The Sun.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1885.

Amusements Today.

Academy of Music—Concert, 2 P. M.
Bijou Opera House—Adonis, 8 P. M.
Casino—Amelia, 8 P. M.
Comedy Theatre—Keller, 8 P. M.
Daly's Theatre—A Night Off, 8 P. M.
Eden Musee—Tableaux, 10 A. M. to 11 P. M.
Grand Opera House—Her Atonement, 8 P. M.
Harrigan's Park Theatre—The Grip, 8 P. M.
Lyceum Theatre—Out of Our Circle, 8 P. M.
Madison Square Theatre—Saints and Sinners, 8:30 P. M.
Mount Morris Theatre—Humpty Dumpty, 8 P. M.
Niblo's Garden—The Enchantress, 8 P. M.
People's Theatre—Aristocracy, 8 P. M.
Star Theatre—The Black Hussar, 8 P. M.
Standard Theatre—Ville Noyarche, 8 P. M.
Thalia Theatre—Pygmalion, 8 P. M.
Tony Pastor's—Rice's 1885 Addition, 8 P. M.
Union Square Theatre—Romeo and Juliet, 8 P. M.
Wallack's Theatre—Heartsease, 8 P. M.
3d Avenue Theatre—Rip, 8 P. M.
5th Avenue Theatre—Frado, 8 P. M.
14th Street Theatre—Evangeline, 8 P. M.

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THE SUN, New York City.

The Presidential Succession.

There are two serious objections to the Presidential Succession bill which has been introduced into Congress by Senator HOAR of Massachusetts. One is that it devolves the duties of the Presidency upon officers not elected by the people or their representatives; and the other is that it might result in making one of these officers President for the greater part of a full term of four years. While we are inclined to regard it as an improvement upon the present statute, the constitutionality of which is doubtful, we do not think it meets the difficulties of the case. This, in our opinion, can be done only by an amendment to the Constitution.

A simple addition to that instrument would solve the problem in a satisfactory manner. The Constitution now provides for the election of a President of the United States by the House of Representatives, when no one of the candidates voted for by the electoral colleges has a majority of the votes of the electors. Why not empower the House of Representatives to elect a President to serve out the unexpired term in case of the death of the President and the Vice-President?

An officer chosen in this way would be both elective and representative. He would be the choice of the people represented in their national assembly. Furthermore, the method of selection would be in harmony with the spirit of our institutions, and with that of the fundamental law as it now is. The House of Representatives now has the power to elect a President when the electoral colleges fail to do so. The proposed amendment would merely extend this power so as to authorize an election by the House for the remainder of a term, when the office became vacant by the death or disability both of the President and Vice-President.

There would have to be some provision for calling Congress together in such a contingency, if it were not in session; but this is a matter of detail which could be arranged without any considerable difficulty.

Now is an excellent time to deal with this subject. Any statute relating to the Presidential succession must be a mere makeshift, involving objections that cannot be overcome. The Constitution should provide for filling any vacancy, and no wiser method has occurred to us or has been suggested by any one, so far as we know, than that which we have now outlined.

We commend it to the most thoughtful consideration of our Senators and Representatives in Congress.

The Staten Island Terminus.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company has taken possession of its new terminal property at Staten Island, and Mr. ERASTUS WIMAN signalized the event last evening by a tremendous banquet to Mr. ROBERT GARRETT on the spot. The bill of fare knew no limitations, the company was large and distinguished, and the occasion had all the weight and dignity that could possibly be conferred upon it.

The speech in which Mr. GARRETT acquitted himself of the obligations of the evening contained some interesting statements, and, as they intimately concern many vital interests of the port of New York, they deserve thoughtful study. The adoption, he tells us, of a Staten Island terminus for a trunk railroad line implies not merely a substantial addition to the harbor facilities of New York, but a great reduction in the charges. Our elevators have been built where the water is shallow, and consequently the grain has to be taken from the cars and transferred to lighters which in turn are towed to the vessels lying in the stream. This, as Mr. GARRETT points out, necessarily increases the expense of transshipment and gives advantages to ports where a direct transfer of grain can be made from the railroad to vessels of heavy tonnage. He shows that the same principle applies in great part to the coal that is handled in our harbor, and, of course, in a less degree to various other staples.

It is evident that Mr. GARRETT's new road, with terminal facilities which are undoubtedly both cheap and practicable, can enter into competition at this port under advantageous conditions. The business of New York harbor has been unreasonably contracted, and anything conducing to its expansion, to wholesome competition, and to the general reduction of local taxation upon the commerce of the port should be encouraged.

Mr. GARRETT's idea is that he can transship merchandise of all classes at Staten Island as cheaply as he does at Locust Point in the harbor of Baltimore. There is no apparent reason why he should not be able to do so at Staten Island, or why his prediction should not be verified that the approaches to New York from the sea, where the water is deep and the shore accessible, should not be fully utilized at an early date in the very same way as that in which he proposes to use Staten Island.

