The Sun.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1881.

**Amusements To-Day.**

Abbey's Park Theatre—Pink, the Amazonia.
Academy of Design—Exhibition.
Aquarium—Circus. Matinee.
Booth's Theatre—One Hundred Wives.
Bijou Opera House—Widow Bedott.
Bunnell's Museum—Broadway and 25th st.
Daly's Theatre—Needles and Pins.
Grand Opera House—Baseball.
Haverly's 14th St. Theatre—The Galley Slave.
Haverly's 5th Av. Theatre—Olivette.
Haverly's Niblo's Garden—Black Venus.
Koster & Bial's Concert Hall—Concert. Matinee.
Madison Square Theatre—Hazel Kirke.
Mason's Temple—Mesmerism.
Middleton's Dime Museum—208 Bowery.
San Francisco Minstrels—Broadway and 29th st.
Theatre Comique—Buffalo Guards' Nominee.
Tony Pastor's Theatre—Variety. Matinee.
Union Square Theatre—The Dead Heart.
Wallack's Theatre—Where's the Cat?
Windsor Theatre—Don Juan, Jr.

## No, No.

No, no. Mr. CONKLING did not come away from Mentor without having received the most satisfactory assurances in regard to the composition of the Cabinet.

Mr. CONKLING may have his faults. That is very possible. But it can never be said that he is easily fooled. No man living is better qualified, both by instinct and education, to look after his own. He is not the dog referred to in the fable, who dropped a piece of meat from his mouth to fight the reflected and imaginary dog he saw in the water.

CONKLING, according to the vulgar phrase, is "all right" with GARFIELD.

If that is not so, then GARFIELD has trouble ahead.

To be or not to be?—no, that is not it. To be *and* not to be. To be President and at the same time not to be President. To be President, with the bit in your mouth and CONKLING on your back, holding the reins, and guiding you.

Query: Is that GARFIELD'S plight?

## One of the Most Important Interests of this State.

The conflict between the advocates of high tolls, low tolls, and free tolls on the State canals is raging as usual at Albany. It has been waged for forty years. Experience has shown that no permanent rule on this subject can be fixed for a long series of years, because the decision of the question depends upon contingencies that cannot be foreseen, such as the amount of the crops, the salubrity of the seasons, the sharpness of railway competition, and the activity of trade along the upper lakes.

It is not surprising that the canal system of the State is not fully understood by the inhabitants of our metropolitan city. They hear something about it when the Legislature is in session. They occasionally see clusters of odd-looking craft floating down the Hudson in tow of a panting steamer. When going to a State Convention on the lightning express of the Central Railroad, they may catch a distant glimpse of a dingy scow, drawn by a couple of sluggish mules. But they are not aware that that scow is laden with more barrels of flour for the New York market than the noisy freight train which has just dashed past, with its dozen or fifteen cars; nor that the cluster of boats in the harbor has brought to the city the teeming harvests of the great States where the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence take their rise, and will carry back to the traders and farmers of the far West the products of the manufactories of the East, and merchandise from over the seas that has paid tribute at our Custom House.

In early days our canals were the boast and pride of the State, and the fame of DE WITT CLINTON, whose sagacity and energy originated and perfected the system, shone with unrivalled lustre. But in process of time they fell a prey to bands of contractors, who used them for venal purposes, and unscrupulous politicians, who used them for partisan objects. Meanwhile we had constructed 924 miles of canals, which covered the counties west and north of Albany like a network. At the outset, the Constitution provided that they should never be leased or sold, but remain the property of the State forever. But into such disrepute had they fallen by the manipulations of corrupt jobbers and party leaders, that ultimately some men reached the conclusion that they had better be sold on almost any terms. In consequence of this reaction against the canals, an amendment to the Constitution was adopted in 1874, which authorized the Legislature in effect to sell all of them except the Erie Canal and its three most productive branches. The four thus preserved measure 484 miles, while the five or six liable to sale measure 440 miles.

Since the adoption of this amendment, public opinion has rapidly changed; nothing has been done under it, and the canals are restored to their former high reputation. And this is well. It is not generally known that the canals as a whole have not only repaid the principal and interest of all the money ever expended upon them, but, in compliance with certain provisions of the Constitution, have put into the Treasury for the general purposes of the State many millions of dollars.

Great railroad corporations are greedy to devour the Erie Canal and its main tributaries. Fortunately, the Constitution stands between them and the coveted prey. These corporations would delight to have the tolls on the canals so adjusted as to diminish the freights on the artificial watercourses that interlace the interior counties and open an avenue for commerce between the States of the Northwest and the Atlantic Ocean. The Legislature and the Canal Board are supreme in this matter. They should adopt such a tariff of tolls on the canals as will strengthen the hold which New York has upon the trade and business of the thriving communities that dwell around the lakes beyond the Falls of Niagara.

