INCIDENTS OF THE STAGE.

DUMAS MALTREATED IN AN ENGLISH VERSION OF "PERE PRODIGUE."

The Futile Efforts of Earnest Dramatic Students With "The Brooke Family"—A Sardou Comedy Reproduced by the Donnelly Company—This Week's Bills.

The students of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts gave their sixth performance of the season at the Empire Theatre yesterday afternoon. These actors have shown improvement in each of the exhibition matinées, but this time the play, "The Brooke Family," was so poor a piece of stagecraft that their efforts were futile. It was a new adaptation by Charles Henry Meltzer of "The Prodigal Father" by Alexandre Dumas, Jr. The story told is of a frivolous father and a sensible son who love the same young girl. The younger man wins her and the old one makes the best of it by accepting her as a daughter. The paternal affection is misunderstood by gossips, who make the father believe that the son is jealous of him. The father goes away and after a whole act of unnecessary talk every one sees things in their true light, a conclusion that would naturally be reached in two minutes. That there were good possibilities in this plot is obvious in the excellent play that Dumas made from it. But in this English version the main complication was awkwardly wrought and obscured by minor interests that came to nothing. That was one of the many faults of the piece. It started with numerous small affairs that petered out and brought the promise of the first act to an impotent conclusion. The language also was strained. A note in the bill said: "It is an Anglicization of a French play, following the lines of the French plot and construction rather closely, but with new dialogue almost throughout to suit the English characters." The fact was that numerous French phrases had been left in and that the attempt to localize the matter in London was wholly inexpert. The note also said: "'The Brooke Family' is in no sense a translation." That was true, for Dumas's comedy is an excellent composition, and, though produced fifty-one years ago, is still in frequent use in Paris. Handicapped as the students were, they still made a good showing. Katherine Black, Josephine Gautier, Dorothy Tennant, John Hous, Cecil Blount de Mille, William Lamb and Marie H. Moore were easy in the the principal parts, as were Marion Wright, R. C. Turner and Westropp Saunders in the subsidiary ones. Unfortunate Francis T. S. Powell had the central part of the father, who was supposed to excite sympathy, but who was regarded by the audience as an old fool who should settle down at 50, instead of whining because he loved a young girl. "The Brooke Family" was an audacious and clumsy maltreatment of Dumas.

In "Diplomacy," which is being played this week at the Murray Hill, the Donnelly stock company bit off more than it could chew easily, though it is making a resolute effort with its unaccustomed mouthful. The play is one of Victorien Sardou's masterpieces of comedy, but it has never been liked by more than a small portion of the theatrical public. Even in its first production in this country at Wallack's, a quarter of a century ago, its success was not proportionate with its merits. *Julian Beauclerc* and *Dora* stand for the sentimental hero and heroine, but they are negative characters. They bear what is forced upon them, but make no brave fight. Four other personages are more important in the action, but the average audience does not sympathize with any of them. *Henry Beauclerc* is a role that actors like. But he stands outside of the plot and reaches into it. Lester Wallack was its first interpreter in this country. Nowadays it would be John Drew. Ralph Stuart, the leading man of the Donnelly company and an actor of intelligence, seems to regard its polished wit as farcical fun. Laboring under this mistake he exaggerates as though he were playing in an uproarious sketch. Most of the Murray Hill players are far out of depth in this exposition of European diplomacy and intrigue. The parts have been badly dealt out. Why was not William Redmond, an actor of authority and experience, assigned to *Baron Stein* instead of letting the low comedians have it? Knowing Walter Allen as an impersonator of comic fellows, the audience does not take him readily for a dignified man of the world, subtle and crafty, as Sardou drew him. Another mistake was in placing Grace Huntington as *Countess Zicka*. Rose Coghlan used to play the plotting Russian in a way that made women almost long to be a brilliant adventuress with a grudge against the world. But Grace Huntington does not regard the words of Sardou worth memorizing. Dorothy Donnelly should have been cast for the *Countess*, but instead she is the *Dora*. She does her best with an unsuitable task of inert gentleness. Thomas Coleman, usually a villian, is the *Count Orloff*, which fact made folks mistrust the unfortunate Russian nobleman, thus again thwarting the author's purpose. The Donnelly players swam out beyond their depth once before this season in "Lady Windermere's Fan." The last time that "Diplomacy" was acted in New York was two years ago at the Herald Square by a summer stock company. Frank Mordaunt, Blanche Walsh, Aubrey Boucicault, Edgar L. Davenport, Frazer Coulter, Lilla Vane and Marion Abbott gave an admirable performance. But even with that good treatment the piece gained no popularity.

