HERE FOR CHRISTMAS.

Many Passengers on Mauretania in Stormy Westward Trip.

After a series of hard gales, heavy seas and generally adverse Atlantic weather, including the tail end of a hurricane, which she encountered last Tuesday, the biggest ocean liner afloat, the Cunard steamship Mauretania, swept majestically past Sandy Hook Lightship—the finish of her second westward race against time—at 6:45 o'clock yesterday morning, just as dawn was breaking.

By the time the pilot had climbed on board it was announced that the big ship had covered the 2,780 miles from Daunt's Lightship, off Queenstown, in 5 days and 55 minutes, which was exactly a minute longer than the Lusitania took to complete the distance on her first westward passage. The Lusitania holds the westward record of 4 days 19 hours 54 minutes, her sister ship being 5 hours 1 minute behind that time on this trip.

The Mauretania's daily runs were: December 15, 501 miles from Daunt's Rock Lightship; December 16, 562 miles; December 17, 553 miles; December 18, 545 miles; December 19, 693 miles, and 476 miles to Sandy Hook Lightship.

Her average speed for the entire distance was 23 knots, but from noon of Thursday to the finish she travelled at the rate of 24.83 knots. From noon of Wednesday until noon Thursday was the only smooth day she had. In that period she made 606 miles, and had it not been that some of the stokers were ill during the passage the officers confidently expected that the ship would have beaten her highest run of 624 miles, made on her last westward trip.

The Mauretania came straight up the Ambrose Channel to Quarantine, where she was detained for two hours on account of the transfer of a phenomenally large Christmas mail. Arriving off West 14th street, at 11 o'clock, she was moored to her pier in twenty-five minutes, and by 12:30 all her saloon passengers were ashore. The Mauretania brought 409 saloon, 247 second and 586 third class passengers—a total of 1,242. She also brought $422,000 in gold, 3917 sacks of Christmas mail and 149 packages of parcels post.

All the passengers united in praising the behavior of the Mauretania in Tuesday's hurricane, when the wind blew from the northeast for nearly three hours at a rate varying from sixty to eighty miles an hour, raising a tremendous sea, which did some trifling damage to her boats, but through which she rode with only slightly diminished speed. It was with general satisfaction that no fog was encountered on the Newfoundland Banks, on account of the northwest wind and cold weather which followed the storm.

Among those on board were Whitelaw Reid, American Ambassador to the Court of St. James's; Mrs. Reid, Ogden Mills Reid and Miss Jean Reid, Captains E. Ferretti and Guidoni, of the Italian navy; Sir Edgar Vincent, M. P., and Edmund Bristol, M. P.; Mr. and Mrs. J. Sergeant Cram, John McFadden, Mrs. A. J. Drexel, Miss Drexel, J. A. Drexel and L. C. M. Drexel. At a concert held in the lounge room on Thursday night $325 was raised for the Seamen's Charities at Liverpool and New York. Mr. Reid was chairman, and Sir Edgar Vincent, who is a brother of Sir Howard Vincent, of the Westminster Rifles, in his address spoke of the wonderful progress made in shipbuilding, as exemplified in the Mauretania and Lusitania.

J. W. De Kay, of No. 115 West 88th street, this city, president and chairman of the board of directors of the Mexican National Packing Company, brought with him from England a group of financiers, shareholders in the company, who are to dedicate the plant in the City of Mexico. They will leave New York on a special car on December 26 for the City of Mexico, where the first great modern packing house in that country is to be opened by the Mexican Vice-President, acting for President Diaz. The plant is to be operated under a special concession from the Mexican government, and packing houses all over that republic are to be opened under strict government supervision.

Simon Lake, the inventor of the Lake submarine, who was a passenger, said he was constructing four of his boats for the Russian government at St. Petersburg. They are of five hundred tons each and are to travel fifteen miles an hour on the surface and eight miles submerged. Two more, being built in Austria, are to go twelve and nine miles an hour respectively on the surface and submerged. He declares that they will discharge torpedoes like a rapid fire gun.

Eugene Littauer, brother of ex-Congressman Littauer, is returning from an eighteen months' trip to Japan, the Philippines and Ceylon. Others on board were Vice-President Hackstaff of the Illinois Central Railroad, Frederick Parry Morris, president of the Long Island News Company; Lady Duff Gordon, a sister of Mrs. Elinor Glyn, Miss Dorothy Billman and Mr. and Mrs. Fred C. Whitney.

GRANDDAUGHTER FOR TOM L. JOHNSON.

[By Telegraph to The Tribune.]

Cleveland, Dec. 20.—A daughter, to be named Margaret Evelyn, was born this morning to Signora Frederica Mariana, who was Bessie Johnson, daughter of Mayor Tom L. Johnson. The Marisnas were married here on March 23, and Mrs. Mariana returned to the family home a few weeks later, leaving Signor Mariana.

