The Sun.

MONDAY, MARCH 24, 1884.

Amusements To-day.

American Institute—Roller Skating and Bicycle Rink.
Bijou Opera House—La Vie. 8 P. M.
Casino—The Merry War. 8 P. M.
Comedy Theatre—Peck's Bad Boy. 8 P. M.
Daly's Theatre—Red Letter Nights. 8 P. M.
Globe Dime Museum—294 Bowery.
Grand Opera House—Young Mrs. Winthrop. 8 P. M.
Koster & Bial's Hall—Juggling, &c. 8 P. M.
Madison Square Garden—Circus. 2 and 8 P. M.
Madison Square Theatre—Alpine Roses. 8:30 P. M.
Metropolitan Opera House—Il Barbiere di Siviglia. 8 P. M.
Mt. Morris Theatre, Harlem—The Two Johns. 8 P. M.
New Park Theatre—Her Sacrifice. 8 P. M.
Niblo's Garden—Orpheus and Eurydice. 8 P. M.
Park Theatre, Brooklyn—Siberia. 8 P. M.
People's Theatre—The Romany Rye. 8 P. M.
Star Theatre—Brutus. 8 P. M.
Thalia Theatre—Lorle. 8 P. M.
Theatre Comique—Cordelia's Aspirations. 8 P. M.
Tony Pastor's Theatre—Variety. 8 P. M.
Union Square Theatre—Separation. 8 P. M.
Wallack's Theatre—Lady Clare. 8 P. M.
3d Av. Theatre—The Rajah. 8 P. M.
6th Av. Theatre—Confusion. 8 P. M.
8th St. Theatre—Hamlet. 8 P. M.

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THE SUN, New York City.

The regular circulation of THE SUN *for the week ending March 22, 1884, was:*

Sunday	148,850	Thursday	122,502
Monday	123,057	Friday	122,322
Tuesday	123,565	Saturday	122,783
Wednesday	123,112	Weekly	62,870
Total for the week			944,976

Ohio Next October.

While it is generally admitted that the party which carries New York in November will elect the next President, it is equally true that the vote of New York may be influenced by the result of the October contest in Ohio. Indeed, it may be that Ohio will strike the keynote of the campaign. Where, then, will that great State probably throw its weight at this turning point of the struggle, provided the free traders in Congress succeed in making a controversy about the tariff the chief feature of the canvass?

Last October the Democrats of Ohio surprised the country by electing HOADLY as Governor. They also carried the Legislature, and in due time they sent to the Senate that sterling Democrat of the old school, HENRY B. PAYNE. The tariff was one of the main issues in the contest. The Republican Congress had just reduced the duty on wool one of Ohio's chief products. The Democrats condemned this sharply in their platform, harped constantly on it during the canvass, and many of their candidates for Congress promised, if elected, to do their best to have the former duty restored.

On the other hand, Mr. FRANK HURD, the distinguished free trader, refused to take the stump for HOADLY unless he could be permitted to denounce the tariff plank in the platform of the State Convention. Here is the resolution which excited Mr. HURD's hostility:

"We favor a tariff for revenue, limited to the necessities of the Government economically administered, and so adjusted in its application as to prevent unequal burdens, encourage productive industries at home, and afford just compensation to labor, but not to create or foster monopolies."

This is the flag under which the Democrats carried Ohio last fall. Would wise men change the ground on which the great preliminary battle of October next is to be fought?

The Federal Fee System.

A resolution of the House of Representatives some time ago called upon the Secretary of the Treasury to furnish a statement showing the gross earnings of every United States Marshal, District Attorney, and Court Clerk, the expense of his office, and the net earnings which have been paid to him each year from the beginning of the fiscal year 1873 to the close of the fiscal year 1883.

The answer to that inquiry, so far as it relates to the Marshals, furnishes some curious information. The fees collected by them for the time named amount in the aggregate to about $7,000,000. Of this large sum only a little more than $120,000 was returned to the Treasury in excess of the expenses and fees as net earnings.

Only eleven States, namely, Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and North Carolina, with the District of Columbia, made any return of net earnings.

It is a remarkable fact that in some States the expenses and the maximum pay exactly offset the receipts of the Marshals. It is hardly conceivable that this precise equivalence could have occurred in so many different localities without assistance from the officers who made up the accounts.

An elastic system does not tend to promote honesty in the public service.

One thing is made clear by the figures sent to the House by the Secretary of the Treasury. The Marshals and the District Attorneys should receive stated salaries, graduated according to the duties they are called upon to perform and the business actually transacted in their offices. It would be unfair, for example, to pay the District Attorney for the Southern District of New York as small a salary as the District Attorney for Nevada. But the people ought to know the pay of all public officers, and the fee system of compensation should be abolished.

The Chamber of Commerce and the Adirondack Forests.