Sydney Drew and his wife are again arrayed in domestic battle at Keith's. The provider of their new short play, which is called "Love Will Find the Way," is Kenneth Lee. He puts them in characters just like those that fell to them in the farce they recently laid aside. Its jealous wife, unreasonably suspicious and a confirmed scold, and its husband harassed by her expressions of displeasure, are repeated. The wife seeks to control her husband by pretending to faint whenever his actions displease her. When the husband is distracted by her unreasonableness, he turns to similar demonstrations. It is the old formula for a short play of a husband retorting in kind and coming out the victor. As he faints twice and she four times the brief piece deserves classification as a smelling salts drama. The fainting is attended by a deal of the violence that waits on vaudeville fun. In her first fit Mrs. Drew does no more than to close her eyes and fall on a couch, there to kick and groan. Later she drops in her husband's arms as he is receiving a telephone message, and his antics are then divided between attention to the telephone and supporting the insensible woman. There is an alternation of dropping the receiver to support the woman, and dropping the woman to answer the warning bell. Next she aims to fall upon the couch, but misses it, and her husband drags her on. It is a task to test his strength. All his frenzy does not call to his face the flush that this lift does. In her last effort the actress falls against him, but he refuses to support her, so she slides down the front of him, and lands on the floor in a sitting posture, a picture of surprise. His first faint is a backward one over the head of the couch, and it brings him to the floor after an acrobatic twist. It rivals the comic acrobatics of eccentric tumblers. His final resort is to a pretence of hanging himself. A scarf is about his neck and attached to a curtain pole. From this he hangs by one hand. As a preface to this the actor declares with fervor that he is ready to die in as many styles as oysters do. This is a fair sample of the language. The wife's distresses cause the husband a loss of $15,000 at every performance of the play, of which it has two daily. But there is another and real side to the ledger, and it should present a satisfactory account to these players, for the farce is far more comical than the average of such offerings.

Extra matinée performances will be given at the theatres on Washington's Birthday, and there will be a great diversity of plays and vaudeville from which to choose. The pieces brought back into New York use this week are "The Only Way," with Henry Miller, at the Harlem Opera House; "In Old Kentucky," at the Grand Opera House; "The Mascot," at the American, and "Diplomacy" at the Murray Hill. "'Round New York in Eighty Minutes" has been moved downtown to the Star. The closures on Saturday night will be "The Surprises of Love," at the Lyceum; "Chris and the Wonderful Lamp," at the Victoria; "Mlle. Fifi," at the Fifth Avenue, and "When I Came Back," at the Irving Place. "Hearts Are Trumps" is ready for to-night at the Garden. The opening performance of "Aunt Hannah" at the Bijou has been postponed to Thursday afternoon.

The plays under headway include "Brother Officers," with the Frohman Stock Company, at the Empire; "The Ambassador," with the other Frohman Stock Company, at Daly's; "The Little Minister," with Maude Adams at the Criterion; "Sherlock Holmes," with William Gillette, at the Garrick; "Papa's Wife," with Anna Held, at the Manhattan; "A Romance of Athlone," with Chauncey Olcott, at the Fourteenth Street; "When We Were Twenty One," with the Goodwins, at the Knickerbocker; "Sapho," with Olga Nethersole, at Wallack's; "Coralie and Company," with Frohman's comedians, at the Madison Square; "Naughty Anthony," with Blanche Bates, at the Herald Square; "Whirligig," at Weber and Fields's; "Ben Hur," at the Broadway; "Way Down East," at the Academy of Music, and "Broadway to Tokio," at the New York.

George Grossmith will begin his humorous monologues at Mendelssohn Hall to-night. Music halls, continuous shows and burlesque houses offer each their distinct sort of vaudeville. Koster & Bial's has a variety performance, whose specialists are a diverting and costly lot. Henri French, Truly Shattuck, Ida Fuller and the Mignams are among them.

Continuous show folk at Proctor's Palace are Milton Nobles and Flora Irwin, each playing an amusing farce, and Pollie Holmes and C. W. Littlefield are leaders of the specialists.

Daisy Lovering has the dramatic number at Proctor's Theatre, a farce in writing which Alice Ives had a hand. Digby Bell is a monologuist here, and Camilla Urso is an unusual sort of instrumentalist.

Marion Manola and Blanche Ring are strongly constrasted vocalists in the bill at Keith's, and Dolan and Lenherr and Thorne and Carleton are familiar sketch pairs. Pastor's has Bowers and Dixon and Filson and Errol. At Miner's in 125th street some of those listed are Leonard Grover, Jr., Haines and Pettingill and the Tobins. Rude burlesques and variety show are in about equal parts at the Dewey.

Gen. Lawton's last fight is a recent subject for depiction at the Eden Musée, where wax show, motion pictures and music are combined pleasingly.

A vaudeville performance on behalf of the Actors' Fund comes at the New York next Sunday evening. Managers Proctor, Pastor, Fynes, Weber & Fields, Albee, Lederer and Roberts are assisting in the arrangements. From many volunteers there will be selected a list that is rarely equalled. Marie Wainwright, George Holland, Lafayette, Etta Butler, Robert Hilliard and Marie Dressler are among those chosen.

