THE NEW SPEAKER.

WITH SOME CURIOUS INCIDENTS OF HIS ELECTION.

[FROM THE REGULAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]
LONDON, February 27.

"Sir, I have it in command from Her Majesty to acquaint this House that she has been informed of the resignation of the Chair by Sir Henry Brand, and that she gives leave to this House to proceed to the election of a new Speaker."

Such are the words in which the Prime Minister of England yesterday, February 26, 1884, signified to the House of Commons that they were at liberty to make choice of a presiding officer. There is a piquancy in this antique flavor of the days of Tudors and Stuarts, when the control of the Sovereign over the Legislature was in many points substantial and direct. The words are now a form, but a form which has a historical interest and from which nothing would induce a man of Mr. Gladstone's temperament to depart. In this, as in other matters, the form outlives the fact. It is conceivable, but only just conceivable, that the Queen might interpose an objection to the very possible Speaker whom the House might prefer. If she did, it would not be announced publicly. The matter would be arranged between herself and the Prime Minister; as in the case of Cabinet appointments, where she still retains, and reasonably exercises, a form of objection. We are far from the days when the House of Commons accepted a Speaker at the dictation of the Crown, but it would be interesting to know what would happen if Her Majesty withheld the leave she granted yesterday, and if the House nevertheless proceeded to an election.

Other points in yesterday's proceedings will be found not less quaint. When four o'clock came, instead of the usual announcement of "Mr. Speaker," the cry of "Mace" was heard from the officers. The Sergeant-at-Arms appeared bearing the heralded Mace. The House is not capable of constituting itself completely without a Speaker. Captain Gossett placed the awful symbol not on, but under, the table. The Clerk of the House, Sir Erskine May, took his usual seat. There were no prayers. Every seat was filled. The Clerk rose and silently pointed at Mr. Gladstone, and it was in answer to this mute appeal that the Prime Minister uttered the words I have quoted at the beginning of this letter. There were a few cheers as he took his seat, and the Clerk then pointed, still opening not his mouth, to Mr. Whitbread, who had been selected to propose Mr. Arthur Peel to be Speaker. Mr. Whitbread, though not an old man, is one of the Nestors of the House. Born in 1830, he was elected for Bedford in 1852, and has ever since sat for that constituency. On matters of precedence and procedure there is no authority higher than Mr. Whitbread's, and he would have been chosen Speaker by general consent had his health permitted him to serve. He spoke for not more than ten minutes and wholly avoided technicalities, but his speech is a whole manual of conduct for the Chair. One striking passage I quote. Referring to Mr. Gladstone's remark yesterday that the office has no counterpart elsewhere, Mr. Whitbread continued:

If the office is singular in its duties, so it is in the sources from which its authority is derived. No resolutions inscribed on our journals, no standing orders, no powers by statute, could for one moment avail the Speaker who had lost the confidence of this House. [Hear, hear.] His whole authority is based upon that confidence. It is a confidence which the greatest and freest assembly in the world has delighted to repose in the Speaker. And as it has been in the past, so I doubt not it will be in the future; and if, as some think, troublous times are in store for us in Parliament, I feel confident that the great body of the House will renew from day to day their confidence in the Speaker, and that the measure of that confidence will only be the need that shall arise.

The whole speech was in this tone of dignity and wisdom, skilfully set to catch the sympathies and suffrages of the whole House. He well said of Mr. Peel that, though he had not been eager to thrust himself upon the attention of the House, those who knew him best were those who had the strongest confidence in his success. And he concluded with the words: "I beg to move that Mr. Arthur Peel do take the Chair of this House as Speaker." Mr. Rathbone, a Liverpool merchant, seconded the motion in a speech still briefer than Mr. Whitbread's. Then Mr. Arthur Peel rose. Probably no man in circumstances so delicate ever made a better speech: modest, firm, in parts almost eloquent, free from every effort at display, penetrated with a sense of the responsibility about to be laid on him, inspired throughout by right feeling and high principle. Nothing could have been in finer taste than his declaration that he was under no illusions as to the presentation of his name while so many on both sides of the House were better fitted for the place.

I know very well, sir, how much I am indebted above all things—it would be unnatural in me if I did not avow it in the face of this House of Commons—for the favor which the House has thus far shown me, to the fact that I am the son of a statesman [cheers] whose history and whose labors are identified with the story and the debates of this House [hear, hear,] whose public services are indelibly written in the records of his country [hear, hear], and whose name is warmly cherished in a multitude of British homes.