## The Speaker's Office in the House of Commons.

The Parliamentary rules announced by the Speaker on Wednesday of last week were not "proposed" in the sense of being submitted to the House of Commons for its adoption or rejection. They were simply definitions of the Speaker's intentions respecting the exercise of that discretionary power conferred on him by Mr. GLADSTONE'S resolution, which permits urgency to be voted for a given bill or motion under certain conditions. In view of this declaration from the Speaker himself, let us inquire what the previous conception of his office was, and how far it has been altered by the new plan of Parliamentary procedure.

The original function of the Speaker has been clearly explained by Sir G. C. LEWIS. The House of Commons, he reminds us, were at first a set of delegates summoned by the Crown to negotiate with it concerning the payment of taxes. They might take advantage of the position of superiority which they temporarily occupied to remonstrate with the Crown about certain grievances upon which they were generally agreed. In this state of things it was important that they should have an organ, or spokesman, with sufficient ability and knowledge to state their wishes, and with sufficient courage to contend against the displeasure of the Crown. For the firmness with which he fulfilled this office, Sir PETER DE LA MARE, chosen Prolocutor or Speaker in 1376, suffered imprisonment, and in the discharge of the same duty Sir THOMAS MOORE did not flinch from facing WOLSEY'S displeasure. So late, indeed, as 1777 Speaker NORTON, on presenting a bill on the part of the Commons to the King, in the House of Lords, used his right of delegated speech to lecture the Crown on its extravagance. On the whole, however, since 1688 and the growing concentration of power in the House of Commons, its presiding officer has gradually been transformed from the mouthpiece of a petitioning body into the moderator of a deliberative, law-making assembly. In general terms, it may be said that the Speaker has for two centuries been regarded as placed in the chair for the specific purpose of maintaining order and furthering the despatch of business.

So much is admitted on all hands; but during the recent stirring scene in Parliament, on the morning of Wednesday, Feb. 2, a vehement dispute arose on the question how far the Speaker might legitimately go in pursuance of his acknowledged duties. Let us see precisely what he did on that occasion, because there is a widespread misconception on the subject. The Speaker's so-called arbitrary conduct on Wednesday morning, which involved not the expulsion, but the voluntary withdrawal of the PARNELL party, is constantly confounded with his application of a standing order on Thursday, under which Mr. PARNELL and his adherents were suspended for a single sitting. In a word, there has been no such thing as the expulsion of an Irish member from the present Parliament; there have been merely suspensions for one evening, in strict accordance with a rule adopted, at the suggestion of Sir S. NORTHCOTE, a year ago.

The grave and questionable assertion of discretionary power on the Speaker's part took place, as we have said, on Wednesday, under the following circumstances: The session, which began on Monday, Jan. 31, lasted uninterruptedly for almost two days, the Speaker, Mr. BRAND, being relieved during a part of that time by Deputy Speaker PLAYFAIR. At 9 o'clock on Wednesday morning the Speaker entered the House and resumed the chair. Pointing out that during forty-one hours the House had been occupied by repeated motions for adjournment, supported by small minorities, he declared that, in his judgment, a crisis had arisen which demanded the prompt interposition of the Chair. He announced, accordingly, that, with a view of vindicating the credit and authority of the House, he should decline to call upon any more members to speak; and thereupon he proceeded to put the several questions pending to a vote. Coming presently to the main question then before the House, the Speaker steadfastly refused to recognize the attempt of any member to speak, and put the motion that leave be given to bring in the Coercion bill. At this the Home Rulers shouted "Privilege!" for some minutes, and as the Speaker still remained standing, they all left the House in a body, after which the motion to bring in the bill was agreed to, and the House adjourned. When, later on the same day (Wednesday), business was resumed, Mr. LABOUCHÈRE asked the Speaker by virtue of what standing order he had cut short that morning the current debate on the Coercion bill. The Speaker replied, "On my own responsibility, and from a sense of duty to the House." Thereupon Mr. PARNELL moved the impeachment of the Speaker.

We incline to the opinion that Mr. BRAND did, in fact, make himself liable to impeachment by this proceeding, and that England will be fortunate if his action of Wednesday is not hereafter twisted into a precedent for gross abuses of power on the part of a partisan Speaker. Let us dismiss at once the notion that there was any historical warrant for his assumption of authority. We have before us the texts of the alleged precedents, which the learning and ingenuity of Prof. THOROLD ROGERS brought forward from some proceedings in the time of JAMES I. Not one of the instances cited by Mr. ROGERS goes the length of vindicating Mr. BRAND'S resolve to cut off all debate and summarily put a motion. It is true that, in 1604, the House agreed to a general rule "that if any superfluous motion or tedious speeches be offered, the party making such is to be directed and ordered by Mr. Speaker." This plainly was not to recognize in the Speaker any latent inherent powers of applying the *cloture*; on the contrary, it was deemed essential to confer on him by a standing order authority to silence an individual. The implication was that of himself, and in the absence of a resolution of the House, the Speaker had no authority to interrupt debate. So much for the principle involved in these far-fetched precedents. We scarcely need to add that the specific privileges vested in the Speaker by the rules passed under JAMES I. must have been expressly revoked, or have lapsed by desuetude, since it is admitted that on the morning of Feb. 2, 1881, the sole authentic and binding utterance of the House touching the Speaker's right of interference with debate was the standing order adopted a year ago.