The usual Saturday matinée will not be given this week at Weber & Fields's, as the stock company have to see Olga Nethersole in "Sapho," for their burlesque called "Sapho." The music hall managers offered to defray all the expenses if Miss Nethersole would give a special afternoon performance, but her physician forbade her to undertake any extra work.

There was more than usual excitement at the dress rehearsals last night of "Hearts Are Trumps" and "Aunt Hannah." The massive scenery of the Garden Theatre melodrama necessitated all night work by the carpenters and scene shifters in order to get it into working order. The sudden retirement of W. G. Stewart from the cast of the Bijou operetta caused some trouble in finding an adequate successor at short notice.

Nina Farrington is studying elocution at the Standhope-Wheatcroft Dramatic School. Those who heard her recite "The Absent-Minded Beggar" at Koster & Bial's a few weeks ago commend her present employment.

The Treasurer's Club will give its annual entertainment for the benefit of the relief fund at Wallack's on Feb. 25. Eugenie Fougère, Cheridah Simpson, Truly Shattuck, De Veaux and De Veaux, Crankshaw, the Carmen Sisters, Fields and Ward, Samuel Siegel, José Van Der Berg, Peter F. Baker, Stephans and Taylor, Belle Stewart, Burkhardt and Adler, Polly Holmes and Jake Schaefer have volunteered their services.

"DAS RHEINGOLD" AT THE OPERA.

First Performance in the First Wagner Cycle Given Last Night.

The first performance in the so-called Wagner Cycle was given last night at the Metropolitan Opera House. The artistic purpose of these representations is to give the four music dramas of "Der Ring des Nibelungen" in their entirety as they are usually sung only at Bayreuth. The music customarily cut out to adapt them for general performance is restored. In the matter of orchestra and scenery the performances abroad under Mme. Cosima Wagner's direction are of course superior to those at the Metropolitan, but the singers here are superior to those employed to-day at Bayreuth, and the opportunity to hear and enjoy the four music dramas is presented so admirably at the Metropolitan that it would be captious to demand greater completeness in the scenic character of the work and better orchestral treatment.

"Das Rheingold" is not often heard now except in conjunction with the three succeeding operas, whose original dramatic motives it introduces and explains. Even in the German cities the introduction to Wagner's trilogy is now rarely heard except as a preliminary to the other three works. Last year it was repeated at one of the subscription performances here, but that seems less likely this year. Everybody acquainted with "Das Rheingold," will find greater pleasure in the other works. Last season it proved one of the most brilliant performances of the year. Practically the same powers were engaged last night, but the result was not equally gratifying.

It is to be considered as a whole rather than in detail, but it is impossible not to speak first of Ernest Van Dyck's wonderful performance of *Loge*. That again fairly dominated every scene in which the tenor appeared. His impersonation of the fire-god, volatile, cunning and elusive was as fine as ever from all points of view. Herr Van Rooy was an admirable *Wotan* once more and Fritz Friedrichs as the malevolent *Alberich* was all that could have been asked dramatically, although his singing was hardly tolerable. Miss Strong was an excellent *Freia*, and Miss Fremstad repeated her familiar performance of *Fricka*. M. Bars was no substitute for M. Dippel as *Froh*. M. Pringle was voiceless with a cold, so *Fafner* was seen rather than heard. The three Rhine daughters were Mmes. Schumann-Heink, Pevny and Olitzka, who acted without vivacity in the first scene, and sang woefully out of tune in the last.

Emil Paur conducted with zeal and eloquence. The audience was not large. Again the opera was sung as it was written, without a pause, and the performance was continuous from half-past 8 until 11 o'clock. Some of the scenic effects were marred by inexcusable stupidity. Just as the gods were preparing to cross the Rainbow Bridge into Walhalla, for instance, the intelligent official in charge of the lights extinguished the reflection on the back drop and the gods must have jumped over the abyss into their new home.

NOTES OF MUSIC.

Mme. Sembrich is positively to sing this afternoon at Carnegie Hall with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Her numbers will be "Casta Diva" and "Il Re Pastore," with obligato to be played by Mr. Franz Kneisel.

Next week's bill at the Metropolitan Opera House will include "La Traviata" with Mme. Sembrich on Monday night, "Le Nozzi di Figaro" with Mmes. Sembrich and Eames and MM. Edouard de Reszke and Campanari on Wednesday and "Tristan und Isolde" on Friday night for the first time this year, with M. Van Dyck and Mlle. Ternina. At the Saturday matinée "Lohengrin" will be given by Mme. Eames and M. Dippel. At the Saturday evening performance "Rigoletto" with Mme. Sembrich will be given. M. Saléza will make his reappearance on Wednesday, March 7, with Mme. Calvé, who will appear then or the first time after her return from the South.

Children's Morning at Carnegie Lyceum.

Ernest Seton-Thompson will give his lecture "The Personality of Wild Animals" in Carnegie Lyceum to-morrow morning. On this occasion the lecture is especially intended for children with whom Mr. Thompson is already a great favorite.