Mr. GARRETT's road apparently means business and the precise sort of development that New York needs. Accordingly it deserves a hearty welcome and generous consideration.

What Good Will It Do Them?

The Republican Senators are evidently impressed and are striving to impress the country with the solemn importance of their decisions on the appointments submitted to them. They had to hold a caucus to reach the wise and magnanimous idea that they would not reject all the President's appointments, but would lookout for offensive partisans and violators of the so-called spirit of civil service reform That is, deeming it injudicious to fight the President as much as they would like to, they are going to fight him as much as they think is safe, and as much as the more conservative portion of the party will stand.

So what is the use of their assuming the airs of patriotism and prating about their judicial functions? Everybody knows that the accumulation of political capital, and not the selection of competent public servants, is the inspiration which will induce these Senators to scrutinize the President's appointments to see what pretence they can find for rejecting them. Everybody knows that the highest fitness and integrity will not avail to secure the confirmation of any man who has been prominent enough in the Democratic party to earn the enmity of the Republican Senators from his State. Everybody knows that each Republican Senator will do his best to console his bounced henchmen, if possible, by bothering their would-be successors. And doubtless the Senators will be able to satisfy some old grudges and have rather a pleasant time, although their course will crave wary walking. If they are not discreet in treating the appointments they may have trouble.

So let the fun begin. Let LOGAN DHU fight over the prostrate body of his PALMER, Postmaster at Chicago that was, and weep at the tomb of loved Long JONES. Let grim old EDMUNDS joyously scatter despair among the Independent Republicans, who once revered him, by showing that his Republicanism is still up to boiling point. Let JEAN JACQUES INGALLS assail Democracy, past, present, and to come, with the Greek fire of his virulent wit. Let Spitfire HOAR tear his snowy locks as he tells of PILLSBURY, the hated of Brother BLAINE, and FRYE and HALE put Collector CHASE by the side of Collector PILLSBURY as common enemies of the human race and of the Republican grip upon long-suffering Maine. Let Our Own EVARTS add his voice to the general hymn of wrath and show what a beginner can do. Let the scrutinizing be lynx-eyed and the oratory terrible; but if every one of the Democratic nominees is rejected, what good will it do their Republican predecessors? Will it give them back their fat places and fat pay?

The Republican Senators may fume, but they can do nothing for their heelers put out.

"For violets plucked, the sweetest showers will not make grow again."

An Agreeable Vanity.

There seems to be something exceedingly comfortable and comforting to the rest of mankind in the reflection that rich men have to die as well as other people. This reflection is the favorite commonplace in most of the preachments called forth from pulpits and newspapers by Mr. VANDERBILT's death. And in the streets, when the news was first announced, perhaps the most common remark heard, next to an expression of deep interest in the probable size of the dead man's fortune, was something like this: "All his millions couldn't save him."

The feeling which prompts people to repeat this truism, the nap of which must have been well worn off ages before "DAVID's son, the sad and splendid," set down some other famous commonplaces about vanities, of which he had a very generous share, seems to be a sort of vague satisfaction that their inequality in worldly possessions with millionaires is in some sort relieved and redressed by the fact that these gentlemen are not able to buy off death.

But they are frequently able to make themselves very comfortable before their taking off, and they do not die sooner than the average of men. They can afford to live better than most people, and in a material sense it may be said that they can better afford to die, for they have had the opportunity to get all they are capable of getting out of life. And while their millions cannot save them, they can at least get them the best physicians.

It is better to be a living pauper than a dead millionaire, but none of the philosophers who point out the futility of riches would not like to be a millionaire in good health. Riches are a vanity, of course, but all the world thinks them a very agreeable sort of vanity to have in the house. Still, theoretically all the world will continue to pretend to despise this vanity.

Is It Not a Hoax?

Must not the report we get to-day from San Francisco be a hoax? It is that of the discovery of a socialistic plot to assassinate twenty men of that city for the sole apparent reason that they are rich or prominent.

The story is that the police found that an association of "ultra Socialists" had put those twenty names on a "proscriptive list," and instructed an executive committee to devise means of blowing them up with dynamite. When the quarters of the plotters of assassination were entered, it is further related, "a complete laboratory for the manufacture of infernal machines" was discovered, and four men, who boasted of their purpose to kill the proscribed individuals, were arrested and taken to the city prison.

Among the intended victims named are such men as Gov. STONEMAN, United States Judge SAWYER, Congressman MORROW, Mayor BARTLETT, and LELAND STANFORD.

It all must be a hoax; or else "ultra Socialists" are Thugs—enemies of mankind, whom society must drive out like venomous beasts.

Mr. Randall's Record.

