The Sun.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1879.

Amusements Today.

Broadway Opera House—The Spanish Gitanos.
Daly's Theatre—An Arabian Night. Matinee.
Fifth Avenue Theatre—H. M. S. Pinafore.
Grand Opera House—Don't Destroy.
Haverly's Theatre—Fiddle-de-dee Matinee.
Lester & Diehl's Garden—Concerts.
Niblo's Garden—Beauty of Salem.
New York Aquarium—Public Feeding Seals.
Park Theatre—Fritz in Ireland.
Standard Theatre—Princess Toto.
San Francisco Minstrels—Bowery at 2 P.M.
Theatre Comique—Mulligan Guards' Christmas.
Tony Pastor's Theatre—Variety.
Union Square Theatre—French Flats.
Wallack's Theatre—Estella.

The Hot-bed of Snobbery.

The GRANT movement very properly reached its height at Philadelphia, the hot-bed of snobbery.

GRANT had been received abroad by the crowned heads of Europe with honors never before accorded to any American.

The Philadelphia sincompoops, like BORIE and CHILDS, imagined that by imitating the courts of Europe they themselves would shine in a borrowed light. But who thinks anything of them?

All Philadelphians are more or less snobbish. They are born hero worshippers; and it is natural enough that GRANT should be more honored in Philadelphia than elsewhere.

After all, what does it amount to for him or for his followers?

Can he be elected President?

If a minority can elect.

Not otherwise.

Hence the Philadelphia demonstration, like all other demonstrations for GRANT, in the end goes for naught.

The News from Afghanistan.

The more we learn of the present situation of the British troops in Afghanistan, the more ominous it appears. As we read between the lines of the official despatches and mark their curious reticence, and more pregnant contradictions, we cannot escape the conviction that the English force under Gen. ROBERTS is in a position of grave peril, and that a repetition of the frightful catastrophe of 1841 can only be averted by prompt succor or consummate military skill. Is there reason to believe that the British commanders possess the requisite ability, or that adequate reinforcements can reach them through the Khyber Pass under the untoward conditions of an Afghan winter?

There is a sinister likeness between the recent experience of the English in Afghanistan, culminating, as it has, in the incidents of the past week, and the unlucky record of their previous occupation forty years ago. When DOST MOHAMMED surrendered in 1840, and was sent a prisoner to India, as his grandson, YAKUB Khan, was sent not long ago, the conquest of his dominions seemed to be practically accomplished. But, during the ensuing eighteen months, revolt followed revolt in every corner of the territory, and the Anglo-Indian troops had to be constantly on the move. Gradually the English troops in the Cabul district, notwithstanding some brilliant and isolated successes, were driven in upon the capital, and finally the forts on the heights overlooking the city were occupied by the insurgents. The capture of the commissariat stockade hastened the process of starvation, which must in any event have followed the control of all approaches to the environed army. Within sixty days the British were driven to capitulate, and the force which marched out under a promise of safe conduct was but little inferior to that now commanded by Gen. ROBERTS, numbering, as it did, 4,500 combatants and 12,000 camp followers. We need not remind the reader that the whole army was massacred in that portion of the Khyber Pass lying between Cabul and Jelalabad, and known as the Kurd-Cabul defile.

It has been the custom to charge the blame of this terrible disaster, perhaps the worst which had befallen the English arms in modern times, upon the age and incapacity of Gen. ELPHINSTONE; and certainly his behavior compared ill with the resolute defence of Jelalabad by SALE, or with the gallant stand of NOTT at Candahar. We must bear in mind that ELPHINSTONE, however, like ROBERTS in the present crisis, had to sustain the brunt of the Afghan attack, and the results of the military operations in the two cases have, up to date, been apparently identical. Thus we were told on Saturday that on Dec. 10 Gen. MACPHERSON had occupied Sarkh-Kotal just in time to prevent the junction of the Afghan regiments from Kohistan with an insurgent force from Ghuzni. Presently it leaked out that the Afghans had just before inflicted a severe defeat on another detachment led by Gen. MASSY, capturing some of his artillery, which were not recovered until the arrival of Gen. MACPHERSON'S forces. Next we heard that the enemy had attacked the British in the hills south of the Bala-Hissar, and the news of a repulse was telegraphed; but the despatch was plainly spurious, for the next day it transpired that MAHMOUD Jan, with 10,000 Afghan Sepoys, or regular infantry, had occupied these very heights. On Sunday we were assured that a successful attempt to dislodge the enemy was in progress during Friday, and that the crest of the hill would be stormed next day by Gen. MACPHERSON and Gen. BAKER, who were now moving in concert. On Monday it was announced that, after a partial failure on the part of MACPHERSON to carry the ridge, Gen. BAKER, at the head of some 5,000 men, had succeeded, after a desperate contest, in driving the Afghans from all of their positions. How much confidence can be placed in such assertions was shown on Tuesday, when it appeared that the practical outcome of the assault was the reverse of favorable; that the enemy, far from giving way, were still advancing; and that Gen. ROBERTS had decided, had, in other words, been obliged to coop up his forces within the so-called Shirpur cantonment, and to abandon to MAHMOUD Jan all the heights encircling the city. Such was the calamitous result of four days' fighting, and we are not surprised to learn that urgent appeals were sent from Cabul for immediate reinforcements, or that a meeting of the British Cabinet should have been forthwith summoned to consider such serious tidings.

