The Sun.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1883.

Amusements To-Day.

Academy of Design—Art Loan Exhibition.
Bijou Opera House—Opinion and Fairy Fox. 2 and 8 P. M.
Casino—The Beggar Student. 2 and 8 P. M.
Daly's Theatre—Seven Twenty-Eight. 2 and 8 P. M.
Grand Opera House—Hazel Kirke. 2 and 8 P. M.
Haverly's San Francisco Minstrel Theatre—2 and 8.
Madison Square Theatre—The Rajah. 2 and 8 P. M.
New Park Theatre—Passion's Slave. 2 and 8 P. M.
Niblo's Garden—The Pavements of Paris. 2 and 8 P. M.
People's Theatre—A Bunch of Keys. 2 and 8 P. M.
Star Theatre—Lo's XI. 2 and 8 P. M.
Theatre Comique—Cordelia's Aspirations. 2 and 8 P. M.
Thalia Theatre—Fledermaus. 10:30 A. M., 2 and 8 P. M.
Tony Pastor's Theatre—The Mother Goose Party. 2 and 8.
Union Square Theatre—Storm Beaten. 2 and 8 P. M.
Wallack's Theatre—An American Wife. 8 P. M.
3d Av. Theatre—Sam'l of Posen. 2 and 8 P. M.
5th Av. Theatre—The Glass of Fashion. 2 and 8 P. M.
14th St. Theatre—P. p. 2 and 8 P. M.

Advertising Rates.

DAILY AND SUNDAY, 40 cents a line, ordinary advertising; large type, 80 cents; and preferred positions, 50 cents to $2.50, according to classification.

WEEKLY, 50 cents a line; no extra charge for large type. Preferred positions from 75 cents to $2.

Advertisements for THE WEEKLY SUN, *issued to-morrow morning, must be handed in this evening before six o'clock.*

The Day of Days!

'Twas eighteen hundred years ago,
Not in a region of ice and snow,
But far in the land of the early morn,
The oldest of lands, our Christ was born.

Of all the joy days under the sun,
Of all the holidays, there's but one
That comes to the heart, and clings to the home—
Christmas has come!

Still through the length of the multiplied years,
Sunshine of pleasure, and rainfall of tears,
Changes and growth in wonderful ways,
Christmas remains the great day of days.

The day of the hope that casteth out fear,
The day of all days that brings good cheer
In the country's peace and the city's hum—
Christmas has come!

Now in the uttermost ends of the earth
The story is told of the Christ-child's birth,
And millions, wherever the sun's rays fall,
Are kin in the hope that is dear to all.

All over the lands and far out on the seas
Is a lifting of voices and bowing of knees,
And alike to us all, if we rest or roam,
Christmas has come!

Wherever the blessings of mortals increase,
With customs and laws that give joy and peace,
Where science and art yield comfort and bliss,
All over the world there is no day like this.

Of all the joy days under the sun,
Of all the holidays, there's but one
That touches the heart, and clings to the home—
Christmas has come!

The Irony of Politics.

It was officially announced in the House of Representatives yesterday that the Hon. FRANK HURD has been selected by Mr. Speaker CARLISLE as the representative of Ohio in the Committee of Ways and Means.

This would be very well indeed, if that committee were expressly organized in the interest of free trade opinions, and for the purpose of bringing about the transformation of the tariff on a strict revenue basis.

If the Ways and Means committee could be composed entirely of free traders, and if, in making their tariff bill, they would do their best to bring it as nearly as possible to the free trade line; and if the House of Representatives would adopt that bill so that it might go to the Senate and be rejected there; and then if the Democratic National Convention would adopt it in their platform, so that the issue of free trade and protection could be brought squarely before the people and voted upon in the Presidential election of 1884, there would be this good in it, that the question would be settled for twenty-five years at least, and then the Democratic party might once more attend to its duty of reforming the Government and restoring the principles of JEFFERSON to their proper place as the centre and well-spring of our polity.

Of course everybody understands that such a measure would be attended by the overthrow of the Democracy in the election of 1884; and it may well be doubted whether the proceedings of the party have not already been carried so far by the enthusiastic and passionate apostles of free trade, such as Mr. WATTERSON, Mr. MORRISON, Mr. HURD, Mr. MILLS, and, to a certain extent, Mr. CARLISLE himself, that it is already impossible to prevent a result so crushing and so calamitous; while, as the case now appears, we are in danger of having to endure the overthrow without the corresponding benefit of a settlement of this pestilent question. Such is sometimes the effect of impossible situations and Quixotic leadership.

However, we have to take what is appointed for us, and accordingly we here once more declare our respect for Mr. HURD as a perfectly upright gentleman of most decided opinions, limited information, considerable oratory, and character in every way estimable. He says and does what he thinks right; and Mr. CARLISLE likewise means to do the best that is possible for him under the circumstances. He is doubtless handicapped by impulses he cannot repress and obligations he cannot ignore; and he is not to be blamed for the fact.