CONSTABLE HOOK SMOKE.

Staten Island Committee to Go to Washington to Try to Stop It.

A meeting of the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce and other citizens of Staten Island was held last night at St. George to discuss means for the abatement of the Constable Hook smoke nuisance and to endorse the bill introduced to that end in Congress by Congressman Nicholas Muller. The Chamber of Commerce has circulated petitions among the citizens of the island asking Congress to pass the bill introduced by Mr. Muller, known as House bill 7734, which prohibits any persons or corporation in any State or Territory of the United States from conducting any business in such a manner as to generate from the manufacturing plant any offensive, obnoxious or injurious gases or odors. The violation of the act is declared to be a felony. This bill is now in committee.

About one hundred representative business men of the island attended the meeting. John M. Pendleton, Second Vice-President, occupied the chair. Henry P. Morrison offered resolutions declaring the smoke and fumes to be disastrous to health and vegetation on Staten Island and an obstruction to navigation on the waters of the Kill von Kull and New York Bay, and authorizing the President of the Chamber, Charles W. Hunt, to appoint a committee to appear before the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee of the House on Feb. 27, which day has been set for the hearing of a Staten Island delegation. The committee was appointed as follows: C. W. Hunt, J. M. Pendleton, H. P. Morrison, Erastus Wiman, Sidney F. Rawson, C. G. Kolff and Dr. S. A. Robinson.

Crushed Under a Mass of Iron.

Louis Anderson, 25 years old, of 5 President street, Brooklyn, while at work yesterday in Milliken Bros'. Arch Iron Works, at Clinton and Bryant streets, was struck on the head by an iron grating weighing 9,000 pounds and killed. The grating was being hoisted for removal and the chain supporting it gave way.

W. C. T. U. AFTER "SAPHO."

CONSIDERS ALSO PUGILISM, ALCOHOL AND HEREDITY.

Takes a Glance Backward at the Langtry Tea and Puts in a Good Word for Chief Devery—He'll Stop Peddling of Daudet's Book, or Has Done So, Speaker Says.

The mid-year convention of the New York County Woman's Christian Temperance Union was held yesterday in the Chelsea Methodist Church in West Thirtieth street. Delegates from twenty unions were present. Mrs. Francis A. Westerfield, the President, in her opening speech mentioned approvingly the organization's remonstrance against barmaids at the Langtry tea, and called upon Mrs. E. D. Martin to tell of her efforts to have "Sapho" suppressed. Mrs. Martin is the Superintendent of the department of "Purity in Literature and Art." She told the delegates that while she was in Europe she studied the play, and on her return here she started organizing public sentiment. She had appealed in turn, she said, to Anthony Comstock, Chief Devery and the Board of Education to suppress the play, and she believed that in doing so she was acting for all the best interests of the city.

"The whole story," said Mrs. Martin, "is a sad one and a disgrace to the community. As an organization we are the representatives of motherhood, and to-day a dark blot rests on our city. Wherever 'Sapho' has been no good will go. If these things exist and we do not protest against them, then they exist with our consent."

Mrs. Martin said further that she had just had a talk with Chief Devery about the translations of Daudet's novel sold in the streets and that she could promise the women present that this would be stopped. "In fact," said she, "I believe that by to-night the sale of these books will have ceased."

At the afternoon session the petition of a newspaper calling on Mayor Van Wyck to have the pay suppressed was circulated and was signed by those present. When the delegates had disposed of "Sapho," the Lewis bill to stop boxing contests was taken up. This also fell under Mrs. Martin's department and she urged every one present to sign a petition to the Senate asking that the Horton law be repealed as provided for in the Lewis bill.

"Now is the crucial moment for us to strike at this evil," said Mrs. Martin. "Do the biggest stroke you've done yet. Don't you remember that Miss Willard and I started the opposition against the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight in the West and how gloriously we succeeded?"

Somebody remarked that that contest had after all taken place, whereat Mrs. Martin with a note of triumph still in her voice said: "I know it, but not in Colorado. We drove 'em out of that State and they had to go farther West than that. It is for the children that we are doing this work," she continued. "Why, the little boys now ask for papers with as much fight in us they can get."

Mrs. Martin stopped long enough to start the anti-boxing petition going its rounds and then went on to tell the members how she and other workers had put a stop on the other evils. The barmaids who Mrs. Martin imagined were to be a feature of Mrs. Langtry's tea came within this category. She waved a piece of paper in her hand when she came to the subject of the Lily's tea. This paper, she declared, was the original resolution framed by Dr. Mrs. P. J. B. Waite calling upon the police to stop women selling drinks at the chantant.

"The newspapers," cried Mrs. Martin, "made room for this on their front pages and while we slept Monday night it was printed and we woke up Tuesday morning to find that we were the most famous organization in the city of New York. I'm going to ask Mrs. Waite to read her resolution to us now. She framed it and she'll read it."

