The Sun.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1882.

The regular circulation of THE SUN *for the week ending Dec. 23, 1882, was:*

Sunday	140,537	Thursday	137,236
Monday	138,441	Friday	136,477
Tuesday	138,278	Saturday	137,196
Wednesday	138,844	Weekly	64,512

Total for the week 1,030,921

For the Few and Not for the Many.

In the report of the committee of the Board of Education who were appointed to investigate the course of instruction in the public schools, it is said: "When we reflect that at least 125,000 children are in daily attendance, and that the course of study was prepared with the view of meeting the needs and ability of the many and not the few, the comparatively small number of complaints about excessive work imposed on the pupils do not constitute a reasonable charge against the general merits, usefulness, and applicability of the course."

That may be all true enough so far as concerns the allegations that the scholars are overworked. But what is one of the studies the committee regard as demanded by the many? It is drawing, to which a great amount of attention is given. A very small portion of the time and thought of the pupils might be profitably given to that, a free use of the pencil being a valuable acquirement in many trades; but drawing is carried so far in the schools that it becomes a special branch of study requiring much application. As much time is required for instruction in it as for history in the recommendations of the committee.

But the great majority of the children do not stay long enough at the grammar and primary schools to attain any considerable perfection in drawing. Nor is the rest of the course in line with it. If the schools set out to give an industrial education, then drawing "an original pottery form," examples of "bisymmetrical historic ornament of different styles," a "design for textile fabric," and the like would be a wise employment for the pupils. But drawing is all that is done in that direction, and the children cannot immediately apply the little they learn in a way to make the instruction of practical value to them.

The truth is, drawing as taught in our public schools of the higher grades at present belongs to the industrial school, and if it is advisable to teach it to the children of the city at the public expense, then it is advisable to make it part of an industrial school system to be established in connection with the other schools, or as a subsequent course. But instead of such a really useful institution we support a college to teach boys Latin and Greek and the higher mathematics, which they do not want, and a Normal College to carry girls along the same road, and to embellish them with fancy accomplishments, which they do not need even for ordinary teaching, and which are of little service in fitting them for other employments out of which to make their living.

If the humbug college in Lexington avenue was turned into an industrial school, instead of sending out graduating classes of only forty or fifty a year it would be crowded with boys ambitious of the practical instruction it afforded, and the money spent upon it would really tell, whereas now it is utterly wasted, since the other colleges of the city would gladly receive every boy who wants a classical education merely.

The trouble with the administration of the public school funds is that a large part of them is spent for the few, while the many either go without any instruction in the free schools at all, or are compelled to submit to a course of study necessarily more or less adapted to the wants of the paltry minority who are intended for the humbug college in Lexington avenue, or the girl's college, at which an elegant education is given.

The District Attorney's Office—Shameful Neglect of Duty.

Our esteemed contemporary, the *Evening Post*, on Friday called attention in this paragraph to a most discreditable occurrence:

"The Court of General Sessions was adjourned to-day because no prosecuting officer was in court, a fact upon which Judge Cowing commented severely."

Section 1,503 of the new codification of the laws relating to the city of New York, which is a concise statement of the existing statutes relating to the compensation of the District Attorney and his assistants, provides:

"The District Attorney shall receive for his services as such District Attorney a yearly salary of twelve thousand dollars, which shall be paid in equal monthly payments. There shall be four Assistant District Attorneys for said county, who shall each receive a yearly salary of seven thousand five hundred dollars."

We understand that Mr. McKEON, the District Attorney, is ill, and consequently he cannot be held responsible for his own absence from court on Friday. But where were his assistants?

These gentlemen are JOHN R. FELLOWS, AUGUSTUS J. REQUIER, JOHN VINCENT, and JOHN O'BYRNE. With the possible exception of Mr. FELLOWS, it may be doubted whether any one of them ever enjoyed a net income from his private law practice of $7,500 a year. Their appointment, in every case but his, was professional promotion, and it was their business to show that they deserved this advancement. Instead of doing so, it would appear that they flagrantly neglect their duties. If not, how did it happen that there was no prosecutor in attendance before Judge COWING at the time we have mentioned?

If the Assistant District Attorney who ought to have been there had been liable to lose his salary for the day if he did not attend, the court would never have been obliged to adjourn on account of his absence.

Public officers must be made to do the work the people pay them for.

He Waits Long and Comes Far.

Mr. H. BURJORJEE, the son of Dr. BURJORJEE DORALYEE BURJORJEE, and the nephew of Dr. NUSSER-WANJEE COYAJEE, writes us from Bombay a long letter to controvert some statements made concerning him in THE SUN so long ago as the 20th of last August in two letters written by his father and uncle above named. It is a great distance to come to set himself right, and he has waited so many months to do it that everybody here has forgotten all about him and what was said of him; and before the Bombay public could get his vindication, even if we published it in full, many weeks more would elapse.