The irony comes in when Mr. HURD is taken as the representative of the Democrats of Ohio. Only three months ago they carried their State election in a most gallant and surprising manner. Their chief candidate was not only sick and broken down, but in his appearances before the people upon the stump, it was evident that his name and personality added little to the strength of the party. Yet against all obstacles, and in the face of immense discouragements, they brought the State back into the Democratic fold. In doing this did they receive any help from Mr. HURD? None whatever. He was too exclusively a free trader to take part in their labors. He refused even to make a speech unless he could be permitted to denounce the platform upon which they were making their fight. Accordingly they went through it without the least aid from him; and it is to be said in his behalf that if he had appeared in the canvass, he might have done injury to his party; and it is equally certain that, although he was elected by the party, he would have been beaten if he had gone before the people alone upon his own merits and as the advocate of his own ideas.

Well, now that it is all over, Mr. HURD is chosen to speak and act for Ohio in this most important and influential committee of the House. Can anything surpass the irony of such a selection and such a preference?

It is not too much to say that if under such circumstances a State election were held in Ohio to-morrow, the Democrats would be beaten by a majority of fifty thousand.

Poor, stricken, hapless Democracy, divine in ideas, most impotent in conduct, what fatalities beset thee, what follies are committed in thy name!

But the storm ends with the rainbow of promise, and hope may yet revive amid the very wreck of disaster.

What to Do With Cotton Spinners.

Mr. ROBERT HOWARD, Secretary of the Cotton Spinners' Union of Fall River, Massachusetts, has recently issued a circular congratulating the members of the Union on the generally satisfactory condition of the cotton manufactures during the present year. There have been no strikes in Fall River this year, pleasant relations have been maintained between the spinners and their employers, and the latter have shown "a disposition to settle all troubles which may arise in a fair and honorable manner. We feel confident that as our organization increases its strength the necessity for strikes will diminish proportionately."

Mr. HOWARD has long devoted himself to the interests of the people who work in the great mills of Fall River, and his influence with them to precipitate or to avert a strike is justly powerful. It is pleasant to be assured by him that employers in Fall River are inclined to settle disagreements with their employees fairly and honorably. "Labor diplomacy" is the happy phrase which he uses to express the work of the Union in treating with employers and coming to terms with them if possible without resorting to a strike. "The measure of the value of a strong Union," says Mr. HOWARD, "lies not so much in the conduct of successful strikes as it does in the number of disputes its moral strength prevents." If the Cotton Spinners' Union really acts as a preventive of strikes, the Fall River cotton manufacturers might unite with Mr. HOWARD in hoping that it may increase its strength.

We are afraid, however, that they are more likely to look with suspicion upon the growth of an organization which, under the guidance of such prudent observers of the labor market as Mr. HOWARD, would be likely to gain its point by striking at a time when there was a great demand for labor and little surplus labor to be found.

To get rid of surplus labor is one of the chief problems of the Fall River spinners. A good deal of surplus labor from the Lancashire mills finds its way to Fall River, and tends, of course, to reduce wages there. Mr. HOWARD intends to submit to the Union a "scheme on a coöperative basis by which land can be purchased at low rates in the Southern States and colonized by the unemployed operatives from this city, whom we could send there from time to time when the condition of the labor market warranted such action."

It seems to us that this is not likely to be a successful scheme. It is doubtful if the operatives in cotton factories are, as a body, suited to agricultural labor; and even if they were, a colony on a coöperative basis is a very hazardous experiment. A better plan to draw off the surplus cotton labor of Fall River would seem to be to direct as much of it as possible to the cotton factories which are springing up in the Southern States, and which must be dependent on outside labor. Unemployed operatives suited to agriculture, the trades, or labor of any other kind, could be directed and helped into getting employment of the kind for which they are best fitted. But it is always a difficult thing to displace labor satisfactorily, or bring it under new conditions where it can thrive.

Our Coal Product.

We have often had occasion to denounce the worthlessness of many of the volumes issued at great expense from the Government printing office, but we are equally ready to welcome the rare appearance of anything really valuable from the same source. We are glad to say that some useful and creditable work has been done by Mr. ALBERT WILLIAMS, Jr., in collecting for the United States Geological Survey all the attainable data relating to the mineral resources of our country. Among the meritorious features of the compiler's method are the wariness with which unverifiable and perhaps interested statements are discriminated from authentic returns, and the caution with which conjectural estimates are put forward in the absence of exact statistics. Instructive also are the comparisons made, whenever they are practicable, between the output of mineral substances in the United States and the yield of similar products in other countries.

