Our Washington Correspondence.

WASHINGTON, March 17, 1854.

Theatrical Affairs in the Capital—The National Theatre and Risley's Variété—A New Débutante.

Your readers generally, who cannot complain of any stint of intelligence as to affairs of an Executive, Congressional, or political character that take place here—will not, I am convinced, object to a short chapter descriptive of theatrical matters in this metropolis. It is by no means an uninteresting or inappropriate subject, for, in the prosperity or decline of the drama may, to some extent, be traced the progress of enlightenment and refinement among people.

This city manages to maintain two dramatic establishments, one of very large and the other of diminutive dimensions. These are the National theatre, of which Mr. E. A. Marshall—of the Broadway, New York—is the lessee and proprietor, and Risley's Variété, the managers and proprietors of which are Messrs. Risley and Goodall. The former is situated at the west end of Pennsylvania avenue, within one block of Willard's Hotel, and the latter is located more centrally on the same thoroughfare, being within one or two blocks of Brown's and the National Hotel. As the National theatre is that which has the highest claim to attention, I shall devote the first and chief part of this communication to it.

The National theatre was erected, or rather rebuilt—the former edifice having been burned a short time previously—some three or four years ago, for the reception of Jenny Lind in the capital. It has been since then, I believe, that it passed into the hands of Mr. Marshall. Its outward appearance, fronting the avenue, is by no means of a character to impress the passer-by with very elevated ideas as to the architectural taste of its designer. It presents to his eyes a low, broad dead wall, of a dirty yellowish hue, pierced by some half-dozen narrow windows, the glass of which might probably be transparent if they were ever cleansed, but such not being the case, their utility for admitting light is very apocryphal. Two wide flights of wooden steps conduct from either side of the front of the building to a covered central porch, in which is located the box office. You enter the theatre and are at once struck with its large dimensions, as well as with the absence of anything like decorations. I believe it is one of the largest, if not the very largest theatre in the United States, having a capacity for seating between four and five thousand persons. Its stage is the finest I have ever seen. Three tiers of boxes or galleries rise over the parquette, nearly on the same plan as in the Broadway theatre. He must have been an orignal genius who planned the interior of the edifice. Certainly, he imitated nothing that I have ever seen before in the shape of gallery. He must have heard of the leaning tower of Pisa, and aspired to construct something as peculiar on the same principle. So the seats in the boxes are not only raised in gradations to command a view of the stage, but the forms themselves have got a leaning in the same direction, one end being considerably higher than the other, thus forming a sort of architectural sliding scale, which, however meritorious it may be in point of originality of invention, makes the sitting part anything but luxurious. The forms are scantily and shabbily upholstered, and in some places in the dress circle the rude, unfinished woodwork is daubed over with a coat of brown paint. There is no such thing as a pendant chandelier or gasalier in the house, and the illumination of the building generally is anything but brilliant. This, however is partly attributable to the great width of the house, and in a still greater degree to the miserable substitute for gas which a vile monopoly here palms upon our citizens.

So much for the external and internal appearance of the National Theatre. I do not mention these things in disparagement of the establishment, or from a desire of being captious or fault-finding; but I do so—first, because as a veridical historian, I could not omit alluding to them without being liable to a charge of partiality; and secondly, because the notice of the matters to which I have alluded may prompt to the improvement, in some respects, of the appearance of this really excellent theatre.

I now come to the dramatic portion of my sketch; and having arrived at this point I have no further faults to find. No further complaint is necessary, or would be appropriate. The stock company of the National is, in all respects, excellent, and can favorably compare with most of your New York theatres. But, since the opening of the season, the manager has not depended on his stock company for attraction. Julia Dean, Collins, the Irish comedian, and Forrest, have successively appeared as stars; and now another actress of much merit, but almost unknown to fame, has come upon the boards of the National, and has attracted much attention. This *artiste* is named in the bills as Miss Annette Ince; and as a sort of guarantee of her ability, it is stated in these same not always reliable bills, that "her recent unequalled triumphs in New York, Philadelphia, and other cities, have been the theme of universal admiration." I am much inclined to question the truth of this announcement, as I do not recollect reading any criticism of her performances in the HERALD; and if she had made her *début* in New York, a notice thereof would most certainly have appeared in its columns. But more of this anon.

I cannot say whether the engagement of Miss Dean was a successful one or not, as I did not happen to visit the theatre during her sojourn. That of Collins certainly was not. The public have been satiated with the ridiculous burlesques of Irish character—as delineated by Collins, Barney Williams, and such "stars"—and it is not to be wondered at that they are estimated at their real desert, or rather a little above it still. The engagement of Forrest, however, replenished the coffers of the treasury, which must have been sadly depleted by the results of the season up to that time. You could hardly imagine that the theatre, large as it is, was unable to accommodate comfortably the vast throngs who flocked to it to witness Forrest's acting. Yet such was the case. Persons coming late could not possibly procure seats in the house, except they had them engaged previously. And so it continued during the whole term of his engagement, which lasted three or four weeks. He was succeeded by Mrs. Farren as a "star." This lady appeared to me to be one of the dimmest luminaries of the theatrical stellar genus that I ever saw twinkle on the stage. As the member of a regular stock company she might be perhaps regarded as above par, but as an artist aspiring to a nich in the temple of fame, her pretensions far outran her merits. It seemed that the people in Washington came to the same conclusion, even without many of them witnessing her performances, for they judiciously kept away during her short engagement, and patronized prayer meetings and chemical lectures instead of the drama.