In terms not less graceful he referred to the example of his predecessor, Sir Henry Brand, as one which he could only hope to imitate by help of the House itself. He appealed to that aid without which he would be powerless indeed, "without which the best Speaker who ever sat in that Chair would be bereft of all power and authority—I mean the moral support, assistance and co-operation of this House." He pledged himself to but one thing, perfect impartiality, and he sat down "humbly submitting himself to and placing himself in the hands and at the disposal of this House." This House indicated its sense of the admirable quality of his speech by cordial cheers from the Conservative not less than from the Liberal benches. Then Mr. Whitbread, who sat behind the lower corner of the Front Bench, with Mr. Arthur Peel beside him, took the new Speaker by the hand and led him down to the open floor, Mr. Rathbone following. It is to be noted that though a motion had been duly made and seconded, no motion was put to the House. It was known there was to be no opposition. The Tories had considered the question of putting a candidate in nomination, and had decided in full party caucus at the Carlton Club that nothing was to be gained by a demonstration doomed in advance not only to defeat but to discredit. If there had been an opposing candidate, a division must somehow have been taken, but it seems to be considered that the Clerk of the House is only competent to put a motion to the House in peculiar and pressing emergencies. So engrossing is the authority of the Speaker—and it may be added so impersonal is it—that Sir Henry Brand on Tuesday himself put to the House the resolution of thanks for his services and the resolution for an address to the Crown in his own behalf.

Standing on the steps of the Chair Mr. Arthur Peel then—after an unmannerly interruption by Mr. F. H. O'Donnell had been repressed by the House—acknowledged the great honor done him in calling him to the Chair, promised to do his best; and ended by saying: "I humbly and respectfully thank the House for its indulgence, and I pray for its generous support." The election was then complete. The new Speaker took the Chair. The Sergeant-at-Arms advanced. Making a low obeisance he took the Mace from the supports by which it hung below, and placed the precious bauble in its wonted position; the House cheering loudly and long.

There was, however, still something to be added. An occasion so solemn as the choice and installation of a new Speaker could not be permitted to pass without a personal ratification, as it were, of the act by the voice of the Leader of the House. Mr. Gladstone rose to offer the new Speaker his congratulations. Again the express renunciation and disavowal of anything like party purpose was heard. Not, said the Liberal chief, as leader of a party, but as Leader of the House did he speak—or in his own more ample words, "on account, not of my connection with Party, but of the share attaching to my position in the regulation of the business of the House for the convenience and advantage of all its members." And in this character he tendered to the new Speaker his own congratulations and those of the House. He would not have been himself if he had not added a eulogy on Sir Robert Peel:

Sir, I may without impropriety, I think, say that to me it affords no common gratification to witness and to assist in the elevation to so high a position of the son of a man whose follower I have been, and for whose name and character down to this late hour of my life I retain an unbroken and undiminished veneration. [Cheers.]

Once more Mr. Gladstone defined the duties and essential qualities of the Speaker, much as he had defined them in parting from Sir Henry Brand. To Sir Henry Brand Mr. Gladstone had expressed his gratitude for fulfilling these duties and displaying those qualities. To Mr. Arthur Peel he spoke in the language of hope and expectation. This is the sixth Speaker under whom Mr. Gladstone has served. The number is thought great here, and it covers a period of more than fifty years. In America, where Speakers come and go with Houses of Representatives every two years, the fewness of the terms included in such a period will mark as well as anything else the unlikeness between the two offices of the same name. At the end came another formula of ancient days: "It is my duty to acquaint the House in closing that I have received the command of Her Majesty [it must have been by telegraph] to signify her pleasure that the Speaker whom the Commons have elected be presented to-morrow at 2 of the clock, in the House of Lords, for Her Majesty's Royal approbation." Safe to say that Her Majesty's Royal approbation will be gracefully given. But it is to be observed that Mr. Arthur Peel took the Chair, and that the Mace was put upon the table, before Her Majesty's pleasure had been officially made known. Sir Stafford Northcote joined in the congratulations offered by Mr. Gladstone, and Conservative assent is perhaps not less important than Royal approbation. The Tory leader, however, gave it to be understood that his acquiescence in the election of Mr. Arthur Peel was limited to the duration of the present Parliament.

Ceremonial all this, you will possibly say, and not worth treating at such length. What are the minute formalities of Parliamentary life in England to the American who has a Parliamentary life of his own, with a written Constitution and written Statutes at the back of it? who cares for the fresh rehearsal of musty mummeries? Well, I hope some of us care even for the historical side; for the continuing traditions of six hundred years on which our own Parliament and all our legislative procedures are closely modelled. But whether we do or not, there is something in these elaborate proceedings of Monday and Tuesday which to my mind is simply charming—something besides the survival of early forms which we may presume in these Darwinian days would not have survived but for their surpassing fitness. Amid the vulgar and violent contentiousness of recent sessions of Parliament, here, at any rate, is one scene of calm dignity, of real beauty in its perfect decorum, of admirable feeling throughout the whole House. There is something in the acts and words of these two days which ennobles public life. It may have to give way to-morrow to the usual turbulence and hateful animosities, but I nevertheless avow my delight in it while it has lasted.

G. W. S.

LONDON GOSSIP.

AN ENGLISHMAN'S NOTES ON ENGLISH TOPICS.

[FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]
LONDON, March 4.