The thoroughness of the inquiries instituted by Mr. WILLIAMS is well illustrated by his exhaustive survey of our coal industry. The more important results of this investigation may be summed up in a few sentences. It appears, for instance, that in 1882 the total output of coal in the United States was, in round figures, 92,000,000 gross tons, of which nearly 61,000,000 tons belonged to bituminous and rather more than 31,000,000 tons to anthracite varieties of the mineral. If we assume an average price of $1.25 per ton at the pit mouth for bituminous coal, the total spot value of this product would slightly exceed $76,000,000, while the yield of anthracite, at a colliery price of $2.25 per ton, would be valued at about $70,550,000. Of course the sum paid for coal by the consumer was enormously greater, the price of anthracite by the cargo in the New York market during the year 1882 having averaged $4.85. Here we should note that from the shipments of anthracite and bituminous coal during the first six months of 1883 Mr. WILLIAMS computes that the whole production of the year will not surpass by much more than one per cent. that of the preceding twelvemouth. If, however, we look back to 1870, we shall observe an immense increase in the volume of deliveries, for in that year the yield of all the coal mines in the United States—exclusive of the amount consumed at or close to the collieries, and which is supposed to form from 5 to 8 per cent. of the whole product—was but 33,310,000 tons.

Let us now avail ourselves of Mr. WILLIAMS's statistics to compare the output of coal in the United States with the quantities of the same mineral extracted from the mines of other countries in 1881, the latest date for which trustworthy information is accessible. In the year named the aggregate product of the world—exclusive of Italy, Sweden, Chili, and China, from which returns are not forthcoming—was 350,890,000 gross tons. To this total the coal fields of Great Britain, though their united area is less than 12,000 square miles, contributed above 154,000,000 tons, or a little more than two-fifths. The United States came next with 76,670,000 tons, and it is to be remembered that our known coal area covers not less than 192,000 square miles, without taking into account the imperfectly verified reports relating to Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, Dakota, California, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. Third in the list of coal producers is Germany, whose stores of this mineral have a surface of no more than 1,700 square miles. Notwithstanding the limited field of operations, the German miners turned out in 1881 upward of 61,500,000 tons. France, with a coal superficies of 2,086 square miles, sent forth less than 20,000,000 tons, or not much more than Belgium (17,500,000 tons), whose coal area does not exceed 518 square miles, or is not, in other words, a tenth greater than the anthracite district in eastern Pennsylvania. With Austria-Hungary, which yielded 19,000,000 tons, we come to the end of the great coal purveyors. Among the minor producers may be mentioned India (4,000,000), Russia (3,225,000), Australia (1,775,000), Nova Scotia (1,125,000), and Spain (800,000).

The period at which the British coal fields will be exhausted has been a subject of anxious computation. In the United States we need not be disturbed by any forebodings of failure in our coal supply. Look, for instance, at the anthracite coal fields, which comprise less than 500 square miles. The State Geological Survey of Pennsylvania is not yet prepared to calculate the contents of the whole anthracite region, but it has completed the investigation of the Panther Creek district, which has a superficies of but 12¼ square miles. It is found that this small basin originally held upward of one billion gross tons. When we learn that the total shipments of coal from the entire anthracite section of Pennsylvania (464½ square miles) from 1820 to 1882, inclusive, was considerably less than half a billion tons, we can see that our accumulations even of the hard variety of the mineral are virtually inexhaustible, to say nothing of the unmeasurable mass of our bituminous deposits.

Elevated Railroad Accidents—An Unwise Policy.

It is not reasonably to be expected that the system of elevated railroads in this city can be operated without occasional accidents.

In some cases the injured persons must be chargeable with all the blame. In others the fault will rest wholly upon the company or its servants. A third class comprises those accidents which involve negligence on the part of the carrier and passenger both.

No matter where the responsibility belongs, however, in any particular instance, it is an unwise policy for the managers of the elevated railroads to do all they can to conceal the facts from the public whenever a fatal casualty occurs on their lines.

A young girl was killed at the Rivington street station on the east side on Friday under circumstances which, so far as they have been made known, indicate gross neglect, if not criminality, on the part of the brakeman who shut the car gate against her. If a person had been injured in like manner at the same hour on some railroad in one of our neighboring States, Massachusetts, Connecticut, or New Jersey, there would have been a telegraphic announcement of the fact in the New York evening papers. But the police were not even notified of this accident in our own city until twenty-four hours or more after its occurrence, when the Coroner received a letter in pencil from the surgeon of the railroad company informing him that the girl was dead.

It is impossible to read any of the published accounts of this case without gaining the impression that the managers of the Manhattan Elevated Railway Company are acting upon an unwise policy of concealment in respect to accidents. The folly of such a course ought to be evident. It gives rise to suspicion. People begin to think that the company employs a surgeon chiefly to avail itself of his observations as evidence for the defence in accident cases. The prejudice created in the public mind by attempting to keep back the truth at one time, when the facts tell against the corporation, will operate adversely to the company at another time when the management is really not to blame. The people are not disposed to be unduly exacting toward the elevated railroads, but they do not want the officers, station agents, engineers, firemen, and train hands constituted into a corps for the concealment of criminal negligence.