But I said that a new candidate for popular applause has appeared on the boards of the National. Miss Annette Ince made her first appearance there last Monday evening in the character of Julia, in the play of the "Hunchback." Miss Ince is a young and handsome lady, and one whose appearance does not bespeak much adaptability for the profession she has chosen. She is a blonde, and as well as I could make out from the indistinct view which my distance from the stage enabled me to get of her, she has an expansive brow and regular features, is of the medium height, and possesses a graceful, though rather slender figure. For the charms and graces of her acting I can however vouch with more confidence. The character of Julia is one in which almost every modern actress has appeared, with more or less *eclat*, and though it requires much dramatic power in its representation, still the style of acting has been laid down long ago and is rarely deviated from. The Julia of Miss Dean is with little or no variation the counterpart of that of Miss Davenport—and both are but copies of that of Mrs. Kean. So that though that *rôle* is generally selected to exhibit the talents of young artistes, it affords but little opportunity of judging of their real merits. Of course there are exceptions to this rule, and it is for the purpose of quoting an exception that I allude to it. All the artists whom I have seen perform the *rôle* of Julia, seem to have based their ideas of its impersonation on the theory that her passions were rather of the haughty, excitable and imperious kind, than of the truly pure, deeply loving and amiable, overshadowed for a moment though they were by a stinging sense of humiliation. And so representing the character, Miss Julia has been shown up as not by any means the model young lady Cousin Walter prided himself on. Miss Ince, though she does not ignore the wounded pride of the heroine, exhibits it in a less violent manner than is customary; but brings out in stronger relief, and in pleasing contrast, the feminine sensibility, and the deep, pure, boundless love with which her heart was filled. I have rarely seen a more finished, exquisite and natural piece of acting than she displayed in that scene where, soliloquising, the heroine exclaims:—

"Tis love, and if not love, why, then,
Idolatry. Aye! that's the word, to speak
The broadest, deepest, strongest passion
That ever woman's heart was borne away with.

In this, as in other scenes, the talents of the actress were recognized in the plaudits of the audience. The other characters of the piece were well maintained, Mr. McDonough playing Master Walter with much ability, and Mr. Perry Sir Thomas Clifford. There is much that is absurd and unnatural in the plot of this play, although it has been so long a favorite on the English stage. Where, in the range of probabilities can be found a parallel case of a parent watching over, and in the holiest hourly communion with his child, and yet without any real cause—for that of his deformity has no force—concealing his paternity from her? where an earnest lover, wealthy as could be desired, who would be frightened out of his love by an exhibition of extravagant tastes on the part of his mistress? and who could not afterwards be moved to tenderness by her passionate and tearful appeals, except so far as returning love might be exhibited in his attempting a rude familiarity? Nor is the character of "Modus," the young collegian, poring over Ovid's Art of Love, and yet neglecting his opportunities of practising the art upon his "sweet cousin" more true to nature, though it is more permissible in the construction of the piece, as being productive of effective scenes. It seems to me that all the male characters—not omitting that of "Lord Tinsel"—are extravagances, or, at all events, that if they have counterparts anywhere in nature, it can only be in the country for which the author wrote, and from which he drew his materials.

Miss Ince has since played in the melodrama of "Love, or the Countess and Serf," and in the tragedy of "Fazio," and I have heard her highly spoken of in both.

Risley's theatre—the *variété* as it is called—is a small but neat concern. It is a large room in an iron fronted building on the avenue, and was probably designed as a lecture or concert room. It has no galleries or boxes, except two private boxes, and the twenty-five centers are merely located at the further end of the hall. The theatre cannot accommodate more than five or six hundred persons. The stage is entirely too low and narrow to admit of much effect being produced. Miss Davenport has played an engagement here; but it injudiciously took place during Forrest's engagement at the National, and was not, therefore, very successful. Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams have been playing for the last fortnight to crowded houses, but I believe their engagement terminated last night, unless the bill for this evening may announce a re-engagement for a few nights more of these popular actors. Risley possesses a very good stock company, the principal of whom is Mr. Goodall, a copropriator, and an actor of much merit. Mr. Goodall is a young man, possessing many good qualifications for his profession, but he has had the misfortune for some time past of receiving indiscriminate puffery from the newspapers, which has given him an undue confidence in his powers, and has perhaps rendered him less studious of the rules of his profession than is compatible with real success. Risley's Varietie is a very popular place of amusement, and its popularity is, to a large extent, fostered and increased by the liberality of its managers towards the press—a principle which, I believe, is entirely ignored, or but little practised by the manager of the National. As to either I do not speak of my own knowledge, but merely report what I have heard among newspaper men.