Mrs. Waite modestly tried to disclaim the authorship of the resolution, but Mrs. Martin shut her off and got her to read it again, declaring that it was now her paper, her famous. When she had finished, Mrs. Martin took the floor again to say a good word for Chief Devery.

"On Monday evening after that resolution was passed," she said, "I called up Devery. Mrs. Martin left off the title, and he assured me we were on the side of law and order. You know everything that God does, He does by law. No matter what comment is made, we're not here to talk politics, but I want to say that we always receive courteous responses from Chief Devery in everything."

The convention next proceeded to consider reports from other superintendents of departments. One report was on "non-alcoholic medication" and was made by Mrs. Margaret S. Organ, whose department covers that and some other things. Mrs. Organ said that the trouble about non-alcoholic medication was that many members were not educated up to it themselves. "While we ought to distribute literature outside of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union," she said, "we should also give tracts to our own members. Why only the other day a sister told me she drank root beer and used patent medicines. Some of us don't know, it seems, that root beer and patent medicines contain alcohol. Now I've just noticed in the *Voice*, the temperance paper, a whole page advertisement of a certain kind of sarsaparilla which contains 38½ per cent. of alcohol. Think of it!—advertised in a temperance paper. Why it's shameful!"

In the evening addresses were made by Dr. Mrs. P. J. B. Waite and Dr. Margaret Stewart. The latter's subject was "Heredity and Regeneration." Women, she said, should have the control of the source of life and be conceived to motherhood instead of being subordinated to man. The Christian religion, she asserted, was twenty centuries old, but Christian marriage had not yet come and was still in the Adamic state. "The soul of motherhood," said Dr. Stewart, "is being extinguished and criminal abortion abounds on every side. Man in the primeval ages was innocent compared to the moral transgressor of to-day. The more civilization we have the more base does the world become in the subordination of women, and society will never be regenerated so long as motherhood is subordinated to the desires of the flesh."

The convention passed resolutions urging Congress to adopt an anti-polygamy amendment to the Constitution. Resolutions were also passed supporting the appeal made by the 300,000 women of the organization to the Queen for arbitration to end the Boer war, and asking Mrs. Choate to be the bearer to the Queen of their united prayers that the war might so be settled.

BROOKLYN REPUBLICANS' PLANS.

Dates for Primaries and Conventions—Gov. Roosevelt Indorsed for Renomination.

At a special meeting of the Kings County Republican General Committee held last night in the Johnston Building in Brooklyn, these dates were fixed for important events in the political calendar:

Tuesday, March 27, primaries for the election of delegates to the Assembly district and Congressional district conventions; Friday, March 30, Assembly district conventions to choose delegates to the State convention; Monday, April 2, Congressional district conventions to elect delegates and alternates to the National convention.

This resolution presented by Jesse D. Frost, acting Chairman of the Executive Committee in the absence of Col. Michael J. Dady, was adopted with a hurrah:

"*Resolved*, That the Kings County Republican General Committee, in common with the Republicans of the Empire State, recognizing the sterling worth and splendid executive ability of Gov. Roosevelt, indorses his administration and earnestly favors his renomination."

The committee also put itself on record as strongly favoring the construction of all the new naval vessels at the navy yards, and especially at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, by the Government in preference to private contract.

The Executive Committee submitted a report approving of the passage of the following bills pending at Albany: To make the Sheriff, Register and County Clerk salaried instead of fee offices; providing for a separate bureau of elections; the elections of city magistrates in 1900 of Senatorial districts; and the creation of a commission to build bridges and tunnels.

In the discussion over the bills, that for putting the Sheriff, Register and County Clerk under salaries was opposed on the ground that the change in New York county had not proved of any real benefit to the taxpayers. The County Committee, however, approved of all the bills by a decisive majority and the support of Gov. Roosevelt, the State Organization, Senator Platt and Chairman Odell was asked for them. Some proposed amendments to the primary election laws, simplifying its operations were also approved.

BRYAN'S REAL NEED.

Not So Much Instructed Delegates as Instructed Voters, Says a Hill Paper.

NEWBURGH, Feb. 20.—The Bryan Association of this town in meeting last night resolved to instruct all Newburgh delegates to see not only that Bryan is renominated, but also that the Chicago platform is reaudopted. The *Register*, which is Hill Democratic, says to-night: "He is not now so much in need of instructed delegates as he will be later on of instructed voters."

Bryan Speaks in Florida.

TAMPA, Fla., Feb. 20.—Col. Bryan spoke for two hours here to-night on the issues of the day. He will speak in Jacksonville to-morrow night.

THE TEHUANTEPEC ROUTE.

An American Engineer Pronounces it Feasible for the Isthmus Canal, and Points Out Its Physical and Political Advantages Over Nicaragua or Panama.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: It is a truism that domestic commerce is the unifying force of nations. Separate sections do not remain united in one nation unless they trade with one another. This truth was recognized by us when we built the first Pacific railroad, by Canada in building the Canadian Pacific Railway, and by the colonizing nations in subsidizing and supporting steamship lines to their colonies.