TO PAINT PORTRAIT OF GREENE.

[By Telegraph to The Tribune.]

Providence, Dec. 20.—A special commission appointed by the last Legislature to secure a portrait of General Nathanael Greene, to hang as a companion picture to Gilbert Stuart's painting of George Washington in the State Capitol, has awarded the contract to Gari Melchers, of New York.

WHAT IS GOING ON TO-DAY.

Free admission to Metropolitan Museum of Art, American Museum of Natural History and the Zoological Gardens.

Annual Pilgrim Mothers' dinner of the New York Legislative League, Waldorf-Astoria, 12:30 p. m.

Musical under the auspices of the College Women's Club, Waldorf-Astoria, 3 p. m.

Reception and musical of the Gotham Club, Waldorf-Astoria, 8 p. m.

PROMINENT ARRIVALS AT THE HOTELS

BELMONT—W. H. Porter, Boston. BRESLIN—A. P. Hill, Fort Edward. GILSEY—J. H. Young, Philadelphia. GRAND—J. M. Dobbs, San Juan. HOLLAND—E. N. Brown, Mexico. IMPERIAL—George D. Lawrence, Taunton. MANHATTAN—Martin S. Kean, Albany. MAJESTIC—James C. Martin, Richmond. PRINCE GEORGE—George D. Foster, Nottingham, England. WALDORF-ASTORIA—P. P. Campbell, Pittsburg.

THE WEATHER REPORT.

Official Record and Forecast.—Washington, Dec. 20.—The weather is generally cloudy in the East and South, with light snow in the Ohio Valley and along the lower lakes and light rain in the Gulf and South Atlantic states. Rain has also fallen in the North Pacific Coast states and snow in scattered localities in the plateau region. A slight disturbance is central in Western Texas and a second one is moving inland over Washington. The temperature changes have been unimportant. Light snow is probable Saturday in the Middle Atlantic states and the lower lake region and rain in the Gulf states. The weather Sunday will be unsettled in the East, with the probability of snow in Northern and rain in Southern districts. There will be little change from the present temperatures.

The winds along the New England coast will be fresh southwest; along the Middle Atlantic coast fresh and variable, mostly west; along the South Atlantic coast fresh northeast to east; along the east Gulf coast fresh northeast; along the west Gulf coast fresh and variable, mostly northeast.

Steamers departing Saturday for European ports will have fresh west winds and fair weather to the Grand Banks.

Storm warnings are displayed on the Washington coast.

Forecast for Special Localities.—For New England, fair to-day and Sunday; fresh southwest winds.

For Eastern New York, Eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, cloudy, possibly light snow to-day; Sunday partly cloudy; fresh west winds.

For the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia, cloudy to-day; possibly light snows; Sunday fair; light variable winds.

For Western Pennsylvania and Western New York, cloudy to-day; possibly light snow; Sunday fair; brisk west winds along the lakes.

Local Official Record.—The following official record from the Weather Bureau shows the changes in the temperature for the last twenty-four hours in comparison with the corresponding date last year:

	1906.	1907.		1906.	1907.
3 a. m.	31	26	6 p. m.	43	37
6 a. m.	35	25	9 p. m.	42	36
9 a. m.	35	27	11 p. m.	41	35
12 m.	46	34	12 p. m.	40	—
3 p. m.	46	37			

Highest temperature yesterday, 38 degrees; lowest, 24; average, 31; average for corresponding date last year, 39; average for corresponding date last thirty-three years, 35.

Local Forecast.—Cloudy, possible light snow, to-day; Sunday, partly cloudy; fresh west winds.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

PROTEST AGAINST NEW PRISON SITE.

Why Should Criminals Have Some of the Finest Scenery in the State?

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Some forty miles up the Hudson River, in the very heart of the lofty Highlands, the State of New York purposes to build a new prison on a tract of five hundred acres comprising the site of Fort Montgomery.

The location is one of singular beauty and historic interest. On the north bank of Popolopen Creek is a long, rugged hill, ending in an abrupt cliff at the Hudson. Across the river at this point stretched in Revolutionary days a heavy iron chain on booms of logs, to prevent the passage of the British fleet. For the protection of this chain a little two-gun battery was placed part way up the hill. Higher up beyond the crest of the bluff were the earthworks of Fort Montgomery, with guns commanding the river in all directions. A little further south, but not beyond rifle range, was Fort Clinton, another earthwork, about half as large, and capable of holding about four hundred men.

The scenery is superb. Across the water the steep sides of Anthony's Nose cast their shadow; to the south the ragged range of Dunderberg runs back out of sight, while down the river, a forest-lined vista of miles, is Peekskill in the distance.