Mr. BURJORJEE, therefore, was foolish to undertake the job, and we shall not commit the equal folly of giving up valuable space to his letter. Besides, he is a young man, and can vindicate himself by his course of life. The trouble, too, only rises out of a difference about that clap-trap business, theosophy, so called.

There is, in truth, no such thing as theosophy. It is a mere name describing nothing real. The whole pretended science is only a product of humbug, charlatanism, lunacy, and sensationalism. The old beliefs of India are better, because they have substance, and are based on a noble philosophy. They are worth discussing, and sensible men can find very much to learn from them. But this humbug, theosophy, is unworthy of serious thought.

Mr. BURJORJEE, therefore, was justifiable in leaving the Theosophical Society, as it seems he did; and if he soon discovered the shallowness of its philosophy, he showed himself a discerning young man. We unhesitatingly say that when his uncle called him a "foolish youth," the old gentleman was wrong, if he had no other reason for his harsh language than that the nephew so acted and so concluded in that particular case. The young man got out of the concern in good time.

But we are tired of the whole thing. It does not deserve serious treatment. And Mr. BURJORJEE must settle his difficulties with his family in private. They are of no public interest here in New York, nor do we believe that the people of Bombay care any more about them.

The News from South America.

Although the position of the South American belligerents seems on the surface unchanged, several incidents have recently taken place which render the prospect of an agreement somewhat more promising. Time is working on the side of peace. With the lapse of every month the delusive hopes of American intervention entertained in Peru and Bolivia tend toward extinction, while in Chili itself there seems to be a growing conviction that an issue must be found, even at the cost of some concessions, from the present intolerable situation.

It is becoming more and more evident, as the Chilian authorities have divined from the outset of peace negotiations, that a solution of the existing difficulty may be materially facilitated, if not definitely effected, by Bolivia. It is at La Paz, where a constitutional government is in operation, rather than at the shifting headquarters of Peruvian guerrilla chiefs, that the preliminaries of a treaty, framed to regulate the claims of the combatants, may be best arranged. Should Bolivia make peace upon her own account, or should she, without abandoning her ally, insist that certain terms proffered by Chili were reasonable and ought to be accepted, it is probable that public opinion in Peru would declare itself so loudly against the further prosecution of a useless war that CARRILLO and CACERES would find it impossible to keep even their present inconsiderable forces in the field.

That such would be the result of a decided change of attitude on the part of Bolivia has been so firmly believed at Santiago that, so long ago as the date of the Arica Conference, the Chilian representatives made special efforts to win the good will of the envoys from La Paz, and, as the official documents published by our State Department show, would probably have succeeded at that time in rupturing the alliance between Peru and Bolivia but for the unwarranted and reprehensible interference of Mr. ADAMS, the American Minister to the last-named power. About a year ago a second effort was made on the part of Chili to arrive at a friendly understanding with the La Paz Government, and Mr. BALMACEDA, lately the Chilian Secretary for Foreign Affairs, does not hesitate to assert that the preliminary agreement entered into at Tacna between the agents of his own country and of Bolivia would have been ratified by the Congress of the latter State had not Mr. ADAMS a second time interposed, and persuaded the La Paz authorities to await the disclosure of the policy contemplated by the United States in despatching the TRESCOTT mission. Remembering the tenor of Secretary BLAINE's instructions, and observing that Mr. WALKER BLAINE was allowed to accompany Mr. TRESCOTT, the American Minister at La Paz thought it quite safe to repeat the gross misconduct of which he had been guilty at Arica, and for which he had escaped due censure at the hands of Mr. EVARTS.

Since the miscarriage, however, of the Tacna draft of an agreement, the Bolivians have had their eyes opened to the intentions of our Government by the recall of Mr. ADAMS, and are now evincing a much more tractable disposition. It is true that the La Paz Congress, in its recent discussion of the peace problem, did not go so far as to openly differentiate its interests from those of Peru; on the contrary, it made an edifying profession of loyalty to its unlucky ally, and declared that the MONTERO Government must be notified in advance of any negotiations with Chili, and invited to share in them. But the Congress was careful not to say that, in case of MONTERO's maintaining a defiant attitude, and refusing to offer Chili a reasonable indemnity, its representatives should hold themselves bound to imitate the perverse conduct of their ally. A very different purpose seems to be implied in the injunction laid on the Executive to at once conclude a truce with Chili if possible, and, having taken this preliminary step, to spare no pains to adjust the conditions of a lasting peace. In other words, the Bolivians have recovered the conciliatory temper of which they gave evidence at the Arica Conference, and which, but for the meddlesome behavior of Mr. ADAMS, would probably have put an end to the South American troubles more than two years ago.