The Speaker himself admits this, and defends his action of Wednesday morning, not by precedent, but on abstract principles. I sit here, he said, in effect, for the fundamental purpose of seeing to it that the deliberative and law-making functions of this House are not brought to naught. To that end I am invested, by the very nature of my office, with a large amount of undefined discretionary power, only limited by my accountability to those whose delegate I am. This theory would be big with dangers should the Speaker cease to be, what he has been for some generations, a conscientious, impartial officer, and should he become once more, what he often was in the seventeenth century, the unscrupulous tool of a partisan majority. But admitting, for the sake of argument, the existence of this undefined discretion, is it not clear that the Speaker should resort to it with extreme diffidence, and never until the inefficiency of rules, sanctioned by the House, has first been demonstrated? May we not go further, and affirm that when a deliberative body has provided a specific remedy for a particular grievance, it is the paramount duty of its presiding officer to test it by application, and that his neglect to do this and his recourse by preference to alleged discretionary powers was an act of disrespect to the published will of the House, for which the aggrieved members would be justified in demanding his impeachment?

Now, had Mr. BRAND tested the standing order of last February, and found it wanting, before on Wednesday morning he chose to close the debate by an exercise of arbitrary authority? So far was the worthlessness of that remedy from having been demonstrated, that within thirty-six hours, viz., in the Thursday session, the Speaker resorted to it, instead of straining a second time his supposed discretion, and, ejecting under its provisions the whole PARNELL party, enabled Mr. GLADSTONE to pass his Urgency resolution. Why did not the Speaker apply on Wednesday the drastic but legitimate purge afforded by the NORTHCOTE standing order, instead of invoking his alleged discretionary powers? There is no answer to this question. What took place on Thursday in strict accordance with a standing order of the House attests the needlessness of the Speaker's unprecedented course on the preceding day.

That Mr. BRAND yielded on that occasion to the pressure of men less cautious and circumspect than himself, may be inferred from the programme of intentions which he promulgated on Wednesday of last week. It will be remembered that the GLADSTONE resolution vests unlimited discretion in the Speaker in those cases where a given bill or motion has been voted urgent by three-fourths of the members in a House containing at least 300. But the Speaker shows his good sense in announcing the broad principles on which he proposes to exercise that discretion, and it must be owned that the rules he has laid down exhibit a purpose of using sparingly and conscientiously the large authority conferred on him. But these so-called rules, being merely the expression of a personal intent, can be superseded at any moment by their author, and of course they cannot bind another Speaker.

Let us sum up now the changes superinduced in the conception of the Speaker's office by the events of the first week of February. By the GLADSTONE resolution of Feb. 3, he may be clothed in certain contingencies with unlimited powers to muzzle a minority and close debate. What is far more startling, we must hold—if the precedent established by Mr. BRAND on Feb. 2 is allowed to stand unrebuked—that the GLADSTONE resolution was not really requisite, but that all, and more than all, the powers it gives were already inherent in the Speaker by virtue of the essential nature and duties of his office. Let British politicians once awake to the full significance of these events, and we may be sure that we have seen the last of non-partisan Speakers in the House of Commons.

## How the Negroes are Increasing.

It was very commonly prophesied both at the South and the North after the emancipation of the negro slaves, that their natural increase would be far less when they were free than when they were in bondage. For several years after the war we heard reports of the licentiousness of the late slaves, and of the alarming frequency of infanticide among them. Men who regarded themselves as wise students of the peculiarities of the negro race, propounded theories to show that the blacks would gradually diminish and ultimately die out under freedom. Slavery, they contended, encouraged their rapid increase, for it was profitable to their owners; but, once free, the negroes would shirk the responsibility of bearing large families, or fail to raise children through ignorance and neglect.

But, like many other fine theories, this one has been upset by practice and experience. The negro race shows no signs of dying out. On the contrary, it is increasing at a more rapid rate than the white race. Statistics of marriages and births in the New England States, for instance, prove that the old Puritan stock is declining both proportionately and actually. Marriages are fewer among them than formerly, and families are smaller, while the foreign population are contributing to the natural increase a much larger proportion than they bear to the whole number of inhabitants. Meantime the negroes of the South are multiplying at a rate which shows them to be among the most prolific people of the world, and proves that they possess to a high degree the hardihood required for the struggle for existence.

The census of 1880 gives the Southern States, Texas not included, a black population of 5,643,000, against 4,242,000 in 1870. That is, the increase during the ten years was about one-third, or 33 per cent. The increase of the population of the country as a whole during the same period was only about 30 per cent., though foreign immigration added so largely to the number of the white inhabitants, while, of course, the negroes gained almost entirely by births only.