Some hundred and thirty years ago Sir Henry Clinton sailed up from New York with a British fleet and army for the purpose of capturing these forts and opening the river. A pretended move upon Peekskill lured General Putnam from the support of the forts, and while he was absent Sir Henry marched his men around back of Dunderberg Mountain and attacked from the land side. Although hopelessly outnumbered, the small garrison of only six hundred men resisted until half their force and one hundred and forty of the enemy had christened the ground with their blood. The forts were taken, the boom was broken and the Hudson was opened to the British fleet.

And upon this spot, which our patriot dead made sacred, is to be erected another Sing Sing prison. Why, in all the great State of New York, was this place alone chosen? Was there not room elsewhere? The case gives rise to the curious inquiry, What particular merit have these criminals that we should place them amid the grandest scenery in the state? And the equally curious thought comes that perhaps the state commissioners, in their wisdom, have discovered that scenery has a reforming influence. We shall now look to see Pennsylvania erect a penal institution at Valley Forge, and Massachusetts a jail at the foot of Bunker Hill.

A Sing Sing on the site of Fort Montgomery! An electric chair on sacred ground! If the voice at Albany is indeed the voice of the people, and the voice of the people is the voice of God, let it deliver its aria in harmony, and not give forth discordant notes.

PATRIOT.

Newburg, N. Y., Dec. 19, 1907.

WEAK POINT IN NATIONAL ARMOR.

Disclosed by Pacific Cruise of the Battleship Fleet.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Foreign naval authorities, as might be anticipated, are quick to discover and emphasize the weak point in our national armor, as disclosed by the Pacific cruise of the battleship fleet.

Count Ernst von Reventlow, foremost of German writers on maritime affairs, wings a keen shaft at us when he declares "that nine-tenths of the coal carrying vessels being British, throws an unfavorable light upon the capacity of the American commercial marine." The count might have added that those coal carrying steamships that are not British are Norwegian, Dutch or Italian, and only one, the Virginian, is an American steamer, that happens to be going out to the Pacific to engage in the Hawaiian and coasting trade.

Great Britain, France and Germany would not dream of hiring foreign tramps to perform the essential national service of convoying and supplying their ships of war. Their laws, regulations and practice would forbid such a course, and no such humiliation would be necessary in any event, for all of these nations possess ocean freighting steamers of their own. But the United States, like Russia or China, is helpless, because a government which protects every other industry exposed to foreign competition has for sixty years neglected the merchant shipping that in time of need is the fighting navy's indispensable reserve.

If this were a time of war instead of peace Admiral Evans's great battleship fleet could not be moved to the Pacific Ocean, though a hostile force, having seized the Philippines, were about to descend upon Hawaii and hammer at the gates of Puget Sound and San Francisco. For foreign colliers could not be lawfully chartered or purchased after war had once begun, nor could their officers and crews be trusted to risk their lives for a flag they did not love in a conflict in which they had no interest. The United States learned this lesson in the war with Spain in 1898, when with fifty million dollars available for many days before fighting began we could not buy or beg or borrow enough colliers, transports and other auxiliaries for a little army of 25,000 men and a navy not one-fourth of the actual strength of that of 1907.

What foreign naval experts are saying, and what all the governments of Europe and Asia know, is that this great battleship cruise is being accomplished, so far as the vital coal supply is concerned, under false pretences—that is, lacking colliers of our own flag, officered and manned by our own people, the cruise could not be achieved under the stern conditions of actual war. Count von Reventlow understands this; what he says is mortifyingly true and undeniable, that "if the United States remains dependent upon England for coal transportation the latter country can use this fact to advantage in case of future complications between the United States and Japan for the promotion of her own political ends."

Harrison, McKinley, Roosevelt, three Republican Presidents one after another, have asked Congress to give the country a strong navy and a strong merchant marine. Congress has given them the one without the other. This spectacle of our huge battleship fleet convoyed around South America by foreign colliers, amid the sneers and jeers of Europe, is the inevitable and illuminating consequence.

WINTHROP L. MARVIN.

Boston, Dec. 19, 1907.

"CURRENCY BASED ON VALUE."

Correspondent Thinks Theory Worthy of Consideration.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The article of two or three days ago on "Currency Based on Value" departs from the usual dignified and sensible tenor of The Tribune. It is far from sensible to suppose that in the long run any money could be made by withholding commodities from use. Land will appreciate in value if withheld from use, but land is a different thing.

Neither is it sensible to suppose that money would continue to be issued after it ceased to bring the issuer a profit. Overabundance of money destroys interest, and there comes a time when the borrower must liquidate.

If the editor was not serious in his expressions of fear regarding the outcome of putting the value basis theory into practice, he stands convicted of want of dignity for the two following reasons:

The subject is too momentous to admit of trivial treatment.

In the second place, the value basis theory is worthy of consideration. Not that it has always been presented in workable form, by Senator McLaurin and others, but it was the editor's duty to discover the good element in the various propositions and discard the unworkable accompaniments.

The editor has things mixed, any way. It is not value, but wealth, that it is proposed to utilize as the basis of money.