There are few subjects on which such nonsense is talked, and written, as pigeon-shooting. I confess that it does not appeal to my taste or imagination in any way, and that the gambling element in it is made unpleasantly prominent. But the humanitarians talk silly twaddle about the "slaughter of doves." A fox is vastly superior to a pigeon, and he is slain, with much pride, pomp and circumstance, but slain nevertheless. It seems to me, therefore, to be childishness to make a fuss about a few blue-rock pigeons which would never be suffered to exist at all if they were not very difficult birds to shoot, within the conditions of pigeon-shooting. And this sport gravely attacked by an army of sentimentalists is useful in its way in keeping the hand in for the more important game-shooting. I am aware that many people will tell you that a good pigeon shot is not always a good game shot, and *vice versa*, but pigeon-shooting is good practice nevertheless. To say that it is cruel is simply silly. A creature whose tomb is to be the inside of a pie must die in some way. In this country and in France we wring the necks of pigeon and squab. In Germany, a land in which decapitation is largely practised, the cook maid puts a knife into the mouth of the doomed dove and cuts the top of his head off.

What lends interest to the contest between sportsmen and sentimentalists is the attitude taken by Sir Frederick Milbanke, a crack shot and a sportsman to the backbone. He is dead against pigeon-shooting, denouncing it as both cockney and cruel. It must be admitted that it gives rise to a great deal of heavy gambling, a diversion of which we have enough and to spare in other ways.

Once more arises the sorry rumor of the Prince of Wales's debts. Many of his friends are, owing to agricultural depression, not so well off as they were, and stand aghast at the prospect of not seeing their money for years, if ever. Should any harm befal "Tum-Tum," as he is called, every shilling of some two hundred thousand pounds would be lost. If the Queen, who is worth nearly two millions sterling of private disposable property, will not pay "Tum-Tum's" debts while he is living, most assuredly she would not pay them after his death. Any appeal to the country would be received with derision, not because the Prince is unpopular, but because his mother's habit of hoarding up the money paid her for *frais de representation* has made her so. The country paid a great deal for George the Fourth when Prince Regent, and Charles Greville has told the world all about the scampish Royal dukes. But George the Fourth, before he "from earth descended," as Landor's epigram puts it, earned the love of all the barbers and tailors in the United Kingdom by his remarkable inventions. He invented three important articles of male costume. Firstly, the wig without which his sacred Majesty was never seen except by his pages, the widow of one of whom, Lady Knighton, died only the other day. Wigs resembling the King's were worn late into our fathers' time by the Waterloo veterans, who also wore, I am told, the frogged "surtout" with braid and fur upon it, also invented by that monarch. His third grand idea was the high and stiff shirt-collar which completely superseded the limp muslin cravats one sees in pictures by Gainsborough and in the earlier period of Lawrence. Now the Prince of Wales can hardly claim to have invented anything but luxurious hot luncheons at shooting parties, which he has clearly brought into fashion. But he is a benefactor of his race as a revivalist. He has distinctly revived suppers and pumps. Both were completely out of date when he commenced his career as a leader of fashion. Now we sup gloriously, and if one of a gouty tendency fervently murmur, "God bless the Prince of Wales," as they look at their smart and comfortable pumps and silk stockings.

I am afraid that vanity has something to do with the revival of pumps, for the Royal family are very well built about the legs and feet. The Duke of Cambridge is remarkable in this way, more so even than the Prince of Wales, and George the Fourth was physically a very fair man till he became sunk in sloth and self-indulgence. As everybody knows, loose trousers are never seen at the Queen's dinner table, tight pantaloons or breeches and silk stockings being *de rigeur* for the men, as low-cut bodices are for the women. The best wine at the Queen's table is the hock, most of it presented to Her Majesty by German grandees like Prince Metternich, who owns the famous red hill known as Johannisberg.

The holder of a famous historic title is just dead. It did not come in the way of Lord Sandwich to render any great services to his country, but his ancestors were very remarkable. There is now at Wortley, the house of Lord Wharncliffe, a portrait of the first Earl of Sandwich, Lord High Admiral of England, wearing the George and broad ribbon of the Garter. These insignia were found on the body of this famous naval officer when it was seen floating on the sea after the desperate battle with the Dutch at Solebay, near Southwold, in 1672. This was the "my lord" so frequently referred to by Mr. Samuel Pepys in his Diary. The fourth Earl was an eminent diplomatist and statesman, after whom the Sandwich Islands were named, probably because he was First Lord of the Admiralty at the time of their discovery. This, however, is not his only title to immortality. He invented the excellent food called sandwiches, the only way to my mind in which to eat the fine German sausages known as *Mettcurst, pâté de foies gras*, and real Gruyère cheese. This celebrated nobleman had sundry passages of wit with Wilkes, and on one occasion was very roughly handled. He was the protector of Miss Ray, who was shot and killed by one Hackman, a well-known tragical incident of London life. The present Earl is a Colonel in the Guards and M. P. for Huntingdon.