The census of the South in 1870 was manifestly incomplete and inaccurate. We shall find a safer basis for comparison by going back to that for 1860, the accuracy of which cannot be assailed. Moreover, that census gave the number of blacks while slavery was in existence. In 1860 there were, in round figures, in the Southern or slaveholding States 4,200,000 colored inhabitants. Of whites there were 8,040,000. In 1880, with the number in Texas put at a low estimate, there were about 6,000,000 blacks and about 12,500,000 whites. The blacks, therefore, gained in the twenty years 1,800,000, or about 43 per cent., and the whites gained 4,460,000, or more than 50 per cent. If, however, we took into account the large additions received from white immigration by some of the Southern States, particularly Texas and Missouri, and the loss by black emigration, we should undoubtedly find a greater natural increase among the negroes than among their former owners.

Let us compare this gain of the negroes with that made by them during the twenty years from 1840 to 1860, when they were slaves. The number of slaves in the United States in 1840 was, in round figures, 2,487,000. In 1860 it was 3,950,000. The increase was, therefore, about 60 per cent., while the increase of the Southern negroes during the twenty years from 1860 to 1880 was only 43 per cent. We must make allowance, however, for large emigration of negroes since the war to the North. When we get the full returns of our negro population North and South we shall therefore probably find that the rate of increase has been about the same since slavery was abolished as it was before.

## The Father of Prohibition.

We print a letter from the venerable NEAL Dow, the father of prohibitory legislation in Maine. He has nearly reached his eightieth year, but is, we are glad to say, as hale and vigorous as a lad of fifty.

Few agitators have had Mr. Dow's good fortune. He has lived not only to see his theory embodied in the law of the State, but also to watch it in practical operation for more than a quarter of a century.

Mr. Dow is not yet quite satisfied with the workings of the system. He wants further legislation, and he thinks that the courts of Maine are too much inclined to mercy when they use their discretion in dealing with citizens convicted of selling whiskey, wine, beer, or cider.

We are sorry that Mr. Dow has no explanation to offer of the amazing increase of crime in his State since prohibition became its settled policy. This increase of crime, as shown by prison statistics, is to the increase of population as two hundred and seven is to fourteen.

We remarked the other day, in the article to which Mr. Dow refers, that it would probably be unfair to attribute this startling access of depravity to the existence of the prohibitory statutes; but we see no escape from the conclusion that stopping the sale of liquor in Maine has not diminished crime.

## Forster Withdrawn!

So HAYES backs down, and actually *withdraws* the nomination of FORSTER!

Poor FORSTER! There have been bigger fools, but few more active and conspicuous.

Why not appoint CHARLES A. PEABODY, Jr., United States District Attorney? He is a red hot Republican, a lawyer, a scholar, and a gentleman.

We suppose he is too much of a gentleman to hold a Government office in these degenerate days.

Then why not appoint NOAH DAVIS?

The same objection would not apply to him. And there would be no danger that the tears shed over his retirement from the bench would create a flood, or even a freshet.

One or two of our contemporaries think they discovered two or three errors in our recent article on "Old New York Members in the House." It so happens that in each of these alleged errors our contemporaries are themselves in error. Let them read and inwardly digest the Congressional Directory, by that distinguished biographer, Major BEN PERLEY POORE, who paid his election bet like a man a few years ago by wheeling a barrel of apples from Newburyport to Boston.

In the Senate yesterday the 3½ per cent. rate of interest for the funding bonds, recommended by the Finance Committee, was voted down, and 3 per cent. fixed. The House passed the River and Harbor bill. A resolution was adopted paying Mr. FRANK HURD $3,300 for his expenses and services as counsel in the HALLETT KILBOURNE contempt case. The debate on the Apportionment bill was continued. A message was received from Mr. HAYES recommending an appropriation for the proper representation of the United States at the International Monetary Conference.

The River and Harbor swindle has at last been consummated in the House, almost every amendment tending to relieve it of its more flagrant features of extravagance and robbery being overwhelmingly defeated. Now it is to run the gauntlet of the Senate; and it remains to be seen whether that body, like the House, will furnish a phalanx of men banded together to raid on the Treasury.

An artist in search of a fine historical subject might find one in the beautiful spectacle presented the other day when ex-Ancient Mariner THOMPSON instructed young Major GOFF in the performance of his duties as head of the American Navy. There is a well-known modern picture of a farmer training his son to hold the plough, which is based on the same idea and is very popular; but the illustration is not so fine as that of the old salt of the Wabash teaching the young tar of the Kanawha to plough the waves. The subject for discussion, on the day in question, was the proper method of hunting after the Jeannette; and this brought in, as a part of the picture, a group of old navy officers, who gathered around in wonder as the ex-Ancient Mariner explained the peculiarities of navigation in high latitudes, and the relative advantages of the Galena, the Wachusett, and a New Bedford whaler—his words falling on his young successor like solid chunks of wisdom.