E. D. BRINKERHOFF.

New York, Dec. 17, 1907.

N. Y. U. MUSICAL CLUB ELECTIONS.

The following officers were elected yesterday at the annual meeting of the New York University musical clubs: C. H. Van Bargen, '08, manager; G. L. Hawkins, '09, assistant manager; W. P. Sinclair, '08, leader of the glee club.

The itinerary of the clubs follows: January 10, Peekskill; January 17, University Heights; January 21, Flushing; February 4, Rockville Centre, Long Island; March 10, Newark; March 28, at the Woman's Law Class commencement exercises at Washington Square; April 3, New York City, and Easter, trip to Providence.

PRICE OF DIGESTION.

Plasmon Company May Make It Cost Mark Twain $32,000.

The Plasmon Company of America, a corporation capitalized at $750,000, with $250,000 paid in, of which Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) is vice-president and acting president, went into the hands of a receiver yesterday.

The famous author must figure in this story of his connection with the bankrupt company by his right name, for to use his nome de plume would presage something humorous, and the story doesn't present a humorous side.

It is true that the bankruptcy proceedings against the Plasmon Company, which is a concern manufacturing a milk food product, reveal the fact that it may cost Mr. Clemens indirectly about $32,000 to cure his indigestion, but who would laugh at that? That amount represents approximately his investment in the Plasmon. In a letter sent by Mr. Clemens to one of the petitioning creditors, he says that the company's available bank balance is only $13 08.

According to Ralph W. Ashcroft, who represents Mr. Clemens in his Plasmon interests, the latter has been an "innocent at home" in this commercial venture. The author has told about it in his autobiography, in which he referred to the men who sold him the stock as the "Plasmon Buccaneers."

But to revert to his trouble with his digestive apparatus—which is the beginning of the story—that was when Mr. Clemens was on a tour of the world, about eight or nine years ago. While in Vienna, some one recommended to him a milk food, the continuous use of which cured him of his indigestion. The product came from London, and when Mr. Clemens returned there he was so enthusiastic over it that he became interested in the formation of the International Plasmon, Limited. The latter now owns one-third of the shares of the Plasmon Company of America.

When Mr. Clemens returned to New York he was still enthusiastic, and several persons to whom he told the story of the rehabilitation of his digestion absorbed the spirit and set about organizing an American company for the manufacture of the magic powder. They promised to let the humorist "in on the ground floor"; he went in, but, according to Mr. Ashcroft, it was not on the right floor. The promise was, Mr. Ashcroft said, to sell Mr. Clemens stock at $50, which, however, cost him $100 a share, which was the par value.

That was about five years ago. Since then there have been many misunderstandings in the company management, which finally have resulted in bankruptcy proceedings.

The petition in bankruptcy filed was an involuntary one. The petitioning creditors were William B. McGann, ex-president of the company, whose claim is $2,500; William T. Robson, ex-treasurer, $1,000, and Ralph W. Ashcroft, $8,000. These claims were for services and money loaned.

Mr. Ashcroft was formerly assistant manager of the Plasmon company, and about four years ago made certain charges of mismanagement. The controversy that arose resulted in a libel suit brought by Mr. Ashcroft against John Hays Hammond, who was interested in the company.

Mr. Clemens was a witness in the case which was non-suited. Mr. Ashcroft said yesterday that he learned when he made his charges against certain men in the company that they were trying to freeze out Mr. Clemens.

Judge Hough appointed C. S. Brookheim yesterday as receiver of the Plasmon company. The papers in the case were served on Mr. Clemens.

"Your friends say you were outrageously swindled. Were you?" said a reporter to Mr. Clemens yesterday.

"I was," he replied.

"Out of how much?"

"Oh, about $32,000. But I don't mean that I was swindled out of the $25,000. The company failed because of bad management."

"Was this the first time you were swindled?"

"In my life? The first time in my life?"

"Yes, sir."

"Oh," laughed Mark Twain, "why, I have been swindled out of more money than there is on this planet.

"But," continued Mr. Clemens, "I oughtn't to say I was swindled out of all the money. Most of it was lost through bad business. I was always bad in business.

"Don't confound the bankrupt company with the English Plasmon Company," he added. "That is paying 5 or 6 per cent, which is doing well for an English company. I hold $80,000 worth of stock in the English company."

BONCI, ILL FROM GRIP, BREAKS DOWN.

Conried and Hammerstein Singers Have a Series of Misfortunes.

The ill luck which has apparently been following Heinrich Conried and Oscar Hammerstein for the last week continued yesterday, and at the end of the first act of "La Boheme" at the Metropolitan Opera House last night Signor Bonci, who had the part of Rodolfo, broke down and was compelled to leave the stage. Andreas Dippel took his place.