The testimonial craze is becoming a nuisance. Two musical celebrities who have certainly received much money for their services, Sir Michael Costa and Sir Julius Benedict, are to be testimonialized on a very grand scale. A wicked wag has dubbed the last-named eminent composer Sir Julius "Benefit."

I went last night for the second time to Mr. Edgar Bruce's new theatre, called the Prince's. I regret to say that I was called upon to witness another failure, owing, I am bound to admit, to the shortcomings of Miss Lingard, whom I suppose I must call an Anglo-American actress. Anything more absurd I never witnessed. The play, "Breaking a Butterfly," might have been made something of by a good actress, but Miss Lingard was quite overweighted by a part in the style of *Frou-Frou*. She was made up in ringlets and short petticoats to look like Miss Lotta, and jumped about in a ridiculous way. This unrestfulness was probably assumed to give an air of youth to the part, but the result was deplorable. I cannot imagine what Mr. Bruce is thinking of to open a new theatre with Miss Lingard and Miss Helen Matthews. He has already lost all the advantage of freshness and novelty, and his theatre has made no mark whatever. Leading ladies are much wanted on the English stage, but it is of no use to send us the calibre of actress represented by Miss Lotta and Miss Lingard. Miss Minnie Palmer pleases the lads who can endure her vulgarity, and will probably make a successful trip, but the other two ladies are hopeless. Meanwhile Miss Anderson draws great houses at the Lyceum and is a distinct social success. Miss Calhoun, also, in a minor position, is steadily making her way. To be an American is at this moment a decided advantage, but American actors and actresses should remember that we know our Paris as well as our London, and are generally "critical."

The through-thick-and-thin adherents of the Government are trying very hard to minimize the effect of the Brighton election, but it is a severe blow nevertheless. There was not long ago a large Ministerial majority at Brighton, and the Radical caucus thought itself strong enough to bring Mr. Marriott to book for attacking Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. Marriott behaved very pluckily in the matter, took the bull by the horns, resigned his seat and stood a contest. He has won a decisive victory and shown distinctly that if he has turned his coat so have his constituents, whose vote hits the Government very hard at this juncture. I need hardly explain to American readers how very awkward such an incident as this is at the opening of a session and in the early stage of a revolutionary measure. Mr. Irving's election to the Reform Club will hardly counterbalance the effect of the Brighton election.

We know that "adventures are to the adventurous." What a fine instance, however, is Colonel "Fred" Burnaby! This amazing olive-colored giant seems to be always in the thick of it. His family talk of descent from Edward the Fourth, and the size of Colonel "Fred" speaks voluminously in favor of the family pedigree. Yet, despite his eighteen stone of weight, he goes up in balloons, rides to Khiva, across Asia Minor and the rest of it. He actually dodged the orders to stop him in Egypt and is now severely wounded. "Fred" insists on being there or thereabouts.

A strong party here are agitating for the reinstatement of Valentine Baker in the English army. I am afraid the Queen will not listen to anything of the kind. He is as brave as a lion and a splendid cavalry officer, but I have reason to believe that Her Majesty cannot be induced to forgive the railway-carriage affair.

Memorial windows are greatly to the fore. Two have been inaugurated lately, to somewhat dissimilar persons; one at Woodstock to the late Duke of Marlborough, one in the Church of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, to William Shakespeare. At the latter celebration Mrs. Keeley was present and other historic veterans. Mrs. Keeley is wonderfully active and "cheery." It is difficult to believe that she played *Jack Sheppard* some fifty-seven years ago. Mrs. Stirling is another marvel of vivacity. She is, however, several years younger than Mrs. Keeley, who is an "amateur" of trials and often to be seen in court when famous cases are being tried. Mrs. Keeley is also a regular "first-nighter" at the play. There will be a tremendous meeting at the Court Theatre on Thursday, when "Dan'l Druce" will be produced with Mr. Hermann Vezin in the principal part. The immense crowd anxious to be present is explained by the appearance of Miss Fortescue (Finney) as the Puritan damsel in Mr. Gilbert's comedy. It will be quite a "sensational" first night.

Mr. Vezin is very much liked on this side of the Atlantic. When Mr. Edwin Booth was playing here last time the management of the Prince's Theatre was in the hands of one Gooch, the husband of Miss Fanny Leslie, a burlesque actress and dancer. Mr. Booth wished, very naturally, Gooch to engage Mr. Vezin to play Shakespeare with him. He was quite satisfied with Miss Gerard, but wanted the cast strengthened with one good man. Gooch resisted obstinately, till at last Mr. Booth thought there must be prejudice at the bottom of this stubborn refusal. Finally it came out. Gooch considered Mr. Vezin unlucky. "Take bad luck with him wherever he goes," said Gooch; "what I call a perfect *Judas*." I apprehend that Gooch, whose education has been neglected, meant Jonah.