Now that the San Simon cow boys are simultaneously ravaging Sonora and Arizona, stealing cattle with perfect impartiality both from Mexican and American ranches, it may be well to recall that for precisely similar raids of border thieves into Texas, Mr. HAYES held Mexico responsible during nearly three years, invading her territory with his armed forces.

Few as are the remaining days of this session of Congress, there is time enough to pass the bill to restore the balance of the Japanese indemnity fund, after taking out $248,000 to pay to the officers and crews of the Wyoming and the Takiang for services in destroying hostile vessels in the Straits of Shimonoseki. We demanded a sum of money sufficient to pay for injuries suffered by our sailors in Japanese waters. Japan paid us a sum largely in excess of the requirement for that purpose. Now there is a balance amounting to $1,463,224 in gold, after the deduction already spoken of, awaiting disposal. There is no reason why it should not be paid back to Japan. There was never any demand for exemplary damages, but only for what was required to indemnify the actual injuries.

The Illinois State Board of Agriculture sets up a somewhat unusual standard for officeholding. It has recommended that Mr. EMERY COBB be appointed Commissioner of Agriculture under Gen. GARFIELD, on the ground that he is a famous raiser of crops and breeder of cattle. Mr. COBB may know something about corn, but what does he know about raising ten?

The only wonder about the recent flood in Washington has been that with two such naval authorities as ex-Ancient Mariner THOMPSON and young Major GOFF within call it gained any headway. It is now ascertained that young Major GOFF was absent in West Virginia, while of course it took the ex-Ancient Mariner some time to get his sea legs on again before proceeding to bail out the city.

## A Letter from Neal Dow.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I saw in THE SUN of the 14th an editorial article with the heading, "What Does This Mean?" It will no doubt go all the rounds of the press in this country, and perhaps in England also, for the moneyed interest involved in discrediting prohibition in Maine and in breaking it down is very great. It has been an understood thing that if the Maine law shall withstand the assaults made upon it from the "four winds" by interest, appetite, and passion, the policy of prohibition will surely prevail very widely through the world.

Probably you do not know that the Maine law is now and always has been attacked on two lines: First, that it is a dead failure, inasmuch as more liquor is sold and consumed in Maine, as the result of it, than ever before; and, secondly, that the sharp suppression of the grog shops has demoralized the people and ruined the business of the State. The same persons lead the attack on both these lines.

I hope the good people of the country will not be alarmed lest the suppression of the liquor traffic in Maine shall result in driving the people back to barbarism. Some of the drinking men of the State are very anxious on this score, and plead piteously for the return of the good old rum times, when liquor could be had anywhere in respectable places, whereas now it is only to be obtained in low, secret, dirty dens.

I do not think our people are alarmed at the prospect of a general demoralization as the result of the suppression of the grog shops. Within four months after the enactment of the law the jails in the counties of Kennebec, Franklin, Oxford, and York were entirely empty; the jail in Cumberland contained only five prisoners, three of them rumsellers, whereas before the law it had been habitually overcrowded. The House of Correction in Cumberland County was also empty, while before the law it had been too small for its inmates.

The Maine law has suppressed entirely every distillery, brewery, and wine factory in the State, and has extirpated fully nineteen-twentieths of the liquor traffic. Some low, vile grog shops yet remain in our larger cities and towns, and will do so until we can procure some slight additions to the law as it now stands. The discretion of our courts, as of yours, I am sorry to say, is often employed to make the path of the rumseller easy instead of thorny, and we shall not be able to expel the liquor traffic from our borders thoroughly until the courts shall be deprived of all discretion in liquor cases. We have no difficulty whatever with our juries, which are prompt always to convict rumsellers when the evidence will warrant it, the trouble is in the courts, either before conviction or after it.

The number of our convicts in prison is swollen very largely by convicted rumsellers. We have had more than fifty of them at one time in Cumberland County jail, for terms ranging from three months to twenty-six months. Before the Maine law we had none of this.

Two years ago I took pains to ascertain the number of convicts in prison in Maine and the number in Massachusetts, the latter being four times more than the former in proportion to the population.

From the day of the enactment of the Maine law, in 1851, to this day no incident has occurred to justify the declaration so often made, that it is a failure; on the contrary, it has been and is now in every way a great success.

NEAL DOW.

PORTLAND, Me., Feb. 16.

## MR. CONKLING'S VISIT TO MENTOR.

CLEVELAND, Feb. 17.—As the day draws nigh when the Cabinet problem must be solved, Gen. Garfield's infirmity of purpose becomes more and more conspicuous. Senator Conkling's visit has not solved his perplexities.

The great cause of anxiety is the rivalry between the Blaine and the Conkling factions. It is intensified by pledges made by Gen. Garfield at the pinch of the Presidential campaign, when the outlook was darkest for the Republican ticket, and the third-termers stood back, apparently indifferent as to the result. In that extremity Simon Cameron, who had been confidentially consulted by Gen. Garfield at the opening of the canvass, visited Mentor and made the arrangement by which the Grant leaders were to come to the front.

