wait. If the whale-boats are sent forward by the middle of July, the men at Fort Conger can be rescued and brought back to Cape Sabine by the middle of August, whether the ice breaks up or not. The superiority of whale-boats for open-boat navigation in Arctic waters cannot be questioned. It is also an easy matter to convert them into sledges by the use of cradles with runners, which can ordinarily be towed behind. The experience of all explorers in that quarter warrants the belief that while sledging is a most arduous and hazardous undertaking in the spring and autumn, Smith Sound beyond the ice barrier, and Kennedy Channel and Hall Basin are frequently navigable during portions of July and August. The chances are largely in favor of open water on the west shore above Cape Hawks, and in any emergencies that may arise the open boats can be drawn on runners.

The plan is an admirable one and encourages us to believe that an intelligent effort will be made to rescue Greely. The execution of this or any other scheme that may be devised ought to devolve exclusively upon naval officers. It is neither necessary nor expedient that army officers should take part in this expedition. It is natural for Lieutenant Garlington to desire to retrieve his reputation, and for army officials to take an active interest in measures for the relief of the Arctic military garrison. But this is unmistakably a sailor's errand, and the Navy Department should have exclusive charge of the expedition and be held responsible for its success or failure.

THE BUSINESS SITUATION.

It has been generally supposed that the year 1883 has been one of almost unmixed disaster. But the statistical records given with some detail on another page show that there has been neither stagnation nor panic; that the volume of trade has been nearly as large as in any previous year; that a foreign commerce scarcely ever exceeded in magnitude has been attended with very favorable results to this country; that the railroads have done more business and realized larger earnings than ever before; that the payments through clearing houses outside of New-York exceeded $14,042,000,000, an aggregate never reached before, though it might have been slightly exceeded in 1881 had all the clearing houses now in existence been in operation then; that the number of failures was swelled by the collapse of many unimportant concerns, and the aggregate of liabilities by the fall of a few great speculators, but the average of liabilities for other failures was unusually small; and that the speculative dealings in some products were enormous—of oil, for instance, more than a hundred times the entire stock in the world having been sold at three cities during one year.

It cannot be said that these facts justify a gloomy view of the industrial and commercial situation. Labor must have been generally well employed, or the interchange of products could not have continued on so vast a scale. In fact a principal cause of industrial disorder has been the refusal of working people to bear a share of the sacrifices which the fall in prices involved. With cheaper food and clothing, the inevitable reduction in wages which they have resisted unwisely and in vain will leave them at least as well off as they were in 1881 or 1882. The profits of manufacturers and dealers, and the dividends of corporations, have been seriously reduced, but there is a wide difference between slender profits and ruin. The country has to wait, with some endurance and patience, for the readjustment of industries and branches of trade to changed conditions, but there is nothing to indicate that a recovery of business health need be long delayed.

The operations of the Government, however, tend to retard recovery, and constitute a constant menace. One year ago, and yesterday, the cash held by the Treasury and the amount of certificates outstanding were as follows:

	Jan. 2, 1883.	Jan. 1, 1884.
Gold	$171,504,568	$218,361,736
Silver dollars and bullion	98,485,045	123,800,576
Cash	$269,989,613	$342,162,312
Certificates, gold	39,514,810	62,982,180
" silver	68,443,660	95,299,241
" legal-tender	9,575,000	14,335,000
Total	$117,533,470	$173,616,421

Legal-tenders in the Treasury are not included as cash, both because they are really mere evidences of debt redeemed, and because the obligations of the Treasury to redeem bank notes have been greatly increased. The Treasury has put into circulation during the year $56,000,000 more paper money, and has taken in $47,000,000 more gold, but its demand obligations have enlarged. The increase in silver held by the Treasury, about $25,000,000, is merely a source of peril. The Government has paid about $110,000,000 of the public debt during the past year, but it has thereby caused a sharp contraction of the bank circulation, with consequences which Members of Congress seem quite too slow to perceive. Finally, the organization of the new House is justly regarded as evidence that dangerous legislation will be attempted, and there are many who have not full confidence that the Senate and the President will prevent mischief. In short, the operations and the menaces of Government are the chief causes of disheartenment. Left to itself, the business and industry of the country would probably revive without great delay.

MR. SEYMOUR ON THE CANALS.