The proposition of Admiral MONTERO to cede the districts of Arica and Tacna to Bolivia, looks, at the first glance, like the offer of a bribe to the La Paz Government to persist in hostility to Chili. Now, there is no doubt that Bolivia urgently needs such an outlet to the Pacific as Arica would afford her; indeed, before the war the bulk of her foreign commerce was transacted through this harbor instead of through the ports in her own coast strip, which were cut off from the productive districts of the interior by the almost impassable desert of Atacama. But, much as the Bolivians would like to possess Arica, they know that it is not MONTERO's to give, and that they could not oust the Chilians without a series of victories which the joint power of Peru and Bolivia, when at its acme, proved unable to win. The La Paz authorities, in fact, are perfectly aware that if they are ever to get Arica, or some other convenient Peruvian port, they will have to obtain the free consent of Chili, who now holds all the desirable harbors in southern Peru. This is the secret but powerful motive which is impelling Bolivia to side with Chili in exacting from Peru a territorial indemnity large enough for two. It may also be surmised that MONTERO has thrown out the suggestion mentioned as a feeler, for he knows, of course, that the Peruvian Constitution, about which we heard so much under the BLAINE régime, would be violated quite as flagrantly by a cession of national territory to one foreign country as to another. If public opinion is observed to view with tolerance a proposal to give Arica to Bolivia, it may be brought to view with less repugnance the further sacrifice of Tarapaca. Indeed, it is difficult to see what Peru, whose naval power is gone, could do with the outlying province of Tarapaca, which if the project ascribed to MONTERO were carried out would be severed from the rest of the country by Bolivian territory. The fact, in short, that MONTERO has begun to talk about the mutilation of the national soil in any circumstances is a favorable omen.

A treaty which should allot Tarapaca to Chili and assign the districts of Arica and Tacna, which adjoin it on the north, to Bolivia, would, of course, be welcome at La Paz, and would be less obnoxious to the Peruvians than any terms which their conqueror has offered during the last twelvemonth. In view, moreover, of the rancor engendered by the war, it seems to be an essential condition of a lasting peace that Chili and Peru should not be conterminous. The interposition of a tongue of Bolivian territory would probably serve as a guarantee against a speedy resumption of hostilities. It might, therefore, be wiser and cheaper in the end for Chili to approve the offer attributed to Admiral MONTERO, on condition, of course, that Chili's title to Tarapaca and to the old Bolivian coast strip lying south of that province should be formally recognized by the parties in interest

A Glowing Picture of Alaska.

So little, comparatively, is known about Alaska, that a summary of the facts concerning our hyperborean Territory, given in a paper read at Washington last spring by the Rev. SHELDON JACKSON, will be interesting beyond doubt. The paper was prepared to direct attention to the educational needs of Alaska, and it is one among a rather heterogeneous collection of essays published by a Washington bureau which seems to try to make all the noise it can in order to magnify its office—we mean the Bureau of Education, so called.

A good deal of the stuff published by that fussy concern is rubbish of the most unmistakable sort, and in the pamphlet where we find the facts about Alaska nearly a hundred pages besides are devoted to the report of a sort of conference and experience meeting at Washington last March, whereat various people, teachers, clergymen, school superintendents, school book agents, and others, were assembled to discuss educational matters, and to advocate pet notions about teaching and pet schemes for getting money out of the Treasury. There was more or less of value in the papers presented, but all that could have come out without Government aid, and been printed where its chances of being read and producing a useful effect would have been far greater than they are in a public document chiefly consumed at the junk shops.

The paper of Dr. JACKSON on Alaska would have made a very good magazine article with a little alteration, especially as it is illustrated with a map and five engravings besides, the cost of which would then have been paid by private publishers, instead of being put on the people as it is now. There would be about as much reason for putting on the Government the expense of printing all the home missionary reports of the various religious denominations as there is for including Dr. JACKSON's plea for education in Alaska in a public document.

He gives the area of Alaska at 580,107 square miles, but that must be an estimate only, for we are not aware that there has yet been a regular survey of the Territory. It is, however, a far more extensive country than most people have any conception of. For instance, from extreme north to south is 1,400 miles in an air line. From its eastern boundary to the end of the Aleutian Islands is a distance of 2,200 miles, or as far as from Washington to California. The island of Atlu, at the end of the Aleutian chain, is as far west of San Francisco as Maine is east. A good many people have been astonished when they were asked where is the centre of a line drawn from the furthest east to the furthest west of the United States territory, to find that the true answer is San Francisco.

Alaska is as large as all the New England and Middle States, together with Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Kentucky, and Tennessee combined, or as large as all of the United States east of the Mississippi River and north of Georgia and the Carolinas. That is, it is nearly one-sixth of the area of the United States. It has a coast line of 25,000 miles, or two and a half times more than the Atlantic and Pacific coast lines of the remaining portion of the Union. The total area of the islands of Alaska Dr. JACKSON estimates at 31,295 square miles, or twice as much as that of the State of Maine.