It was then understood that in the event of success the Treasury Department would be given to New York. After the election, Gen. Garfield viewed the situation differently, and while on a visit to Washington, before the meeting of Congress, he informed Mr. Morton, who had been proposed for the office, that as New York had the great Custom House and was the centre of all the vast financial operations, the Treasury Department ought to go West. Not long after that meeting, Mr. Allison was invited to take the Treasury portfolio.

If Gen. Garfield had been a courageous leader, or even a politic manager, he would at once have sent for Mr. Conkling, laid the case before him, and asked for his coöperation. He sought to compass his ends through devious ways. Mr. Blaine had previously been tendered the Department of State.

The two leading places in the Cabinet having been disposed of without consulting Mr. Conkling, one of them in direct violation of the Mentor agreement made with Simon Cameron, nothing was left for the chief of the third-termers but a secondary place. The suggestion of a scheme by which Senator Conkling would be offered Mr. Evarts's place, with a foreknowledge that it would be spurned, must have come from some small source. Gen. Grant had tendered Mr. Conkling the Chief Justiceship before giving it to Mr. Waite, and the New York Senator had declined that first of professional honors. Grant had also proposed to nominate Mr. Conkling for Minister to Great Britain, and that honor had also been declined.

How, then, could Mr. Conkling be gratified so as to bring him in full accord with the new Administration? If this question had been seriously considered two months ago, and been frankly met, the chasm which separates the two wings of the Republican party might possibly have been bridged over, though from the nature of the conflicting elements a collision has always seemed inevitable.

At this late hour Mr. Conkling has been summoned to Mentor, in the hope of patching up a peace. Gov. Cornell had made two visits, on the latter of which he was attended by the new Senator, Mr. Platt, whose presence at Washington gives Mr. Conkling two votes. Mr. Pierrepont had also carried counsel to the President elect, and had even offered to take a seat in the Cabinet himself, as a means of reconciliation.

Mr. Conkling has not up to this time made any request of the President elect, or appended his signature to any of the numerous applications for Cabinet and other places under the new Administration. He has made no recommendation of any kind. He has abstained from expressing any opinion on any subject. And he has had no communication with Gen. Garfield until now.

Since Gen. Garfield arranged yesterday's conference the Senator has not concealed his plans or purposes if certain things came to pass. Whether the President elect has been equally free with Mr. Conkling will soon be known, with all the material details. He may have spoken with a present resolution, to be abandoned when Mr. Blaine shall follow his rival and assert his authority.

Gen. Logan was recently invited to visit Mentor, and he went back to Washington, perhaps, less informed as to Gen. Garfield's intentions than when he left his comfortable seat in the Senate for a cold and unprofitable journey. It had been distinctly and, as was supposed, finally arranged that Robert Lincoln was to go into the Cabinet. Gen. Logan had fixed upon the Interior Department for his protégé, but when he bade farewell to Mentor, it was quite unsettled whether Illinois would be considered in the make-up of the Administration at all.

This single fact illustrates the uncertainty of the future programme. Gen. Garfield does not know himself, at this time, of whom his Cabinet will be composed, for the simple reason that, after laying down a chart of policy, and having chosen the agents to carry it out, he became alarmed lest it might not prove satisfactory. He has reconstructed it half a dozen times within the past six weeks, to the great annoyance of Mr. Blaine, Mr. Allison, and his other confidential advisers.

### Three Planets Now Before the Public.

The spectacle presented by Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn grows more attractive every evening. Venus and Jupiter are fast approaching each other, and on next Monday night they will be in conjunction, shining only a little over three degrees apart. Old Saturn looks as if he had fallen behind in the race, and he has also dropped out of line with the others. Next week, however, he will assume such a position that the three planets will mark the corners of a little triangle.

With the telescope the view of these planets is exceedingly beautiful. Venus begins to show the crescent form, and may be watched with a low magnifying power long before sunset. A slight turn of the tube, and Jupiter with his attendant moons sails into the field of view. Another turn brings Saturn upon the scene. His splendid rings are opening wider every month. The narrow division between them looks like a black line of enamel upon a golden band.

Those who wish to study these wonderful planets should not let slip the present opportunity, for before the spring is over they will all have disappeared from the evening sky.

### The Rugby Colony.

W. Hastings Hughes writes from the Tennessee Rugby to say that the rumor that the founders of this enterprise have been cheated in their purchase of land there, that the settlement is a failure so far as Tennessee is concerned, and that it is to be "removed bodily" to Minnesota, where some amiable people have presented the settlers with a large tract gratis, is a bad joke. He says: "We have had a more severe winter than most people here can remember, and those of us who have been housed in battened shanties have suffered somewhat from the cold, but the snow disappeared inside than a fortnight ago. We have now quite open weather, the settlers are hard at work preparing for their spring crops, a new sawmill has just got to work which will do away with the scarcity of lumber, which has been our only real difficulty; new settlers are arriving daily, our church and school building is nearly finished, and things generally look about as unlike removing bodily as can well be imagined."