I cannot speak much in favor of the patronage bestowed by the residents and transient visiters at Washington on these dramatic establishments. The National is so large, that even with an audience of an ordinary number—say ten or fifteen hundred—it would look miserable; and yet I have seen it with perhaps less than one-fourth the latter number. While Forrest was playing there the attendance was not only large—as I have said—but it was also highly fashionable; most ladies here being in the habit of attending public places in full dress—but before and since then it appears as if the patronage did not pay expenses. Since Miss Ince's engagement matters are again looking up. Risley's is so small that it is a puzzle to me how the concern exists at all. Neither of them certainly can be enriching their proprietors.

There are one or two concert saloons in this city also, and during the season they have been now and again occupied by Sandford's *troupe* of melodists and by the Hutchinson family, neither of which companies, however, derived much emolument from their visits to Washington. Besides, we have peripatetic minstrels—harpers—who occasionally visit the halls of the hotels in the evening, and awaken the hearts of the schemers and politicians to something akin to emotion, by singing "la Marseillaise," "Mourir Pour la Patrie," and other French hymns of freedom. With them my description ends.

NINGUNO.

WASHINGTON, March 20, 1854.

The Cuba Question—England vs. Russia—What are We to Expect?—Mr. Butler's Opinions—Movement in the Senate for the Relief of the Nebraska Bill in the House—A Bad Fix for the Bill and the Administration—Prospect of War.

In the incidental debate which sprang up this morning in the Senate on the Nebraska bill, Mr. Butler, of South Carolina, hit upon one point outside of the immediate question, which is of the highest signification and importance. He suggested the necessity of harmony and conciliation between the two sections of the Union, because of the dangers to be apprehended from the present alliance between France and England. Let Russia be crushed in this war, and what guaranty is there that the present "balance of power" in the Gulf of Mexico will not be invaded? There is none. The victorious French and English fleets and armies from the Baltic, the Black Sea, and the Danube, may very easily be detailed to appropriate between the two powers the sovereignty of all the West India Islands, and perhaps the territories of Mexico and Central America. The inducements will be strong, and the present Anglo-French alliance covers the regulation of the affairs of the Western as well as the Eastern hemisphere. Mr. Butler has the sagacity to see the drift of this Eastern question, as far as this Western hemisphere is concerned; and before many months are over, his views, and the views of the NEW YORK HERALD, may be shared in by a much larger proportion of the Southern members of both houses than at present. Mr. Butler has shaped out the general idea, and it will take root or die, as the war in Europe may disclose the ulterior schemes of England and France in regard to Cuba and the other West Indies.

But this incidental debate upon the Nebraska question proper, is the most significant and important which has yet taken place, either in or out of Congress. First, there was a leading editorial article in the *Union* yesterday, making the Nebraska bill a test of democracy. Secondly, Mr. Badger this morning opened the debate in a personal explanation of what is known as the Badger amendment, declaring substantially the old French laws recognizing slavery in the Territories of this bill, as also superseded and set aside by this bill.

But why did Mr. Badger rise this morning to make his explanation. Ostensibly in answer to certain remonstrances against the bill in North Carolina, but really in behalf of the bill in the House. His object, doubtless, was the result of a consultation, and it was to give the weight of additional explanations from several of the most powerful friends of the bill in the Senate, in support of the measure as it lies before the House.

Yet, in spite of the *pronunciamento* of the *Union* and of the efforts of Mr. Badger, Mr. Butler and Mr. Mason to make the Badger amendment and the bill as clear as the light of day, there was a break revealed in the South by Mr. Brown, of Mississippi, and by Mr. Stuart, of Michigan, who referred to the criticisms of various Southern papers to show that the bill as passed is regarded by certain parties in the South as a Northern measure upon a Southern platform.—Mr. Stuart, in the course of his remarks, said that he was the author of the Badger amendment, and made it the condition of his vote for the bill. His purpose was, in effect, that there should be no loop-hole for the introduction of slavery into Kansas and Nebraska under cover of the old French laws recognizing slavery, which existed in said Territories up to the time of the passage of the Missouri compromise, and which might be construed as coming again into force with the removal of the act of 1820 but for an express stipulation to the contrary.

This lift to the bill in the Senate is important and significant of defection in the South, and of distressing weakness in the House; and, for good or for evil, the prospect becomes every day stronger that the bill will go by the board. The bill will be very apt to fail; and thus the agitation will be thrown upon the country, with what consequences God only knows. Perhaps we may contrive to slip in a war with Spain, with the aid of the special messenger to Madrid and Mr. Soulé. It is the last remaining chance for reuniting the democratic party North and South. The messenger to Madrid goes flaming like a firebrand. He may return with Mr. Soulé and a call for war, which will extinguish Nebraska in the rush for Cuba. It is the last chance, and the most will be made of it, if this Nebraska bill falls through, you may depend upon it. V.