Signor Bonci had a slight attack of grip, from which Dr. Carl Savini, his physician, says that he will recover in a few days. At the beginning of the performance Max Hirsch came before the curtain and announced that Bonci was suffering from bronchitis, and that he might not be able to finish the opera on account of it. When the famous tenor began to sing it was evident at once that he was not in his usual voice. Each note seemed to cost him a decided effort.

At the end of the first act Mr. Hirsch again appeared and announced that as the tenor had suffered a breakdown his place would be taken by Mr. Dippel. Many of those who had heard the man sing were disposed to criticise Mr. Conried for allowing Bonci to take a part when he was evidently so ill.

A representative of the impresario said that Bonci had discovered that he had a cold early in the evening, but had come to the Metropolitan and had insisted on taking his part. He was resting quietly late last night in his apartment in the Hotel Ansonia, and his physician said that he will be able to sing again next week.

The misfortune that has been following the opera managers began a week ago, when Miss Geraldine Farrar broke down at the Metropolitan on account of a cold. Since then Mme. Sembrich, of the Metropolitan, has had bronchitis, and Mme. Gadsky has sent Mr. Conried word that she will not be able to take part in "The Flying Dutchman" to-night because of the death of her mother in Germany.

At the Manhattan Mme. Gerville-Reache was afflicted a few nights ago. Later came the news that Miss Mary Garden was ill and might not be able to appear again this winter. It was said at the Manhattan last night that Miss Garden's condition was about the same as yesterday, and it would be impossible to say certainly before Monday whether she had pneumonia or not. The performance of "Louise," of which Miss Garden's illness necessitated the postponement, will be given on Friday night.

MISS RUMSEY TO WED FRENCHMAN.

[By Telegraph to The Tribune.]

St. Louis, Dec. 20.—Miss Elma Rumsey announced her engagement to Pierre Cartier, of Paris, on her return home to-day from New York, where she has been visiting Mrs. D. Bryson Delavan, her sister. The wedding date has not been set. Miss Rumsey is heiress to more than $1,000,000 left by her father, Moses Rumsey, of this city. She first met her fiancé, who belongs to an old French family, in Paris last summer.

CARDINAL'S CHRISTMAS GREETINGS.

[By Telegraph to The Tribune.]

Baltimore, Dec. 20.—Cardinal Gibbons has sent Christmas greetings to the Pope and the Catholic sovereigns and princes of Europe. One letter is to Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, another to the King of Spain, and another to the King and Queen of Portugal. The King of Saxony is not forgotten, nor is the Regent of Bavaria. King Leopold of Belgium is remembered, and letters have also been addressed to the cardinals.

CHICAGO SPEAKER FOR Y. M. C. A. MEETING

Raymond Robins, known as "The People's Politician," of Chicago, will speak at the men's mass meeting at the West Side Young Men's Christian Association, No. 318 West 57th street, to-morrow afternoon at 3:30 o'clock. His subject, with which he is thoroughly familiar from close study, will be: "Homeless Men; or, Industrial and Social Human Waste—Behind the Scenes of a Municipal Lodging House."

MUSIC.

OPERA UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

It is a small journalistic fancy that cannot supply entertainment for the reader of musical doings in the opera houses nowadays. It ought not to be necessary to rewrite the story of Mr. Conried's deposition from the position which is his by right of possession and power; or of new opera houses in Boston, Philadelphia and a string of cities that have strained themselves for half a century to support opera for a day once a week during the season or for a week or two after the season in New York is over; or of German opera at an opera house guiltless of German singers, or of festival lyric theatres on the Hudson. These are fine and elastic topics, but the prevailing epidemic of influenza is providing facts enough to keep the chronicler of musical doings busy without resorting to them. They might, therefore, as well be laid aside till the coming of the dog days, when they will be more entertaining than they are now and quite as significant.

There were changes of operas at both houses last night which had been announced on account of the illness of singers; and at the Metropolitan there was another change, which had not been foreseen, and therefore could not be announced. Signor Bonci tried to sing the role of Rudolfo in "La Bohème," but hoarseness interfered. He walked through the first act with such moral support as he could extract from an apology offered from the stage in his behalf and then yielded his task to Mr. Dippel, who finished it in a whole hearted manner that won for him the sympathy and applause of the audience. Under the circumstances the representation went off spiritedly, though it seemed with a little more energy than was essential in the orchestral department. Wholly charming was Miss Farrar as Mimi. There will also be a change in the opera to-night. Mme. Gadski's mother, who has long been ill, died in Berlin yesterday, and Miss Alten will therefore assume the part of Senta.

Archaic as are most of the set arias in "Rigoletto," there is a considerable vitality left, even for latter day hearers, in what may be called the music of the scene, the short passages descriptive of dramatic movement and emotion, such as give pith and power to the first interview between the jester and Sparafucile. Episodes like this have no doubt done their part toward keeping "Rigoletto" intermittently popular, and it was in such moments of this work, as Mr. Campanini and the orchestra set them forth last evening at the Manhattan Opera House, that most enjoyment lay for frequenters of Mr. Hammerstein's theatre. Thanks to the sensitive and authoritative leadership of this conductor, the best is made of even these old fashioned scores—would that the singing actors concerned in their presentation might attain the same high level of interpretative skill!