Silas Seymour, the retiring State Engineer, in his annual report to the Legislature, takes a decidedly gloomy view of the condition and prospects of the canals. He says that they have deteriorated during the year, and he estimates that it would take something over $3,500,000 to put them in complete repair. But that is not the worst of it. He has lost faith in the canal system. As the result of his observations he expresses the opinion that "the canals as a successful and necessary means of transport have outlived their usefulness."

A strange difference of opinion has been developed of late in regard to the real condition of the canals. During the fall a large number of canal-boat captains published affidavits setting forth that the canals were in a wretched condition—were, in fact, barely navigable. An attempt was made to dispose of these affidavits by characterizing them as "campaign lies"; and a number of counter statements were produced from responsible parties to the effect that the canals were in fairly good if not in first-rate order. Now comes the State Engineer backing up the captains; while, on the other hand, we find the Governor, in his annual message, asserting "that the banks, prisms and structure [of the canals] are now in sufficiently good condition for present purposes I have no doubt." In these circumstances perhaps the best thing the perplexed public can do is to wait and see what the Superintendent of Public Works has to say on the controverted point and then strike an average.

Mr. Seymour has reached the conclusion that the free canal policy is a failure. The Governor, on the contrary, argues in his message that it is a success. Both of them would do well to suspend ultimate judgment at least until the policy has had a full and fair trial. And it will be time enough after such a trial to discuss the question whether the canals must go.

THE FREETHINKERS' CONVENTION.

The Freethinkers, so called, have been holding another convention. We speak of them in this qualified manner because we have yet to be convinced that they enjoy any greater freedom as thinkers than those who assume no such title. Your average Presbyterian or Methodist, for all that appears to the contrary, is as free a thinker as your professional Freethinker. Too much that is complacently called freethinking by the men and women that indulge in it is simply loose thinking, or odd thinking, or reckless thinking, or vague thinking. It certainly differs from the common run of thinking, but not because of its greater freedom.

The resolutions that were adopted by this latest Freethinkers' convention can scarcely be regarded as a contribution to that body of thought that the world will not willingly let die. It was resolved, "first, by a free discussion, to place before the American people the "natural, sacred and inalienable right of all men "to exercise freedom of speech." The formal assertion of this inalienable right, in this age of the world, in this country, is a notable tribute to The Superfluous. In adopting such a resolution the Freethinkers recall the Katydid to which Dr. Holmes addressed the lines:

> Thou sayest an undisputed thing
> In such a solemn way.

Another of the resolutions favors the taxation of church property. It begins: "We desire to "enlighten the consciences of our church "friends so that they will see the injustice of "exempting ecclesiastical property from taxation." The inference to be drawn from these words is that those who are in favor of such exemption are so unfortunate as to possess unenlightened consciences. To be a Freethinker is to have an enlightened conscience; not to be a Freethinker is to need one. Can it be that freethinking and dogmatism are convertible terms? The question of taxing churches is by no means a new one. It comes up periodically in the Legislatures and a discussion of its merits follows in the newspapers. There is much to be said on both sides of it, but it is not to be said on either side that people of the opposing view have defective consciences. In case Freethinkers are really enamored of freedom, they ought not to be found casting imputations upon the consciences of people who are free enough not to be their kind of Freethinkers.

Another resolution states that the Freethinkers aim "by criticism and argument, to "weaken the confidence of our fellow-citizens "in the Bible as purely an inspired revelation "from Heaven." This is where the real simon pure freethinking comes in. Freethinking as apprehended by the public is conditioned primarily upon a disbelief in the inspiration of the Scriptures. The man that renounces the Bible as a divine revelation is free. The man who holds fast to it is in bonds. The attempt "to weaken the confidence of our fellow-citizens" in this particular has been going on these many years. By all means, however, let the Freethinkers continue to advance their criticism and argument. The exercise seems to interest them and it certainly does not seem to hurt whatever is vital in the Christian Church.

A "STATE PAPER."

An effort is to be made this winter to induce the Legislature to repeal the act of 1843 creating a "State Paper," and all acts requiring the publication of legal notices and reports of incorporated companies in the State Paper. Those who ask for the repeal—and the movement seems to be strong all through the interior—argue that such notices and reports instead of appearing in the State Paper, at Albany, should be published in the newspapers of the counties wherein the notices may originate or the companies have their business offices, the details to be arranged by the Boards of Supervisors.