Out of a mass of vague and garbled telegrams, two broad facts emerge, viz., that the Afghans, for the moment, are too strong for the British in the field, and that Gen. ROBERTS's position at Cabul presents a threatening similitude to that of ELPHINSTONE. It is true that communications through the Khyber Pass were said to be still open at last advices; but how can a mountain defile, over a hundred miles in length, be permanently held in the depths of winter against the hill tribes, inflamed, as they soon will be, with the hope of easy victory and unlimited plunder? Jelalabad, the fortress which commands the middle of the Pass, can doubtless be held by Gen. ARNUTH NOT, as it was held by SALE in 1841. He can hardly venture, however, to largely deplete his garrison, under present circumstances; while, on the other hand, should he forward only a small force to the aid of Gen. ROBERTS, it will run the risk of complete annihilation in its upward journey through the Kurd-Cabul defile. The troops under Gen. GORDON at Gundamuk are not numerous, and an isolated movement on his part might expose him in like manner to an overwhelming assault by the Afghan leaders, whose forces are, of course, emboldened by success, and must be continually swollen by new recruits. Indeed, he reports that all the tribes in his front have risen, and that he cannot safely advance without reinforcements. Help from Candahar seems impossible, because Ghuzai bars the road, and, moreover, the troops of AYOUB Khan, which left Herat nearly three weeks ago, must by this time have given the British sufficient employment in that quarter. The assertion of the London *Times* that the Duranis of Candahar will sustain the English commander in resisting the Heratees, attests a curious ignorance of Afghan politics. The column advancing from Herat must of course be made up of Duranis, for that city is the ancient capital of the clan, and it is certain that this tribe, to which the late dynasty belonged, considers itself specially aggrieved by the English occupation, and is the prime mover of the present insurrection. The sole substantial chance of native support lay in the jealousy of the Ghilzais, but this was lost by the harsh treatment of YAKUB Khan, who was related, on the female side, to the chiefs of this strong clan.

In the present crisis it is natural that the tale of the ELPHINSTONE disaster should appear big with menace and with prophecy. But there is no such thing as inevitable analogy in history. That march through the Khyber Pass which Gen. POLLOCK effected in March, 1842, can be performed in January, 1880. Not only ought reinforcements to be forwarded from India much more promptly, now that a railway has been pushed almost to the Afghan border, but the beleaguered garrison should be better able to hold out. It is probable that the commissariat supplies, instead of being stored in an outlying fort, as was the case forty years ago, have been secured by Gen. ROBERTS. Nor is it unreasonable to expect that some such feat of arms may be exhibited by the beleaguered force as was achieved by SALE in his bold sortie from Jelalabad, which broke the spirit of the Afghans before POLLOCK'S relieving column had come up. We may add that a decisive triumph over MAHMOUD Jan, following these preliminary reverses, and attained at this season of the year, would do more than half a dozen summer campaigns to fortify the English hold upon the country. The Afghan cannot be, as British Liberals seem to think, an unconquerable being, that is to say, a perfect anomaly in human nature. Their country is the Switzerland of Asia, and for four centuries the Swiss were supposed to be invincible in their native strongholds. But the Generals of NAPOLEON found means to master those sturdy mountaineers, as the Generals of the CESARS had done before them, and the countrymen of ORGETORIX and WILLIAM TELL became the submissive subjects of the Roman and French empires. This notion of Afghan intractability is a thing of modern date. For centuries the race was docile under Mongol and Persian domination, and it has probably not lost the capacity of discerning when it has been thoroughly beaten. If the English resources are put forth, and handled by military talent of a high order, there is no reason to believe that the permanent conquest of Afghanistan need involve difficulties superior or even equal to those which attended the long struggle with the Mahrattas and with the Sikhs.

The Prodigious Pension Account.

As reported by Mr. HUBBELL, agreed to without amendment in Committee of the Whole, and passed by the House with little debate, this year's pension appropriation reaches the prodigious amount of $32,404,000, being an increase of $3,038,000 over the amount appropriated last winter for the current fiscal year.

The outgo for pensions has at length risen to be the highest expense item in the government of this country. It was not so a dozen, nor even five years ago; but additions to the roll by special legislation, or else by a general letting down of the bars, as in last year's arrearage of pensions act, have swollen this annual account until now it far surpasses the army, the navy, the civil service, the Interior Department, in a word, any other account in the national ledger.