As has been pointed out in your columns, natural barriers divide our nation into an Atlantic and a Pacific empire. The extent of the separation, the depth and width of the plane of cleavage, is not generally realized by our people. A clearer idea of it may be acquired by understanding the fact that of the total seaborne commerce of the world North Atlantic waters bear more than three-quarters, while the Pacific bears less than one-eighth: of our own share, the Pacific does less than one-thirteenth. Our wealthy and prosperous Atlantic empire has not dealt justly in this matter of easy communication with our Pacific. The transcontinental railroads cannot furnish cheap or adequate transportation. They can carry only high-priced products. What cannot pay rail freights or bear the loss of time and quality incident to a sailing voyage around the Horn cannot be shipped or produced in excess of local demand, in our Pacific. The Pacific Coast is further disabled in commerce by high freight costs on necessary imports and by the operation of customs tariffs, which, framed primarily to fit Atlantic-side conditions, are sometimes unjust, oppressive and ruinous to the Pacific side. All these untoward conditions are intensified by the acquisition of our new Pacific possessions.

Because the affections and loyalty of a section or people flow with the volume of their commerce, it is a self-evident proposition that we must build a trans-isthmian ship canal, thereby to bring our Pacific possessions within the distance limits of communication with us by steamship; or we must see them stunted in growth, separated in interest and affections, disunited from and disloyal to us, because we are unjust to them.

Without adequate, twentieth-century transportation between us and them our rule may in the future become to them a burden, a curse, and a thing of hate.

A trans-isthmian ship canal, therefore, is a grave national concern, of import equal to establishing good transportation between our Atlantia seaboard and the Mississippi Valley, which George Washington labored for and De Witt Clinton consummated; like obtaining control of the Mississippi and Columbia rivers.

Primarily, such an avenue of trade is an essential part of our internal transportation system, and its chief work will be to serve and build up domestic commerce, and, thereby, to promote unity of interest and sentiment, affection and loyalty between the widely separated parts of our nation. To do this it must serve our domestic commerce adequately, and to be adequate it must be free from tolls or charges of any kind or unnecessary limiting restrictions on domestic shipping as any part of our coast line or internal waterways.

Under this head we find folly in the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, which gives to foreign ships the right to use the canal on the same terms and under the same conditions as our own coastwise trade.

These treaty limitations of our rights are preposterous and should not be considered for an instant; for they not only snatch from us the full use and enjoyment of the canal in times of peace, but also convert it into a threat and a danger in time of war. In war it must be part of our military resources, and in peace the fact that we do not charge toll on our ships should not prevent us from charging a fair toll on foreign shipping.

Some of the more forward and mouthy organs tell us we must swallow the Hay treaty or have nothing; that England commands the situation by virtue of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, and the new one marks the limit of British concession. That contention is absurd, and it is unpatriotic. Such an attempt to dragoon the nation into an unwise agreement will be fruitful of but one thing—disaster to the men or party guilty of it.

This contention, stated baldly, is as follows: Either we must build a canal and deliver it to hostile control, or give up the idea of a closer union with our Pacific.

If the contention were true, we might seriously weigh the question whether it were better to accept the treaty, with all its folly and surrender; or abandon our hopes of future growth and power in the Pacific. But we do not face such a question. There is a way out; an alternative, satisfactory to the country and which will serve its interests better than the Nicaragua Canal, with or without the treaty.

That alternative is a ship canal across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

This project was abandoned many years ago because of the great number of locks necessary, in the then state of engineering science, to overcome the 600 to 700 feet of elevation met at this isthmus. But this objection does not now lie against a ship canal at Tehuantepec. The advancement of science has removed it. Steel pneumatic locks more than one hundred feet in lift have been adopted, after years of investigation, by New York State for the Erie Canal, and it is perfectly practicable to build such locks to lift 150 or 175 feet. This reduces the number of locks necessary at Tehuantepec to not more than eight or twelve in all. The Walker report on the Nicaragua Canal recommended eight locks; so that it is feasible to build a ship canal at Tehuantepec which will be shorter and have no more or but few more locks than the United States Government, in its latest dictum, recommends for Nicaragua.

I have had occasion, in the discharge of my professional duties, to spend many months in the investigation of the problem of locking vessels in canals, and do not hesitate to say that such locks as are referred to, go far to place the Tehuantepec isthmus fair with Nicaragua as the ideal site for an American trans-isthmian ship canal.

The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty did not apply to Mexico and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, where a canal will be free from any questions of treaty restrictions except such as may be hereafter ratified between us and Mexico.

The Tehuantepec route is best located to serve American interests. It cuts off 700 to 800 miles on voyages between our ports via Nicaragua, and 1,400 miles on voyages via Panama. It is a country older geologically and less subject to earthquakes; and its eastern terminal is in the Gulf of Mexico, which, since the Spanish war, is practically an American lake and can be hermetically sealed by us against a hostile fleet.