WASHINGTON, March 20, 1854.

The Gadsden Treaty—The Black Warrior Case—A Flummux—The Nebraska Bill—Another Flummux—Opinions of Gen. Bayly, and Col. Benton.

The Senate have again gone into Executive Session on the Gadsden treaty, to the exclusion of all the business of legislation, superseding even the Homestead bill, the special order of the day. From this it is very probable that we shall soon have the treaty disposed of one way or the other. The necessities of the Mexican Dictator admit of no delay, and this has perhaps induced the Administration to hurry up the work in the Senate, so that Santa Anna may be supplied with the funds requisite to keep him on his legs for a year or two longer. But there is nothing in our relations with Mexico requiring this haste—or this expenditure of twenty millions of money. Better wait a few months, and the Mexican people may do the job for us on a larger scale than Gen. Gadsden, and free of any extra expenses to the Treasury. But Santa Anna and the lobby must be relieved; and the chances now are that the fifteen millions to the Dictator, and the five millions to the Mexican claimants, including the Tehuantepec people, will be sufficiently powerful to carry through the treaty. The solicitude of Mr. Mason, Chairman on Foreign Relations, indicates as much; and there are Northern Senators who are inclined to vote this treaty because it secures nothing but a desert. A new treaty might possibly give the South a new slaveholding State, and this a good many of the Northern Senators are opposed to, in addition to the free soilers. The prospect that this treaty will shut off the South from any further advances into Mexico, makes it practically a Northern measure. Hence, while the South are inclined to favor it in hopes of the Pacific railroad; the North are disposed to acquisce from anti-slavery considerations. Perhaps we may come to some approximation of the actual state of the case from the action of the Senate today.

The affair of the Black Warrior, unless a row should be kicked up by the special agent to Madrid and Mr. Soulé, will prove a flummux. The President having failed to recommend anything, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs will not recommend anything. We understand that Gen. Bayly has declared as much, and insists, even if we are invaded by Spain, that the President shall first recommend before the house committee shall act; and if he does not recommend anything explicit in such an exigency, then the proper course will be to insist upon it that he shall shoulder the responsibility, according to his duties under the constitution, and initiate the war, as President Madison did in 1812, and as President Polk did in 1846.

The Nebraska bill, it is now generally admitted, is another flummux. The debate in the Senate to-day shows that, like an old horse sorely afflicted with the poll-evil, the bill is on the lift, and can't stand without propping from the Senate. But the misfortunes of the administration stick to it, and the New Hampshire election has made it an ugly piece of business. Col. Benton remarked to-day that it can't pass. "No, sir, I never believed it could pass. All the necessities of the time; all the party dislocations of the day, the spirit of the North, and the honor of the South, are dead against it. Had it come from the South, I should have moved for its expulsion from the House upon the very threshold; but as it comes from the North, we shall see what they are going to do with it. I shall oppose it. Even as a clean parliamentary act, I should oppose it; and how, then, could I support this abortion from the Senate, with a stump speech in its belly—yes, sir, with a stump speech thrust into its belly, by way of an explanation of its 'real intent and meaning,' which is neither its extent nor its meaning."

Thus speaks Benton, of Missouri. The bill appears, to all intents and purposes, a dead cock in the pit. There are said to be twenty-five or thirty majority for it in the House, by the more hopeful of the Administration men; yet it will be, in all probability, referred to the Committee on the State of the Union by a large majority, there to sleep, without any violent interruption, till the first Monday in December next. CATO.

WASHINGTON, March 20, 1854.

The Land and Railroad Schemes before Congress—Who are Their Friends?—The Nebraska Bill and the Western Members.

It is evident that some of your correspondents in this city belong to that wonderful class of people denominated, in vulgar parlance, discoverers of "mare's nests."

In Sunday's HERALD both the telegraph and the mail appear to have conveyed to you the startling information that a deeply laid scheme was on foot here, by which the government was to be plundered of money, lands, &c. The South were to be forced to the commission of various crimes, and compelled to put their consciences into their pockets, whilst the North was to be swallowed up in the irresistible tide which was to surge and roll over the country. A vast number of "lobby members," it was said, were engaged in this diabolical scheme, and leading correspondents of journals were to form a principal part. What particular "part" these "leading correspondents" were to play is also stated, being neither more nor less than to hold their tongues whilst all this villany was going on.

As I am not as much behind the scenes as the letter writers who have made these startling discoveries, I cannot say whether the assertion is true or not, that some correspondents of papers may be well paid for doing nothing. Lucky devils, they, if it is true. Such a lucrative business, with so little trouble, does not often fall to the lot of newspaper men. Allah be praised that the profession has risen here in respectability, according to your Sunday correspondents, from its members being the recipients of cast-off garments, to their new being paid, in moneys and land, for—doing nothing.