In this state of things, it is time that some one should have the courage and patience to look into and probe this chief source of national expense; for hitherto it has been largely left, except in its mere routine and clerical management, to the manipulation of demagogues, who have traded with it for votes. There are now nearly a quarter of a million people pensioned from the Treasury—more exactly, 242,755 on the first of July last. That, it need hardly be said, is higher than any number before known; and yet let it be remembered, it is now more than a dozen years since the war ended; and, according to the ordinary rates of mortality, even among well and uninjured persons, a large portion of those who were added to the rolls during the war and during the two years after its close, must have died.

But if it is desired to know how these pension expenses grow continually greater, instead of steadily lessening, as is the custom among other nations during a long succession of years of peace, it is only needful to note the statistics of the Pension Office, which show that last year alone 31,346 new names were put on the list, 908 dropped names restored, and only 13,497 stricken out from death, discovery of fraud, or other causes. Here we find a net addition of 18,757 names to the roll in a single year. And this increase will go on for years under the arrearage of pension bill, which has already caused an addition of three millions to the annual appropriation.

The real feeling of the people about this business is what every patriotic citizen can find in his own heart: a wish that every brave soldier and sailor of the war who deserves a pension should have one—they and the widows, children, or dependent relatives who are also entitled to pensions under the liberal laws. But that mock soldiers and sailors, or swindlers and knaves who pretend to have been invalided or crippled in the service, should defraud alike the public treasury and these deserving pensioners who might otherwise receive larger sums, is not endurable.

It may be said by those who never like to have a pension bill or a pension system called in question, that there is no swindling among applicants. Let Commissioner BENTLEY give his testimony on this matter. In his last annual report he says:

"An examination into the papers in the cases of few pensioners whose names have been dropped from the rolls within the last three years and four months, because the pensions have been obtained by fraud, shows the following: Two hundred and twenty-nine invalids established their cases by producing 1,667 affidavits and certificates, of which 1,233 were false—of the latter, 291 were made by officers, 179 by comrades, and 763 by other persons. Two hundred and seventy-one pensions of widows, minor children, and dependent relatives were established and allowed upon 2,816 certificates and affidavits, of which 1,851 were false—of the latter, 95 were made by officers, 69 by comrades, and 1,687 by others."

It is also asserted by Mr. BENTLEY that at least ninety-two outright forgeries were committed in the five hundred cases. There had been paid to the five hundred persons spoken of in the above illustrative example, $547,225 before the discovery of their frauds.

In face of such facts it will not do to raise a cry of mock indignation against proposals to overhaul the old frauds and to guard the Treasury against fresh ones from this source. Those that have been detected in the past are such as were too open to escape notice, or such as a tolerably hard-worked bureau, upon which Congress continually puts new cases, had time to examine into. It is impossible not to believe that among a quarter of a million pensioners there may be many more.

It is quite evident that the duty of Congress in the matter of pensions is not fulfilled by simply voting the vast annual appropriation, as under the pending bill. The growth of the pension list has become really serious, and when Mr. BENTLEY says that he expects to have 250,000 pensioners on his list before the end of this year, it is high time for Congress to act.

The Insane.

Insane people are not only shut out from the rest of the world in the closely guarded asylums, but they are also in a condition of mind which throws doubt on all they may say touching either what is done to themselves or to those about them. If they tell stories of cruel treatment by their keepers, they are not believed; or those who have watch over them may combat their allegations by contradictory statements which have the advantage of coming from sane minds. Doubtless one of the most common features of lunacy is a wild revolt against the restraint the deplorable malady of its victims renders necessary, and they may mistake even kindness and a just solicitude for their welfare for gross and unpardonable cruelty.

But this doubt regarding the complaints of the insane of their treatment by their keepers, though it may be justified in most cases, may also be used by asylum attendants as a screen for the most outrageous and inhuman conduct toward the unfortunate people trusted to their mercy. Knowing that whatever they may say on the subject can easily be referred to insane delusion, the opportunity for the neglect and torture of their secluded patients by careless physicians and coarse and brutal nurses is too great for some of these guardians of the lunatics. Occasionally well-authenticated instances of causeless severity and terrible cruelty inside our public insane asylums get reported outside their walls, but as a rule we know nothing of what goes on within these prisons. Though their inmates may in general be treated with proper consideration, and doubtless are as well cared for as the intelligence of their keepers permits, the keepers need careful watching as well as their patients.

At the same time the cost of the care of the insane has become an increasingly heavy burden on the people, and is grossly extravagant. The Legislature makes vast appropriations for asylum buildings, whose erection benefits their projectors rather than those who are to occupy them, for they are constructed in violation of the best-approved principles, and are made for architectural display, not for use only. The increase of insanity in the State has been made the occasion for enormous and needless drafts on the public treasury.