Mr. JESUP and the other members of the Chamber of Commerce committee have written to the *Tribune* a letter in which they explain the attitude taken by the Chamber toward the various Adirondack bills now before the Legislature. None of these bills receives the approval of the representatives of the commercial interests of this city, and none of them deserves or should receive the support of any one who desires to preserve for the State the Adirondack forests or the great water supply of our rivers which these forests secure. Every one of the three bills now under consideration at Albany has been prepared and introduced by the men who have for months been working to prevent any sensible or efficient Adirondack legislation. Every one of these bills is intended to facilitate the spoliation of the forests by the lumbermen, and not to guard the interests of the State in these forests. Mr. LANSING in the Senate, and Mr. ELY and Mr. BOYNTON in the Assembly, have shown themselves active and successful enemies of the forests; and these new bills which they have prepared indicate that in the few weeks past they have lost nothing of their political cunning and audacity.

Mr. JESUP and his associates clearly explain the nature of the legislation which should be sought for at Albany if the forests are to be saved. What is needed, as the committee say, is a bill under which an able and conservative Commission may have full authority to manage the forests of the State upon good business principles, and "to inaugurate and put into execution a system of forestry under which the permanency and usefulness of these forests may be maintained." The committee insists, too—and no disinterested person who has ever devoted any consideration to this subject can doubt for a moment that in such a provision the real value of an Adirondack Commission will be found—that the Commission should be empowered to make a careful investigation of the whole Adirondack problem, and report to subsequent Legislatures any measures which their investigation may show to be necessary to secure the largest benefits to the State. It is a perfectly reasonable request on the part of the people of this State that they should be informed of the actual condition of these forests, upon which so much of their prosperity and commercial success depends. The Legislature will certainly neglect its most important duty if it permits the continuation of the destruction of the North Woods without providing means by which the nature, the extent, and the consequence of such destruction may be made known to the people, who will be the chief sufferers when the forests are once universally swept away.

The various bills, therefore, now before the Legislature should be speedily disposed of, and the way made clear for the consideration of such measures as the committee of the Chamber of Commerce suggests. Even if these are adopted they will not prevent at once further forest destruction, but they will at least enable subsequent Legislatures to act with more intelligence than has been shown at Albany during the present session. Any Adirondack bill endorsed by Mr. LANSING or Mr. BOYNTON should be defeated, whether anything more is done or not this session. Under the pretence of wishing to save the forests, they are using every endeavor, as THE SUN has so often pointed out, to render the position of the lumbermen impregnable in the North Woods. A direct issue between the northern counties and the rest of the State can no longer be avoided. In the end the selfish and narrow interests of the northern lumbermen must give way to the commercial necessities and the general welfare of the rest of the State.

There is little time, however, to lose. The danger to the State is coming every year nearer and nearer. Nothing but vigorous and determined action can now save the forests.

The Testimony of George Bliss.

The testimony of Col. GEORGE BLISS before the committee of Congress which is investigating the Star route cases is as sparkling as the champagne he opened when one of his colleagues retired from the prosecution.

Even when the facts he relates are already familiar to the public, they are told in a peculiarly entertaining way which gives them fresh interest.

The most noteworthy disclosure is that which relates to the action of the Secretary of the Navy in behalf of Mr. GEORGE E. SPENCER, formerly Senator from Alabama, who was wanted as a witness for the Government against the Star route conspirators, on account of a statement he was said to have made to the effect that he had seen money paid by one of the accused parties to another.

"SPENCER is that kind of a man," said Secretary CHANDLER to Mr. BLISS, "who has such devotion for his friends that he will say no if you ask him if he knows anything."

The purpose of this remark could not be misapprehended. Mr. CHANDLER wanted the counsel for the prosecution to understand in advance that SPENCER would deny the truth in order to shield the men on trial. Such, at least, was the opinion he entertained of that gentleman's character.

It is often refreshing to learn what public men think of one another.

The Isthmus Waterway.

There is never too much information published, of an exact and satisfactory sort, concerning the progress of the Chagres canal. The mail news from Aspinwall gives sufficient accounts of the sickness prevailing among the workmen, and of the riots when there are any. The statistics of Mr. DE LESSEPS are good as far as they go, but sometimes are made too much the basis for rosy inferences. Among the most instructive documents on the subject must be ranked the reports of American naval officers, and particularly of Lieut. RAYMOND P. RODGERS.

A year ago Lieut. RODGERS gave a summary of the state of the work on the great ship canal, and now he presents another annual review of it. The two changes in the plan which he has to note are, first, the introduction of a tidal dock or basin at the Pacific terminus, and, secondly, the establishment of a large port at each end of the canal, and an intermediate station at Tavernilla. The ports will accommodate many vessels at once; the central station will allow vessels to pass one another there; the tidal dock will secure a uniform level in the canal by controlling the currents produced from inequalities in the tides of the two oceans.