The more Mr. RANDALL is assailed by his jealous colleagues in Congress the brighter and more creditable his public record appears.

In self-defence he is compelled to refer to facts in his own favor which he might otherwise prefer to let others bring to public attention.

"I never voted a dollar nor an acre of land for any railroad," he said on Tuesday, in the course of the debate on the rules.

When Mr. GIBSON of West Virginia said he had yet to discover that the gentleman from Pennsylvania, meaning Mr. RANDALL, or the gentleman from Indiana, meaning Mr. HOLMAN, had ever objected to appropriations for their own States, Mr. RANDALL promptly declared: "The gentleman is mistaken so far as I am concerned."

In the same discussion it came out that Mr. RANDALL had always voted against the River and Harbor bill, and finally, that since the House of Representatives had been under Democratic control, and practically under Mr. RANDALL's leadership in respect to these matters, "there had not been an acre of land or a dollar of subsidy appropriated."

The judgment of such a man as to the wisest methods of procedure to be observed in doing the business of Congress may safely be followed.

Mr. CLEVELAND has done wisely in selecting the Hon. JOHN BIGELOW for the office of Assistant Treasurer in this city. Mr. BIGELOW is an accomplished, high-minded, and experienced public man. The duties of the place are not arduous, but the responsibility is great. It has been held by many distinguished citizens, and Mr. BIGELOW is worthy to succeed them.

The story of the loss of the schooner James T. Morse, whose Captain and crew were brought to this port yesterday, adds another to the long list of disasters at sea that the past month has furnished. Better ships and better seamanship have fortunately diminished very greatly the percentage of shipwrecks in our times, but the number of vessels lost is still lamentably great.

A shipwreck always possesses peculiar fascination for the imagination, and probably the sea would lose half its charm, even to sailors themselves, if it were never lashed into fury by tempests. It is doubtful whether the most harrowing stories of sufferings at sea have ever deterred a boy who had the seagoing fever from following the bent of his inclinations. In truth, so many heroic qualities are developed in such battles with the elements, that many a skilful story teller has found no better way to show off the strong points of his hero than by having him shipwrecked.

The British conquest of Burmah was not accomplished, after all, without a massacre of Europeans by the Burmese. It was feared that THEBAW would kill all the whites he could lay his hands on in Mandalay when the British expedition started for that city, but the savage monarch was wiser than his enemies thought him to be. But one of THEBAW's Ministers was more rash, and, catching eleven poor fellows who had been working for the Bombay and Burmah Trading Company trying to slip out of the country, he put them all to death. THEBAW was doubtless a bloodthirsty and worthless fellow, albeit his royal blood now commands respectful recognition from the British, but it is pretty clear that he was not the only bloody-minded person high in authority in Burmah.

The ladies of St. George's Church in Stuyvesant square intend to give two theatrical entertainments at the Madison Square Theatre on Dec. 29 and Dec. 30, in the afternoon, for the benefit of the poor boys of that parish. The play will be the "Russian Honeymoon," and the artists will include Mrs. POTTER, Mrs. ANDREWS, Miss LAWRENCE, Mr. COWARD, Mr. PRESCOTT BUTLER, and Mr. JOHNSON, the most distinguished amateurs of the city. Tickets and reserved seats can be had at the American Art Gallery, 6 East Twenty-third street. It is hoped that the proceeds will be amply sufficient to establish a comfortable and attractive reading room for the use of the boys.

Washington Notes.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16.—The death of the Vice-President is not likely to interfere with social gayety at the capital this winter, except so far as certain official usages at the White House may be respected. The preparations for a lively season, founded upon the expectation of an unusual number of visitors, are exceptionally large.

All the members of the Cabinet are now well housed and ready to do their part in making Washington agreeable. Mr. Whitney exceeds his colleagues in the extent and liberality of his plans for entertaining company. He has taken the former residence of Mr. Freimuthuysen at a rental of $4,000 a year, and has enlarged and embellished it at an expense of about $20,000. He has the refusal of the purchase of this property for $60,000 at the end of four years, when its value will have been largely enhanced by his own expenditures.

The Hon. W. L. Scott, who was once a page in the House of Representatives, of which he is now a member, and who has become a millionaire by enterprise and courage, is also expending many thousands in adorning one of the best houses in the city, to make it more attractive for the guests he expects to receive. Senator Stanford follows his example as next door neighbor.

Mr. D. P. Morgan of New York, well known as one of the magnates of the stock market, purchased the fine mansion of Senator Cameron recently, with the expectation of enjoying the winters at Washington. Infirm health has suddenly changed his plans.

Every year increases the number of wealthy recruits who seek the capital as a winter resort. They buy houses, make investments on speculation, and gradually become identified with the town. The access to official society, and the easy intercourse with scientific, literary, and art circles, which are constantly advancing, offer attractions which do not exist to a similar extent in many of the commercial cities.