Touch Not the Unclean Thing!

The railroads are getting their free passes ready for the members of the Legislature and the leaders of the lobby. Indeed, it is more than probable that they have begun to distribute them as Christmas presents.

Senators and Assemblymen ought to refuse to accept gifts which are intended by the donors as bribes. Every week in the session measures affecting railroads will have to be considered. How can a member regard such questions from an unbiassed point of view while he has a railroad retainer in his pocket? It will be a great relief to legislators to rid themselves of these deadhead perquisites. The lobby will be shy of the member who has refused his pass.

The proper way to treat the matter is to enact a law forbidding the acceptance of railroad passes by members of the Legislature. Some States have done this. Let New York follow their example.

Speaker CARLISLE's committees were pretty accurately foretold by the Washington correspondents, and there were few surprises when the list was read in the House of Representatives yesterday. Mr. MORRISON, Mr. CARLISLE's manager in the Speakership campaign, is Chairman of Ways and Means, and a majority of his associates probably are in accord with his views on the tariff question.

Mr. RANDALL is at the head of the Committee on Appropriations, and Judge HOLMAN goes on the same committee. These two appointments should insure retrenchment in the expenditures of Government and the discomfiture of the jobbers.

Mr. CURTIN gets the Chairmanship of the Foreign Affairs Committee, as the result of the Speaker's not very successful attempt to make a compromise between Messrs. COX and BELMONT. Mr. COX is Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee, a place he did not want.

The majority of the Chairmen are from the West and South, the South getting twenty-eight of the fifty-three. New York does not fare very well, but there are men in her delegation who have the ability to rise above the accident of place, and they will be heard from before the session is over.

The Congressmen have gone home for the holidays, and when they are back in their places again the momentous year 1884 will have opened. Whose year will it be?

Death took CHARLEY BACKUS from us, but it is Wall street that has proved too much for the remaining end man, BILLY BIRCH. The San Francisco Minstrels will include him no more, as his interest in that organization has been disposed of to another party on account of losses in stocks.

It was a great combination, BIRCH and BACKUS, and the surviving partner in leaving the company that succeeded the old firm cannot have the consolation that his retirement could not have been prevented. No one can escape the common fate of humanity, but everybody can keep away from Wall street. It seems, though, that a great many people don't, and Mr. BIRCH was one of those who didn't. We hope that his recent losses will not rob him of the power to make a great many other people laugh.

A bill introduced into Congress, and referred to the Committee on the Library, provides for the consolidation of the public gardens of Washington. Last year a like effort was made in this same direction, but it was unsuccessful. There are four of these gardens, for whose maintenance appropriations are annually made, amounting in the aggregate to an average of forty or fifty thousand dollars. One of these, the Botanic Garden, has cost over half a million. The greenhouses which furnish flowers to the President and his friends cost over ten thousand a year, while the nursery from which Congressmen get their bouquets absorbs another large sum annually. The Agricultural Department has its own garden, and the Botanic Garden is the most expensive of all. But Congress finds it convenient to keep them all going.

Each member of the new firm for writing comic opera, Mr. W. D. HOWELLS and Mr. GEORG HENSCHEL, has great talent in his own department, but whether they will be able to produce works equal to those of GILBERT and SULLIVAN is another question.

As a writer Mr. HOWELLS is often quoted as among the first of the present day, and few artists anywhere have a broader and truer musical comprehension than Mr. HENSCHEL; but that doesn't tell us whether they can write an opera that will tickle and delight pretty nearly everybody with the grotesque charm of both its music and libretto. We hope they can.

Congress has rewarded itself for its services during the past three weeks by taking an extra long vacation, which extends not only through the Christmas holidays, but to the 7th of January. A stranger might imagine that this prolonged recess at least followed a vigorous beginning on the winter's labors, but in reality Congress has done next to nothing in actual legislation, and, indeed, has been so few hours in session in the aggregate that, in now adjourning outright for a fortnight, it will be comparatively little missed.

Several of the forty-seven gentlemen who signed a letter protesting against the opening of the Bartholdi Pedestal Art Exhibition on Sunday give their reasons in another part of this paper. A variety of objections are urged to the practice, but—assuming that such exhibitions exert the beneficial influence that it is assumed they do—none of the objectors shows how the benefit is to be enjoyed by the hundreds of thousands of people who toil from Monday morning until Saturday night. That is the whole question after all. Are people who are so unfortunate as to have no hours of leisure except on Sunday to be debarred from all the privileges of more favored persons?

The correspondence between Secretary FRELINGHUYSEN, Minister LOWELL, and Secretary of Legation HOPPIN in the O'DONNELL case, which was sent to the House of Representatives yesterday, does not add to the lustre of Mr. HOPPIN's career. Early in October Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN directed an inquiry as to O'DONNELL'S claim of American citizenship, to which Mr. HOPPIN replied that he "had come to the conclusion that O'DONNELL'S certificate of naturalization was either granted to some other person or fraudulently obtained." How this conclusion was reached he does not say. Probably it was only an inference, for on Oct. 23 he informs Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN that he has made further inquiries and he "was impressed with the apparent truth of O'DONNELL'S statements." Thereupon Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN directed Mr. LOWELL to consider O'DONNELL'S American citizenship established.