Lieut. RODGERS also notes that the deflections of the watercourses along the route have been determined:

"In regard to the deflections of the rivers of the Atlantic slope from their present beds, it may be said in brief that it is the intention to keep their waters at all times to the side of the canal, and removed from it by means of cuts and sluices. * * * From Matachin to the Atlantic there will be beside the canal proper a second, but smaller, canal close to and to the eastward of it, carrying the waters of the Upper Chagres to the ocean; and a third, and still smaller, canal or sluice for the purpose of draining the watershed lying to the westward of the route."

The precise amount of work done on the various sections—the Aspinwall, the Gatun, the Gorgona, the Bohio Soldado, the Obispo, the Culebra, and so on—is set forth in detail by Lieut. RODGERS. In some sections the rate of progress has been good, whereas in others it has been bitterly disappointing. On the whole, he concludes, "while it is evident that much important work has been done, and a considerable excavation made, yet I believe that the expectations of a year ago have not been fully realized." But he accounts for this on the ground that the foundation of an undertaking so gigantic requires much time; and the railway and port facilities have, until now, been very limited:

"The capacity of the railway has been more than doubled, seventeen trains daily passing over the road at present, instead of the eight of a year ago, and when the quay of the Terre-pleine is completed, and its water front dredged, the discharge of vessels and delivery of cargoes along the line will be greatly expedited."

When will the canal be finished? Lieut. RODGERS tells us that there are now 15,000 men at work, and that while last year they excavated about 700,000 cubic metres a month, early this year they expected to reach more than a million, and before the next rainy season more than two and a half millions. From May to December the rains reduce the amount of work, but it is hoped that the average annual excavation hereafter will be about twenty-five millions. Now, Mr. DE LESSEPS has said that the canal would be open to traffic in the year 1888; but Lieut. RODGERS estimates that at the highest rate of excavation now relied upon it must take seven years more to finish the deep Culebra section, and, of course, until the last portion is done, the canal cannot be used.

As to the probable cost, Lieut. RODGERS, after close study under some difficulties, infers that $40,000,000 have been already spent on the canal, which is a full third of the amount estimated by Mr. DE LESSEPS for the total cost of the work. There can be no question, however, that the further subscriptions which may become necessary will be procured without trouble, and we judge that there is good reason for expecting that the canal will be in full operation by the year 1892, or in season to help celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the great voyage of COLUMBUS to America.

A Congressman's Foolish Talk.

The House Committee on Rivers and Harbors, to judge from the utterances of Mr. WILLIS, its Chairman, is suffering at present from a serious deficiency in good sense and correct information.

This gentleman told a Southern delegation on Friday that the estimates of the engineers called for the appropriation of forty millions for the improvement of rivers and harbors, but the committee would limit the amount to about ten millions, so that the general policy would be to give in each case about one-quarter of the amount demanded.

The reduction is right, so far as it goes, but should be made in a different way. Some works ought to be entirely abandoned without the expenditure of another dollar on them, while there are probably some on which the full amount of the engineers' estimates could be wisely and profitably spent. But a general policy such as Mr. WILLIS mentions, of giving one-fourth of the sum asked for in all cases, is simply an invitation to the promoters of every river and harbor scheme to ask Congress hereafter for at least four times as much money as they will be content to get.

In addition to this foolish announcement, Mr. WILLIS made a statement which we think is wholly without any foundation in fact. "The opposition to the River and Harbor bill," he said, "has been fostered by the New York newspapers in the interest of the railroads."

If he believes this, he has been imposed upon by somebody who has deceived him with a ridiculous and transparent falsehood.

Mr. FRANK WILKESON's recent discussion of the effect of Indian competition on the prospects of our wheat-raising industry has attracted a good deal of attention. We give space this morning to a second article indicating what Mr. WILKESON believes to be the true remedy for high rates of transportation to the seaboard, namely, a system of internal water communication, to be constructed by the Government of the United States at the public expense—national canals, in short.

The views of this writer are always expressed with vigor, and they are generally original and stimulating to thought. It is proper to say, however, that in advocating the construction of a national waterway from the wheat fields to the Atlantic coast, our interesting correspondent is very far from expressing the opinions of THE SUN in regard to the legitimate functions and right policy of the United States Government.

The classic shades of Fostoria were invaded on Saturday by an interviewing reporter, who dragged from the reluctant lips of the Hon. CHALLEY FOSTER the following confession:

"The people of Ohio are in favor of BLAINE as first choice. Senator SHERMAN also could unquestionably carry Ohio. I think that if SHERMAN, by the votes of the delegates from other States, is shown to be an available candidate, the Ohio delegation would cast their vote for him."

Mr. FOSTER's opinion on the value of JOHN SHERMAN's Presidential chances is particularly interesting, for it is the opinion of an expert. It may be remembered that FOSTER dabbled in SHERMAN stocks just four years ago this spring.