To find our highest mountains we must go to Alaska. There the Coast Range of California and the Rocky Mountain Range of Colorado and Montana unite to form the Alaskan Mountains, which extend until they gradually sink into the Pacific, the highest peaks visible above the water forming the Aleutian chain of islands. In the Alaskan Range are Mount St. Elias, 19,500 feet high; Mount Cook, 16,000 feet; Mount Crillon, 15,900; Mount Fairweather, 15,500. These are the figures of Dr. JACKSON, though for their accuracy he does not give us his authorities. But the heights are those commonly given in gazetteers and geographies. Besides its ordinary mountains, Alaska contains the great volcanic system of the United States. It is also the great glacier region. "From Bute Inlet to Unimak Pass nearly every deep gulch has its glacier, some of which are vastly greater and grander than any glacier in the Alps." Hot and mineral springs also abound in Alaska. And, in addition, it contains one of the largest rivers in the United States. The Yukon River is 70 miles wide across its five mouths and intervening deltas; for the first thousand miles it is from one to five miles wide, and, according to Mr. ROBERT CAMPBELL of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company, it is navigable at certain seasons for nearly 3,000 miles, if its tributary, the Pelly, be included.

Nearly all the sealskins used in the markets of the world come from two little islands belonging to Alaska. The skins of the sea otter are also very valuable, and there are many choice land fur-bearing animals. The waters are wonderfully rich in fish, as all the explorers of the region, from Capt. COOK down, have testified. Besides cod, "Alaska can supply the world," says Dr. JACKSON, "with salmon, herring, and halibut of the best quality." It is also "the great reserve lumber region of the United States." There are "thousands of square miles of yellow cedar, white spruce, hemlock, and balsam fir that densely cover the southeastern section of Alaska." And, of course, minerals are plenty and of various kinds in so mountainous a region.

As to climate, "in a general way, it may be said that inland Alaska has an arctic winter and a tropical summer." At Fort Yukon the thermometer often rises above 100° in summer, and indicates from 50° to 70° below zero in winter. Along the immense southern coast and islands the climate is moist and warm. On the island of Unalashka, for instance, according to the record of a Greek priest during five years, the lowest point reached was zero of the thermometer, and the highest 77°, the average being 37° at 7 in the morning, 40° at 1, and 36° at 9 at night. As to climate and weather, it is very much the same as northwestern Scotland, a little more than half the days being clear or partly clear, and the rest all cloudy. At Sitka, according to records kept pretty steadily for forty-five years, the mean spring temperature is 41.2°; summer, 54.6°; autumn, 44.9°; winter, 32.5°; for the whole year, 43.3°. "The surprising fact is brought to light," adds Dr. JACKSON, who takes the above figures from the Alaska Coast Pilot, "that the winter climate of southeastern Alaska for forty-five years past has been the average winter climate of Kentucky and West Virginia, and the average summer climate of Minnesota." The mild climate of this region is due to the warm Japan current of the Pacific, the Kuro-Siwo. Generally of Alaska, Mr. WILLIAM H. DALE of the Smithsonian Institution, says: "I come back convinced, from personal inspection, that Alaska is a far better country than much of Great Britain and Norway, and even part of Prussia."

The Attorney-General as Private Counsel.

Heretofore we have always thought pretty well of Mr. LESLIE W. RUSSELL, the present Attorney-General of the State of New York. In an interview published yesterday, however, he is reported as expressing certain views in regard to his own conduct which we deem unsound in principle and likely to prove exceedingly pernicious in practice.

The conversation related to the propriety of his practising law in private causes. He said he thought the salary of the Attorney-General, which is only $5,000 a year, was fixed upon the assumption that the lawyer elected to the office should be at liberty to continue his private practice. He thought he might properly engage in any case in which the people of the State are not interested either as plaintiffs or defendants. He added, however, as we learn from our esteemed contemporary the *New York Times*, that the function of the Attorney-General, as the law officer of the State, in the suit to vacate the charter of the Mutual Union Telegraph Company, ceased when he gave his consent that the action should be brought.

According to the sentiments attributed to Mr. RUSSELL in the report of this interview, he regards himself as free to act as the private counsel of Mr. JAY GOULD and Mr. W. H. CAMERON in that suit, although he does not say that he has concluded to do so.

This will not answer at all. It is preposterous to argue that the interest of the people in such a case ceases the moment the Attorney-General has consented that the name of the people may be used as plaintiffs. Whatever part the Attorney-General sees fit to take in a public litigation of this character must be taken as a public officer, and his salary is intended to pay for it. He is not at liberty to take one cent for such services from any one but the State; and in our opinion the acceptance of a retainer from private persons under such circumstances would justify his impeachment and removal from office.

It may be that Mr. RUSSELL is right in thinking that the law is not intended to debar the Attorney-General from practising in private causes. The work of the office, however, is great enough to take all his time if he does his whole duty, so the question ought not to be of any practical importance just now. But a litigation which cannot be instituted except in the name of the people and upon the express consent of the Attorney-General is not a private cause; and the Attorney-General cannot properly act as private counsel in such a case.

An Extraordinary Omission.