Tehuantepec is the ideal American route, either for adequate service to our commerce in peace, or for our safe use in war, and should not be overlooked now that American genius has made it practicable for us to lift our ships over its summit with certainty, security and celerity.

F. M. SYLVESTER.

NEW YORK, Feb. 20.

SHE SAID SHE WAS A SULLIVAN.

A Lucky Lady That She Wasn't a Man, O'Hoolihan Told Her.

Policeman O'Hoolihan of the Eldridge street station arraigned a young negress yesterday in the Essex Market police court on a charge of disorderly conduct. "Yer Anner," he said, "she was doin' a shkirt dance on the Bowery. Whin Oi arristed her she tried to jab a hatpin in me."

"What is her name?" asked Magistrate Mayo.

"She says she is Ida Sullivan," replied O'Hoolihan, "but Oi am convinced thot thot's an alliance."

"Where do you live?" asked the Magistrate of the woman.

"Heaven is mah home, Judge," she replied with a grin.

"I will sentense you to ten days on the Island," said the Magistrate.

"Yez be a lucky lody that yez ain't a man," said O'Hoolihan to the prisoner as he led her to the prison.

RIVAL FIRE COMPANIES.

THEY BREAK OUT IN VERSE ALL OVER STATEN ISLAND.

Mr. Wah, the Laundryman, Has Extra Washing—Typewritten Stanzas on Trees, and Screeds, Diamond-Cut, on Window Panes—Mayor Considers Rival Applications.

Mayor Van Wyck wheeled around in his arm chair, and, glancing out of the window, caught sight of an engine returning from a fire. His mind reverted to the belligerent factions of firemen in the Staten Island village of Pleasant Plains. He had concluded not to render a decision in the case of the Amicitia Engine Company vs. the Citizens' Engine Company. He recalled that the young men who had organized under the name of Amicitia had declared that they were the "only originals," and had been the first to organize an engine company in Pleasant Plains. The men of the Citizens' Engine Company made a similar declaration, and believed that they were entitled to a charter. As neither company can obtain a charter until it obtains the Mayor's approval, the case officially remains as it was a week ago, when each company sent a delegation to the Mayor's office with petitions.

Al Downes, the Mayor's secretary, startled his Honor from his reveries by appearing with a big batch of letters from Staten Island citizens who are interested in organizing a fire department for Pleasant Plains. Some of the letters contained fire department poetry; others informed the Mayor that the citizens of Pleasant Plains were having personal encounters because of the fire department question, which threatened to break up households, and might even rend asunder the brotherly ties in the local church. One man wrote that there was no place on earth that needed a fire department so badly as Pleasant Plains. He ended his letter by quoting the following from a Staten Island paper:

"Fire companies, galore,
They come right to the fo e,
In Pleasant Plains.
They all take pains,
The Amicitias lead the van
And they will get there if they can."

This effusion made up the headlines of an article on the troublesome subject.

Some of the poetry got as far as the Mayor's office. More of it now got out of Pleasant Plains. The poet of the Amicitias had pasted some of his work on the store window of the Chinese laundry on the Amboy road. A delegation of Cits took offence at the Amicitia poetry and went into the laundry and told the proprietor, Mr. Wah, that his window might be smashed some night unless he took down the Amicitias' poetry. Thereupon, the Chinaman washed his window. The next night a Cit posted the following on the Chinaman's window:

"Hurrah for our fire brigade!
We will stand by our guns undismayed.
Our wrongs we'll set right
And we'll keep up the fight
And put Amicits in the shade!"

This had been up a few hours when some of the opposition came along and told the Chinaman that if he didn't take down the Cits' poetry, they'd smash the window. The Chinaman said that he would allow both sides to use his window as a bulletin board if neither side would agree to let the other's poetry stay up.

"Me like all same," said the Chinaman, "Slitizens good same as Seesaw Clompany. Me washee collar all day, me washee window all night."

"Well," said one of the Amicitias, "you want to wash the Citizens out of existence."

The Chinaman washed his window so often that the poetry failed to stick there after a while. Then the Amicitias's poet ground out the following, which he tacked up on a tree near Brown's Pond:

"We can still make a fight for a cause that is right,
And put fraudulent companies down.
The Plains may feel proud of Amicitias crowd,
We're the only real thing in the town."

The Cits' poet pasted one up on a village barber pole. This was torn down. Then one of the Cits went over to the little one-story railway station, and tacked up this notice written in pencil on foolscap.

WARNING!

The person or persons who attempt to tear down any of the poetry put up by the Citizens do so at their peril.

Pasted across this was a slip of paper which contained the following:

"The Amicitias take the bun.
For they are young and they can run.
The Cits are old and quickly tire,
And never could get to a fire.

At the back of the little house that is used as the railroad station waiting room some enterprising Citpasted up this typewritten "poem":

"For good firemen we'll open bids
We want no Amicitia kids.
Such dudes at fires in the Plains
Are in the way of men with brains."