Eagle City, in the new gold region, is probably the liveliest place in the country at the present writing. With lumber at twenty-five cents a foot and whiskey at one hundred and twenty dollars a gallon, the material prosperity of the place is beyond question. It should be observed, however, that the chief industry thus far developed is gambling.

The new Chatham street viaduct will form an effective outlet for the bridge railroad, and will prove a material convenience to the public. But there is no plan of rapid transit across the bridge at present under consideration that is not poor and ineffectual. The capacity of the great structure which has been erected at such an enormous expense is dwarfed and curtailed, and its utility restricted to a narrow competition with a ferryboat.

What does Mr. WATTERSON mean, in his latest pronunciamento, ukase, or bull, when he refers to the air which Speaker CARLISLE and Col. MORRISON breathe as "the fetid atmosphere of the House?"

Mr. JOHN KELLY says the Democratic candidate for President should come from New York.—*Omaha Herald.*

If that is so, and the MORRISON idea is to form the platform for the next campaign, then the candidate should be the Hon. WILLIAM DORSHEIMER or the Hon. SAMUEL S. COX.

In view of Gen. GORDON's present precarious situation, what value can be attached to the statements lately made as to the relations he had established with various tribes and the exhilaration of the MAHDI on receiving from him his appointment as Sultan of Kordofan—an exhilaration which betrayed that potentate into presenting the bearer of the despatch with a suit of clothes? Clearly there is something wrong with the news which reaches us with such fluency and variety from the heart of the Soudan.

While a naturally large proportion of jobbery was to be looked for in and about the selection of the site for the new Federal building in Brooklyn, it would appear that there is even more of it than Secretary FOLGER can tolerate with comfort. The objections which are now offered to the Johnson street plan are, if well founded, the most serious that can be urged. Perhaps it would be as well if the Secretary were to give the matter his thoughtful reconsideration.

RUTHERFORD B. HAYES has been having a hard time of it with his hens during the late floods. He had better keep ducks if he is going to stay in Ohio.

A bill has been introduced into the House for the transfer of the Indian Office to the War Department, and possibly may be discussed during the approaching consideration of the Indian Appropriation bill. Sixteen years ago a Commission, consisting of Gens. W. T. SHERMAN, A. H. TERRY, and C. C. AUGUR, and Messrs. TAYLOR, HENDERSON, HOW, and SANBORN, made a report which employed the following language on this subject:

"To determine this question properly, we must first know what is to be the future treatment of the Indians. If we intend to have war with them, the Bureau should go to the Secretary of War. If we intend to have peace, it should be in the civil department. In our judgment, such wars are wholly unnecessary, and, hoping that the Government and the country will agree with us, we cannot now advise the change."

Has anything since occurred to justify the reversal of this noteworthy opinion?

Striking the Nail on the Head.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* You have struck the nail square on the head at last, and would to heaven you had done so this early four years ago. The people will not have it otherwise, and the cause is stronger now than ever. Mr. Tilden must be nominated at Chicago. Half the battle will then be won. If he declines it will be when we have placed our party on such high ground that we can safely leave the rest to God and the people. W. S. COOKE.

MONTIS, March 18.

THE WHEAT QUESTION.

How Can American Wheat be Enabled to Compete with that Raised in India?

The question how best to meet and overcome the competition of Indian wheat for the control of the consuming markets of Europe, that our agriculture is now called upon to face, is a grave one, and one that demands immediate attention. The prosperity of our nation depends on our agriculture. The farmers are not prosperous. The price of wheat steadily declines in Chicago. The West demands relief—demands that its breadstuff producers be put in condition for the race. They fear to encounter the competition that is forced upon them. They realize that the fight is unfair, and that, under the existing order of things, they will be beaten. Their murmuring is echoed by their representatives in Washington. The occasion afforded by their discontent has been eagerly seized on by the advocates of British free trade, who strenuously insist that our agriculture is being crippled by a protective tariff, and that all our agriculture needs to enable it to hold the markets of the world is a reduction of the tariff on the materials consumed by farmers. Through ignorance that is actually criminal in public men, or a wicked wilfulness, they endeavor to divert the attention of farmers from the actual state of development of foreign wheat lands and the competition that has arisen to the tariff question.