It was at short notice that Mr. Hammerstein's forces gave "Rigoletto" this, its first hearing of the Manhattan's season. "Louise" being postponed, last night's bill was arranged barely twenty-four hours before the audience gathered to see and hear it. Under the circumstances credit must be given for a good measure of success. Mr. Sammarco does not yet personate the jester with the commanding force of characterization to which he may ultimately attain, but his singing of the music is always intelligent and always instinct with beauty. He was in excellent voice last evening, but this could not be said of his colleague, Mr. Bassi, who sang the Duke's part with effort. Miss Zeppilli was a girlish Gilda, and her facility of execution in the upper register counted strongly in her favor. Mr. Arimondi was well fitted with the bravo's duties, and Mr. Gillibert gave artistic importance to the usually ineffective part of Monterone. A good audience was present—the Manhattan Opera House has for some time past been a place of social as well as musical consideration.

SANTA CLAUS LEFT COALHOLE OPEN.

And Three Girls Fell Into It Trying to Get Some of the Presents.

Three girls, who were trying last night to get some of the presents given out by a Santa Claus in front of a department store in Grand street, Williamsburg, came to grief, and as a result are nursing some severe bruises. Santa Claus apeared in front of the store about 9 o'clock and began to distribute his presents. He was surrounded by a mob which became so violent St. Nicholas became frightened.

In the scramble Annie Silverstein, of No. 288 Metropolitan avenue; Sarah Weissman, of No. 284 Metropolitan avenue, and Emma Walters, of No. 128 Bedford avenue, were pushed down an open coalhole. Strangely they were not severely injured. Santa Claus was informed by the police that he had better retreat to the interior of the store. He obeyed the advice, and the crowd soon scattered. A physician who was called patched up the faces of the girls, who then went to their homes.

TAHITI PRINCESS IN SAN FRANCISCO.

San Francisco, Dec. 20.—Princess Terri Pomare, of the royal family of Tahiti, daughter of Queen Marau and niece of Prince Arii P. Asalmon, arrived to-day from Papeete on the Oceanic liner Mariposa for a short stay here.

ASHOKAN DAM "SCANDAL."

Professional Support of The Tribune's Position.

From The Engineering Magazine.

The so-called "investigation" of the contract for building the Ashokan Dam has now developed a situation which demands the immediate and watchful scrutiny of the entire press and all the commercial, civic and taxpayers' associations of greater New York.

The building of this great dam is the first and most important step toward the construction of the greatest water supply system that has ever yet been undertaken anywhere. The aggregate cost of the entire work will be somewhere between $100,000,000 and $250,000,000, and, of course, many years of time will be required for its completion. Because of the magnitude of the undertaking, and especially because of the absolute necessity for keeping partisan politics and "political grafters" out of the work, the Legislature of New York publicly pledged Mayor McClellan to the appointment of three Commissioners of the Board of Water Supply, to be selected and nominated by the three leading commercial organizations of greater New York. In accordance with this obligatory public pledge the Mayor was fortunate enough, for the city, to secure the services of J. Edward Simmons, nominated by the Chamber of Commerce, of which he is president; Charles N. Chadwick, nominated by the Manufacturers' Association of New York, and Charles A. Shaw, nominated by the Board of Fire Underwriters. These are all men of the highest probity of character, of spotless integrity, distinguished by long and successful business careers, and throughout the recent and scandalous newspaper campaign of insinuation, ridicule and misrepresentation not even the boldest of the political intriguers back of this so-called "investigation" has dared to give utterance to a suspicion of the straightforward and open honesty of the commissioners in the matter of letting this contract.

In explanation of their action, on the first day of the so-called "investigation" the commissioners presented a dignified and exact statement of all the essential facts and circumstances leading up to the letting of the contract. A careful reading of this statement, followed by close study of the official documents and all the evidence that has since been brought out by the Commissioners of Accounts, serves to satisfy us that the Commissioners of the Board of Water Supply not only acted conscientiously but also with orderly procedure and deliberation, and manifestly with the greatest care to see that the best interests of the city might be served. And in coming to a conclusion they not only had, in formal written opinions, the high warrant of the very best engineering advice that they could command, but they also had an exhaustive written opinion from the Corporation Counsel proving that, legally and technically, they would be obeying the manifest purpose of the state Legislature in letting the work to the contractor who, in their best judgment, could best serve the city's interests.