MR. CABLE'S CREOLES.

New-Orleans Letter to The Baltimore American.

From the levee I strolled over into the French quarter. Not far from the residence of Mr. Cable, the novelist, I found a curious-looking old bookstore. It was a snug old hole, with that atmosphere of mustiness in which book-worms thrive. The proprietor was an aged Frenchman, with untrimmed hair and full beard. Did he know Mr. Cable? Yes, he knew the novelist very well. He often visited his store, and they were great friends.

"Perhaps, then, you can tell me something about the Creoles?"

He laughed in a low, self-amused, chuckling way, and still cackling softly he called a tall gentleman from one of the alcoves.

"He wants to see Cable's Creoles," said the old man, smiling between the words.

The tall gentleman laughed outright. It seemed very amusing.

"My dear sir," he said at last, "you will not find them. The Creoles that Cable describes don't live in New-Orleans. They never did live in New-Orleans, and they never will live here. Cable, sir, is a great romancer—a romancer not only in plots, but in material. Right around this neighborhood here he found a phase of life new to the world. He began to describe it, and it made him famous. Here he got his suggestions for characters; but he gave those characters attributes which they never possessed. His fancy painted the facts in colors they never before knew. The Creole of Cable is a different creature from the Creole we know of in New-Orleans. The real Creole is incapable of heroic action—he is a mere human nonentity. Cable is an able man, sir, a very clever man. I am a neighbor of his. I know him well, and like him; but you must not mistake his fiction for reality."

"This is surprising—very."

"Well, you are not the only one surprised. Last night I was standing in the veranda of the St. Charles Hotel waiting for the pageant. There were several New-York ladies in front of me, and one of them said to her companions that she had come down two weeks ago to see Creoles like those described in Mr. Cable's books, but that she hadn't seen a single one. I felt like saying, 'And you won't see them,' but, of course, I didn't. Yes, sir, it's very amusing to us to see you strangers walking around here trying to find Cable's Creoles. That's why we laughed when you asked your question awhile ago."

"Do you sell many of Cable's books?" I asked the bookseller.

"Yes, we sell some, we sell some, but not a great many."

"Do the people like him around here?"

"Some do; some don't. But you people in the North think more about him and read more about him than they do down here. But Mr. Cable is a nice man, sir—he is one of the best men I ever saw."

The other gentleman discoursed for some time upon the history of Louisiana and the people. "The people now called Creoles," he said, "are fast drifting away. The Irish control their politics. The Hebrews monopolize their business, and their morals are in the hands of alien priests. They themselves have retired within their homes. It is a fact, sir, that hundreds of Creoles living right around this neighborhood have never crossed Canal-st. They refuse to believe that the western part of this magnificent city exists. This is their exclusiveness. They know nothing of modern progress. Their habits belong to a generation long past. Their race is crumbling to pieces, and they are rapidly passing away."

A WYOMING COWBOY ON CATTLE RAISING

From The Pittsburg Dispatch.

"When I struck Wyoming it wouldn't have troubled an infant to carry my bank roll. But I got possession of a little land, bought a few cattle, made the most of my time and money, and to-day I can round up a bunch of two hundred cattle worth $30 a head where they stand this minute. The vast mountain territory furnishes them free living in the spring, summer and fall months, and we feed our losses and move south in the winter. I am started all right now and am bound to make big money. It isn't just like finding money, for it takes time and attention, but I do not know of any business that will pay a larger dividend on the original investment. Now I am going to tell you something. A man can invest $10,000 in stock raising in that Territory to-day, and in ten years he is bound to be worth at least $150,000. The land costs little or nothing, and the increase is largely profit. We figure on 80 per cent increase and a loss of not more than 3 per cent. Last summer I circulated around among 8,000 head of cattle, and I saw three cases of diseased animals. These were affected with what we call the 'big head,' a swelling which manifests itself in the animal's jaws and eventually results in death. But the disease is not contagious and is the only form of affliction known among cattle in that country."

"Is the business of stock raising increasing in the West?"

"Yes, rapidly, but there's millions of acres of as fine grazing country as the sun ever shone on, with plenty of pure water, unoccupied and waiting for the march of progress to develop it. In spite of the fact that the business is growing rapidly, the price of beef remains firm, which is proof positive that the supply is not in excess of the demand. Its only a matter of time when the country will blossom under the refining influences of civilization. Its undeveloped resources are simply wonderful."

"How is the climate?"

"Well, when you come to talk on that point I grow enthusiastic. It's the healthiest in the world. Sickness is an uncommon thing. The air is pure and bracing, and a man feels buoyant all the time. When I came home I rode seventy-five miles in an open sleigh with the mercury down to 28° below zero, but I did not suffer a particle from cold. Speaking about the character of the people out there reminds me. We are catching the idea of civil government rapidly. I attended the execution of the first man ever hung by sanction of the law in the Territory, at Rawlins, one week ago Friday. The victim was a man named Donovan. He was convicted of the murder of a man who had befriended him in days gone by. Now, the people out there are down on ingratitude, and they waltzed that fellow into eternity in great shape. It was a private affair. I applied to the Sheriff for admission, but he would not admit me until the victim had been consulted. Here is his card:

"If I am to be hung, please admit L. H. Gray & oblige
L. DONOVAN."