Inquiries instituted by THE TRIBUNE indicate that the repeal will encounter some opposition from the legal profession. The majority of the lawyers with whom our reporters have conversed say that their convenience will be promoted by the retention of the present system of publication. They believe it would not be wise to scatter these notices and reports so that one would have to consult a variety of newspapers to obtain the information that is now to be found in the State Paper. Of course the matter will receive thorough discussion before anything is done, so that the merits and demerits of the State Paper are certain to appear. In the meantime we contribute to the discussion the suggestion that if the intention is to serve the greatest convenience of the greatest number, there would seem to be no reason for continuing the publication of the State Paper at Albany, even if it is thought best to continue it at all.

Pouring oil on troubled waters does not always compose them. There are the troubled waters of the Ohio United States Senatorship, for instance. According to current report the more Standard oil that is poured upon them the more unsettled they become.

Mr. Irving's recent card in THE TRIBUNE concerning the absurd charge that he had disparaged American audiences was graceful and manly. An imputation of invidious remarks to those persons who are prosperous in the public esteem is one of the commonest methods of malicious detraction. It has been used, of course, against Mr. Irving, who is altogether too fortunate a man for envy and malice to endure. An old remark made by the poet Samuel Rogers applies to this case: "To succeed is no little crime in the eyes of those who fail; and those who cannot climb will endeavor to pull you down by the skirts."

The Civil Service Commissioners make a request for an increase of clerical service, which is modest enough. They want one fourteen-hundred-dollar clerk. We venture to assert that no Government bureau is better entitled to the increase it has asked for.

Butler certainly went out of office in a characteristic way—with a sneer and a blunder. He left a Bible in the Executive office for the use of his successors, but, of course, could not do this simple act without writing an inscription in the book, with a suggestion of sarcasm about not being able to find a copy of the Scriptures when he came in as Governor. His blunder was a little one, and would never have been noticed if the worthy Governor had not been so very exacting with other people and made so many slips himself. He told the members of the Legislature that they were ready for the transaction of business when they were merely qualified for organization. That such a slip should have been the subject of any comment simply shows that he has succeeded in rasping the Massachusetts mind into a state of great sensitiveness. Ex-Governor Butler is not likely to do much hereafter in public life, except to furnish some amusement as a Presidential candidate. Furnishing amusement as a candidate has, in fact, been his principal occupation for many years, as he has run for office and failed to catch it much more often than the average politician. Now he is sixty-five years old, and we will not be able to enjoy him in this capacity more than fifteen years longer at the outside.

The available cash in the Treasury has been reduced about $11,000,000 by the debt payments during the past month, which have exceeded $24,000,000 for bonded debt. This corresponds with estimates made when Secretary Folger issued the December call, that he would not have sufficient surplus revenue by the date of its maturity to meet it. The payments made in December leave the "available cash" lower than it has been before since May last, and yet a considerable part of what is counted as "available" really consists of trust funds, which do not properly belong to the Treasury, and in which there has been no increase. In the bank funds especially, the Treasury holds many millions, which are in no sense available for the payment of its own debts.

The ghastly discussion in England over the relative advantages of the "long drop" and the "short drop" in hanging criminals has brought out a number of opinions, from which it may be inferred that death by suffocation is a rather enjoyable experience, while death by shock to the spinal marrow is attended with awful agony. In New-York the practice has been for many years to draw the criminal up by the fall of a heavy weight instead of letting him drop through a trap. Hence death on the scaffold in the City Prison is usually from suffocation. But the diffusion of the belief that this form of death is practically painless will hardly have a tendency to lessen the number of murders.

It looks as though the English Government had made a singular mistake in allowing the Orangemen and Nationalists to come so close together at Dromore. When it is notorious that two factions desire nothing better than the opportunity to crack one another's skulls with shillalahs, it is too late to think of constitutional privileges and matters of that kind. The feeling of the Orangemen to the Catholics, and now to the Nationalists, is not of a character to be dealt with by persuasion. Orange sentiment, indeed, has always been far too explosive for safe handling. It has shown that the superposition of a mixture of politics and theology upon the Celtic temperament infallibly produced a compound even more dangerous than nitro-glycerine. The fact that the Orangemen pride themselves upon their loyalty, of course, only renders them the more difficult of treatment. For they present a ferocious caricature of that Government policy which they profess to support and approve. They would pacify Ireland by killing off all who refused to drink "the pious and immortal memory" and the "Battle of the Boyne." The late extravagant circular of Lord Rossmore was really quite a normal expression of Orange views. And the worst of it is that these hot-headed, truculent, intolerant people are thoroughly in earnest, and cannot imagine how the Government can fail to be grateful for their energetic support. No doubt they thought it an outrage that they were not permitted to fall upon the Nationalists at Dromore and make mince-meat of them.