Adroit free trade arithmeticians have calculated the enhanced cost of living and of the tools used in Western agriculture that results from the tariff, and they have claimed that the high price of the tools was a result of the tariff on iron and steel. The truth is that the combined weight of all the iron and steel parts of the tools used on the farms of average size in the West rarely exceeds a ton. The effective life of the tools, if they are properly cared for, is about eight years. The enhanced cost of the implements resulting from the tariff, even if the sum representing the duty is added to the price of the material in England, would not be over $20. This would be an annual charge of two and a half dollars on each farmer. The excessive cost of the tools is owing, not to the tariff on iron and steel, but, first, to the patent laws; secondly, to the manufacturers' system of selling on credit, and paying their agents large commissions for selling the tools. It is a well-known fact that the cost of manufacturing an unpatented two-horse farm wagon of any standard make equals the actual cost of most of the reapers in use in Western wheat fields. The former sell for about $80, while the latter, protected by patent laws, sell for $200 to $300. The patent laws tax the farmers ten times more than the tariff, and the taxation is direct. No Congressman has had the hardihood to advocate the abolition of the patent laws so as to cheapen the agricultural tools of the nation.

The cost of woollen blankets and clothing in England and in this country has been an exhaustless theme for would-be moulders of Western political belief. They have so often dwelt on the iniquity of the agriculturists being excessively taxed for the woollen blankets they sleep under and the woollen clothing they wear that many people, who have no practical knowledge of the subject, believe that Western farmers, who till their own or rented land, are large consumers of woollen goods. This is a mistake. The working farmers of the far Western States, where the distress caused by the alleged excessive cost of woollens has been represented to be most severe, prefer to wear cotton garments. The only woollen goods they habitually wear are underclothing. They sleep during cold weather under comfortables made of a heavy layer of cotton or raw wool sewed between two sheets of calico. A comfortable is much warmer than a pair of blankets. The blanket-lined cotton clothes that are sold throughout the agricultural and mining regions of the West outwear woollen goods and are warmer. They are used by all men who are called upon to face the Arctic storms that sweep across the plains. They are universally worn by the Rocky Mountain miners, a class of men who are reckless in their personal expenditures, and who would buy woollen clothing, no matter what it cost, if they preferred it. There is no truth in the assertions made by the advocates of free trade that the farmers and laboring men of the West are clamoring for cheap iron and cheap woollens.

The Western breadstuff producers realize that they are heavily handicapped in the race now to be run between them and the poverty-stricken tillers of the Indian wheat fields, by the excessive cost of transporting their produce to our export ports. This cost is due, not to the tariff on iron, as the British free traders would have us believe, but to the practice that has been fostered under Republican rule of allowing shrewd, unscrupulous men to mortgage the growth and industry of our country by building railroads with money obtained from the sale of bonds, while they resolutely refused to pay a cent for the stock that represents the road. This system, conceived in dishonesty and grown to full maturity under the monopoly-fostering care of the Republicans, is called developing the country! Railroads are built through uninhabited regions. The stock is issued to the promoters of the scheme, and they hold it until the country is settled. Then they extort sufficient transportation charges on the agricultural produce shipped to market to pay dividends on vast paper estates that have been created by the engraver's art.

The natural increase of population along the line of the greatest railroad in the State of New York, and the increase in manufacturing resulting from the rapidly growing population, supplemented by the growth of the agricultural West, has been the cause of the prosperity of that road, and not the marvellous ability displayed in its management, as the modest owners would have us believe. As the people furnished more and more materials to be transported to market, the road became crowded with business, and the stock was watered and watered to keep the dividends within the lawful limit. The owners of the road falsely claimed that they had added to the value of the property by their able management, and that they had a right to its increased value. They ignored the truth that every child born, every wheel built, every vine planted, every blow struck in labor by the people living in the vast territory tributary to the road, added to its value, and that the people were entitled to the increase. But it was boldly appropriated by the family owning the road, and is held to-day by them. They gloat over this wealth and cheerfully damn the public that created it. The arrogance of the claim has been submitted to by the people, and they have paid into the pockets of this family alone a sum that is greater than the estimated cost of a system of canals that would speedily revolutionize transportation in this country and reduce its cost to a nominal sum.

In the West things are worse. There the arrogant managers of the railroads parcel out the States. They agree that certain territories and peoples shall belong exclusively to certain roads. State lines are ignored. It is the "Northwestern Territory," the "Rock Island Territory," the "St. Paul Territory," the "Northern Pacific Territory," and the people living on the land are spoken of as "our people" in railroad offices. That the revenues of the holders of the paper estates may be rendered stable, a policy of pooling the profits, and of preventing competition between the transportation companies, has been adopted. The last cent that the producers can afford to pay is drawn from them. But the time is near when they can no longer pay. The breadstuff consumers of Europe have become impatient of helping to pay the revenue of the paper estates held by American railroad owners. They demanded cheaper breadstuffs, and they have opened a wheat field which will necessitate a reduction in the cost of transportation in this country, or a cessation of the exportation of breadstuffs.

Our new countries, where the virgin wheat lands lie, that we depend on for food, and expected to control the markets of the world by, are gridironed with railroads built, and dishonestly built, with money obtained by selling bonds. Not a cent was put into the stock. From the Canadian Pacific southward to the Gulf of Mexico, the East and West lines, with a single exception, are roads built for the sole purpose of plundering the people. Their stock represents nothing. But by the most outrageous laws ever submitted to by an intelligent people, the directors of those roads will be allowed (have been allowed in some cases) to wring out of the people sufficient money to pay a dividend on stock that has no more actual value than circus posters. Tax collectors sit in every freight office throughout our land, who gather the tribute paid to the dignitaries of transportation, who were created by the Republican party.