"O. K.
"Wallace Miller, Sheriff."

"Armed with this credential I was allowed to witness Donovan's drop. The execution created quite an impression on the minds of the people and was a warning to the lawless. I'm going back in March, and I expect that four or five Pittsburgers will accompany me, who have about decided to go into the business. It's a great scheme, and, in the language of Colonel Sellers, 'there's millions in it,'" said Mr. Gray, as he sank partly out of sight in the slush in a wild chase across the street for a Union line car, which he finally succeeded in boarding a moment later.

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE.

CONGRESS AND NATIONAL DEFENCE.

JOHN ROACH ON THE EVILS THAT WOULD FOLLOW THE PASSAGE OF THE FREE-SHIP BILL.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: "In this great country of ours, one of the richest in the world, with ten thousand miles of coast, dotted with great commercial cities and manufacturing towns, there is not a single one of our ports on the ocean or lakes that an ordinary ironclad could not pass." So said Admiral Porter, and no man will question his judgment. Our old, superannuated forts have not a single modern gun to damage an enemy's ironclad; yet our Congress recently appropriated only a few hundred thousand dollars to finish one small ironclad, which required plates only seven inches thick for her armor. The Secretary of the Navy advertised in this country for bids for those plates, but not one was tendered; they could not be made in any of our Navy Yards, nor in any private establishment in this country, so they were contracted for in Europe.

Recently a Board of officers was appointed to determine which Navy Yard should be used for the manufacture of heavy ordnance, but was unable to give any idea of the extent or of the cost of the necessary plant, and was finally sent to Europe to procure the needed information. This Board has just made its report, and says that it would require three years to make the tools and put the plant in order before the first gun could be made. Three years, with all their contingencies. Can this Nation afford to wait three years? Can we begin too soon? England to-day has in her navy 65 powerful modern ironclads with a tonnage of 402,000 tons, with the most modern improved guns, and 434 ships for general service with a tonnage of 270,000 tons; or 499 ships with a tonnage of 672,000 tons. Those ships are manned by 4,964 officers and 63,836 seamen, and supported by an appropriation (for 1882 and 1883) of $55,697,000. Any eight of those ships could be sent, two to New-York, two to Philadelphia, two to Baltimore, and two to Boston, and as we have no ironclads for the defence of those cities, could pass our old forts and shell and burn those cities; or we could save them by raising the white flag, paying the ransom demanded, and swallowing the deep humiliation. France, Germany, Italy, even Chili, could do the same thing.

When the four cruisers now in course of construction were first talked of, information was placed before the Naval Committee by Government officers that they could not be built in the Navy Yards without expensive improvements, and, what was worse, they had not the skilled labor in the yards; and yet one private establishment contracted to build the whole, and there are other yards fully equipped to do as much; but none of these yards has the facilities to make armor plates of modern size. But today, with the raw materials at hand from which to build ships and guns, we have none. Under these circumstances, can you estimate the value of the private shipyards to the Nation, furnishing the plants and educating mechanics, and thus providing for the Nation's defence?

Situated as we are, without forts, without guns, without ships, without even the facilities for building them in our Navy Yards, can it be believed that there is a bill before Congress, and members to advocate that bill, too, to buy ships in the cheapest market, and admit them duty free, while our own shipyards and everything they contain are taxed for the benefit of this Government? Such a policy should raise the blush of shame to the cheek of every honest patriotic man.

Such a policy as this would close every shipyard in the country. We should then be without forts, without guns, without ships, without shipyards, and without the skilled labor to build them. One step more and politicians will complete the disastrous chain: break down the shipyards, and give the Nation up, bound hand and foot, to English capital and English greed. Then where is the skilled labor to come from? We would be compelled to go for it where we have gone for our armor plates; and if nothing but cost is taken into account in this country, why not engage England to do our fighting as well as our carrying? She is the only Nation we can buy from. Can we trust her? Remember the Alabama, the Trent affair, the blockade-runners. Pass the free-ship bill, and they close the only practical school which educates labor. Depend upon it, those shipyards which they would so ruthlessly destroy are of more importance to us than Annapolis. To cotton and bread we must give the credit for all the respect that other Nations have for us. Certainly not to our means of defence.

But the advocates of free ships will tell us that we build only a few iron ships, and consequently the loss to the Nation cannot amount to much. This is a mistake. We have now one hundred thousand tons of as good iron ships as are produced in the world engaged in the foreign trade. They were brought into existence in spite of all the opposition piled up against us by our rivals and our unjust laws. In that trade they are manned by 4,000 men, and as commerce-destroyers in speed are far superior to our whole Navy. We have three times that number of fast iron sea-going coastwise steamers, and the plant and skilled labor to reproduce them. All parties are agreed that free trade will ruin this country. Will Congress pass this bill and thus destroy the shipyards of the country and our means of National defence? Will the common sense of this great people allow this industry to be strangled while all other interests are protected?