In the large sense, Washington has neither commerce nor manufactures. It is purely and simply an official and social city, which has attained a remarkable growth in the last ten years, and is destined to be one of the great capitals of the world when the grand plan upon which it was laid out shall be fully developed.

The spiteful attack of Mr. W. E. Chandler upon the Secretary of the Navy, Commodore Walker, and several other officers who are recognized in the allusions, is well understood here. It will fail in its intended aim. Commodore Walker was at the head of the Bureau of Navigation during Mr. Chandler's term as Secretary. He is known to be a most capable, upright, and resolute officer. His political associations have been and still are with the Republicans. He has a near connection of Senator Allison, but he has never carried politics into his official relations. Mr. Chandler never succeeded in bending Commodore Walker to his wishes. Hence their relations grew to be formal and even unpleasant.

Presidents' Messages.

From the Chicago Tribune.

The plan of the President's annual message is not in accordance with the intentions of the framers of the Constitution. None of them could have believed such an institution would grow out of the modest provision which they inserted in the organic law.

There is no reason why the message should be an annual review of events. No requirement of the Constitution or of common sense need make it long or exhaustive. The President has more than one chance every year to make himself heard. He may send in to Congress as many messages as he desires, and no one in law is more "special" than the other.

The annual message has been made and addressed to the country, though the fiction of sending it to Congress is still maintained. Hence its ponderous tone and appalling length, which have been thought necessary for a full explanation to simple and ignorant minds of facts which they might otherwise never comprehend. Yet the simple and ignorant are the last who can, without dismay, think of reading so formidable a state paper, containing so little of practical interest and so much technical verbosity and solemn platitude.

The Constitution of the United States contains this provision:

He (the President) shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the Union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.

The definition of the President's message is limited in these respects:

1. It is to be addressed to Congress.
2. It is to contain information.
3. It is to make certain recommendations.

In all these particulars the President's message of late years has departed from the intention of the framers of the Constitution.

While it is nominally addressed to Congress, it is really meant for the perusal of the whole people.

While it contains some information, it also embodies much superfluous matter in the way of statistics and a recital of facts which have been known to Congress for months.

While it makes some recommendations, it also raises speculative questions of no practical value, and it indulges in argument and mere reflections on passing events not followed by a request for action on the part of Congress.

Progress in Literary Culture.

From the Utica Herald.

As a literary production the message is unexpectedly terse, elegant and vigorous in style—so unlike the annual messages of Mr. Cleveland when Governor of New York, as to compel the remark that translation in station has brought with it a degree of literary culture as unexpected as it is gratifying.

A Candidate for Mr. Chittenden's Prize.

From the New York Tribune.

The report is circulating that a Mr. Chittenden of Montclair, N. J., has offered $500 to any one who will prove that the earth revolves on its axis or that it moves around the sun. If the report proves to be correct, Carl Schurz possibly will resume the stump before the season is over.

Matrimony Encouraged.

From the Tribune.

Every bride who visits the White House receives an elegant bouquet.

Sympathy for the Unfortunate.

"I was surprised to see you come out of a saloon with that disreputable old tramp, Colonel. Did you invite him to drink?"

"No, certainly not," replied the Colonel, straightening up; "but I felt sorry for the poor old chap, and when he asked me to take something I hadn't the heart to refuse."

FRYE AS A PROHIBITIONIST.

His Prediction of Blaine's Defeat—A Leader of the Temperance Republicans.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15.—Senator Frye's recent effort to stop liquor selling in the Capitol and to put an end to whiskey drinking there is no sudden freak. He has long been known to his party associates as a teetotaler, who was in hearty accord with the law of his own State which has given a name to statutory prohibition. He is a Maine law man through and through, and though he does not stand with Senator Blair in favor of a national prohibitory law, he differs with Blair simply because he believes that each State ought to attend to its own policing. Mr. Frye, though the true son of a Federalist, is Democrat enough to take that ground. With Blair, Chace, and Platt of his own party, and Gorman, Colquitt, and Camden on the other side, Frye has the support at least of five Senators who are teetotalers themselves and have always been anxious to have a prohibitory law in operation in the Capitol.

Mr. Frye for some years has been disposed to believe that the Republican party must take up the cause of prohibition or sooner or later be disintegrated, and he is also disposed to believe that a great majority of the party is in favor of absolute restriction of the sale of liquor, while a very considerable minority in the Democratic party is, in his opinion, similarly disposed. A little over a year ago I met Mr. Frye while he was stumping for Blaine. He was not particularly hopeful of the result, and he said that he had no doubt that if Blaine was defeated it would be due to Republicans. I asked him whether he meant Mugwumps, and he replied contemptuously: "No." Then, after a pause, he said he meant the temperance or prohibition vote. "And even if it does not beat the Republican party this year, it seems to me that the prohibition sentiment is going to grow very rapidly, so that before very long the party may be compelled to pay some heed to it." I may not quote the Senator's exact words, but the sense of what he said is accurately given.