Some sinister influence seems to be constantly exerted to protect the Central Pacific Railroad corporation in the efforts of its owners to defraud the Treasury of the dues required under the THURMAN act. From the passage of that law until the present time every obstacle that a perverse ingenuity could invent has been energetically employed to defeat its letter and its spirit.

This company owed the United States at the close of the last fiscal year, according to the statement of the public debt, as follows:

Principal in bonds	$27,855,680 00
Accrued interest	24,285,133 81
Total	$52,140,813 81

Under a decision of the Supreme Court the interest on the bonds is not payable until the maturity of the debt. So that, in fact, the Government not only advanced the money to build the road, but has been paying the interest on its own loans, and will continue to pay it for years to come.

The net earnings of this road last year were reported by the company to be $9,317,734.37. This large aggregate does not represent the whole truth, because charges have been added in the "expenses" to diminish the share of the Government under the THURMAN act. What is known as the Southern Pacific was built from the profits of the Central Pacific, and the few owners of the one are the real owners of the other.

Following the example of the Credit Mobilier conspirators, these owners have entered into a lease with themselves for the Southern Pacific, at a high rental, by means of which a large business is diverted from the Central Pacific, with the sole purpose of reducing the returns from the 25 per cent. of net earnings on the latter, as a subsidized road, while the other is not in that category. They have also charged a large part of the operating expenses of the Southern Pacific to the Central Pacific with the same purpose.

THEOPHILUS FRENCH, late Commissioner of Railroads, in an official letter to CARL SCHURZ, Secretary of the Interior under the Fraudulent Administration, dated Feb. 14, 1881, wrote as follows:

"In view of the foregoing statement of facts, and of the additional fact that of the payments of $1,200,000 in money by the Central Pacific Company annually, under the sinking fund law, as anticipated by its framers, but $774,428.22 for the two and a half years ending Dec. 31, 1880, instead of $3,000,000, will be required, it is recommended that the sinking fund law of May 7, 1878, be changed, so far as it relates to the amount required from the Central Pacific, so that 50 per cent. of the net earnings of that company may be applied to the payment of the debt, instead of 25 per cent., as the law now is."

The frauds were so flagrant that this measure of protecting the Treasury against them was recommended. But no action was taken upon it by Congress. Three months after the date of this letter FRENCH went to San Francisco, ostensibly to examine the books and papers of the Central Pacific. His intended journey was announced in advance, with a statement that he meant to call that corporation to rigid account, having ordered a suit to be brought in New York as a preliminary step.

In a few weeks this ardent defender of the rights of the Government became the abject slave of the corporation. He recanted all his official statements, denied his own figures, reported to LELAND STANFORD as his owner, withheld communication from the department, and closed his career in an infamous betrayal of every trust that had been placed in his hands. He is still at large, instead of breaking stones in a penitentiary.

JOSEPH K. MCCANNON, Assistant Attorney-General for the Interior Department, was appointed temporarily to succeed the faithless FRENCH. He made the report of last year, Nov. 1, 1881, wherein reference is made to "a settlement with this company for the year ending Dec. 31, 1880, effected by the then Commissioner FRENCH, whereby the company were shown to owe the United States for that year a balance of $141,475.74, which has been paid into the Treasury."

In his letter to CARL SCHURZ, FRENCH said that of these millions due the sinking fund on Dec. 31, 1880, but $774,428.22 had been paid. Therefore there was due on that day $2,225,571.78, which is not noticed in this so-called "settlement" at all. According to these figures he "settled" for one-fifteenth part of the debt.

Mr. MCCANNON does not make the slightest reference to this enormous discrepancy. He passes it over as a trifle unworthy of mention. W. H. ARMSTRONG was appointed to fill the vacancy of FRENCH. His report follows the example of his predecessor, and takes no notice of the two and a quarter millions due on Dec. 31, 1880. And his statement of the Central Pacific account for the year is "ascertained from the general books of the company in San Francisco by the bookkeeper of this bureau." He took the corporation's figures.

These successive omissions are most extraordinary, and are made more so because FRENCH, before he was captured by the Central Pacific, exposed habitual frauds of that corporation, while Mr. ARMSTRONG can find nothing but loud praise for its management. THE SUN took occasion last summer to condemn the conduct of this important official, when he started out on a tour of pleasurable inspection with his family and a party of friends in a special train provided with every luxury by this corporation, upon the concerns of which he was to report in the interest of the Government. It was an indecent exhibition, which exposed Mr. ARMSTRONG to criticism at the start of his official career, and it was made all the more indefensible because there is a fund of $3,000 provided for "travelling expenses" of his office.

The politicians in both Houses of Congress are shouting loudly for "civil service reform," as a pretended panacea for the corruption with which all the departments are honeycombed. Here is a practical case in point, demanding serious and prompt attention. A great corporation, grown enormously rich by Government subsidies, refuses to pay a small part of its honest debts to the Treasury, and resorts to criminal expedients to defraud it.