But it is scarcely necessary to treat seriously this "lobby member" discovery. Let us look at the measures before Congress; and if we find these measures to be improper and dishonest, it matters not whether or not "lobby" influence is exerted, the measures should be denounced, and the press should do everything in its power to protect the rights of the people. If, on the other hand, these measures are in themselves just and proper they should pass on their merits alone.

The subject of granting to States alternate sections of land, for the purpose of aiding in the construction of railroads through the public lands, has for years been before the country, but the first practical test which has been given the theory is in the case of the Illinois Central Railroad. Congress some years ago granted to Illinois, to aid in the construction of the road, a portion of the land lying on its route. The official report made from the General Land Office, at the commencement of this Congress, shows that the government has received for the alternate sections of land not given to the State of Illinois as much money as the whole of the land—that given to the State and that reserved by the government—would have brought, at the regular government price of the land previous to the road being constructed. Independent of this, it at once brought into the market, for immediate sale, the government lands on either side of the road, for thirty miles, which before that could not be sold in consequence of its remoteness from market, and there being no means of communication through the country. The grant has, therefore, not only aided in building a great railroad and opening up the resources of that region, but it has brought into immediate sale, at enhanced prices, all the government land in the State. These are official facts, which can be seen at length in the report of the Commissioner of the Land Office, of last December.

It is not pretended that the land thus given by the government, even if sold at double the price which the law directs, would build a railroad. But the State uses it as collateral security to raise money in Europe, and then by giving at the same time a mortgage on the road as fast as it is constructed, the security is complete. The earnings of the road, and the increase in value of village sites, are calculated in the end to remunerate the State for its outlay.

The granting of public land, in aid of the construction of railroads through the public lands, is a very different principle from the scheme to distribute the public lands to all the States. In the first proposition a small portion of the public lands is sought, which by making improvements has the effect of benefitting all the public lands in that locality, and, in fact, does not take a dollar from the public treasury. The plan of distributing the public lands to all the States is merely a question of giving away all the lands and depriving the general government of them, for the benefit of the several States individually, without in any way giving an equivalent in the improvement of the lands therefor. The latter plan seeks to deprive the government of all benefit in the public lands; the former makes the improvements through the public lands, receiving therefor about one-seventh of the value of the road, and increasing the value of the lands alternating with what is given to the State, so as to sell it, by law, at twice the price now asked, namely, $2 50 an acre, instead of $1 25.

The alternate system does not deprive the "old States" of their share in the proceeds of the public lands, as has been urged, because it enhances the land, by the very terms of the donation, just as much as it takes away, and hence it gives as great a return of money into the public treasury as if not an acre was given away. It is not a distribution scheme, but a plan by which a *quid pro quo* is given, rapid settlement is induced, and the full amount of money paid to the government for the lands that can now be paid for all the lands by law. The other plan is simply a question of giving away to the individual States the proceeds of the public lands, instead of giving the money to the federal government. Each plan rests upon its own merits, and neither having anything in common, conflict.

The whole question has been for years past debated in Congress, in all its length and breadth. Free discussion has taken place, and it is to be supposed that the principle is fully understood by Congress. How lobby influence can be brought to bear to prejudice a question so well considered is a matter not quite so easily understood.

But it is said the West intend to force the South to vote for these land bills, or they will defeat the Nebraska bill. What foundation in truth is there for such an allegation? Some of the most ardent advocates of the Nebraska bill in the House are also the warm friends of the land bills. Take, for instance, the Chairman of the Committee on Territories, Mr. Richardson. Is he a person capable of such conduct as to sacrifice his position as a national man in order to force a fraud on the country? Mr. Bissell, of Illinois, is another man equally friendly to both measures. In the South the warmest friends of the land bills are found. The Alabama, Louisiana, Kentucky, Arkansas and Missouri delegations nearly all voted for the Wisconsin land bill, whilst among its strongest opponents are found the names of all the abolitionists in the House—Giddings, Gerrit Smith, &c., and the anti-Nebraska whigs and democrats, such as Havens, Israel Washburn, Grow, Murray, Perkins, &c. It is true Virginia is opposed to the land bills; but her members are opposed to everything which they cannot find in the resolutions of '98.

You will thus see that the idea that it is the anti Nebraska men who desire the passage of the land bills, and that they intend to force the South to vote for the land bills or they will vote against the Nebraska, is ridiculously false. The abolitionists, free soilers, and fanatics are all opposed to the land bills. The Northern men, committed to the Nebraska bill, nearly all are from the West, and are also in favor of the land bills, that is, such as are open, fair, and involve no fraud. I have taken the pains to-day to inquire carefully into the matter, and I cannot find a single member who makes the support of any land bill the condition of his support to the Nebraska bill. If there are any such let them be named, and their guilty conduct exposed.