Of course the large Prohibition vote given to St. John in New York State cost Mr. Blaine the election although various other causes are more popularly associated with his defeat. But Prohibition leaders in New York estimate that seventy-five per cent. of the temperance vote comes from men who used to act with the Republican party. It is quite likely that Mr. Frye has already obtained figures of the prohibition or temperance vote cast in the elections of last month. He has for some years watched the record very carefully, making special efforts to get accurate returns from all parts of the country. The figures will show him a rather remarkable confirmation of his belief in the constant growth of the temperance vote. For when we remember that the past year has been a dull one politically, and that there was in all elections a great falling off in the vote, it does seem to show that Mr. Frye has been paying more attention to this matter than some of his party friends, to learn that his prediction has been verified almost everywhere, and that the temperance vote has increased. In New York State there was an increase of about twenty per cent. over the vote cast for St. John a year ago, while in Connecticut, where, there being no general election, but only one for the choice of Assembly, the vote was necessarily light, yet it is found that the Prohibition vote increased nearly 100 per cent. over that of 1884, for not far from 5,000 Prohibition votes were cast. The astonishing victory of the Prohibitionists in Atlanta and the reports from some of the Western States have probably stimulated Mr. Frye to take the decidedly suggestive step that he has respecting the sale and use of liquors in the Capitol. It would not be very surprising, before long, if Mr. Frye took a very much more advanced step, and counselled the adoption by his party of the great temperance reform movement.

Should the new joint rule, which he has proposed, be agreed to by both Houses, it would be interesting to learn whether it could be enforced in those cosey club rooms of which there are half a hundred, more or less, in the Capitol, and which are called committee rooms. The self-respecting member never sought his cold tea in the restaurant. The cupboard in the committee room afforded an opportunity of procuring a better cup of cold tea, with the additional advantage of privacy. Feasts, even, have been served in the committee rooms, and there has been the keeping of corks there. A distinguished statesman, now in the Senate, caused a famous feast to be served in his committee room two or three years ago—to the great indignation of Mr. Frye, by the way, who had had it in mind to make a fuss about it.

If the joint rule is adopted, and Mr. Frye sticks to a determination he has had for a long time of enforcing prohibition in the Capitol, there may come some highly interesting developments, and the Maine Senator may find himself most conspicuously before the country. Stranger things have happened in politics than the candidacy of Wm. P. Frye of Maine for the Presidency as the great leader of the temperance wing or remnant of the Republican party.

The President and his Cabinet Photographed.

From the Washington Post, Dec. 15.

A handsome carriage stopped in front of Brentano's yesterday afternoon, and the President alighted. He was anxious to avoid publicity, and hurried around to a side door on Eleventh street, whereby he gained an entrance to the photographic studio on the second floor. The members of the Cabinet, not quite so modest, passed through the bookstore as fast as they arrived, and ascended the main stairway. It was a very good-natured group and Mr. Prince found that the men whose labors directed the affairs of the nation were wonderfully submissive in the hands of a photographer. In a few moments the group was arranged, four seated and four standing. The President sat in the centre, with Secretary Bayard on his right and Secretary Manning at his left. At the extreme left sat Secretary Lamar. Behind them stood Postmaster-General Vilas, Secretaries Whitney and Endicott, and Attorney-General Garland.

"Are you ready, gentlemen?" said Mr. Prince. "Yes," replied Secretary Manning, who acted as spokesman. There was a moment of suspense, during which the party sat like statues, and then the smiling photographer informed them that it was all over. By this time the President's carriage had attracted considerable attention, and quite a crowd had collected in the street. This caused the President to become impatient, and as soon as he could get away he made for the door and gained his carriage.

"This is the first time in the history of this country," said Mr. Prince, "that the President and his Cabinet have been photographed in a group."

Jenks's Meddlesome and Troublesome Rules.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* You cannot be too severe on the meddlesome folly which inspired Assistant Secretary Jenks's "rules for the guidance of the Pacific railroads in making reports under the act of 1878." His ignorance of the machinery of railroad management is simply amazing. Three of Jenks's requirements are as follows:

V. A report in advance of any stockholders' meeting showing what is proposed to be done at such meeting.

VI. A similar report 10 days before each directors' meeting.

VII. A similar report 3 days before each directors' Executive Committee meeting.

Stockholders assemble in New York, or Boston, or San Francisco, from different States, to elect a Board of Directors. Five different resolutions, which the officers of the company have not seen, may be offered at the meeting and adopted. How is it possible to give Jenks ten days' notice of these unknown resolutions, existing only in the purposes of stockholders acting without concert with corporate officers, in distant parts of the land? In such directors' meetings, it is impossible to tell what resolutions thirteen different men may bring to the Board. Not a President or Secretary of any great railroad company in this country can tell fifteen minutes before a regular Board meeting what will be done at it. Surprises in such companies as the Union Pacific, Central Pacific, and Northern Pacific are constant. The unexpectedness of these meetings, of which Jenks seems to have no conception, can be illustrated by the fact that I have seen routine business at a regular Board meeting thrust aside and postponed for an hour by a bitter debate, which arose as unexpectedly as a blizzard in Iowa, about a lease of another line of railroad, and nothing came of the debate except bad feeling.