It has bought public officers to betray their trusts, and, as the figures show, will make millions if false and fraudulent settlements are allowed to stand. But not one of these shams and hypocrites who masquerade as reformers will dare to move a proper investigation of these accounts, or challenge the acts of a company that keeps retained counsel in Congress and a powerful lobby to take care of such cases as this is.

Whether Congress accomplishes anything during the holidays or not, the members may be sure that the general opposition to jobbing legislation does not diminish.

If, as Attorney-General BREWSTER alleges, it was owing to Marshal HENRY's neglect that Capt. HOWGATE escaped, it is also pretty certain that it is owing to a great deal of neglect on the part of several higher officers than HENRY that Capt. HOWGATE is not back in jail.

RED CLOUD should have been a member of the Forty-seventh Congress. When that noble red man called upon the Secretary of the Interior yesterday, he at once moved to postpone business. He was tired, he said, and perhaps he would call again next Tuesday. This sounds so much like the excuses offered by Congressmen for the past few days as to give rise to the suspicion that RED CLOUD has been plagiarizing from the *Congressional Record*.

A word or two about Sultans. ABDUL MEDJID died more than twenty years ago. Beyond question, he is very dead. The present Sultan is his son, ABDUL HAMID.

In the highly interesting and important account of this Sultan's madness published in THE SUN day before yesterday, our correspondent, who is now and has been for years a resident of Constantinople, inadvertently spoke of him once as ABDUL MEDJID, and the error was repeated in a head line. Nowhere else throughout the letter was the crazy Sultan improperly designated.

The mistake is to be regretted, like all lapses from strict accuracy. But there may be some compensation in the fact that it has served to show what a wealth of information respecting Turkish affairs and the East generally is possessed by some of our most esteemed contemporaries. We have no doubt that if in the course of a column about Gen. ARTHUR he should be once mistamed PRESIDENT ADAMS or PRESIDENT BUCHANAN, the error would be promptly detected and exposed by both the *World* and the *Graphic*.

PAGE, the California stage driver and river and harbor jobber, was fitly made Speaker *pro tem.* of the House of Representatives yesterday, in the absence of KEIFER. ROBESON always sees to it that he is represented by proxy in the Speaker's chair.

The FORD boys, the Missouri pets, whom Gov. CRITTENDEN hired to assassinate JESSE JAMES, are making a sorry failure of the lecture business. In Hartford, the other night, they had an audience of eight persons. By watching their progress from town to town the Governor of Missouri can form some idea of the estimation in which he is held by the country.

At the installation of a Presbyterian pastor in Albany on Thursday night the Rev. Dr. ECOB, in his charge to the people, said:

"When churches and Christians are more interested in politics, the good men and women of Albany will no longer be obliged to hang their heads in shame and mortification at the sight of a Mayor's beer wagon trundling along the streets on Sunday."

The Mayor's beer wagon can be arrested by the police under the new Penal Code. Dr. ECOB or any other citizen of Albany can see that it is done. The running of beer wagons on Sunday violates an ancient law that has nothing to do with politics.

A Court of Indian Offences is the latest addition to our judiciary system. It is the invention of Secretary TELLER, and a court is to be set up on each Indian reservation to try offenders against a new code that Mr. TELLER promulgates. The court is to consist of three Judges, selected from the tribe by the Indian agent. The Judges are to be paid $20 a month, and are to have jurisdiction over a variety of proscribed offences, such as sun dances, bear dances, scalp dances, war dances, incantations of medicine men, polygamy, and the like. Some novel decisions may be expected from these red Judges, but they can hardly commit any absurdity that they cannot find a precedent for in the acts of some of our petty but high-salaried magistrates in New York. On reading the list of practices forbidden to its red wards by our paternal Government, one wonders whether the Indians have any customs of their own left.

The President of the United States has no home of his own in which to spend the holidays. His New York house is leased and the White House is in the hands of the painters. He goes perforce to the Soldiers' Home with his family for his Christmas festivities. Poor man!

If incompetency were a crime, the Emigration Commissioners, who are being investigated by a Senate committee, could take refuge under the shield of our State Constitution and refuse to testify on the ground that they would incriminate themselves. The testimony that the Commissioners give against their own management of things is enough to warrant a clean sweep in that department. If the State cannot be rid of this wrangling and fighting Board, the Legislature ought to change the name of its meeting place from Castle Garden to Bear Garden and direct that signs be put up warning immigrants against the animals.

An Unappreciative Inquirer.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* How old is that piece that Mark Twain spoke last night?

NEW YORK, Dec. 23. H. McK.

We forget the exact date of its birth, but its age doesn't make any difference. It comes to us rejuvenated every year. It has the freshness of eternal truth.

SENATORS AS ATTORNEYS.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22.—Although United States Senators are prohibited by statute from acting as agents, attorneys, counsel, or otherwise in behalf of claimants or delinquents before Congress or in the departments, the violations of this wholesome law are frequent. It would not be far out of the way to say "they all do it."