There are hundreds of millions of dollars of railroad stock, mortgages on the industry of the people, on which dividends are being paid that represent nothing but the effrontery of railroad directors. One of the fundamental laws of our system of government is that the people shall not be taxed without their consent. This law is rigidly adhered to in all matters of State, county, town, and school district taxation. A bond that has the taint of irregularity about it is worthless. The people have never hesitated to repudiate an illegal obligation; but they have tamely submitted to the outrage of allowing men to issue hundreds of millions of dollars of railroad stock that represents nothing but the cost of printing, and they have paid dividends on this stock. Annually millions of dollars are collected from the people to pay these charges that are a violation of the natural rights of mankind. If the people murmur and threaten unfavorable legislation, their representatives are purchased with the money they have paid to the roads. They have not been able to obtain relief. State representatives, Congressmen, Senators, Judges, all are controlled, purchased with money that has been drawn from the people under the cover of unjust laws.

The outcry that is promptly raised by the press and by the representatives of the transportation companies when any legislation looking to the relief of the people by the construction of a system of internal water communication is proposed, clearly indicates the powerful influence of these corporations, and shows how determined they are that the people shall not be relieved of their burdens, and that they shall continue to pay into the pockets of the railroad directors the money that, no matter how dishonestly expended, if invested in canal digging, would speedily relieve them from outrageous transportation charges. The press of the United States, with few exceptions, bitterly opposes any and all proposed systems of national canals. They denounce the scheme as one under which the people would be robbed—they are only plundered now. They declare that all sorts of disasters would stalk in the trenches dug by the people to hold free water on which free boats would float, and behind which the people could repel the attacks made on their material welfare by the transportation corporations. They insist that the people's money must not be squandered in canal building, and annually the people pay a sufficient sum of money in excess of reasonable freight charges to build 500 miles of canal.

These same men do not oppose the sinking of vast sums in puerile attempts to improve the navigation of the Mississippi River. They know that the river runs at right angles to the channel of trade, and they also know that it cannot be improved. These outcries have succeeded in leading the people away from the issue at stake; have led many of them to believe that they cannot do as they please with their own; have created a belief that they had better go on forever paying money into railroad freight offices than to put it into internal improvement that would save them millions of dollars annually, and that would put them into condition to successfully meet competition from whatever portion of the earth offered.

Politics should not be a fight for office, nor should it be a thing of sentiment. Now, when our national prosperity is threatened by the opening of new wheat fields, and opened by a powerful and wealthy Government, whose scheme of internal improvements embraces 15,000 miles of railroad and thousands of miles of canals, the attention of Congress should be turned to politics instead of sentimentality. In the extremity that will soon be on us no thought will be taken of the killing of white or black scalawags and chicken thieves in the Southern States.

The war ended eighteen years ago. The Republicans have ruled during that period. They now point proudly to the country and claim as the results of their wise government a land ruled by the corporations they created, an agriculture that trembles before the first serious competition it has been called upon to meet, and a moneyed aristocracy that is unlike that of any other country in having neither blood, brains, or courage—and that is all.

FRANK WILKESON.

A FREAK OF THE GLACIAL PERIOD.

A Wonderful Discovery in a Coal Mine in Lackawanna County, Pa.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* About two months ago the miners employed by Jones, Simpson & Co. were driving a heading in the Ridge mines, about a mile from this borough. They had worked about 600 feet through the coal, when a blast blew out not only coal, but a large stream of water and a quantity of round stones. The miners were alarmed, and ran away to the opening. After waiting half an hour, they returned, and found the stream of water very small, but the round stones continued to pour out. They supposed that there was a fault in the coal seam, and worked ahead, but the round stones continued to pour out. After three weeks' work by four men, loading and carrying away the round stones, gravel and loam made their appearance. When they was removed, they found the daylight and a circular chamber, forty-five feet from the surface, cut through the rock and stone, thirty feet in diameter.

I examined this geological wonder yesterday from the surface and from the bottom. It is in the woods, with small holes at each side in the course of a very small rivulet. There are some rocks thrown up five or six feet high about twenty feet above it in the course of the stream. From below you can see a circular chamber thirty feet in diameter and forty-five feet in height. The walls are nearly perpendicular (the floor is rock), and next the wall is six feet of coal all round, then the rock is sandstone. It rises thirty-five feet high, and is covered by gravel, loam, and other alluvial deposit. The stones are all rounded, and occupy about twenty feet of the chamber. They are from six pounds in weight to small pebbles. In the lower part of the cave round pieces of coal were mixed with the sandstone pebbles.