No, Mr. Jenks is unequipped for the duties of his office, and he is meddlesome, troublesome, and mischievous. A DIRECTOR.

Dec. 14.

De Voe Predicts Hard Weather.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* During the holiday season people usually take more interest in the weather than at any other time of the year; and, as we are to have a great variety of weather during the rest of this month, no doubt your readers would like to know something about it in advance. The chances of sleighing in New Jersey for Christmas are rather poor. About the 21st there will be a southeast storm with rain in this section, and warm for this season of the year; and Christmas will be a clear, bright, pleasant day over most parts of the United States.

Quite a number of people have come to the conclusion that we are to have a mild, open winter, but they will be mistaken, for about the 27th we will enter the most severe storm period of the winter. About that date two severe storms will move across our continent from west to east. A severe snow storm will occur, extending from the Hudson River westward, and railroad travel will be all blocked up, so parties having goods to send West from New York city should ship them without delay, so that they will reach their destination before the 27th.

And while the snow storm is in progress there a violent cyclone will occur down in New Mexico, and it will strike the west half of Texas and Indian Territory on Jan. 1, 1886, and parties having charge of cattle in Texas and Kansas will be in danger of severe losses by intense cold, and in the State of Illinois the thermometer will drop about 20° in half an hour. This cold wave will probably strike New York city on Jan. 2, and the Hudson will close as far down as Fort Lee, and January will be an extremely cold month. Your readers will have about ten days to get ready for a freeze up.

A. J. DE VOE, Meteorologist.

HACKENSACK, Dec. 16, 1885.

The Sense of the Word Idaho.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Referring to the mention in your paper of the names of some of the Territories, the name Idaho is undoubtedly derived from the Nez Perce word or phrase I-dah-ho (accent on the second syllable), meaning "sunrise Mountains," or "sunrise on the mountains." The Nez Perces lived immediately to the west and of the mountain region to which the name Idaho was given by the miners who rushed thither from California and Oregon, and it would be natural for them to pick up the phrase from the Indians and apply it to the new diggings. Joaquin Miller has written a very entertaining sketch on this subject, wherein he describes the first application of the name by the miners, of whom he was one. MONTANA.

THE MILITIA CONVENTION.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16.—The annual Convention of the National Guard Association of the United States, which began its sessions in this city yesterday, is chiefly occupied with considering the character of the legislation to be asked of Congress. The selection of Washington as the place of meeting was presumably due to the opportunity thus afforded for personal conference with Congressmen.

There are two plans of militia reform that find favor. One of them is generally known as the Sewell and the other as the Slocum bill. Gen. Slocum's scheme is the more comprehensive. It contains twenty-nine sections, and practically revises all the existing statutes on the subject of the militia. It increases the annual appropriation now made for the militia from $200,000 to $600,000, and imposes certain conditions on its distribution to the States. One of these conditions is that the State shall hold an annual inspection of its troops, in which a regular army officer is to accompany the State Inspector, and make a report both to the Governor and to the Secretary of War of such matters as in his judgment require to be brought to their attention. Another condition is that the State shall, within a year after the passage of the act, provide and maintain at least one rifle range for the instruction of its troops in marksmanship. The States must also furnish for their militia troops, as soon as practicable, a service uniform and equipments in general appearance like those of the regular army, to be worn when in actual service, and also "in the performance of any duty, drill, parade, or ceremony prescribed by this act." But any serviceable clothing and equipments in use at the passage of the act will be accepted, and on occasions not specified by the act other full dress uniforms may be worn. In addition, the State must provide a camp of instruction, in which its active troops are to be trained at least five days consecutively every other year, besides being assembled for drill at least twelve times a year. Provisions are also made for quartering a neighboring battery, troop, or company of the regular army in the State camp, for detailing regular officers as camp instructors, for quartering militia in the forts, in order to practise the heavy gun drill, and for issuing Government rations and camp equipage to the militia in camps.

In spite of this careful elaboration of details, or perhaps in consequence of it, many friends of the militia do not support the Slocum bill. Some of them look doubtfully at the relation of its provisions to the present rights and privileges of militia organizations. Others, who find it free from objection on that score, yet fear that the multiplicity of its conditions for obtaining a share of the appropriations may lead to long debate and eventual postponement of the bill.