Take two cases pending before the Solicitor of the Treasury. While they are not specially distinguished from others, they illustrate an abuse which becomes specially noticeable at the moment when Congress, particularly the Senate, is discussing the question of civil service reform.

The United States vs. Rothschilds is a celebrated tobacco case. It comes from Detroit, and has been for some time pending before Solicitor Raynor. Recently Senator Conger, who has had the case in charge, has renewed his efforts in behalf of the defendants. At a recent hearing before the Solicitor of the Treasury there was a stormy scene between the Senator and that official. Although unsuccessful in his efforts—the Solicitor having already instructed the District Attorney to press the case for trial—the persistent Senator has not given up. His clients have in him an able and obstinate agent and counsel.

As another illustration, take the Rhomberg compromise whiskey case, which has been pending in the Treasury Department for the last three years. It comes from Dubuque, Iowa, and Senator Allison has lately appeared in it. It differs from Senator Conger's case in the fact that Senator Allison's clients have merits on their side. On the representation of Senator Allison, Solicitor Raynor has very lately again taken up the case. The Senator urged on the Solicitor that it was one of great hardship to his clients, and that he and they asked only what he knew was simple justice. But without regard to the justice of the cases advocated by these Senators, there still remains the law, and a most proper law it is, forbidding such action on their part.

WASHINGTON NEWS.

The Pension List—The Whiskey Bill.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22.—It has transpired that a leading pension agent in Washington has printed and sent abroad thousands of petitions for increased pensions. This accounts in part, at least, for the numbers which continue to pour into Congress from all parts of the country. It has been suggested that it might be well to circulate petitions among taxpayers for a revision of the pension laws, with a view to curtailing the appropriations, which, through the efforts of the agents, are every year growing larger.

It is not disputed that millions of dollars are fraudulently paid out annually under the present pension laws. Yet Congress is asked to open the door still wider.

The promoters of the Whiskey bill are experiencing difficulties from delay occasioned by the fact that so many Senatorial elections are soon to come off. Not only is Brother Windom hampered, but other Senators are not altogether certain, in these uncertain times, where they stand. The elections have made patriots whose terms are about expiring timid. Windom, while fully committed to the whiskey interest, and who will be found for the bill or whatever the whiskey men declare they demand his vote for, is playing shy, and will do so till the Minnesota Senatorial election comes off, which will be early in January. Then he will take to whiskey without fear. His reelection he considers assured if the whiskey people play fair. The wily Senator is determined that they shall play first.

Attention has recently been drawn to the circumstance that whereas last winter Secretary Folger with one blow overthrew the Ring, now, although the question comes up precisely as it did then, he has not manifested the slightest interest in it, either in his report or elsewhere. Had not the Secretary at the last session leaped into the arena like a gladiator to oppose the bill, his present silence and inaction, the conditions being the same, would not be so conspicuous.

Consistency.

From Music and Drama, Dec. 23.

The *Times* and SUN reflect severely on Mr. Joseffy for placing Liszt's Fantasie on "Don Giovanni" on his programme, the former going so far as to say that it was a disgrace to Mr. Joseffy to play it. The critics certainly cannot know that Rubinstein and Bulow, the two greatest pianists in the world, play it frequently, and consider it one of the best of Liszt's transcriptions. Why, then, should it be beneath Mr. Joseffy's notice?

From Music and Drama, the same number.

He (Joseffy) did not succeed much better in the Liszt "Don Juan" Fantasie, as he was utterly exhausted long quite inaudible long before he reached the welcome close of a purposeless piece of mediocrity, *entirely unworthy of the virtuoso whose name it bears.* To hear the simple and unaffected strains of "La ci darem" tortured and mutilated beneath a mass of acrobatic humbuggery is distressing to a well-regulated musical mind, and such a piece of vandalism cannot be too strongly condemned. If it is desired to reproduce pandemonium in a state of open revolt in order to afford an idea of the hideous to which a modern pianoforte may be consigned, surely it is scarcely in accordance with the fitness of things to degrade Mozart in the process. The feeble attempts to grapple with the forcible utterances of musical insanity in which this hideous burlesque abounds rendered it still more repulsive, and exhibited Mr. Joseffy in a somewhat ridiculous light.

It is very well for a musical journal to endeavor to lead and direct public taste, but it is a little trying to find it being led in two opposite directions at the same time. Nevertheless, the Christmas number of *Music and Drama*, from which we extract these singularly contradictory opinions, is full of interesting matter and credit to the enterprise of that journal.

Another Civil Service Notion.