I have written about this subject because it has been charged that enormities are in existence, and are winked at by correspondents. I am ignorant of any such scheme. I do not believe they have any existence, except in the fertile imaginations of some persons who endeavor to write interesting letters by depending upon their fancy for their facts.

[Correspondence of the Philadelphia Ledger.]

WASHINGTON, March 18, 1854.

Mr. Buchanan and Smith O'Brien—The French Minister and the Black Warrior Affair.

The Deficiency bill passed the House yesterday at a late hour in the afternoon. The Western members, whose railroad grants had lately been defeated, combined with the members from Pennsylvania in throwing out the appropriation of $530,000 for the New York assay office. Several of the New York members themselves took ground against the appropriation, which they considered unconstitutional. Considering that but $100,000 had been appropriated by the last Congress for the establishment of the office, it is believed that Mr. Guthrie transcended his authority when he entered into a lease of $53,000 per annum, for fifteen years, of a house in Wall street. Other localities, it is argued, might have answered as well, and three houses in Pine street, near Wall street, might have been had for a fifth part of the money. The appropriation was voted down by a decisive vote, though Mr. Guthrie himself was present in the House, and Mr. Cutting, of New York, one of the leading hards, advocating it.

Mr. Buchanan, in an interview with Lord Clarendon, brought to his lordship's attention and intimated to him the propriety of emancipating Smith O'Brien from his condemnation and banishment to the Australian island. He had the gratification, on the day succeeding, not only to find the subject introduced into the British Parliament, but also to hear Lord Palmerston announce to the House that the government had authorized his release from exile and bondage. So Smith O'Brien, whose only offending consisted in loving his country, not wisely, perhaps, but too well, is now emancipated and redeemed. This act of pure patriotism and benevolence is characteristic of the enlightened Pennsylvania statesman.

The French Ambassador, on seeing the President's communication to Congress touching the affair of the Black Warrior and the Cuban authorities, at once obtained an interview with the Secretary of State, demanding an explanation of what he termed an extraordinary procedure on the part of our government. He met with just such a reception as might have been anticipated from that sound thinking and far-seeing statesman, Gov. Marcy promptly declined to entertain any communication or explanation with the government of France, or any other authority, save the representative of Spain, and demanded to be informed under what shadow of right or usage the government of France could pretend to interrogate him on a subject in which France was apparently uninterested. This visit of the French Minister, conjoined with the declaration of Lord Clarendon, is significant of approaching great events, which time is gradually revealing.

WASHINGTON, March 20, 1854.

Thus far but little progress has been made in Post office reforms, though very serious improvements are contemplated. One thing aimed at is the reduction of compensation allowed to railroad companies for carrying the United States mail. If these railroad companies, it is argued, continue to receive the same compensation per mile which is now granted to them, the expenditures of the Post office Department, over and above its revenue, will soon reach the enormous sum of eight millions of dollars. This a pretty snug item for one of the departments, and will, if the revenue from customs should fall off this year, make a pretty good hole in the surplus of the treasury. A call has been made from the Committee on Post offices and Post roads to inquire into the different compensations for railroad transportation of the mails, and a message in reply is about to be sent to the Senate. The post office arrangements require a thorough overhauling, if the drain on the treasury shall not increase in a geometrical ratio.

A bill is about to be introduced into the House to repeal the duty on salt and all allowances to fishing vessels and drawbacks upon the importation of pickled fish. Some three hundred thousand dollars are annually paid in the shape of bounties to New England fisheries, besides an occasional row with England about fishing within a marine league from shore. The Western members will nearly in a body support the bill.

General Houston has left for Texas, previous, as he says, to immigrating to California. He will not, he says, bring up his children in a slave State. Gen. Foote has arrived at San Francisco, and has been warmly received. From present appearances, he will at once take a hand in politics; everybody in California being in favor of the constitution and the Union.

The Legislature of Texas, previous to adjournment, left it to the Texas delegation in Congress to settle with the United States and the creditors of the State, in regard to the five millions reserved in the treasury, subject, however, to a final ratification of their arrangement by the Texas Legislature. Gen. Sam. Houston being gone, little doubt is entertained but that Gen. Rusk, and the members from Texas in the House of Representatives, will be able to effect some satisfactory settlement of all the claims of the creditors. Gen. Rusk understands the true interest of Texas, and has always been in favor of an honorable liquidation of the entire debt.

[Correspondence of the Post.]

The Black Warrior Indemnity—Special Mission to Spain—Rumor About Mr. Marcy.

WASHINGTON, March 21, 1854.

Warren Winslow was sent as a special bearer of despatches to Spain, in the steamer which left New York on Saturday last. The messenger which arrived here from the Captain-General of Cuba to the Spanish legation, has accomplished nothing. There are a variety of reasons assigned for this failure, but probably, the true cause is to be found in the want of official or diplomatic authority on the part of the messenger. His proposition, it is understood, partook more of the nature of an offer for the payment of damages for the losses incurred, as in any ordinary commercial transaction, than of a reparation for national offence, and was, consequently, not such an offer as our government could accept, as there were other and much graver national questions involved, beyond the mere amount of private damages sustained. The response to the dispatches just sent out will be awaited with more than ordinary solicitude; and it is as well to repeat, that unless the temper of Congress on this subject is essentially modified during the time which must necessarily elapse before this response can be received, you may expect something to fly besides feathers.