A meeting is to be held to-night at Cooper Union to consider these and other matters affecting the insane. It will be addressed by some well-known physicians, who have made a specialty of the treatment of diseases of the mind and nerves, and by gentlemen who are outside the medical profession. We shall learn from the report of what they say how they propose to remedy the gross evils which now prevail, and the meeting will have the great advantage of directing popular attention to a subject of the gravest importance. In no department of medicine and in none of public administration is there a greater chance for progress than in that which concerns the treatment of the insane.

Babcock.

Prominent among the arrivals in Philadelphia of distinguished persons to meet Gen. GRANT appears the name of Gen. BABCOCK.

It was a custom of the ancients to parade a skeleton at their feasts. It reminded the guests of their own mortality.

BABCOCK may render his country as good a service as the skeleton rendered the ancients.

The presence of BABCOCK at the Republican feasts reminds the country of the rottenness of GRANT'S Administration.

A more valuable service could not be rendered.

The feature of yesterday's proceedings in the Senate was the introduction of a financial resolution by Mr. MORGAN in opposition to Mr. BAYARD'S. Mr. MORGAN is for continuing the volume of United States notes and retaining their legal-tender quality; also for the restoration of the silver coinage to an equality with gold. He made a striking speech in support of his resolution. Mr. MORGAN also introduced a resolution reciting that since certain railroad and telegraph companies have not complied with the terms under which public lands had been accepted by them, therefore such land grants be declared forfeited, and the land returned to the public domain.

Mr. BALLOU, in a bill presented in the House, proposed that the statute that makes United States notes a legal tender be repealed, and that gold and silver only shall be legal tender in payment of debts. Then the House decided to have a committee look into the system of fees and salaries allowed to officers of United States courts. The Military Academy appropriation, reduced $4,000 from that of last year, was passed, the total amount being $314,949.

The slight stirring up given to the trade-mark question in the House, yesterday, indicates a lively clash of arms when it gets fairly before that body. The issue is whether Congress shall have power to grant, protect, and regulate the exclusive right to adopt and use trade-marks. The Committee on Manufactures reported favorably upon the amendment that proposes to give Congress this power, but opposition was instantly developed, and the subject was turned over to the Judiciary Committee.

There is something suspicious in the fact that the Chairmen of the Senate and House Committees on Post Offices and Post Roads simultaneously rush to the defence of the Post Office Department when the notorious crookedness of the star route service is exposed. We are surprised that Mr. MONEY, Chairman of the House Committee, should figure in the rôle described by the Washington *Post*. Mr. MONEY has heretofore occupied an entirely different attitude in the House. In a speech made Feb. 28, 1879, he held up as an example of the extravagance of the department the route from Fort Worth, Texas, to Fort Yuma, Arizona. The increase of the pay on this route, from $134,000 to $299,000, he characterized as "an unwise and wasteful expenditure of the public money, done under the color of the law, but to the excessive profit of the contractor, the loss of the Government, and in violation of the spirit of the law." If Mr. MONEY has changed his opinion in regard to this "unwise and wasteful expenditure of the public money," we would like to know just when the change took place.

The number of the walking women who held out for three days is remarkable; hardly less so is the high average of the scores thus far made by the leading half of them. It is not improbable that several of them will reach between 350 and 400 miles by the end of the six days, if they walk continuously up to the hour assigned for the end of the match. Still, the actual record will depend much on the closeness of the contest between the fair ladies during the last three days. Hitherto they have been so near together as to stimulate each to her utmost exertions. Meantime interest is awakening in the men's race that is to follow next week. It can easily be fancied that ROWELL would gladly exchange his chances of earnings during the ASTLEY belt race in England, next April, for his chances of winning half the gate money in Gilmore's Garden, next week.

Chicago has carried the day against its rivals, and the Republican National Convention will meet in that much-mortgaged city on June 3.

If half they say of one another is true, what wicked fellows those Brooklyn Presbyterian ministers must be! But the public can make allowance in these cases for the fervor of clerical rhetoric.

It was a man with a club who cleaned the Augean stables. Who knows but another man with a club may be equally successful in cleaning New York?

Of all men, one would look to a Christian preacher to refrain from the sin and crime of suicide, and one would be loath to suspect that a motive to suicide on the part of a preacher could exist in the fact of his appointment to a pastorate in Atlanta. Nevertheless, the Rev. Mr. PLEDGER, a Methodist preacher of Georgia, has shown himself unable to draw from the religion which he professed sufficient courage to deter him from putting off the coils of this life, and yielding to the promises of an act which his conscience must have denounced. He cut his throat in an Atlanta hotel. That Mr. PLEDGER lacked the motive to self-destruction which poverty entails is evident from the fact that several hundred dollars were found in his pockets, and that his note book showed he had $8,000 in bank. The only reason for his act is said to be that a Methodist Conference recently in session in Augusta appointed him to the charge of a church in Atlanta. This appointment, for some reason, plunged him into the deepest dejection. He declared that the place was a "death trap;" and although he obeyed the commands of the Conference, and journeyed to the city which he abhorred, yet once there his despondency overwhelmed him.