The coal company intends to make an air hole for ventilation of this chamber, in which case it would have to be filled up. This would be a source of grief to scientific men. Mr. Lesley, the State Geologist, says that there is only one other such freak of the glacial period yet discovered, and that is in Luzerne, Switzerland. It is to be hoped that it will be preserved as a natural curiosity of the greatest interest to science. J. F.

ARCHIBALD, Pa., March 18.

Another Materialized Spirit Captured.

From the Hartford Courant.

BOSTON, March 21.—There has been rather an exciting episode in connection with spiritual manifestations in Boston. At a house at the south end of the city there have been many exhibitions of materialized spirits of late. Some of those who knew of these exhibitions were convinced that they were fraudulent, and laid a plan for their exposure. The story, as it is told to me, is to the effect that fifteen of our citizens agreed to go together to the house and investigate the matter to the bottom. They arranged a plan of operation in advance. The seances are held in a darkened room. The materialized spirits issue from a cabinet and move about the circle conversing with those who compose it. The arrangement was that one of the party should seize upon the spirit, while another, who took a seat near the gas-burner, should strike a match and turn on the gas at the signal, when the investigation should proceed. This was strictly carried out. The spirit appeared in the form of a sailor. The active party in the circle watched his opportunity, and threw his arms with a muscular grip about the sailor, when the room was suddenly illuminated, and he found himself clasping a woman. She fought vigorously to be free, and dealt her captor a blow which left a mark on his face. The sailor costume came off in the struggle, and though, the woman retreated, the parties got possession of the cabinet and carried away the paraphernalia by which this imposition had been carried on. It is a singular affair, and the men who are concerned in the exposure, I am told, are of the highest respectability.

300 to 500 Feet.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Will you tell us the height of the Palisades on the west side of the Hudson River, to settle an argument by several of your Philadelphia readers? H. J. G.

PHILADELPHIA, March 22.

THE FATHER OF PROHIBITION.

Why Neal Dow Began his Campaign which has Lasted Half a Century.

PORTLAND, March 20.—To-day Gen. Neal Dow celebrated his 80th birthday in a quiet manner. He is still very vigorous, and probably has lost nothing of physical or mental strength within the past few years.

Mr. Dow was a teetotaler from early youth. The custom of offering wine among refreshments at social parties in Portland was largely put down by him and his two sisters, who, the first of all in that city, entertained their friends in large numbers without intoxicants. He was drawn into the warfare against the liquor traffic accidentally.

There was a lady well known to Mr. Dow and his family, whose husband, an educated man, holding an important public office, was a dipsomaniac. This lady sent for Mr. Dow one day and told him that her husband was away again on a time. Mr. Dow went to a certain rumshop where Mr. Blank resorted and told the rumseller the whole story, entreating him not to sell the man any more liquor. The rumseller replied:

"It's my business to sell rum, and I have a license for it. I'll sell to anybody who asks for it who has the money to pay for it. I support my family by selling liquor."

Mr. Dow indignantly replied:

"It's your business, then, to sell rum, and you have a license for it? You support your family, do you, by destroying other people's families? Heaven helping me, I'll change all that!"

Mr. Dow led Mr. Blank home, and from that day commenced an active, persistent, unceasing warfare against the grog shops. Innumerable meetings were held all over the State, in small towns and villages as well as in large towns and cities, everywhere denouncing the liquor traffic. When public opinion was prepared for the overthrow of the grog shops, as Mr. Dow supposed, he prepared a bill entitled "An act for the suppression of drinking houses and tippling shops." His friends said it was too radical. He went to Augusta with his bill in his pocket, had a public hearing in the Representatives' Hall before a joint select committee, which agreed unanimously to report the bill without change. The next day was the last one of the session. That night Mr. Dow had his bill printed, it was placed on the desks of the members early in the morning, and on that day was passed through all its stages to be enacted, and went into effect on its approval by the Governor.

Within six months the jails in five of the counties were empty, as well as the houses of correction of Cumberland county. The open liquor traffic came immediately to an end.

WARNER MILLER IN A WORRY.

He Wants to Go to Chicago as Delegate at Large, but is Not Sure of the Chance.

HERKIMER, March 23.—The friends of Senator Warner Miller in this, the Twenty-fourth Congress district, and especially here at his home, are in a sad quandary. They want to send him to the Chicago Convention in June. He wants to go. They and he prefer that he should go as a delegate at large. But if the President's friends control the Utica Convention will they permit the election of an opponent of Mr. Arthur's renomination, even though he is a United States Senator?

That is the question which perplexes Mr. Miller and his friends. The District Convention meets on April 11. It will make Mr. Miller a district delegate if he desires the office. But if he accepts delegate honors at the hands of the District Convention, will not that fact be held sufficient reason for denying him the larger honor at the hands of the State Convention? And if he refuses the former may he not miss the latter, and consequently be left in humiliation at home?

