MRS. ASTOR'S NEW YEAR PARTY.

Eighty Homeless Boys and One Little Girl Off for the West.

Eighty-one homeless boys and one lonely little girl assembled in the rooms of the Children's Aid Society yesterday. They constituted "Mrs. J. J. Astor's New Year Party," and were preparing to leave this city for homes in the West and South. Mrs. Astor, who paid for their transportation, was present in the afternoon, and bade them farewell. The boys, who were between the ages of 12 and 14, were gathered in the front room. Most of their faces answered for their Celtic origin. The land of Bismarck had only a few representatives. Fat boys from the Fourth Ward looked more prominently fat in the cast-off garments of thin little Fifth avenue æsthetes. Slim boys wore trousers that flapped about their legs like the garments of a cornfield scarecrow on a windy day. All seemed very glad that they were going away. These boys took the 10 o'clock evening train from Jersey City for Culpepper County, Virginia, in charge of the Southern agent of the society, Mr. A. Schlegel.

In the back room fifteen little ones from 5 to 10 years of age were assembled. They were more comfortably and neatly clad than the others, and appeared to be natives of the city. They unconsciously did a great deal of attitudinizing. One bright-eyed little boy was looking through a small Bible; another leaned against a table, with legs crossed and arms folded, calmly surveying the reporter; another very rotund youngster, not more than 5 years old, was squatted on the floor desperately endeavoring to lace his brass-toed shoes. His proud contemplation of the brass toes materially interfered with the lacing, which another little boy finally accomplished for him. He then leaned back on his hands with a sigh of relief and continued the contemplation of his toes. The lonely little girl was in this room, and received much attention from her chivalrous companions. She responded to the poetical Christian name of Irene. Her other name is Branigan. She is a pretty, black-eyed, straight-featured little orphan. Her brother, who resembles her strikingly, accompanied her. There was not what might be called an ill-looking face in this room. This party went in high spirits to the Erie Railroad depot, where they started for Lawrence, Kan., on the 6 P. M. train. They will be adopted by people in Kansas. Another party of fifty boys, in charge of E. Trott, bound for Osceola County, Iowa, also went out on this train. Most of the young emigrants came from east side lodging houses.

CHILDREN OF VAN HORN.

They are Advised not to Reckon too Certainly on their Dutch Fortune.

The celebrated Van Horn estate, leased for ninety-nine years in the last quarter of the last century, and said to cover an enormous amount of property in the principal cities of this country, will probably never revert to the heirs, real or pretended, in America. The large amount of money belonging to the estate, and supposed to be lying in a bank in Holland waiting for somebody to go and claim it, can certainly never be recovered, for the lapse of thirty years outlaws such a claim in Holland.

An association, of which Mr. Zinks of Philadelphia is President, has been formed by the survivors of the Van Horn family in America, in hopes of getting the property. Its expectations seem, however, to rest upon rather slender grounds. A Miss Montgomery, who was boarding at a Michigan hotel, said that at the same hotel was a Mrs. Macoreie, whose husband was a waiter. Mrs. Macoreie saw an advertisement in a New York newspaper calling for heirs for the Van Horn estate. She was an heir, and she came to New York and obtained $38.000 as her share of the property. Miss Montgomery's story started into action every one who could trace his descent, in however remote a degree, to the Van Horns of Holland. But Mr. John P. Jayne, the old claim lawyer of 7 Murray street, says that a man, whom he sent to Michigan for the purpose, discovered Mrs. Macoreie, and ascertained from her that the whole story was a falsehood.

"I had my suspicions," said Mr. Jayne, "when I heard of the great size of the estate. Property is not often allowed to accumulate in that way without some of the heirs turning up. They say the estate owns land in New York, Jersey City, Newark, and Trenton, and they might have added in Philadelphia and Baltimore without much affecting their claim. Any one who pays money in the hope of getting back part of that state will be a poorer man when the association has finished its labors."

Commended to the Grand Jury's Attention.

George Griswold Haven, the banker, of 17 Wall street, is foreman of the new Grand Jury in the General Sessions. Recorder Smyth, in his charge to the Grand Jury yesterday, directed its attention to the defalcation in the Docks Department, and to what a former Grand Jury pronounced the gross negligence of members of the Board. The multiplication of crimes of violence and the abuse of deadly weapons he also mentioned.