Mr. HOPPIN seems to be rather too deliberate or indifferent a person to be intrusted with a life and death matter.

It is worthy of notice that the Christmas which WASHINGTON passed a hundred years ago to-day was the first that he had enjoyed as a private citizen, at his home, for nine years. After resigning his commission as Commander-in-Chief, on the 23d of December, at Annapolis, he started at once for Mount Vernon. Soon after arriving there, he wrote as follows:

"On the eve of Christmas I entered these doors an older man by nine years than when I left them. . . . I am just beginning to experience that ease and freedom from public cares which, however desirable, takes some time to realize. It was not till lately I could get the better of my usual custom of ruminating as soon as I waked in the morning, on the business of the ensuing day; and of my surprise at finding after revolving many things in my mind, that I was no longer a public man, nor had any thing to do with public transactions."

And again, this was his language:

"I have not only retired from all public employments, but I am retiring within myself, and shall be able to view the solitary walk and tread the paths of private life with a heartfelt satisfaction. Envious of none, I am determined to be pleased with all, and that, my dear friend, being the order for my march, I will move gently down the stream of life until I sleep with my fathers."

WASHINGTON did not foresee, on that Christmas of 1783, that a long and memorable civil career of service to his country was still in store for him.

A Republican Estimate of Judge Holman.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I have read with great interest your many articles in advocacy of the nomination of the Hon. W. S. Holman for the Presidency in 1884, and from a long intimate acquaintance with him, and observance of his course in Congress, can heartily endorse the idea. While you have given many estimates of his worth from Democratic sources, I wish to give you one from a Republican standpoint. Near the close of the Forty-fourth Congress the Hon. Samuel A. Dobbins, on his way home, heard two persons in front of him on the train rejoicing over the fact "that they had got the old fox this time." Thinking their subject related to a member of Congress, he, after apologizing for interrupting them, inquired who the old fox was, when he was told that it was Judge Holman of Indiana, whose district had been recently so changed as to insure his defeat. His reply was: "Gentlemen, I have no sympathy with you in your rejoicing. I have served four years in the House with Judge Holman, and from my Republican standpoint I tell you I would like to see the Congress made up of just such men as W. S. Holman." The effect of Mr. Dobbins's remarks can readily be imagined. This incident was related to me by my old friend Dobbins soon after his return. B.

WASHINGTON, December, 1883.

Christmas Comes But Once a Year.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Within the past week I have heard the saying, "Christmas comes but once a year," repeated over and over again, and I was led to wonder whose it really was. I traced home the Christmas motto, and found that the man who wrote it was author of the first didactic poem in the English language. His name was Thomas Tusser. He was born in Rivenhall, England, about 1515, and died when Shakespeare was but sixteen years old. Tusser was descended from an old and honored family, was well educated, and began life at the court of his native land. He was by turns a farmer in more than five counties in England, a schoolmaster, a musician, a grazier, a poet, and a serving man in the family of the nobleman who first introduced him into court.

While a farmer and poet he wrote the poem in which occurs our Christmas saying. The poem was entitled "The Farmers' Daily Diet," and the sentiment runs thus:

"At Christmas play, and make good cheer,
For Christmas comes but once a year."

But woe be to the adventurous soul who peeps curiously into the Blunderbuss closet where Time has hung his proverb loves. Only the Irishman who picked up skull after skull and heard a hollow voice from out the darkness, as he touched each one, exclaim, "That's mine!" could sympathize with the feeling in which I gazed upon the words that were the stock speech of my daily life, and heard the ghost three hundred and sixty years old say, as I muttered the familiar lines, "That's mine!"

A stone that is rolling can gather no moss. THOMAS TUSSER.

Better late than never. THOMAS TUSSER.

All's fish they get
That cometh to net. THOMAS TUSSER.

Look ere thou leap, see ere thou go. THOMAS TUSSER.

Except wind stands as never it stood,
It is an ill wind that turns none to good. THOMAS TUSSER.

Time tries the truth in everything. THOMAS TUSSER.

God sendeth and giveth both mouth and the meat. THOMAS TUSSER.

There is but one recourse—the braggadocio of the Irishman as he desperately picked up the seventh skull and made off with it, exclaiming, "Well, they're not all yours, anyhow." H. K. J.

NEW YORK, Dec. 21.

Baptismal Immersion Dying Out in England.

The Rev. W. F. Stead of London, a pupil of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, said in the Baptist ministers' meeting yesterday that the strict Baptist Church in England was dying out. The only requisite for admission to most of the churches was belief in Christ, without reference to immersion. They were Baptist in name only, and the principle, Mr. Spurgeon's church was almost the only exception to the general rule. Their immersion was necessary for membership, but anybody could join in the communion service. Ministers who adhered to the old principles of baptism were coming to the United States.