These important official documents are all in available typewritten form for those who may desire to read them; and the signed statement of the three commissioners, above referred to, has been wisely issued in printed form, so that it may be obtained at once, by either personal or written application to the secretary of the board, No. 299 Broadway, New York. We strongly commend a reading of this printed document by every one who may be in any way concerned, because it failed of publication in the newspapers, and in this issue we have not available space for repeating the essential facts embodied in the statement.

The point of immediate importance is that the so-called "investigation" has not developed one essential fact which is contrary to or in conflict with the perfectly frank and open statements which the Commissioners of the Board of Water Supply have made, filed and held open for public inspection from the very beginning of the transaction. On the other hand, the conduct of the inquiry from beginning to end indicates a settled purpose to discredit the commissioners before the public, and if possible, through newspaper notoriety, misrepresentation and ridicule, to drive them out of office, and thus open the way for the Mayor to secure the appointment of commissioners who will manage the great work as he personally may desire—which is the direct opposite of the known purpose of the law creating the Board of Water Supply!

In view of these developments, we are highly gratified to observe that at least three of the most influential of the New York newspapers have already sounded a note of warning. (Quotations from The Tribune, "The Evening Post" and "The Outlook" followed.)

THE DRAMA.

NEW PLAY AT THE GERMAN THEATRE.

"ON THE EVE."

A melodrama, entitled "On the Eve," written by Leopold Kampf, was produced last night at the German Theatre. It relates to the Nihilist movement in Russia. The scene is laid in a Russian town, on the eve of a popular revolt. The first act shows a group of Nihilists, in their lodging, where they are privily engaged in printing revolutionary documents. One of those Nihilists, Vasili by name, is the hero of the play; another of them, Anna Rikanskaya, is the heroine. Vasili is devotedly in love with Anna, but he is fearful that she, being devoted to the revolutionary cause, will look on him with contempt, if he declares his love and allows any human feeling to supersede his devotion to the Nihilist revolt. The act closes with the seizure of these Nihilists, Vasili and Anna having escaped. The second act shows another group of conspirators, who are preparing to kill a tyrannical governor, by exploding a bomb under his carriage, as he is driving from the opera, in the night. Vasili undertakes the fatal duty of casting the bomb. An interview between Vasili and Anna presently occurs in which the secret of their love for each other is mutually avowed: here the interest of the drama becomes deep and passionately emotional. In act third the scene shifts to the house of Anna's aunt, who is the wife of a Russian official but, secretly, is a Nihilist. Anna has taken refuge with her aunt. Vasili visits her, at that house, and, in taking leave of her forever—since he must die, in the execution of his assumed duty—entreats her to give the signal by placing a lighted candle in the window. This the heartbroken young woman undertakes to do, and Vasili thereupon departs. The play terminates with Anna's frantic action, in placing the candle in the window after a fierce struggle with herself, and the explosion of the bomb. This play possesses essentially dramatic moments and obviously it is indicative of a condition of terrible hardship and suffering; while, also, it presents images of heroic self-sacrifice in the fanatical service of what is considered a patriotic duty by persons who are in revolt against the government of their country.

THE SUNDAY CONCERTS.

For the information of those in quest of diversion on the first day of the week the following list of theatres where two concerts will be given every Sunday, beginning to-morrow, may prove serviceable:

MANHATTAN.	
Alhambra,	Fifth Avenue,
American,	Harlem Opera House,
Colonial,	Victoria,
Dewey,	Lincoln Square,
Gotham,	Murray Hill,
Fifty-eighth Street,	Yorkville,
Fourteenth Street,	Metropolis.
New York,	BROOKLYN.
Twenty-third Street,	Gotham,
One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street,	Novelty,
Grand Opera House,	Folly,
Union Square,	Olympic,
	Gayety,
	Star.

At the opera houses, the Metropolitan and the Manhattan, the concerts will be given, as usual, on Sunday nights.

MR. WEBER SEES MR. SAVAGE.

"Joe" Weber and Henry W. Savage have come to an agreement concerning a burlesque of "The Merry Widow," which Mr. Weber announces as the next novelty at his Music Hall. Mr. Weber will pay Mr. Savage royalties for the exclusive burlesque rights, and another name will be given the entertainment. To the person who can suggest a name for the burlesque that will meet his approval Mr. Weber will give $25.

"SECRET ORCHARD" AT THE GARDEN.

"The Secret Orchard," which begins its last week at the Lyric Theatre on Monday night, will continue its career at the Garden Theatre, beginning December 30. The managers of the play expect to put it on a Broadway stage after the holiday season.

"A WALTZ DREAM" COMING NEXT MONTH.

One of the novelties announced for the new year is an operetta comedy called "A Waltz Dream." It will be presented by Frank McKee at the Broadway Theatre on January 27. Charles Frohman will produce it in England.

TRANSATLANTIC TRAVELLERS.