Amendment intended to be proposed by Mr. VOORHEES to the bill (S. 139) to regulate and improve the civil service of the United States:

Provided, That all applicants for appointment as Commissioners under this act shall, as a prerequisite to their appointment, undergo a public examination before a committee composed of five practical school teachers, not more than three of whom shall be males, who shall be selected for that purpose by the Commissioner of Education, and that the object of such examination shall be to ascertain: First, the competency of said applicants to make a sensible and suitable examination of other applicants for office, touching their qualifications in reading, writing, arithmetic, and English grammar; second, the business habits and avocations of such applicants for appointment as Commissioners, and whether they consider a knowledge of the interior of Africa, the headwaters of the Amazon, the isothermal line, the Monroe doctrine, and the momentum of a body of known weight moving with a given velocity necessary to the proper discharge of clerical work in the civil service of the Government. *And provided further*, That such Senators and members of Congress as desire to avoid the trouble and responsibility of recommending their constituents for appointment in the civil service of the Government shall be permitted to be present and propound questions at the examinations provided for in this amendment.

The Bonded Whiskey Bill.

The National Temperance Society has forwarded to Washington a protest against the pending Bonded Whiskey bill, as follows:

To the United States Senate and House of Representatives:

The Board of Managers of the National Temperance Society respectfully and earnestly protest against the passage of any measure tending to stimulate whiskey production, in the interest of whiskey speculators, such as the pending Bonded Whiskey Extension bill, and they pray for such legislation only by Congress as shall strictly restrict and ultimately suppress the whiskey traffic, which they believe to be highly inimical to the nation's welfare. WM. E. DODGE, President.

J. N. STEARNS, Corresponding Secretary.

NEW YORK, Dec. 23, 1882.

Better Fortune for Gen. Fremont.

From the San Francisco News Letter.

Congress at its last session passed a bill declaring the title to Black Point, near the Presidio, to be in Gen. Fremont's wife, and referred the matter to the Court of Claims only to ascertain its value at the time she was dispossessed by the Government, over twenty years ago, with an allowance of six per cent. interest per annum during the whole term. This can hardly fail to produce a fund which will amply provide for the old hero (for he is now waxing old) and his family in the coming years. Black Point is now occupied, presumably as the property of the Government, by Gen. Schofield as his headquarters. The deft hand and untiring energy of his brilliant wife, Jessie Fremont, is seen in all this.

Women as Car Conductors.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* No doubt that elevated railroad employee who told "Rachel L." that women could fill the places now occupied by men on those roads is laughing "in his sleeve" at his successful administration of "taffy." Even if a railroad company attempted such a silly innovation, there is not an engineer in the United States who would "take the bell" from a conductress or brakelady. Those railroads do not require attractiveness on the part of the employees, especially during the hours of five-cent fares, and after a tussle with a drunken man, in a vain effort to eject him from the car, much of the attractiveness of the train ladies would vanish, and they would very likely find it necessary to lay up for repairs at the next station, unless the company had a physician and a seamstress on every train. ANNIE F.

1,242 THIRD AVENUE.

Danger in Electric Light Wires.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I want to thank you for coming out so plainly against the electric light wire nuisance, for comparatively few people realize the danger latent within those white lines which are becoming so numerous in our thoroughfares. It certainly seems bad enough to have our city encumbered with ugly poles and wires without additional encumbrances of the same kind, which are not only eyesores, but menaces against the public safety. There would seem to be enough danger to life and limb in this city already, and I hope THE SUN will continue to shine on this evil until it is buried. LA BARBE.

NEW YORK, Dec. 23.

Sick headache, languor, and melancholy generally spring from a torpid liver, a disordered stomach, or costiveness, the distressing effects of which Dr. Jayne's Sanative Pills will speedily remove; by their beneficial action on the biliary organs they will also lessen the liklihood of a return.—Adv.

SUNBEAMS.

—In Poland, the Rev. Mr. Alf, a Baptist clergyman, has so often and so greatly incurred the displeasure of the civil authorities by the way he has conducted his religious services that he has been in jail thirty times. He is getting used to it.

—This week is the great festive time for Christmas anniversaries among the Sunday schools. Some of the high pressure schools have for weeks been devoting their efforts not so much to the study of the Bible lessons as to practising hymns and preparing recitations for the coming festivities. The old custom of presenting books has almost gone out of fashion. Children want figs, oranges, and candies. During the next few days and nights enormous amounts of indigestible rubbish will be given to the young people in the name of benevolence and religion. It is well that "Christmas comes but once a year," for if it came once a month the result would be a general "slaughter of the innocents." The children have a chance to recover from the effects of Christmas before the indigestible things of the summer picnics are served out.

—One of those curious happenings which the revolving of the whirligig of time brings round in due course took place in Brooklyn last Wednesday. A colored man not only officiated as Moderator of the Presbytery of Brooklyn, but did so in the meeting of that body which was held in the church of the Rev. Dr. Van Dyke. When the matter of the consolidation of Dr. Van Dyke's church with another was brought up for approval it became the duty of this same colored brother to preside over the Presbytery and to put the question the yea or nay of which should decide the future of Dr. Van Dyke and his church. The colored brother is the Rev. Mr. Freeman, pastor of Siloam Church in Brooklyn. He is a courteous and scholarly gentle