What the Cannon Meant Yesterday.

At noon yesterday, by proclamation of the President, a national salute of thirty-six guns was fired on Governor's Island in commemoration of Washington's resignation of his military command at the close of the war of the Revolution. At 10 o'clock A. M. eleven guns were fired for Gen. Robert Murray, late medical director on Governor's Island, who has been appointed Surgeon-General of the United States Army.

A Fund for Bishop Potter.

From the American Queen.

Mr. William H. Vanderbilt, Mr. J. P. Morgan, Miss C. L. Wolf, Mr. John Jacob Astor, and Mr. William Astor have each subscribed $10,000 to the Bishop Potter fund.

SAVE THE FORESTS.

The Upper Hudson Twenty-five Years Ago and the Upper Hudson Now.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I was born and brought up on the banks of the Hudson, in the northern part of Warren county.

Twenty-five years ago fully one-third of the land now cultivated in this vicinity was a wilderness. I remember helping clear a piece of seven acres, the first clearing in what was then considered the heart of a great wilderness. This clearing was located less than one mile from the Riverside Railroad station. Bears, wolves, panthers, and the lynx then roamed through the forest, and game was plentiful. I remember my father going out one morning after breakfast and returning before noon with a fine deer, which he had shot within a distance of one mile from where we then lived. There were numerous streams filled with trout, and many times have I caught them, using a piece of common twine for a line and a bent pin for a hook, in places where now there is no evidence that a stream ever existed. Every trace of many of the streams known by me in those days has faded away. The wilderness has disappeared, and in its place is a settlement which has a flourishing district school numbering over forty pupils.

In those days farmers could sow with every assurance of reaping in abundance. A drought of two weeks' duration was an unusual occurrence. Now a summer season without a drought of from four to six weeks' continuance is exceptional. Then there was no season of the year when a boat could not be rowed across the river at the place now known as Riverside, then called Folsom's Landing. Now there are times when a man may cross without wetting his feet, and an empty boat could not be floated across. I believe that less than one-half the volume of water passes there during the summer now that passed there during the same time twenty-five years ago.

Wind storms are increasing in frequency and violence, while most of the summer showers follow the forests and pass us by.

In the long ago epidemic diseases were unknown here. Now there is scarcely a time when some portion of our county is not afflicted with that dread disease, diphtheria.

I believe that these changes have been brought about by clearing forests and the consequent diminution of our water supply, and that unless something is done for their preservation, twenty-five years hence the upper Hudson as a river will exist only in name.

I fully concur with what the writer of an article published by you Dec. 10 says as to the future danger from floods. In my opinion, artificial dams and reservoirs would afford us no adequate protection. Nothing but the reservoirs of nature can save us from that danger. Let our Legislature, then, enact such laws as will preserve and protect our forests.

A. ARMSTRONG, Jr.

CHESTERTOWN, N. Y., Dec. 21.

Forests, Climate, Vegetation, and Streams.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Every tree has an artesian well. The roots entering the lowest accessible moisture of the soil, carry the water into the stems of the trees through the natural ducts into the leaves, which throw off the surplus water, thicken the juices, and prepare them for contact with the air and the sun's rays for assimilation and deposit in the growth of the tree. The amount of water thus thrown off is wonderful. Some cotton thread, it was supposed, could only be spun in Great Britain, where the moisture of the islands favored its manufacture. But an ingenious New Englander, putting flowers and shrubs in his factory, by the evaporation of water from the leaves formed a climate equal to the English for such work. The idea of the Albany *Post*, that a forest already saturated with water when new rains come causes them to be thrown off at once into the feeders of the Hudson, and thus produced floods, is absurd. This editor certainly is extremely ignorant of the state of forests.

I entered my estate nearly three-quarters of a century ago, when it was mostly forest, and a large tract set aside for a deer park is an unbroken woods yet. After the hardest rain the walking in a forest is practical and agreeable. The soil of leaves, small boughs, logs, and roots can more than absorb the heaviest rain. The water then resting in the soil is pumped up by the trees, and by their leaves is poured continually into the surrounding atmosphere, which keeps it moist, cool, and agreeable to the person, and aiding even the growth of smaller plants, vegetables, and fruits. I have often noticed that water found the heavy forest other than cool and agreeable. In landscape gardening I have found that a few trees set toward the southwest and south greatly influence the temperature, and if a few trees produce such effect, what will miles of forests do? As forests make the summer cooler, so they make the winters warmer by sheltering against cold winds, and continually throwing out from their depths the waters yet warm from the summer rains. So far, then, from forests making swamps, they are one of the principal means for drying the lands, as I have proved, and for destroying malaria by the effects of the sunlight and the leaves, so that it is not only the emanations from trees destroy malaria.