The large reduction of public debt in December, $11,743,337, makes a decrease of $53,019,583 68 for the first half of the new fiscal year and $109,501,953 04 for the calendar year 1883. We begin the new year with a debt of less than $1,500,000,000 for the first time, and the recent heavy decrease indicates that the new tax laws will leave a much larger surplus revenue than has until lately been expected. It appears that the receipts for six months past have been:

	1883.	1882.	Decrease.
Customs	$100,949,113	$113,609,414	$12,660,301
Internal	61,316,294	74,745,328	13,429,034
Miscellaneous	16,078,800	18,446,445	2,367,645
Total	$178,344,207	$206,801,187	$28,456,980
Expenditures	127,570,101	129,951,328	2,381,227

The decrease in customs is at the rate of only $25,320,000 yearly, whereas about $40,000,000 was at first expected. But part of the difference is due to the large withdrawals from warehouses early in the new fiscal year. The decrease in internal revenue has been cut down materially by the heavy payments on whiskey, so that instead of $35,000,000 for the year the reduction thus far is at the rate of $26,800,000, and will probably be even less for the entire year, as the quantity of whiskey on which the tax has to be paid is still very large. Miscellaneous receipts come mainly from sales of land and cannot be closely anticipated.

Mr. Lowell's resignation as Lord Rector will deprive Congressman Robinson of the chance to allude with his fierce irony to "Lord Lowell." But Mr. Robinson can persevere in his determination to expose and bring to the light of day those miscreants in the shape of British noblemen who have been buying American land with the felonious purpose of cultivating it.

M. Blowitz, the irrepressible ambassador of *The London Times* residing in Paris, and holding in the hollow of his hand the diplomatic destinies of Europe, has recently been placed in a very trying position. He found lesinre to talk over the Tonquin matter with Marquis Tseng, and at the close of a protracted confidential interview found himself loaded to the muzzle with the most explosive diplomatic information. For a short half-hour, probably while he was wending his way toward a telegraph office, he held his peace, conscious that the world already knew as much as it could comfortably hold, and that the disclosures were made for his own ear and not with a view to publication. Then, after a terrible internal struggle with his conscience, he blurted out everything that had been poured into his discriminating but capacious ear. It was his duty to disregard the etiquette of diplomacy, and he sternly and impressively opened his mouth. "Interviewing," he observed as a preface to his disclosures, "may obviously be carried too far, but there are occasions when the publication of conversations with men in responsible positions may exert a salutary influence." American newspaper reporters, whose methods M. Blowitz has dignified by making use of them in his diplomatic studies and labors, will hereafter have the sanction of his high authority whenever they let out unexpectedly the social and political mysteries intrusted to them.

PERSONAL.

Mrs. Oliphant has been spending much time in Germany of late.

Professor Leopold von Ranke, the historian, has just completed his eighty-eighth year, and still works industriously seven hours a day.

Major Henry Mapleson, husband of Mme. Marie Roze, and eldest son of Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Mapleson, the impresario, was recently promoted to the position of colonel of the 10th Corps of the Royal Artillery, on recommendation of H. R. H. the Duke of Cambridge, commander-in-chief.

General Robert Toombs, of Georgia, says that if he consulted his pride as a man of affairs and a prescience that enabled him to predict the events of forty years, he would rest the fame of his life upon his speech on slavery in Boston in 1854, rather than any other single effort; but in the light of humanity he would rather stand upon his compromise speech in the Senate in 1850. There is, he says, no period of his life upon which he looks with greater satisfaction than that in which he attempted to adjust by compromise the differences that were, ten years later, settled by war.

M. de Lesseps relates that thirty years ago he was travelling in Upper Egypt with Said Pacha, the then Viceroy, when, at Ber-Ber, they found famine and distress on every hand. Said investigated the cause, and found that his predecessor had, to punish a trifling revolt, sent thither a large army, which had laid the whole country desolate. "What shall I do to repair the damage?" asked Said. "Begin by abolishing slavery," answered M. de Lesseps. "I'll do it," said the Viceroy; and he did. And moreover, to show his confidence in the people whom his predecessor had ill-used, he had the forts razed and the cannon thrown into the Nile. "Are you not going a little too far?" inquired M. de Lesseps. "Oh, no!" said the Pacha; "none of these cannon could ever have been fired again if the forts had been attacked. They have all been ruined by neglect and exposure.