Among the passengers who will depart to-day for Europe are:

THE LUCANIA, FOR LIVERPOOL.	
G. B. Bancroft.	Mr. and Mrs. W. Pace.
Mr. and Mrs. John Boyd.	A. S. Parsons.
L. H. Dodge.	Mr. and Mrs. Charles Nicholson.
Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Harr.	
THE MINNETONKA, FOR LONDON.	
J. H. Armstrong.	Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Pennock.
Mr. and Mrs. Abbott Low Dow.	The Rev. and Mrs. P. A. Sherman.
L. J. Forde.	
THE PENNSYLVANIA, FOR HAMBURG.	
Carl Fruend.	Otto Ernst Wilde.
Henry L. Titer.	William Stanley Peck.
S. C. Weil.	Dr. W. H. Merrian.

Travellers who arrived yesterday from abroad were:

THE MAURETANIA, FROM LIVERPOOL.	
Mr. and Mrs. Noel Bardac.	William F. Gibbs.
Ogden Bishop.	Whitelaw Reid, American Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, and Mrs. Reid
C. S. Cadwallader.	
F. W. Clement.	
Mr. and Mrs. J. Sergeant Cram.	Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Kelly.
Mrs. A. J. Drexel.	Simon Lake.
Reginald Fellowes.	Mrs. Charles E. Whitney.
Eustace Fiennes.	Captain J. C. Summers.
Mrs. P. R. Forbes.	Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Watson.
Lady Duff Gordon.	
THE PRESIDENT GRANT, FROM HAMBURG.	
William H. Taft, Secretary of War, and Mrs. Taft.	Mr. and Mrs. Martin Egan.
Karl Blinz.	Dr. and Mrs. Ora D. Holland.
Brigadier General C. R. Edwards U. S. A.	Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Smoot.

NO APPOINTMENT MADE AS YET.

Rome, Dec. 20.—It is expected that the appointment of a Coadjutor Archbishop of San Francisco will be announced at a meeting of the Congregation of the Propaganda on January 13 or 20. Archbishop Riordan is confident that the Rev. Dr. Edward J. Hanna, of Rochester, will be appointed.

H. H. VREELAND BEFORE GRAND JURY.

Herbert H. Vreeland, formerly president of the Metropolitan Street Railroad Company, was examined by the grand jury yesterday afternoon for more than an hour regarding the sale of the franchise of the Wall & Cortlandt Street Ferries Company. The hearing was then adjourned until January 13, when the subject will be taken up by a special grand jury.

Died.

Death notices appearing in THE TRIBUNE will be republished in the Tri-Weekly Tribune without extra charge.

Bailey, Charles H.	McInerney, Michael.
Bruyn, Anna P.	Mole, Caroline.
Burrows, Elizabeth.	Owens, Hannah E.
Campfield, Elizabeth U.	Parker, Euphemia M.
Cluett, Edmund.	Parmly, Ehrick.
Hathaway, Mary S.	Proal, Mrs. Sidney M.
Hicks, John D.	Reithelderfer, Thomas S.
Holcombe, Sarah E.	Studley, Caroline H.
Lecompte, Francis D.	Stuyvesant, Robert.

BAILEY—Suddenly, at Bloomfield, N. J., on December 18, Dr. Charles H. Bailey. Funeral services at his home, No. 189 Liberty st., Saturday morning, December 21, at 11 o'clock.

BRUYN—At Kingston, N. Y., at her residence, No. 100 Maiden Lane, December 20, 1907, Anna Platt Bruyn. Funeral private, on Monday, December 23. Interment at New Hurley, N. Y.

BURROWS—Elizabeth Burrows, widow of the late Henry Burrows, in her 74th year. Funeral private.

CAMPFIELD—Suddenly, on Thursday, December 19, 1907, Elizabeth Upham, eldest daughter of the late Rev. Robert B. and Harriet Perkins Campfield. Funeral services at No. 11 North Walnut st., East Orange, N. J., this (Saturday) afternoon at 2 o'clock.

CLUETT—Edmund, at Troy, N. Y., December 18. The funeral will be held from St. Paul's Church, Troy, at 2 p. m. Saturday, December 21. It is kindly requested that no flowers be sent.

HATHAWAY—At East Orange, N. J., early Friday morning, December 20, 1907, Mary Stewart Hathaway, widow of Nathaniel Hathaway, in her 88th year. Relatives are invited to attend the services at the home of her son, Charles Hathaway, No. 155 Prospect st., East Orange, N. J., on arrival of 11:10 a. m. train from New York via D., L. & W. R. R., on Saturday, December 21. Carriages in waiting at Brick Church Station. Interment at Delhi, N. Y., on Sunday. Kindly send no flowers.

HICKS—At Westbury, Long Island, December 20, 1907, John D. Hicks, in his 79th year. Notice of funeral hereafter.

HOLCOMBE—Entered into life eternal, December 19, Sarah Elizabeth, wife of the late Rev. Theodore I. Holcombe. Faithful in all things. Funeral services