During the last few days when the railroad car windows were covered with frost the citizens of Pleasant Plains amused themselves going and coming from New York by writing engine company poetry on the car windows. It is said that some of them have used their diamond rings to express their feelings on windows.

A PRIEST THE CO-RESPONDENT.

John A. Marski Gets a Divorce—Wife Ran Away With Father Popke.

BALTIMORE, Md., Feb. 20.—The Circuit Court to-day granted a decree of divorce to John A. Marski from his wife Lettie. The co-respondent in the case was the Rev. Anthony Popke, a Catholic priest.

Marski and the priest were intimate friends, and when Marski became engaged to Lette who was a Protestant, he asked the priest to teach her the Catholic doctrine. Popke consented, but religion and love went hand in hand and the priest became infatuated with his pretty pupil, who had been an actress, having played soubrette parts for several years.

Shortly after the marriage, the priest's visits became too frequent to please the husband, and, finally, the couple ran away, travelling as husband and wife. Both wife and priest wrote letters to the husband confessing. No defence was made to the suit.

TROUBLE FOR ONE J. H. ELLIOTT.

Check He Probably Thought Was a New Year's Gift Was Sent to Him by Mistake.

Detective Proctor of the New York Central Railroad went to the West 125th street police station last night and said he wanted a policeman to arrest J. H. Elliott who lived somewhere in upper Eighth avenue.

"Mr. Rossiter," said Proctor, "sent a check for $12 last January to J. H. Elliott of Amsterdam avenue and 144th street to recompense Elliott for time lost while testifying in a case. The check didn't get to the right J. H. Elliott, as we discovered by subsequent corespondence and the J. H. Elliott who received it didn't return it perhaps thinking it was a New Year's gift."

Sergt. Kelly told Proctor he would have to get a warrant for the arrest of the man who received the check and the detective went away.

KILLED BY A TRAIN.

Unidentified Man Crushed Against a Station Platform on Staten Island.

An unidentified man, about 55 years old, with gray hair and slightly bald, was run over and killed by a passenger train on the Tottenville division of the Staten Island Rapid Transit Railroad at Eltingville at 6 o'clock last night. As the engine neared the station Engineer Thomas Steele saw a man leaning against the platform, with folded arms and head bent. He blew the whistle and slowed down. The man straightened up as if to let the engine pass. The engineer could not stop in time and the man was crushed between the platform and train.

Gompers Back From Cuba.

Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, returned yesterday on the steamship Mexico from Havana, where he had been for nearly two months. Gompers said he had gone to Cuba to recover from an accident sustained while riding a bicycle and that his visit there had been in no sense official. He said that he had helped to settle the strike between 14,000 cigarmakers and their employers.

A Woman Burned to Death.

TRENTON, Feb. 20.—The dwelling of James M. Schenck, colored, at Franklin Corner Lawrence township, caught fire through the explosion of a lamp at 7 o'clock this evening. Schenck with his wife and six children got out of the building unharmed, but his mother-in-law, Mrs. Mary Van Dyke, 75 years old, failed to make her escape and was burned up.

"I have found your Bronchial Troches most useful for hoarseness and colds." PROF. L. RICCI, Queens College, LONDON, ENG.
BROWN'S Bronchial Troches
OF BOSTON
Sold in boxes only—Avoid imitations.

A SALMAGUNDI SALE.

Sketches by Members Under the Hammer for the Club's Benefit.

A year ago or so the Salmagundi Club found, as might happen to any other Bohemian, that its common purse needed refilling and it got itself together and gave itself a lot of clever sketches, made by its artist members. They were sold at auction in the gallery of the club in West Twelfth street for something nearly approaching two thousand dollars. The sale developed not only the resources of the club in times of need, but it developed the fine qualities of Bruce Crane, the painter, as an auctioneer.

Last week the experiment was tried again and Mr. Crane was again the Thomas E. Kirby of the occasion. He had as assistants Mr. Samuel T. Shaw and Mr. E. L. Ferguson. Some twenty-five sketches sold for a total of very nearly four thousand dollars.

The annual sale of sketches by members of the club or the club's benefit, has thus become a fixture. It is expected that the sale next season will pass the $5,000 mark.

Mr. Crane, the auctioneer, stepped aside when his own sketch was put up and Mr. Ferguson offered it for sale. It brought $205. The top price of the evening was $211 for "Brandywine Valley," by R. Howe. The "Sheepfold" by Louis Paul Dessar and "Late October" by W. C. Fitter sold for $200 each and J. Francis Murphy's "Twilight" fetched $150. Sketches by George Innes, Jr. and R. M. Shurtleff went for $100 each, and pictures by W. S. Robinson, L. C. Earle, Julian Rix, G. W. McCord, J. H. Boston, Elmer Browne, Harry Roseland, T. B. Craig, F. Dellenbaugh, A. T