Henry Irving relates that on his last night in Philadelphia he found his entrance to the stage blocked by several strange men, who did not heed his request that they would move away. When he repeated the request they didn't even look at him, but kept their eyes fixed on the stage and the performers there. Then Mr. Irving grew angry and forced his way through, and demanded of the man nearest the stage: "Who are you, and what do you want?" "Baggage!" was the scant reply. Mr. Irving took this for an insult and not as an equivalent for "luggage," and his cue coming at that moment—at which he was to rush on the stage and seize a villain by the throat—he made the natural blunder of grappling with the wrong man, that is, with the exasperating stranger; and only when the latter cried for help did he collect his mind and spring upon the legitimate object of his wrath. After the play he found that the intruders were porters, waiting, by his own orders, for baggage to take to a late train.

Just twenty years ago last Monday, *The St. Louis Globe-Democrat* relates, Colonel Claiborne, then of the 37th Virginia Regiment (Confederate), deserted by his own troops, was captured by the famous "Stoneman Brigade," and witnessed the death (as he supposed) at his side of his one faithful follower, Captain T. B. Roberts, whom he afterward reported to the Confederate Government as having been shot dead on the battle-field. But on last Monday Colonel Claiborne, now Prosecuting Attorney of the St. Louis Criminal Court, was opening his mail, when he started and cried: "I've got a letter from the dead! I saw this man killed at the battle of Morehead, twenty years ago to-day, and here he is writing to me." The letter was from Roberts, and explained itself as follows: "I have been trying to find out your address ever since the war, and have only just succeeded. I would rather see and talk to you than any other man on earth. . . . Do you remember that figat at Morehead, when you and I started alone to charge Stoneman's Brigade? I tell you, that fellow Stoneman was the worst cuss in the whole Yankee army for us fellows to tackle. But that company of mine were the most cowardly God Almighty ever had a hand in making! No decent man would have run off the way they did. . . You thought I was dead. Well, I'm the healthiest dead man in North Carolina. I got an ugly wound in that scrimmage, but after you had all gone I came to and found a horse, and managed to get on him and ride until I found some friends, who took care of me and brought me out."

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3.—Attorney-General Brewster returned to Washington to-day from New-Orleans.

TALKS ABOUT TOWN.

DEPARTMENT ESTIMATES.

Martin B. Brown, Printer.—For the life of me I cannot understand how our taxes should be increased as they have been. The budget is increased $4,000,000 this year. Why? I can't see; can you? The real property has increased five-fold in the last ten years, but the tax doesn't seem to be on the property which has been improved. They put it on unimproved property up-town, and on personal property, which they estimate very largely, and of which they collect little, but the State taxes are assessed according to the estimates, and the city pays on the estimates notwithstanding that it collects nothing, or very little from the assessment.

A TRICK OF THE DEPARTMENT.

George McLean, Ex-Street Commissioner.—When I was in the office it was called the "Street Commissioner." It is changed now, and they call it the Department of Public Works. But it is all the same except that it has greater powers. I was appointed by Governor Hoffman. I succeeded Charley Cornell, and I accepted on condition that Tweed, who was Cornell's Deputy, should resign. He did not resign. Governor Hoffman called on me to know why I did not remove Tweed, and I told him that he, the Governor, had assured me that Tweed would resign. But he did not, and I said I would retire if Tweed did not resign. The result was that Tweed kept his place, and was subsequently promoted to a higher place. But during the time I was Street Commissioner, now the same place that Commissioner Thompson occupies, a Citizen-Association charged me with the same sort of offences that Thompson is now charged with. As I was pardonably innocent I replied promptly in print and denied the charges. But afterward I found that somebody in the Department was keeping two sets of books, and that the charges of the Citizens' Association were true. I charged Tweed with this fraud, but he had such backing that I could not do anything with him, and so I resigned.

THEATRE LEASES.

Frank Chanfrau, Actor.—The managers are just eating each other up. A lot of speculators have got into the business; they have promised to pay more than any theatre can produce, and, of course, don't pay. None of it for me! I was asked once to take the Fifth Avenue Theatre and manage it. That was after Daly. I offered $10,000 a year, and said I might go up to $12,000 on conditions, but the Gilsey heirs said they could get twice that. They got it—in promises. But that was before Stetson came in.

GENERAL NOTES.