### The Beginning of the End of the Bridge Work.

The last stone of the masonry of the Brooklyn approach to the East River Bridge was laid yesterday. There are fifty-two floor beams of the superstructure ready to be put in position, and workmen were busy yesterday at the Brooklyn arches setting those marked for the Brooklyn tower. In all about 400 tons of the 5,000 contracted for, have been delivered, but many of the members of the superstructure cannot yet be used. There are now enough floor beams on hand for about 100 feet on each side of the tower. The engineers believe that the superstructure will be in position by next fall, and that the bridge may be opened for public travel by Jan. 1, 1882.

### The Battle with the Bosses.

Philadelphia, Feb. 16, 1881.

Another blow for freedom struck!
Another sturdy, honest blow!
Again the people's power and pluck
Have told against the common foe,
And bosses have to go.

A stronghold of the handed Rings
Is carried by the fierce attack
Of those who brook no petty kings;
And all the swindling, thieving pack
Are sternly beaten back.

The fraud, the trade, the trick, the game,
And all the arts that swindlers try,
To bring the people's cause to shame,
Are chased, and caught, and sure to die,
Before the hue and cry.

As Philadelphia did her work,
Let all Ring-hounded people do!
Where'er the seeds of swindling lark,
Reform, to rich and poor men true,
Must run its ploughshare through.

## HE WAS ONLY HALF PAST THREE,

**And Yet, at that Tender Age, he was Collector for a Wandering Minstrel.**

Bertram Lane is a Brooklyn boy, whose age, according to his own statement, is "half past three." He lives in Warren street, near Smith. The hand organs and German bands that make the neighborhood ring from morning till night have developed in Bertram's mind an extraordinary taste for music.

"Dear me," said Mrs. Lane, in great anxiety yesterday afternoon, "where can Bertie be? I scolded him this morning for playing on the piano with the poker, and I think the poor little fellow was annoyed. I wish I had let him do as he pleased."

Bertram's little sister suggested that her brother had gone to reënforce a company of street musicians, who, the day before, had offered him inducements to act as a collector for them. While the anxious mother was considering the situation a strange sound shook the street. It was produced by a strolling cornet player, who was surrounded by about fifty diminutive urchins, who seemed entranced. A very small boy with a little tin pot in his hand did active service in behalf of the musician. He was a fat, rosy cheeked boy, and, with eyes that blazed with excitement and sturdy limbs that trembled from the same cause, he scrambled up the door steps, rang the bells vigorously, and lent additional emphasis to his demand for admittance by kicking until the door was opened. When he presented his tin pot, and asked assistance for poor Mr. Jones, who had a blind wife, and three children down with the measles, he reaped a rich harvest, which he poured into the hand of the grateful cornet player. The collector was Bertram Lane.

Mrs. Lane seized her boy in her arms and hurried toward her home. The afflicted musician pursued her.

"Excuse me, madam," he said, as he overtook the lady, who, being handicapped, couldn't run very fast; "is that your boy?"

"He is," exclaimed Mrs. Lane, turning with indignation upon the musician.

"I congratulate you, madam (he took off his hat); you have a treasure. I told him the story but once, and he had it by heart. He will be a great man if properly trained. What would you give to have him taught the business?"

Without a word Mrs. Lane was hastening home, when the musician again intercepted her.

"Pardon me; the young gentleman has some small change in his hand that belongs to me. He would not wish, I think, to defraud his benefactor. Would you, my little man?"

The chubby hand, indeed, grasped a three-cent piece that the boy had received at the last house he had visited, and this "white penny," as he called it, he now handed over to his friend and patron, who, out of sheer gratitude, played three tunes in front of Mrs. Lane's house. He would have played another if he had not been interrupted by a policeman summoned by the frantic neighbors.

## MR. BLAINE'S JOURNEY FROM BANGOR.

**His Invitation to be Secretary of State—Why he Let the Fact Leak Out.**

*From the Cincinnati Enquirer.*

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12.—It is due to Senator Blaine to tell the true story of how he was asked to take a place in the Cabinet. The circumstances attending the offer of the place to the Maine Senator have long been known to me. They are these, and are absolutely correct: When Garfield in November last contemplated a visit to Washington Senator Blaine was at Bangor, Me. Garfield wrote the Senator in words almost identically as follows:

*The Hon. James G. Blaine, Bangor, Me.:*
I will be in Washington on the 24th inst. (November) for a day or two on private business. If convenient I would like to see you there. JAMES A. GARFIELD.