Senator CAMERON of Pennsylvania was yesterday elected Chairman of the Republican National Committee in place of the late ZACHARIAH CHANDLER. He hadn't a vote to spare, but he had enough. He is SIMON CAMERON'S son, is an ardent GRANT man, and is reported as saying that the third term is already a political certainty. He is best known to Mr. BLAINE'S friends as the man who blocked the nomination of their white-plumed chief at Cincinnati.

After hearing the end of Brother WILLIAMSON'S speech and the whole of aged Brother SPEAR'S speech, and after a little episode of a personal nature, in the course of which young Brother CROSBY accused his fellow Presbyter, young Brother HATHAWAY, of uttering an absolute falsehood, the brethren of the Long Island Presbyterian Synod gave the brethren of the Brooklyn Presbyteryan opportunity to explain their action in Brother TALMAGE'S case. Then they heard what Brother TALMAGE had to say for himself. The vote will probably be reached to-day.

If New Yorkers were capable of the base passion of envy, they would certainly have felt a twinge of it yesterday in reading this sentence in the Philadelphia despatches: "The streets had been thoroughly cleaned and were in superb condition." Happy Philadelphia!

We agree with the Rev. Mr. STIFLER of New Haven that a preacher should not convert himself into a hose pipe and proceed to deluge his hearers with a weak solution of current literature. But we cannot assent to the Rev. Mr. STIFLER'S proposition that this is the inevitable or, at least, the usual result when preachers read a great many books instead of sticking to the Bible and one or two approved Commentaries. That depends on who the preacher is, what books he reads, how he reads them, and what use he makes of them.

Democrats for Grant and the Empire.

From the Cincinnati Gazette.

NEW ALBANY, Dec. 13.—A good many Democrats hereaway have the Grant boom badly. W. C. De Pauw, who is more extensively engaged in manufacturing than any man in India s, says: "Grant is the greatest man of this or any other country. If the Republicans do not nominate him for President the Democrats will, and he will be elected by a tremendous majority." Not a few Democrats in this part of the State agree with Mr. De Pauw in this opinion. It is common talk among Democrats here that, next to Tilden, the Louisville *Courier-Journal* prefers Grant, but this doubtless grows out of the somewhat extravagant exuberance of Mr. Watterson's hospitable welcome of the General to Kentucky.

Against the Third Term and all that it Implies.

From the Cincinnati Commercial.

There are persons who would be willing to do anything for a change from our republican form of government. But the moment there is any real question of this sort before the American people there will be an uprising that will end in a down-sitting upon all pretenders, loafers, and vulgarians, especially the vulgar rich, who fancy that they have imperialist tendencies.

An Ardent Tilden Man.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir*: Mr. Tilden is the only man that can carry the State of New York. Rather than vote for such men as Bayard, Thurman, Hampton, and such men, who sold him out, I would vote for GRANT. Anyway, I go Republican or Tilden.

Is there any one who supposes that any other candidate than Tilden could have led the Democratic party to success at the last election? Those who find fault with him about not fighting for his seat must remember that the South, where the fighting would have had to come from, had had enough of that sort of thing.

AN ARDENT DEMOCRAT.

Louisiana's Vote on the Debt Ordinance.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17.—In regard to the despatch in to-day's SUN about the Louisiana debt ordinance, Mr. King of Louisiana says he had endeavored on several occasions to get information about the vote of the State. All of it had been withheld from him by friends except the vote on the debt ordinance. He feared that the delay in the publication of the vote might cause unfavorable comment, but intended no reflection on Mr. Strong, Secretary of State. He does not remember having used the name of Treasury Burke in this connection, as he has nothing to do with counting the vote. He believes that the recent election proved that the Democratic party in the State has the power to settle any grievances within itself.

The Last of the Hudson County Slaves.

In the death of John Jackson, the last of those once held in slavery in Hudson County, N. J., it is believed, has passed away. He was a slave in the Brinkerhoff family, many years ago, when slavery was in vogue in New Jersey. A relic, which was sworn to before Squire Van Winkle, attested his freedom from bondage, and Jackson was very careful of it. Jackson died yesterday in Storms avenue, at the age of 84 years. He was more familiarly known as "Buttermilk John."

Which is the Principal Hotel?

From the Memphis Appeal.

The principal hotel of New York stands upon a very lot of filth, and the result is a yearly tax paid in untimely deaths.

Interesting News.

From Jay Gould's Tribune.

The action of the Louisiana Returning Board has always been denounced by this paper (the *Tribune*) as one of the grandest frauds of the century.

Here we have a regular old-fashioned annual, such as our grandmothers delighted in fifty years ago. It is called *Poppies Leaves*, is edited by William Fearing Gill, and is published by E. Worthington. It is handsomely printed, and bound with gilt edges. Its illustrations, engraved on wood, are numerous, and its poems, stories, and essays are the productions of more than thirty popular writers of the day, including Mr. Longfellow, Dr. Holmes, Mr. Whittier, and Mr. Lowell. It is likely to be a favorite among the holiday books of the year.

RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE IN MAINE.

The Course of Gov. Garcelon Frankly Justified.

BOSTON, Dec. 17.—When the vote of Louisiana was stolen under the personal supervision of John Sherman, the only pretext set up by the robbers and by the beneficiaries of that monstrous iniquity was that the law creating the Returning Board, passed by the carpet-baggers, vested them with a revisory discretion over the returns, and there was no appeal from their final action. But though the same law directed how these returns should be made up, and when the protests, if any, should be filed with the record, no heed was paid to those conditions.

The truth that fraud pollutes and vitiates all that it touches was flagrantly disregarded, and De Golyer Garfield and other advocates of the conspiracy which succeeded in carrying Hayes into the White House became for the time the loudest advocates of State rights, contending that it would be an indignity to Louisiana to prove that some of the electoral certificates sent to Washington bore forged signatures, and that all of them were fraudulent and procured by corruption.

The history of that infamous event will never be blotted out from the minds of the American people, and all the actors in it, from Grant down to Wells and Anderson, will be remembered only to be execrated when full justice shall finally be done to their respective parts in its consummation. Among the loudest defenders of the Great Fraud was Mr. Blaine, who is the chief champion of the high moral doctrine that all is fair in war and in politics—a doctrine which he personally illustrated in a remarkable way when he seized his own letters from Mulligan, after beseeching that witness on bended knees to save him from ruin.

Until last year, the Republicans had continuous possession of the State of Maine since the foundation of the party, and of late Mr. Blaine has run it like a political factory. The Governors and Councils put into office by the Republican machine never consulted law or Constitution to make up their majorities in the Legislature. They had the exclusive power, and they never failed to exercise it without scruple. Loose practices, open violations of the election laws, and palpable infractions of prescribed forms, intended for the protection of the purity of the ballot, became common, and the minority were powerless to prevent these abuses.

For the first time in more than half a generation, the combined Opposition won a victory last year, and they elected a Governor, who has now made his mark on the records of the State, and who has at a single bound leaped into a most conspicuous position. He let it be known after the election in September that the gross irregularities heretofore practised would not be tolerated, and that the returns would be subjected to the plain requirements of the Constitution and the laws of the State.

Mr. Blaine and his friends and followers, who had claimed a great victory, knew very well that the application of this rule would throw them into a minority. Hence they began to shout fraud, gathered together a crowd of ex-Governors, ex-Senators, and noisy politicians to intimidate the Governor in the discharge of his duty, and to raise a cry of foul play being intended.

All this clamor did not disturb Gov. Garcelon in the least, nor shake his purpose of seeing the laws faithfully executed. He stood firm as a rock, and in quiet dignity let the revilers understand they had to deal with an official who could neither be seduced from his convictions nor scared from carrying them into effect. The result is that the Republicans have lost the Legislature. It is not pretended that any wrong has been perpetrated, or that the Governor and Council have done anything more than to administer the law as it stands on the statute book.

Mr. Blaine found it good and rightful to uphold the Returning Board frauds when they profited himself and his party, and attempted to excuse them on the most miserable of shams. Now, when the Constitution and the laws of his own State throw out a majority illegally chosen, he finds it hard to accept the situation, and rushes about wildly in impotent rage. If injustice has been done in any case it will be easy to prove it. The cool head and stern will of Gov. Garcelon have been evidently too much for the Hotspur of the United States Senate.

THE DEMOCRATIC FAILURE IN WASHINGTON.

The Foolish Election of Richard Bright to be Sergeant-at-Arms to the Senate.

WASHINGTON, Dec 16.—No party can succeed, or ought to succeed, which upon attaining a majority in Congress begins its career by electing men with tainted characters to fill its most responsible trusts. This is precisely what the Democrats did, when personal ambition, an intrigue for the Speakership, and the loud clamor of office-seekers demanded the extra session which invited the disasters of the fall elections.

They had before them two conspicuous examples in the House of Representatives in the persons of the dismissed doorkeepers, Fitzhugh and Polk. These examples were there to advise prudence, if such warning was necessary, in the choice of officers of the Senate. It was to be supposed that on the eve of the Presidential contest, unusual caution would have been exercised, even without these sign posts to point out the way of common discretion.

Against remonstrance and against all decency, they elected Burch Secretary of the Senate, who had been indicted in Tennessee, and Bright, Sergeant-at-Arms, who had been indicted in Indiana on criminal charges. Whether the charges were true or false, these indictments should have been sufficient to exclude them from the highest honors in the gift of the majority, when numbers of honorable men were candidates, in every way competent and worthy, who would have reflected credit on the places, and have challenged public confidence.

What has followed this worse than blunder at the start might easily have been foreseen. Bright brought into office the jobbing practices with which he had been familiar at home, and that had led to his presentment by a Grand Jury of the community where he was best known. The official record proves that he was hardly installed as Sergeant-at-Arms before he began to improve his opportunities in a way that has justly provoked severe comment.