District Attorney McKeon has decided to do without detectives in the District Attorney's office. Detectives Field and O'Connor have been transferred to the staff of Inspector Byrnes. The clerks, it is understood, will be retained until the 15th inst., when they will be replaced by Democrats. The chief clerkship, it is said, will be given to Hugh Donnelly, a lawyer. Mr. McKeon has determined to dispense with a stenographer in the place of Edward W. Bonynge, who has become Deputy Chief Clerk of the Surrogate's office.

James F. Roberts, a son of William R. Roberts, and formerly a law student in Mr. McKeon's office, will be Mr. McKeon's private secretary.

Honest John Settling Up.

A small army of employees and contestants in last week's race met in the *Spirit of the Times* office yesterday afternoon to receive their pay. John Ennis, the manager, said that he felt less dread in facing the rebel batteries at Vicksburg than he did in meeting these men. The reason was that the legitimate expenses of the race had been $4,324.53, and the receipts $4,539. The prizes amounted to $3,500, and John came more than $2,500 short. He borrowed $1,000 from a relative, and this, with the $500 he won from the diamond man, enabled him to pay off all the workmen, in addition to $500 to Fitzgerald, $500 to Noremac, $200 to Harry Kane, $100 to Kroline, and $100 to Lacouse. John has a little real estate, which he is to make over to the bank to-morrow as security for the settlement of all just claims.

Policeman Mahoney's Target.

Policeman Philip F. Mahoney of the Madison street station shot and severely wounded Christopher McDonnell, a burglar of 15, in broad daylight for running away from him. The jury that convicted McDonnell asked Recorder Smyth to rebuke Mahoney, and a severe rebuke was administered. Yesterday, when McDonnell was arraigned for sentence, the Recorder said:

"Policeman Mahoney, without any shadow of necessity, chose to discharge a ball at into your arm, shattering the bone, and endangering your life. You have suffered a great deal, and I have decided, in view of all the circumstances, to suspend sentence. If you commit any other offence, I can send for you at any time and impose this sentence. You are discharged."

Pastor Schneider's Year's Work.

Of the 10,076 marriages recorded at the Bureau of Vital Statistics in 1881, 747 were celebrated by the Rev. Francis J. Schneider, a German Lutheran minister at 89 Second avenue. Mr. Schneider preaches only occasionally, and for the past sixteen years has supported himself almost entirely by marrying people. During that period he has married between 4,000 and 5,000 persons. In 1880 he married 526 couples. He seldom gets less than $5 and when the bridegroom is liberal he receives $10 or $20. His terms are cash. Although a Lutheran, his marriage ceremony is not performed according to the ritual of that church, and is as simple and contains as little of a religious nature as if performed by a magistrate or the Mayor.

Abolishing Unlawful Fees.

When he took his seat yesterday upon the bench of the Fourth District Civil Court, Civil Justice Steckler said that it had been the custom to charge exorbitant and unlawful fees in dispossess proceedings. This was oppressive not only to the landlord but to the tenant, when, from either indigence, he desired to pay his rent into court, and was compelled to pay the sheriff's fees. An end, Justice Steckler said, would be put to this. In the first place, he had decided to abolish the office of dispossess clerk. In the second place, the attaches of the court would be permitted to charge any fee whatever. Justice Steckler's court officers are men of all parties.

For the Better Protection of Theatregoers.

Mr. E. F. Underhill, the well-known court stenographer of this city, has invented a very ingeniously contrived theatre and hall seat, which is designed to avoid danger in the event of fire. It is so arranged that all the seats can be made in a few seconds to simultaneously fold into recesses in the floor, and leave the hall or theatre with nothing to obstruct the movement over the floor to the places of exit.

Mr. Underhill is submitting the invention to the projectors of new opera houses and theatres.

Missouri Counties Commanded to Pay Up.

ST. LOUIS, Jan. 3.—Writs of mandamus have been served on the Rails Cou ty Court, the Marion County Court, and the Pike County Court, commanding them to levy and collect taxes to pay judgments on county bonds in favor of various parties. The bonds were issued to aid in the construction of the St. Louis and Keokuk Railway.

Court Calendars This Day.

SUPREME COURT—CHAMBERS.—Nos. 10, 18, 19, 21, 28, 34, 35, 47, 54, 58, 73, 101, 126, 132, 137, 138, 142, 144, 145. GENERAL TERM AND SPECIAL TERM—Adjourned until Monday. Part II.—Nos. 1482, 1321, 1518, 1520, 1045, 1582, 1507, 1557, 1741, 1064, 1701, 1810, 911½, 966, 1213, 1368, 1210, 695, 24-5, 1548, 1196, 1614, 1013, 1868, 1291, 1537, 1577, 1577, 1577