Thus forests effect an equalization of temperature and moisture through winter and summer. Last year there was snow, as two years ago, a drought in this region. From here to Lexington the drought was distressing, no forests existing, and such a condition has been so uniform of late that almost the whole twenty miles which formerly was cultivated in Indian corn and hemp is now turned into hay, which utilizes the early and fall rains. When I visited the Louisville Exposition last fall there was a great drought over that part of the state, but all along that part of the city toward the Exposition, being artificially watered by the wealthy, flowers and shrubs were in the full bloom, and the shrubs were as fresh as in spring. The general moisture kept the air agreeable, in spite of the general drought, and the blooms were beautiful, whereas no amount of watering at my home could keep the flowers in passable keep and development, because the scorching winds lapped up the moisture as fast as it was given, and drier, faster than the natural circulation could supply the needed water. In a paper prepared by me for the National Congress at Cincinnati in 1882, I stated:

"I remember when the forests were hardly broken here that springs of water were frequent and perennial. The rivulets, creeks, and rivers had a perpetual flow. These are now all changed. The rivulets are dry, or now dried up in summer, and the fish so often caught by me in early years are gone; not one spring in a thousand remains. Now, the deer, the panther, the lynx, and the bear, and the fish, are all gone, and the forests, which were a perpetual reservoir of water for springs, and evaporation, aided by the treading of the feet of the deer, and the fallen leaves and soil, rushes off at once, sweeping the soil into the Mississippi delta. The dry winds absorb not only the ancient humidity of the soil, but drink up the subsoil evaporation, so that not only our summers are dryer, but our winters are longer, more changeable, and unendurable." But we are told by our opponents that we "draw upon our imaginations for our facts." Let us see. My father built a mill on a rivulet on his farm, where he ground grain by water power, and distributed it all the year round. This building was made of large blocks of limestone, some eight feet in length, intended to last for centuries. My father was not aware of the effect of forests upon rainfall. Long since that building was torn down by me, being perfectly useless. The dam filled up with soil washed into the stream, and the site is now visible as a level plateau of grass, and the rivulet is always dry in summer except when heavy rains swell it into a temporary torrent. Near the large spring, four miles from Lexington, on the Lexington and Frankfort Railroad, is land once owned by my grandfather, Thomas Lewis. Just above where that once large spring pours its waters into the Town Fork of Elkhorn our family had a saw and flouring mill; now a large corn and grass field fills the site of the dam, and generally the stream is either dry or shrunken to a foot. Yet, except when visited with heavy rain storms. So much for facts and reasoning. The Sun, if there be facts, is wrong in desiring the lowlands of New York to be devoted to agriculture, while it is right in keeping the forest unbroken on all the tributaries of the Hudson to insure its permanent navigation.

The remedy is to make forest reservations in all the public lands, and to require every landholder to keep a certain portion of his lands in forests, and where the trees have been cut away, to restore them. The granting of the soil to citizens in civilized States is based upon the principle of the greatest good. But no State can relinquish the right of eminent domain in the land. And this doctrine is acknowledged upon in all our courts of law. And if a man's lands may be condemned and taken away from him for the public local good, much more may the landholder be hedged about so use his fields and forests as not to destroy the life of the nation. C. M. CLAY.

WHITE HALL, Ky., Dec. 4.

Shall the North Woods be Saved?

From the Utica Press.

We notice that some of our northern exchanges, notably in St. Lawrence and Franklin counties, are inclined to laugh at the assertion that there is any danger that our forests will be destroyed or that any harm will follow the labors of the lumbermen. They resent any proposition that looks toward the adoption of a policy of preservation, arguing that legislation will materially injure their business prosperity and will accomplish no good whatever. The people are given to understand, in the plainest manner, that a strong opposition will be found in Albany when this subject is introduced.

It certainly seems strange that every one should regard the danger as imminent and pressing, save only those engaged in lumbering and cutting the trees. It may be that the Potsdam *Courier and Freeman* is right when it calls the agitation the product of an "insane fear," but it occurs to us that such a criticism would come with far better grace from some section not financially interested in destroying the commercial prosperity of the remainder of the State. Better far would it be to admit Canadian lumber free of all duty and compensate the loss to our own citizens that would follow such a policy than to permit a few to enrich themselves at the expense of the climatic and commercial interests of millions. It is absurd to argue that the trees of the forest are not wonderful agents for good. Such is the testimony of all scientists and experts, who have given any attention to the subject. If, then, it is admitted that they do perform a mission, we have only to prove that they are in a fair way of being entirely destroyed to show the necessity of immediate and radical legislation.