I have learned, from a source entitled to some consideration, that Mr. Marcy has nearly completed the negotiation of a very successful treaty with Mr. Crampton about the fisheries, and that, as soon as it is ratified, he intends to withdraw from the cabinet. My informant adds, that but for his ambition to have his administration honorably identified with the negotiation of at least one important treaty, he would have retired long since. You can judge whether it is worth while to give this rumor further currency.

Our Melbourne Correspondence.

MELBOURNE, Nov. 29, 1853.

The Weather, Trade and Immigration—Advice to Merchants—Gold Field Legislation in The Council—Spirit of The Diggers—Moral Aspect of The People—Field of Gold.

I forward you this letter and papers, per the Chusan steamer, which leaves here for Singapore, and which, I hope will reach you in seventy days.

During the past six weeks we have had fine spring weather, which has much enlivened business, and as the summer advances no doubt things will materially improve.

There has, however, been a vast decrease in immigration, and it is feared by many merchants that the markets will continue glutted for some time, in consequence of the want of consumption. General cargoes are the safest speculations. The great losses which have been sustained by the home merchants by rushing into the market with large quantities of goods, especially flour, boots and shoes and fire arms, will no doubt induce much caution in their future operations. The best course is for a merchant to send out articles that few think are wanted. To give you an instance, a pair of bellows costing in England three shillings, will sell here for fifteen shillings; for as every one burns wood they are indispensable, yet imports of them are quite rare.

Flour has a general tendency to rise, but is the subject of much speculation, and I think moderate exports from America at the time this letter reaches you will be safe, notwithstanding we have the prospect of a good harvest; fine flour may be quoted at £32 and seconds at £30 per ton.

Bricks have fallen considerably, and makers have lost largely. We have plenty of room for more building materials, and I think that during the next winter—which begins in June—when houses are in greater request and labor cheaper, they will fetch good rates.

The prices current list sent herewith will give the various prices.

There has been some important legislation in the Legislative Council as to the gold fields and the diggers. The government are inventing and trying to impose every conceivable tax on the diggers; they are about to exact a license fee of £1 per month, put an export duty on gold at the rate of 2s. per ounce, and charge a license fee of £100 per annum on all storekeepers, however small; of course all these taxes come out of the diggers, and the government avowedly confessed, in brining forward these measures, that as they could not extract by force a large license fee from the diggers, they would get it out of them in another shape, and thus put forward the gross falsehood that the diggers had no objection to a heavy tax, provided they were robbed indirectly. There will be some rare doings in the diggings yet. The diggers are the majority of the population in this colony, and for the sake of ultimate humanity and liberty, it is only to be hoped the government will continue to act basely and tyrannically. The evidence taken before the gold fields committee, showing how the diggers have been treated on the diggings by the large bodies of armed police who are stationed there, would not be believed in America or England; their treatment throws Austrian and Italian despotism far into the shade. I have the printed mass of evidence before me, and I observe a large number of men and women, who without justifiable cause or provocation, have been deliberately shot dead by the police. There are no courts of law for redress, no jury, no counsel, only a contemptible "Justice of the Peace" here and there, in the neighborhood of the diggings, and he a "squatter," who believes nothing but what a policeman swears to.

Thousands of persons meet with grievous disappointment in the diggings, and men of education and ability find the use of the spade far more valuable than their acquirements, except they happen to be fortunate.

Vice, drunkenness, crime, and villany of all sorts prevail here to a fearful extent; but the greatest vice of all is intemperance, for it begets every other crime.

The aspect of things generally, bespeaks the happening of very great and decisive events before long.

No new gold fields have been discovered, and the last week's yield is about the average. A. W. H.

Jersey City Intelligence.

COMMON COUNCIL.—There was a meeting of the Common Council of Jersey City, at the Lyceum, last evening, Alderman Lyon presiding. After the adoption of the minutes of the previous meetings, various petitions were presented—among which was one from the licensed carmen, presented by Ald. Low, asking for an amendment to the ordinances, which will increase the rates of cartage. Ald. Miller was in favor of an increase of rates, the present rates having been made when the means of living were cheaper than at present. Ald. Low took the same view. The petition was referred to the Committee on Laws and Ordinances, with instructions to report such an amendment. The special committee on amendments reported that their expenses were $196 48 in the discharge of their duties on that committee, which were ordered paid. Ald Hill stated that the amendments were passed by the Legislature.

The City Treasurer's Report for the fiscal year ending March 15, 1854, was rendered as follows:—

Receipts.