Instead of ordering an open and manly investigation into charges publicly made, and capable of the clearest proof, a party committee sitting in secret, headed by Mr. Thurman, have sought to make a diversion in favor of Bright by changing the issue and converting the real question, in which the public is most concerned, into one of petty patronage. And even upon that their attempted protection signally fails with discredit to the person most concerned.

Senators had complained, with reason, that Bright had appropriated to his own use the lion's share of the offices in his gift. The Committee of Inquisitors examined into this grave accusation, and reported to the caucus, taking Bright's pay rolls as the basis, that there were only four persons appointed from Indiana, for the fourth of whom—he being in excess of the quota—Mr. Voorhees made a plaintive appeal that touched the hearts of the indignant Senators who had been left out in the cold.

Now, at that very time, there were no less than nine appointments from Indiana, or nearly three times the number represented to be on the pay rolls of the Sergeant-at-Arms, two-thirds of whom had been charged to other States, or to the District of Columbia. Here are the names:

McKinney, clerk to Bright	$2,160
Bolton, superintendent of folding room	1,440
Hannegan, assistant in document room	1,440
Tolle, door-keeper	1,440
Moreland, mail carrier	1,200
Barret, on Capitol police	1,100
Frank Jones, on Capitol police	1,100
Duke, jobbing room	1,100
Lander, in charge of stables	1,100
Total	$12,540
Bright, Sergeant-at-Arms	4,800
Total	$16,800

This list does not include names known to have been appointed by the personal influence of one of the Senators from Indiana, who was most active in promoting Bright's election.

Mr. Dodge was brought to Washington by Jesse D. Bright when a Senator from Indiana, and was removed by the Republicans in 1861. He has lived in the District since that time, waiting for something to turn up, and his reappointment was among the first official acts of the nephew of his uncle, who recognized his claim of retributive justice because he was of his own State.

This point of patronage is wholly subordinate to the important one of which Bright stands accused; but as he has pleaded it himself, and the Committee have whitewashed him on that pretext, the proof is clear that he is unworthy of confidence in his own made-up case, intended to deceive the Senate.

The retention of James T. Christie, the right-hand man and fit companion of Bright, as Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, is, to speak plainly, disgraceful to the Senate, and especially so to the twenty-four Democratic Senators, who for various reasons, some of which will not bear the least scrutiny, signed a round robin in his favor. Not because he has always been an unscrupulous and most offensive radical politician ever since John P. Hale imported him from New Hampshire eighteen years ago, but for the reason that he is a notorious jobber, who has made a fortune in that way. He has been habitually employed by the great Rings to aid their schemes, because of his close connection with Senators accustomed to frequent his dram shop in the basement, and to borrow money on indefinite time of payment.

The Tehuantepec Project.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir*: The men who are managing to make a noise about a railroad over the Isthmus of Tehuantepec affirm that $100,000 has been deposited in bank in the city of Mexico as a guarantee for the performance of the grant, and that this enterprise is to be pushed to completion before the end of the three years named in the grant.

Since March 1, 1842, when Mexico made the first concession to Don José Garay, she has continued in the grant business. Garay assigned his grant to Manning and Mackintosh, and they in turn assigned to several American citizens, P. A. Hargous being the figurehead. Mr Hargous associated with himself sundry citizens of New Orleans under the name of the Louisiana Tehuantepec Company, Judah P. Benjamin, President.

This company fiddled along with Mr. Trist, Mr. Letcher, Daniel Webster (then Secretary of State), the Mexican Minister at Washington, and *pronunciamentos* in Mexico, until it died a natural death. Then A. G. Sloo (through William D. See) made a contract with the Mexican Government to "construct a plank and railroad across the Isthmus;" but, although Mexico agreed to protect the work with all her power, the United States Government would only protect the "integrity of the enterprise" to such extent as it might deem expedient. Mr. Sloo could not dispose of his bonds, and, after spending some money of his own, and a good deal for his friends, he abandoned the work in despair, like all his predecessors who had been verdant enough to put their money into a naked Mexican grant.

It is yet an open question whether it is practicable to construct and maintain a railroad across that isthmus. There are three or four mountain-fed rivers to be bridged, whose waters sometimes rise twenty feet in a night, sweeping everything before them. The writer has been over the route, and has paid out cash to learn the topography of the country and the value of a Mexican grant.

WM. M. HALL.

STAMFORD, Dec. 15.

English Laws and Irish Land.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir*: We fought fearful battles to rescue four millions of Africans, and there must be great battles fought—at least in politics—before four millions of Britons are rescued from landlord slavery. The blacks were well fed in the times of famine, but the crops of the Irishmen have been sold, while they have been hunted from their homes like rats.