JOHN ROACH.

New-York, March 14, 1884.

IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT.

To The Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: In a recent issue of THE TRIBUNE an editorial upon imprisonment for debt under the laws of this State was printed. The views expressed upon the subject I think reflect unmerited disparagement upon our law concerning such cases. There is no person imprisoned upon a judgment against him who could not obtain a release by petition to the Court and filing a schedule of his property if any. See Code Civil Procedure §2,188 *et seq.*

And it is only where there is the element either of tort or fraud in the claim upon which the judgment was obtained that execution may be had against the person. The judgment debtor in such cases is one who has acted dishonestly, and the law protects the party he has defrauded by holding the debtor till he pays or shows to the Court by his petition and schedule that he has no means. This has been found to be a most necessary remedy to protect the community against frauds and dishonest practices in business transactions; and any change in the laws on this subject would have the effect of making fraudulent practices more common and would leave the honest portion of the public without any protection, and with no remedy for the enforcement of their rights against persons who seek to thrive by dishonesty and fraud.

DAVID KEASE.

New-York Bar Association, March 17, 1884.

[This is the familiar ground upon which the system that leads to the outrageous abuses practised in Ludlow Street Jail has always found apologists. There are many States in the Union, as Mr. Keane must know perfectly well, that find no difficulty in enforcing justice and protecting the rights of their citizens without keeping men shut up in prison for an indefinite number of years on a civil process. When fraud has been committed, prove it and punish the guilty man through the criminal courts. If his guilt cannot be proved so as to justify resort to the Grand Jury, is it right to keep him locked up indefinitely and subject him to the vile treatment which prisoners suffer in that den of extortion and blackmail in Ludlow-st? *Ed.*]

A BARBAROUS LAW.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: THE TRIBUNE is entitled to the thanks of every lawyer in the State, and every one else for that matter, for the able editorial in this morning's issue on "Imprisonment for Debt." It is to be hoped that you will keep your guns levelled at this barbarous law until it is swept out of existence. It never did any good. It is a legalized method of aiding vindictive creditors to visit their malice upon the poor debtor. It affords no protection to the community, nor does it deter men from running into debt, or from incurring indebtedness for which they are liable to arrest. There is no reason for the existence of such an atrocious law, and no decent man with a spark of humanity in his soul can be found to oppose its swift abolition. Show me a man who is in favor of the law and I will show you one who has a private grudge to gratify, or is a heartless officer who finds profit in it in the fees it pays him, and in the facilities it offers him for legally garroting his victim.

B.

New-York, March 12, 1884.

SCOURING THE COUNTRY FOR "BOB" VEAL.

To the Editor of the Tribune.

SIR: As THE TRIBUNE has been interested in exposing frauds, and has done much to stop evil-doing, I wish to give you a few facts that may be information concerning what is, I suppose, contrary to the regulations of the Board of Health in New-York City. Men have come here, who are, and have been for some weeks, scouring the country buying up calves, and all classes of calves that they can find. It makes no difference to them whether the calves are an hour old or four weeks. They are killed near the village, and sent off on the train. The meat is shipped in large quadrangular baskets, and is covered with the hides of the calves. I am told that the meat of good calves is put on the top of the baskets, and the "bob" veal in the bottom. I am also told that the men say they are shipping the young calves to feed the animals in Central Park; that they also use them to make fertilizers and chicken feed. I am rather inclined to think that they are shipped to New-York City, or thereabouts, to feed human animals; and as I know that no farmer will eat the meat he is selling, I have wondered if I might not confer a favor on New-York City people by writing this fact.

Yours truly, N. M. HARRIS,
Pastor United Presbyterian Church.

Walton, Delaware Co., N. Y., March 15, 1884.

THE MEXICAN TREATY.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: The United States Senate has acted wisely, it seems to me, in reconsidering the vote by which the Mexican Treaty was rejected. The convention was abruptly condemned by protectionists in that body as a compact in the interest of free trade, and the fact that railway interests in the Southwest would be greatly benefited by reciprocity created prejudice against it. Has not the time now come when the subject can be reopened for intelligent and deliberate discussion? In my judgment the Senators will find upon mature reflection that the wisest course for them to pursue is to reverse their previous decision and to ratify the treaty.