These persons find a simpler method of reaching the desired increase of militia appropriation in Mr. Sewell's bill. This measure fixes on the same sum of $600,000 as the proper annual appropriation, but does not make any condition in regard to rifle ranges, State camps, inspections, or uniforms and equipments. It does, however, carefully regulate and guard the method of sharing the appropriation, and it provides that the ordnance, ordnance stores, and tents paid for by the appropriation and issued to the States shall remain the property of the United States and be annually accounted for by the Governors of the States and Territories.

The Slocum bill has the advantage of being what the most ardent friends of uniformity and efficiency in the militia aim at. The Sewell bill possesses the advantage of having already passed the Senate in the last Congress, so that it could no doubt be easily passed again in that body, and be sent to the House in season for action during the present session.

Gossip About a Distinguished Man.

From the Chicago Daily News.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 10.—Ex-Senator Conkling is a frequent visitor at the national capital. Seldom a month passes that he does not appear as counsel for some of his clients before the Land or Patent Office. His friends say he is looking better than for years past. He walks, if possible, more erectly than ever, and has gained thirty pounds in flesh since leaving the Senate. Notwithstanding his excellent appearance, however, he is a constant sufferer from dyspepsia, and is compelled to use great caution in both eating and drinking. When Mr. Conkling visited Europe last year he went to Carlsbad to drink the waters of that famous spa, believing that their medicinal properties would benefit his health. They did benefit him to a certain degree, but he has since declared that a sojourn of an equal period at Vichy would have proved far more effective. Mr. Conkling is rapidly building up a handsome fortune out of his practice as an attorney. A friend of his, a lawyer of this city, tells me that Conkling's income cannot be less than $50,000 a year, if, in fact, it is not greater. His clients are men like C. P. Huntington, the railway magnate, and others of equal wealth and prominence. Mr. Conkling recently remarked, as a curious fact, that, notwithstanding the cordial relations between him and his former Senatorial associates, many of whom have large corporate and other interests, he had never received a penny from one of the number in the way of a retainer. Huntington is a warm friend of Conkling. He rendered Conkling very material aid in his first race for the Senatorship. When Conkling went to Albany in 1881, to secure from the Legislature a vindication of his course in resigning his seat in the United States senate Huntington used every means at his command to insure Conkling's reelection. Since he began the practice of law in New York city Huntington has paid him large sums of money as retainer, in the numerous suits in which he is constantly interested.

The failure of C. B. Johnson of Utica, N. Y., a year and a half ago, involved the ex-Senator, as well as several others, to a very large amount. With a recklessness quite surprising in a man of Conkling's habitual caution he had endorsed Johnson's paper—to the extent, $100,000. This is probably an exaggeration, but there is no doubt the sum aggregated $50,000 or $60,000. Conkling paid it, however, and went to work harder than before. But for this unfortunate affair he would now be in comparatively easy circumstances. Conkling takes his meals at the Carleton Club in New York, of which John Chamberlain is the caterer. When Conkling was a member of the Senate Chamberlain kept a famous club house on New York avenue, near the corner of Fourteenth street. Conkling regards Chamberlain as the greatest hotel man in the country, and it was mainly through his influence that Chamberlain removed to New York. Frank Burr of Philadelphia is also a member of the Carleton Club. Burr is the author of one of the numerous lives of Gen. Grant. A few nights ago, at the club, he presented Conkling with a copy of the book. While turning the leaves carelessly Conkling's attention was arrested by a chapter which contained his famous nominating speech at the Chicago Convention of 1880. "Are you responsible for this?" asked Conkling, in a great rage, pointing to the speech. "Why, yes, Senator," answered Burr. "What is the matter with it?" "Matter," exclaimed Conkling. "Why, sir, it is full of inaccuracies. You have copied the speech sent out by telegraph, when, if correctness had been the consideration, you might have had the original manuscript. I will not read your book until you have changed it." Burr meekly replied that a second edition would be issued soon, in which he promised the alterations should be made.

Miss Cleveland's Christmas Club.

From the Mail and Express.

Miss Cleveland has been elected President of the Children's Christmas Club, one of the fashionable charities of Washington. It was first started by Miss Waite, daughter of the Chief Justice, and little Nellie Arthur, the ex-President's only daughter, was the first President. This insured its popularity. Miss Cleveland's name will have arouse the charitable instincts of otherwise unfortunate people. The object is to give a Christmas dinner, Christmas tree, and Christmas evening entertainment to the poor. It has been successful hitherto, and will continue to be so as long as Presidents' daughters and sisters have an interest in it.

Is This Really So?

From the Chicago Tribune.