In all ancient nations the farmers owned their farms. When there was famine in Egypt the farmers escaped by selling their lands. In Palestine the divine law made the farms inalienable, and they could only be sold until the year of Jubilee. From the Norman conquest the feudal system prevailed in England. This was an association of land owners in self-defence. The farmers bore arms in defence of their homes, and sent their military chief the present of a few fowls, which paid their rent. Henry Hallam shows that sixpence an acre was the general rent of land when let in the middle ages in England. In Ireland they did not understand the meaning of the word rent.

On the rise of a standing army the military chiefs found a new source of power, and no longer required the swords of the yeomen. Then they made law for themselves to enable them to plunder the farmers, like our city legislators. When sixpence an acre was tolerated by the farmers they soon raised the rent to a shilling an acre; then to two and sixpence; and when money became plenty in the wake of the French Revolution, they raised their demands from two and sixpence to thirty shillings and three pounds, and gave the farmers to know that they could demand more rent every year than their crops were worth, and either starve them or hunt them out.

This accounts for the multitudes of families thrown out at Castle Garden, while the parents, having toiled for landlords all the best of their lives, have only a few shillings to keep their children alive. Every American should lay his shoulder to the wheel, to teach these professional speculators, who have bought land that was stolen from the farmers, that they ought to seek some other profession than that of rooting out the people from the soil to stock the fields with cattle.

All intelligent men know that the claim of rent on large estates is *prescription*, or lay one's rule, and is the same with the claim of Robin Hood to the rents of Sherwood. A house or locomotive that a man has built or created is a different kind of property.

DOCTOR D. ROBINSON.

PATERSON, N. J., Dec. 17.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir*: I would ask "Derry Walls" if there is such a thing as a grievance of any kind in Ireland, or is the land question and its pertaining evils "a weak invention of the enemy?" How comes it, then, that he did not remain at home, among the "peaceful Irish," as he is evidently one of that kind? Where, I ask him, is the similarity of the landlords in Ireland and in this free country? I fail to see any, as the landlord here looks for rent for the house he has built by the savings of his industry. The landlord in Ireland exacts rent for land that the great Landlord created for the good of all, and not for the benefit of a few who spend their ill-gotten gains in London, Paris, and elsewhere. At this time, when the wolf stands at the door of many of the poor of Ireland, who are poor through no fault of their's, but because the landlord must have his "pound of flesh," and leaves him nothing but the bone, I wish "Derry Walls" would submit the plan for the bettering of the condition of his countrymen; that is it, he does not think them too well off already. I was going to sign myself "Limerick Walls," but will not.

JOSEPH F. O'FLYNN, 360 Ninth avenue, N. Y.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir*: Having seen news of a meeting of the Fermanagh men, held in Germania Hall on Friday evening last, for the purpose of assisting families from that county to emigrate, I would suggest to any Fermanagh man who intends subscribing to give his money for the purpose of relieving the distressed, and not be led astray by the leaders of this movement, as it seems they are studying England's interest more than Ireland's welfare. It is well known that it is England's wish to see the Irish emigrate, so that she can continue to retain her robber grasp of the dear old land unmolested. She would never consent to be insulted by the quadruped species rather than be Irishmen. Any Irishman wishing Ireland's liberty would not encourage emigration during the present crisis. I would like to know whether the promoters of the above movement are Irishmen, or what they are anyhow.

JAS. C. NEASY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir*: What is the use of all this fuss about Ireland? Haven't we all the privileges here that honest men want? Even if Ireland was ruled by Irishmen, what would it be compared with this country? Here we have all the rights of self-government, we hold offices, and we receive assistance from the city and State to build up and maintain our churches and other institutions.

The time is coming that we will be a nation here, and then we would soon be powerful enough to free Ireland and hurl England back to where she is keeping Ireland now. Spare your ammunition money, and keep it for use; you will need it much sooner than you think for. Let every Irishman's patriotism be centred here in America. There are thousands now living who will bless the day they took this advice from

A POOR IRISHMAN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir*: The fulness of time has come for all Irishmen to be thoroughly united at home and abroad. The Irish Land League, representing Ireland, has commissioned its President, Mr. Parnell, to visit America to appeal to the Irish race and, it need be, to the generous American people, to aid temporarily the suffering tenantry of Ireland. Liberal aid will be given, but it is well to consider and reflect that none should be required if Ireland had a paternal government like France, which lately appropriated $1,000,000 to aid its needy citizens.

Ireland asks not for even a temporary national beggar, thus supplanting the tyranny, cruelty and plunder of England. England assumes to rule Ireland, who did not provide for them in the time of distress. England having seized the power of ruling Ireland, should protect her from famine, want, and pestilence, and destitution. Therefore, I consider the British Government should, by an order in council, prohibit the exportation of grain, cattle, eggs, and poultry from Ireland. I hold that if the Government, the landlords, and the tenants should mutually agree that no rents shall be paid during the famine, destitution, and misery in Ireland, I hold that the tenants, and others, whose rents had