As a Northern protectionist, I perceive even from a superficial examination of the proposed schedules that there is no reason to dread the effects of reciprocity in this instance. The list of articles which may be exported free of duty from Mexico to the United States includes few manufactures. It is made up mainly of natural products and of raw materials which are used in American manufactures. The free importation of the chief agricultural products of Mexico contemplated in the treaty can do little injury to the agricultural interests of the United States. Raw cotton is excluded; the free importation of tropical woods, like mahogany, will not affect the value of native woods; and many of the entries in the proposed schedules are already on the free list. The main imports which will compete with natural products are tobacco in the leaf and certain grades of sugar. Otherwise, reciprocity will not affect any American industries injuriously.

On the other hand, the schedules of articles which can be exported duty-free from the United States to Mexico include many important manufactures—steam engines, agricultural implements, building materials, railroad machinery, vehicles of all kinds, clocks, stoves, sewing machines, coal of all kinds, petroleum, naphtha and many other articles and products. Mexico offers a great market for American manufactures. Already Great Britain and Germany are striving to gain possession of that market by the negotiation of commercial treaties. Americans have only to bestir themselves in order to retain the advantages already secured. Two-thirds of the foreign trade of Mexico is now carried on with the United States, and the adoption of reciprocity and the extension of the railway system will largely increase the volume of these commercial transactions.

If many of those home industries which have been steadily developed by the protective tariff will be directly benefited by this treaty, Senators ought to think twice before rejecting it. Protectionists must not forget that production, when powerfully stimulated, will eventually outrun the domestic demand and require a foreign market. Mexico promises to absorb a very large amount of American manufactures, and with the exception of sugar and leaf tobacco, does not ask for free trade in common products. In my judgment, Northern protectionists, at least, can accept the treaty with good grace.

E.

Brooklyn, March 10, 1884.

THE COLORADO COAL AND IRON COMPANY.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: General Palmer held a meeting of stockholders of the Colorado Coal and Iron Company in this city yesterday, and I understand he made the allegation that I, after an interview with him, had agreed to represent my report on the examination of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway, made to the English bond and stockholders, and that I grew pale with fright when confronted by him. In reply I would state most emphatically that such is not true. In 1882, at the request of General Palmer, a committee of bond and stockholders in London was appointed, consisting of Messrs. Fothonier, Renshaw and Caird, to select some one to represent them in the Denver and Rio Grande Railway board. I was in London at the time and was requested to enter the directory. In the letter asking me to serve in that capacity the committee said: "We desire one not connected with railroads, and upon whose statements we can thoroughly rely from 'a business point of view.'" In that spirit I entered the board and made an examination of the property. It became my duty to criticise many things in connection with the company's operations in Colorado, and on submitting my report it was in turn submitted to General Palmer, who was in London at the time, with a view to allow him to explain away my criticisms. General Palmer appears to have partially satisfied my English friends, and they were induced to withhold my report for a time from circulation. Upon learning this, I wrote to London, and from my letter I extract the following: "I again repeat, my report is an honest representation on the true condition of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway Company, and I must stand by it, and should wish it placed on record."

In no interview with General Palmer did I ever for an instant withdraw any report or statement I had made, but I did consent at the instance of some of my friends in New-York to refrain from its circulation here. What seems to rankle with General Palmer is, that having been made a director at his suggestion I should be independent enough to criticise the management of the company, whether it affected him or others.

HENRY E. SPRAGUE.

No. 35 Front-st., New-York, March 21, 1884.

THE ENGLISH COPYRIGHT LAW.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Mr. G. P. Lathrop, Secretary of the American Copyright League, has issued a circular, "Objections Removed," in the interest of the Dorsheimer bill. This is one of the "removed" objections:

It is not a correct statement that the American author can now obtain copyright in England by first publishing there. He must be within the British dominions at the time of publication.

The English copyright statute, as applicable to foreigners, is ruled by two decisions, both given in a suit to test the validity of the copyright of a work by an American author. There were five judges on the bench; three of them decided that the author of a book must be on British soil in order to secure a valid copyright; two of them decided that he might be anywhere; and since then, or for more than fifteen years, copyrights secured in conformity with either decision have not been questioned, and it is not likely that they will be in the future.

Liberality is progressive.

Very respectfully yours, ROBERTS BROTHERS.

Boston, March 15, 1884.

"THE FOUNTAIN-HEAD OF EVIL."

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: Allow me to thank you heartily and cordially for the most excellent article in your paper of this morning under the head of "The Fountain-head of Evil." When the leading paper of these United States gives utterance to the sentiments of that article, there is certainly hope for the redemption of our country, and especially of our great cities, from the influence and from the tyranny of rum. Well, and truly do you say: "Municipal corruption, crime, poverty, ignorance, immorality, all flourish rankly because the people tolerate rum." Such articles as the one in this morning's TRIBUNE of the People will tend to hasten the day when the People educated, enlightened and instructed in the terrible evils of intemperance, and the pauperism and crime caused by rum, will rise in their might and declare emancipation from this curse to society and to the world. Strike on; each blow tells for good. Yours truly,

JAMES A. BRIGGS,

Brooklyn, March 16, 1884.

A REPUBLICAN PAPER WANTED IN THE SOUTH.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SI