We learn from Verplank Colvin, who knows more about the northern wilderness than any man in the state, that 10,245,520 acres embraced within that region are in the hands of speculators and lumbermen, and that the State has the ownership of only 573,860 acres. In almost every part of these woods can be heard the axe of the lumberman, and with the facilities for work but a short time will be required to complete the devastation. In reply to the question: "Do you think that the importance of protecting the region has been over-estimated?" Mr. Colvin says: "No, I do not. The Champlain, the Erie and the Black River canals, and the headwaters of the Hudson River, all depend upon the watershed of the Adirondacks." This is the testimony of a man, who for eighteen years, winter and summer, has traversed every portion of the wilderness, and is conscious of the importance of the subject under consideration. The lumbermen may be right when they call the agitation an insane fear, but it will be safer to take the evidence of people who understand the subject.

FRESH WASHINGTON GOSSIP.

The Holiday Recess Farce in Congress—A Story About Riddleberger.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.—Once a year a very diverting farce is enacted in the Congress of the United States. It is called adjourning for the holiday recess. The members begin the session in a severely earnest frame of mind, and receive all hints as to a two weeks' adjournment at Christmas with a frown of indignant disapproval. In a week or two some of the giddy youngsters in the House begin to talk about duck shooting during the holidays. This demoralizing talk goes on until the principles of some of those who have served longest in the House are perceptibly undermined. But those whose legislative life began yesterday hold out longest. They were sent here to work and not to junket, and they are inflexible until about the 19th of December. By this time the old birds have given in, the most of them weaken toward the second week in December, and at last a resolution is passed to take a holiday from the day before Christmas until the day after New Year's. This is then sent to the Senate. The members of that august body would be chopped all to pieces, every one of them, before they would condescend to pass a House bill without amendment; so, just for the principle of the thing, they tack on a few days more of holiday and send it back to the House. The House is deeply grieved at the pleasure-loving spirt displayed by the Senate, but of course there is no time to argue the point, and the resolution is rushed through.

There is no joking between Senator Beck and Senator Sherman. They don't like each other, and when occasion serves each fires hot shot at the other. They have had one tiff this session on the question of the sinking fund, and Senator Sherman said to Senator Beck: "Do you bite your thumb at me?" And Senator Beck said to Senator Sherman: "I bite my thumb." Senator Beck is like Jim Bludso, "He never flunked, 'cause he didn't know how."

It is perfectly delicious to see Riddleberger. He is a tall, lank man, with his hair plastered down on his forehead, and he has an air of wondering delight at finding himself in the United States Senate. But he is not without the capacity for a joke. Down in Virginia they tell of a certain occasion when Riddleberger was making a speech in the Virginia Legislature, and the late Raleigh T. Daniel, one of the greatest Attorney-Generals Virginia ever produced, sauntered into the House. Mr. Daniel was an absent-minded man, and had a habit of talking to himself, causing those who overheard him to laugh outright, while he himself maintained a stately dignity, and wondered what people were laughing at. In the middle of Riddleberger's speech, Mr. Daniel remarked to himself in a pause that Riddleberger was the biggest fool he ever saw. The House roared, but Mr. Daniel sat in calm unconsciousness of what had happened. Not long afterward he was elected Attorney-General, and the first time Riddleberger and he met, Riddleberger shook his hand warmly, congratulated him, and said: "I worked as hard for you in the canvass as any man in the State, though I know you said one day when I was making a speech in the Legislature that I was the biggest fool you ever saw." The Attorney-General assumed a shocked expression, and said: "My dear Mr. Riddleberger, you have been misinformed." "No, I haven't," stoutly responded Riddleberger, "because I heard you say so myself. Now what have you to say?" "Mr. Riddleberger," said the Attorney-General, as he wrung his hand, "I shall have to say good morning."

But those days are over. Riddleberger no longer thinks it funny when people call him names. He tags after Mahone, who has abated none of his strut, and who sits up and looks knowing, but wisely holds his tongue in the Senate.

Mr. Perry Belmont has got a splendid new house here, and is having it fitted up in a manner to make Mr. Vanderbilt envious.

IN THE WICKED CITY.

A Brooklyn Man Ventures into Town and Encounters Two Children of the People.

Shortly after 4 P. M. a long man came over the bridge, and, on arriving at the steps on the New York end, uttered a shriek, and shot down to the sidewalk, whence he coasted cheerily into the gutter.

"Thash a silly thing to do," he said, after a moment's deep reflection. "A small cat would know better'n that."

Then he resumed his torn hat, put the lighted end of his cigar in his mouth, took it out, and put it in his trousers pocket, and achieved a position that bordered upon the upright. Presently his face expressed a pang. He thrust his hand into his pocket, pulled out the cigar, put it in his mouth, smiled, and began to pick his way in a perverse and labyrinthic course toward the City Hall.

Two small boys with their shins depressed, their shoulders humped, and their hands in their pockets, trudged along the eastern edge of the park. One of them stopped and looked at the man who had just escaped a perilous inace composed of equal parts of bobtail cars, eight-horse sweepers, and milk trucks.

"Scotty," he cried, in the clear ringing tones of happy childhood, "get onto his jogs wid de bosted dicer."

They darted toward the long man and, seizing him by the