Doylestown, Penn., is in a ferment over an attempt of the Roman Catholic parish priest of the town to obtain a portion of the school money for the support of his parish school; and there is likely to be a wordy warfare between the priest and the local Methodist minister, in which the people and the newspapers are already beginning to take part. Although the priest is supported by many non-Catholic citizens, it is not likely that he will obtain the desired appropriation for his school.

A reader of THE TRIBUNE, Mr. E. F. Bullard, of Saratoga Springs, is reminded by the published accounts of recent brilliant sunsets, of a phenomenon which he witnessed several weeks ago. He writes: "On the evening of November 26, at this place, a heavy rain, with dark clouds, continued until near midnight. After the rain had ceased, between 12 and 1 o'clock, a bright red belt incircled the horizon in the west, extending upward about ten degrees. It was so red and brilliant as to light up the whole earth, and at first I thought the village was on fire. I have not seen this strange phenomenon spoken of in any of the papers, but have heard that it was witnessed at Poughkeepsie. Will our wise men explain?"

Brevity, which is the soul of wit, is likewise an excellent thing in epitaphs and monumental inscriptions, but that it can be overdone is proved by the inscription on a column which crowns the summit of a hill in Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland. "On the north front," says *The Witlshall Review*, "the inscription is '1883, W. M. N. fecit;' and on the south, 'Neilson, hot blast, 1828.' To those who know that the monument has been placed there by Colonel Neilson, of Queensbill, in memory of his father, the late Mr. J. B. Neilson, the inventor of the hot blast, the inscriptions are sufficient; but the visitor who has not that knowledge must be perplexed and startled, especially if he should confine his inspection to the south front of the monument."

So long as showers of live fish fell only upon isolated communities in this country there was a disposition to explain the phenomenon in a manner not at all gratifying to persons who claimed to have beheld it. But now appears that grave and veracious journal *The Edinburgh Scotsman*, with the declaration that on December 15 a school of perch descended in a heavy shower of rain upon the employes of the New Caledonian Railway Works at Airdrie. Moreover, the men gathered this unexpected supply of manna and took it home. With the exception of the Monkland Canal there is no water nearer to Airdrie than the reservoir at Calderceraix, which is stocked with perch and which feeds the canal.

The Boston Globe greeted its readers on the first morning of the new year with a vivacious account of Boston and her inhabitants—how they lived, worked, played and died—a hundred years ago. A number of illustrations show how the men, women and children of that day looked in street costume, what sort of a figure was cut by the night watchman on his rounds, and how the fire department went to work to quench a conflagration. *The Globe* would have gladly presented its friends with a fac-simile of its issue of January 1, 1784, but inasmuch as it was not in existence a hundred years ago it did the next best thing and reproduced for their benefit that day's number of *The Independent Chronicle and The Universal Advertiser*, which had just been transferred by Mr. N. Willis to Messrs. Adams and Nourse.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

MME. HOPEKIRK'S SECOND RECITAL.

The second recital of Mme. Helen Hopekirk, the Scottish pianist, took place at Steinway Hall yesterday afternoon. It was attended by an audience three or four times as numerous as the first, mostly women. The programme contained no less than sixteen numbers, of which the majority were familiar to all students of pianoforte literature. The character of the pieces was such as to test the mechanical skill as well as intellectual capacity of the concert giver. There was a nice adjustment of contrasts throughout, and not a single one of the compositions was chosen because of its showiness, though the opportunities for display were numerous enough. In this particular Mme. Hopekirk has displayed commendable judgment in the construction of her schemes.

After the Mendelssohn variations in E-flat, she gave an organ fugue, transcribed by Liszt (in A minor), then four of Schubert's most admired songs, transcribed by the same arranger, one of Brahm's Hungarian Dances, a Mozart Fantasie (in D minor), Beethoven's Andante in F, Schumann's Sonata, in G minor, three pieces of a romantic set by Nicodé, a young German writer, two Chopin studies, and Rubinstein's "Romance" and "Valse Caprice." In her readings of this list of a decidedly mixed character, Mme. Hopekirk confirmed our first impression of the excellence of her gifts and attainments. A clear intellectuality dominated all her work, and deep poetical feeling marked her performance, especially of the Liszt transcriptions and the Schumann sonata. As a rule, the few disappointments of the afternoon came from a lack of harmony between her poetical intentions and the means employed to publish them. Her fancy sometimes got the better of her fingers, and an unmusical tone was the