The present system of sending a few Indian children to distant schools and returning them to their reservations clad in mere outlines, long hats, and polished boots, only to be ridiculed by the untamed redskins so that they take to the breechclout and the original dialect within ten days' time, has proved a complete failure.

Elihu Vedder Injured.

From the Washington Star.

Mr. Elihu Vedder, the well-known artist, a cousin of Miss Jo. Vedder of this city, and who has lived in Rome for a number of years has decided for the present not to come to this country. He recently injured his right hand very seriously, but the injury is not so great as to permanently disable him, but it is very painful and permits him only to work with great difficulty.

Fourth-class Postmasters.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16.—The Postmaster-General today appointed the following fourth-class Post masters: New Jersey—At Silverton, Edgar McKeiver. New York—At Ashburgh, Edward H. Page; Dickinson, Zera W. Kingsley; Emmonsburgh, George Ward; Gulick, Charles L. Westbey; North Norwich, F. L. Russell; Union Square, Wm. H. Davis.

Large Failure in Oswego.

OSWEGO, Dec. 16.—The liabilities of James McCarthy, who failed yesterday, will probably exceed $100,000. Among the heaviest creditors are Claflin & Co. of New York, for $18,000. The company creditors are New York merchants. McCarthy dealt in crockery and dry goods. The failure is attributed to low sales. The assets are considerably less than the liabilities.

Brotherhood of Commercial Travellers.

About a hundred gentlemen in evening dress, members of the above organization, celebrated their first reunion at a grand banquet given last evening at Morello's, 8 West Twenty-eighth street. The toasts and responses were bright, and witty anecdotes eloquent speeches, and amusing sketches followed, making the dinner one of the most brilliant of the season. Frank Lincoln's new sketch, "The English Ballad Singer," was repeatedly encored.

CHARLES FOSTER'S DEATH.

A Noted Spiritualistic Medium who Made a Sensation in his Day.

BOSTON, Dec. 26.—Charles Foster, the once noted spiritualistic medium, who ten years ago made a sensation in this country and Europe, died yesterday afternoon at the residence of his aunt, Mrs. Call, in Salem. Death was caused by softening of the brain, with which he had been afflicted for years. He was a son of Joshua L. and Mary Foster, an only child, and when a schoolboy was of a strange disposition. When only 14 years of age, while a pupil in the Phillips School, his attention was called to raps near his desk, loud noises would awaken him at night, and his furniture would be found scattered in confusion. Osborn, a barber in Lynde Block, took him in charge as a mesmeric subject, and from that he developed into a spiritualist medium. He performed more wonders than all the mediums of the time. When scarcely of age he visited Europe, where he was the guest of Lord Lytton at Knebworth, and formed the foundation study for the character of Margrave in a "A Strange Story."

As a test medium he was unequalled. The late Epes Sargent wrote of him at one time that two men who were sceptics saw him producing writing on his arm, and seizing hold of it to discover his trick, as they called it, said:

"We know nothing will come while we hold your arm."

"What will you have?" said Foster.

"Something that will be a test," said they; "something that will fit our case."

Immediately, while they held his arm as in a vise, there appeared in large, round characters the words, "Two fools."

The Hon. Charles De Long, when in California, heard of Foster at the Grand Hotel, and when told of his remarkable powers, laughed at it, but on being urged consented to visit him in his rooms. After Foster had smoked a few moments, he said:

"I can get but one message to-night, and that is for Ida. Do either of you know who Ida is?"

De Long, with a startled look, answered: "Well, yes, I rather think I do. My wife's name is Ida."

"Well," said Foster, "she will have to come and get it."

After De Long had tried in vain to get the message he left, and the next night took his wife there, and they were all seated around a table. Foster sat and smoked a few moments, when he said: "The same message comes to me. It is for Ida. This is the lady, is it?" He asked, as of the spirit, "Oh, you will write the message, will you? Well, all right," and with this he took up a pen and dashed off the following:

To my daughter Ida:

Ten years ago I intrusted a large sum of money to Thos. Madden to invest for me in certain lands. After my death he failed to account for the investment to my executors. The money was invested and 1,250 acres of land were bought, and one half of this land now belongs to you. I paid Madden on account of my share of the purchase $650. He must be made to make a settlement.

Your father, VINEYARD.

Mrs. De Long was frightened at this statement. The next day Mr. De Long called on Mr. Madden at the Occidental Hotel, and asked him if there was not some unsettled business between the late Mr. Vineyard and himself. After a moment's hesitation he said there was, and shortly after said he supposed they had left it in his hands for an increase, but was ready to settle at any time. He deeded to Mrs. De Long 625 acres, for which he offered $18,000, but his offer was refused, as the land was valued at $25,000.

Foster made an immense amount of money. When in Melbourne he left the place where he was receiving more than 100 guineas at a sitting and came home. He had rooms at the Parker House in Boston, and received hundreds of dollars daily, but spent