There is no doubt of Mr. Miller's opposition to the nomination of Mr. Arthur. He talks it and writes it, and his friends, who are reticent when the cue has not been clearly given, are unrestrained in their expressions of hostility to the President's nomination. They go so far as to express the positive conviction that "Mr. Arthur's candidacy would insure a repetition of the Folger campaign."

If, before April 11, it seems probable that the friends of the present Administration will control the Utica Convention, Warner Miller will not be made a delegate from the Twenty-fourth Congress district. If otherwise, he will be. If the prospect is about half and half, he may be made a district delegate, with a view to accepting an appointment at large by the State Convention, if he can get it, and turning his district honor over to his alternate. But Warner Miller is not happy under the cloud of doubt respecting his influence with New York Republicans.

North Carolina Read Out, Too.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In THE SUN of yesterday you say that the Morrison-Carlisle policy is to read New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Ohio out of the Democratic party. True, and you may go further. Permit me to call your attention to the following resolutions adopted by the Democratic Legislature of North Carolina in 1883:

That the internal revenue taxes of the United States ought to be repealed at once.

If Congress should deem it impracticable to modify the present tariff and at the same time abolish the internal revenue taxes, as the lesser of the two evils we prefer the retention of the former and the abolition of the latter.

That the Secretary of State is instructed to transmit copies of these resolutions to the Senators in Congress from North Carolina as an expression of the voice of the State on the issues to which they relate, and to the Representatives in Congress from North Carolina for their respectful consideration.

This has been Democratic policy in North Carolina for nearly one hundred years. The Legislature of 1790 adopted this resolution:

That they strenuously oppose every excise and direct taxation law, should any be attempted in Congress.

So that North Carolina Democrats who favor the abolition of the oppressive and iniquitous internal revenue taxation are not Democrats according to the Morrison-Carlisle standard, and for adhering to a policy that has obtained in the State for nearly a century they are to be read out of the party. H.

WASHINGTON, March 22.

The Continued Existence of R. B. Hayes Philosophically Explained.

From the Albany Times.

An exchange speaks of R. B. Hayes as dead. But he is not dead—probably because funerals come too high.

A Naval Incident Worth Mentioning.

From the Philadelphia Record.

A telegram from Fortress Monroe informs us that the United States steamer Osceola has reached Hampton Roads in safety. This gratifying adventure is worth chronicling.

Two Long Lost Brothers.

From the Portland Oregonian.

The Sheriff of Walla Walla recently received two letters at the same time inquiring for long lost brothers. One of the lost brothers had been hanged a week before for the murder of the other lost brother.

The Vanity of Human Hopes.

When the anxious boomer thinks he booms,
Moving onward toward the Presidency,
Something dark before his vision looms,
Striking blind the eyeballs of his fancy.

Truest friends are often false to trust;
Quite deceitful, too, are delegations;
Fortune's breath can turn our hopes to dust;
Icy winds can freeze our aspirations.

Known too well the candidate may be,
His career extravagantly chequered;
All his friends admire him—don't you see?—
Yet the voters can't abide his record.

Other favorite sons would heir his State,
So divided votes are weakly scattered,
While the boomless boomer mourns his fate,
Seeing how his boom is torn and shattered.

Early birds, they say, will catch the worms;
Early booms are caught, alas! so often.
How the luckless victim squeals and squirms,
Grabbed by fate that ne'er a plea can soften!

Better far the tone and hope of one—
Only one—so modest, meek, retiring,
Who, although a Half Breed Favorite Son,
Seeks the rest his nature is requiring.

Far from crowds he keeps his quiet seat,
Dazed no more by splenders meteoric,
Wishing but to make his book complete,
Caring now for naught but fame historic.

Still the world moves on beyond his room,
Fate upon his back the harness buckles;
Fortune booms the boomless boomer's boom,
While he sits alone, and smiles, and chuckles.

SUNBEAMS.

—A petition signed by 10,000 Scotchmen against the abolition of the feather bonnet in the British army is to be presented in Parliament very shortly.

—The London *Medical Times* says that a hundred deaths have been probably caused by carelessness as to dairy drainage and water supply, for one that is traceable to adulteration.

—An ordinary Cabinet Minister soon sinks into insignificance in England when he retires from office; even Mr. Milner Gibson, to whom the penny papers are under enormous obligations, seeing that no one did so much to repeal the paper duty, was scarcely known by name to the present generation until his death occurred last month.

—There are five spiritualistic organs in France, four in Belgium, two in Holland, eight in Spain, two in Italy, and three in Germany. In addition to several journals devoted to the cause in England and the United States, it has one organ each in Austria, Russia, Mexico, the Antilles, Chili, Brazil, Uruguay, the Argentine Republic, Australia