Assessments	$30,609 68	Redemption of lots	$1,259 74
Interest	1,103 91	Bonds payable	29,989 04
Taxes of 1851	9 06	Public grounds and buildings	82 44
Taxes of 1852	4,533 16	Quota of school funds	1,869 15
Taxes of 1853	46,537 82		
Advertising property	101 25		
Fines & licenses	1,348 10		
Lighting private lamps	60 00		
In Treasury at beginning of year, March 15, '53			7,061 83
Total			$124,565 18

Expenditures.

Assessments	$39,070 61	Erecting & maintaining alms-house	1,666 01
Interest	4,159 63	Support of poor	2,044 64
Schools	8,843 05	Public grounds & buildings	770 07
School houses, & maint'ng same	6,074 91	Maintaining city prison	667 38
Fire engines and apparatus	2,485 00	Watch & Police departments	7,856 07
Fire Department	697 52	Salaries	5,782 18
F. engine houses & maintaining same	3,624 39	Bonds payable	24,525 00
Cleaning streets	1,711 58	Redemption lot account	912 76
Lighting streets	2,939 51	Contingent exp's	5,543 47
Rep'g. streets	1,866 45		
Repairing pumps and sewers	941 72		
Total expenditures			$122,161 95
Balance in Treasury			2,403 23
			$124,565 18

After some further business the Board adjourned.

Statistics of Salt.

[From the Washington Union, March 21.]

In compliance with a resolution adopted by the House of Representatives on the 14th of December, 1853, the Secretary of the Treasury transmitted to that body on the 6th of January, 1854, a report, from which we make up the following interesting statistics on the number of salt manufactories, the amount of capital invested in them, and other valuable information.

It appears from the report made by the Superintendent of the Census, that the whole number of salt manufactories in the United States whose annual product is $500 or upwards in value, is 539. They are distributed amongst the States as follows:—

Maine has three establishments, capital invested, $3,100; average number of hands, four; average yearly wages paid, $1,080; value of product per annum, $9,700.

Massachusetts has nine; capital invested, $40,400; average hands, thirty-five; average wages, $9,180; value of product, $93,850.

Connecticut has 1; capital, $4,000; average hands, 2; wages paid, $504; quantity produced, 40,000 bushels; value, $5,660.

New York has 192; capital, $819,950; hands, 873; wages, $299,376; value of product, $998,315.

Pennsylvania has 47; capital, $168,360; hands, 219; quantity produced, 519,100 bushels; value, $206,796.

Virginia has 40; capital, $1,269,900; hands, 1,297; wages, $324,900; quantity produced, 3,479,890 bushels; value, $700,466.

Florida has 1; capital, $19,000; hands, 8; wages, $1,728; value of product, $6,000.

Texas has 2; capital, $3,475; hands, 16; wages, $2,352; quantity, 8,000 bushels; value, $5,900.

Ohio has 52; capital, $188,750; hands, 167; wages, $42,056; quantity produced, 550,350 bushels; value, $132,293.

Kentucky has 12; capital, $128,450; hands, 162; wages, $17,338; quantity produced, 246,500 bushels; value, $57,855.

Illinois has 1; capital, $2,500; hands, 3; wages, $720; quantity, 20,000 bushels; value, $6,000.

The same report gives the quantity and value of salt imported from 1847 to 1853, and the duties which accrued thereon, as follows:—

Years ending.	*Bushels.*	*For'gn cost.*	*Gross duties.*
June 30, 1847	7,235,508	$893,502	$535,280 20
1848	8,969,604	1,042,502	208,500 49
1849	11,622,163	1,438,981	287,795 20
1850	11,224,185	1,237,188	247,437 20
1851	8,681,176	1,047,890	209,578 00
1852	10,116,980	1,112,137	222,427 40
1853	10,066,981	1,059,432	211,886 40
Total	67,915,697	$7,831,630	$1,922,905 80

The average foreign cost was 11.53 cents per bushel. Under the tariff law of 1842 salt paid a duty of twenty cents per bushel. To show the difference of the operation of that law and the act of 1846, the following statement is useful:—From July 1 to December 1, 1846, the quantity imported was 1,963,112 bushels; its value, $210,213; and the duties thereon, under the law of 1842, were $398,622 40. From December 1, 1846, to June 30, 1847, the quantity imported was 5,242,306 bushels; its value, $561,289; the duties on it, under the law of 1846, were $136,657 80.

Work on the Tehuantepec Route.

We learn that the contractors of Sloo's company (says the *N. O. Delta*) are rapidly pushing their work on this route, and that the obstacles thus far to building the road have proved to be very slight. The following extract from a letter of one of the employés on the work has been kindly furnished to us:—

SUCHIL, February 20, 1854.

Mr. Wall is going ahead finely with the work; he has six miles of the road already open, prepared for grading. The work will be pushed on as fast as possible. Quarters are already prepared for three hundred men, and all the force will be employed that can be advantageously worked. I have examined the river, and do not find any trouble in navigating it. It will not be necessary to go to any expense in clearing it out; there is no imp