Blaine received this note by due course of mail, and arrived in this city on Friday, the 26th of November, the President elect having arrived on the Tuesday preceding. On the afternoon of the day of Senator Blaine's arrival, he called on Gen. Garfield at his private residence on I street, in this city. For two hours the President and the Maine Senator were closeted, without interruption from a single person. At this conference Gen. Garfield, without reservation, tendered the State Department to Senator Blaine. The offer was quite a surprise to Blaine, for it was thoroughly unexpected. After he had recovered from it, Blaine said:

"General, I was hardly prepared for this tender on your part. I do not know how to make answer. I would like some time for reflection and consultation; and in the mean time I will advise you."

Gen. Garfield then and there urged Blaine to accept, but he made no binding answer at the time. Subsequently Blaine had a conference with his closest friends, and the weight of their testimony was that he should accept the place. Said he: "Gentlemen, I am inclined to accept Gen. Garfield's offer; but, meanwhile, I will, for a very short period, still further hold it under advisement."

After this conference with his friends, the fact that Gen. Garfield had offered the Secretaryship of State was communicated to one or two of Senator Blaine's newspaper friends. Blaine said: "If the sentiment of the country endorses the selection Gen. Garfield has made, I will accept the office. Otherwise not." Early in December the announcement was made in one or two newspapers, directly and absolutely, that Senator Blaine had been invited by Gen. Garfield to take the State Department. It soon became accepted as a fact. The universal expression of newspaper opinion was that the selection was a good one. Thereupon Senator Blaine wrote a long letter to Gen. Garfield, accepting the place. This is the story of Blaine and the Secretaryship of State. He will take the office on the 4th of March next, if he lives.

### Cattle Raising.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Assuming it as a fact and it is being demonstrated every day that there is no such thing in this country as land that cannot be cultivated, either with or without irrigation, we are in a position to consider the advisability of having any considerable part of our territory exclusively appropriated by cattle raisers; or, as Adam Smith has it, "sill in the shepherd state."

Nearly all of the South American countries have had a thorough experience in this particular. They now find notably the Argentine Republic that cultivators of the soil must take the place of the cattle raisers. The number of acres that will support one ox, worth $15, will in the hands of one hundred men become a veritable fountain of wealth. The cattle men in our own country will before long discover that cattle fed on grain, vegetables, and hay grown on the fertile soils of our vast domain will yield tenfold better returns than the lean, bony striplings that are driven from the plain, little else on them than sun and frost, that have had need only to make them valuable. Suppose you take a steer from the range, tie him up in a warm stable, give him sweet hay, ground feed, plenty of sweet water. Will he not make a large, fat, succulent beast? Will he not bring tenfold more in the market place than the lean, ill-favored, bony animal that is compelled to roam over neglected acres of dry grass?

The days of the cattle raisers are passing away. There will come in their place a thrifty race of cultivators, who will also raise cattle, but these will be giants of tooth, some meat, fed on meal, hay, sweet roots, and vegetables, as bulky as an elephant and as plump as a partridge.

Belgium has an area of 11,373 square miles. There are whole provinces of mountain, forest, swamp, and bog. She has a population of 5,536,851—462 people to the square mile!

"Holyday! what matchless breves, what flesh and fowl they raise there!" CLARKE W. HARRISON.

### Chanticleer.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Chanticleer, a gray horse, foaled in 1843, bred at Tyrone, County Galway, Ireland, by Christopher St. George, M. P. for that county, was sold by him for 200 guineas to the Morris Brothers, croupiers of a gambling hell owned by F. Cannon, in Frederick street, Dublin, and won for them, in 1848, the Doncaster Cup—Chanticleer was mentioned instead, in mistake—and also the Goodwood Stakes, same year, two of the great races, which established their fortune, as stated in your Saddle-Bags. They have since been well known bankers. W. S.

### Smyth.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Among the recent Dorsey dinner guests I note the names of John F. Smyth and President Winston of the Mutual Life Insurance Company. Is this John F. Smyth the same individual who, as New York's late Insurance Commissioner, was charged with an attempt to levy blackmail on Mr. Winston's company? R. S. C., Forty Holder.

HARTFORD, Feb. 15.

### The Ship Gray Feather.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In reply to "A Pathetic Inquiry" in Friday's SUN I have to state that the ship Gray Feather, Capt. R. S. Mayo, was despatched by R. W. Cameron & Co.'s Pioneer Line for Melbourne about Dec. 12, 1880. She arrived safely and discharged her cargo. Messrs. Cameron & Co. do not have any particulars of any passenger on board the ship.

New York, Feb. 17. JOHN ROBBINS.

### Gen. Hancock will be There.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 17.—The Executive Committee in charge of the inaugural arrangements have been advised that Gen. Hancock will be in the city on the day of the inauguration.

### Truly Good Advice.

*From the Cincinnati Gazette.*

People had better be careful what they drink.

### Fair Questions.

Now, who shall be King of the Fair?
Ulysses S. Grant is the man that we want!
And surely subscriptions will never be scant,
If he is the King of the Fair.

Now, where shall we hold the Fair?
The Park is the place that just suits the case,
If once we could gain the Commissioners' grace,
And goble the Park for the Fair.

Where, then, shall we hold the Fair?
We look all