NEW YORK HERALD.

JAMES GORDON BENNETT,
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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AMUSEMENTS THIS EVENING.

ACADEMY OF MUSIC, Irving Place.—GERMAN OPERA—LE DAME BLANCHE.

BIBLO'S GARDEN, Broadway.—CONNIE SOOGAR.

WALLACK'S THEATRE, Broadway.—THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE.

WINTER GARDEN, Broadway.—TICKET OF LEAVE MAN.

OLYMPIC THEATRE, Broadway.—A BULL IN A CHINA SHOP—MAZEPPA.

NEW BOWERY THEATRE, Bowery.—MAZEPPA—CARRIER AND HIS DOG—HIGHWAYMAN'S HOLIDAY.

BOWERY THEATRE, Bowery.—RAG WOMAN AND HER DOG—LORD LOVEL—JOHN WOPPS.

BARNUM'S MUSEUM, Broadway.—FRENCH GIANT, GIANT GIRL, GIANT BOY, LILLIPUTIAN KING, GEN. GRANT, Jr., &c., at all hours. TICKET OF LEAVE MAN. At 3 and 7½ P. M.

CHRISTY MINSTRELS, Mechanics' Hall, 472 Broadway.—ETHIOPIAN SONGS, DANCES, BURLESQUES, &c.—THE FRIGIDUS FAMILE.

WOOD'S MINSTREL HALL, 444 Broadway.—ETHIOPIAN SONGS, DANCES, &c.—RAILROAD EXPLOSION.

AMERICAN THEATRE, No. 444 Broadway.—BALLETS, PANTOMIMES, BURLESQUES, &c.—HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT.

BROADWAY AMPHITHEATRE, 625 Broadway.—GYMNASTIC AND EQUESTRIAN PERFORMANCES. Afternoon and Evening.

HOPE CHAPEL, 718 Broadway.—THE STEREOSCOPICAN OR MIRROR OF THE UNIVERSE.

ST. NICHOLAS HALL, Broadway.—MIRROR OF THE REBELLION.

NEW YORK MUSEUM OF ANATOMY, 618 Broadway.—CURIOSITIES AND LECTURES, from 9 A. M. till 10 P. M.

HOOLEY'S OPERA HOUSE, Brooklyn.—ETHIOPIAN SONGS, DANCES, BURLESQUES, &c.

New York, Friday, January 22, 1864.

THE SITUATION.

The condition of the Army of the Potomac appears to be one of perfect inaction, enlivened by the ordinary enjoyments which characterize a camp in which no fear of the approach of an enemy disturbs the festivity. The officers, who are quartered comfortably in winter huts, it appears, have their wives with them, to make the huts more comfortable. Other officers entertain their friends at plentiful dinners, where eloquent words are spoken and eloquent music is discoursed by military bands. The Masonic portion of the army hold their lodge meetings according to Masonic rule, and the pickets on both sides preserve a polite and accommodating neutrality. To disturb this pleasant state of affairs, however, the rebel guerillas make an occasional demonstration. For instance, they made a night foray on Colonel Sweitzer's brigade, of the Fifth army corps, wounding six of the men, but leaving eight of their own party dead on the field, for they met a warmer reception than they expected.

A feeling antagonistic to the rebel government and military despotism in North Carolina is growing stronger and stronger every day, if we can judge from the tone of the Raleigh press, as exemplified in the columns of the *Standard*, which declares that if the civil law is to be trampled under foot by the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, and if the rights of the States are to be ignored and swept away by the common government, the people of North Carolina will take their own affairs into their own hands, and will proceed in convention assembled to vindicate their liberties and their privileges. It further declares that the people will not submit to a military despotism nor to the destruction of their rights, personal and civil, in this or any other war. The people of North Carolina thus regard the civil rights of the citizen as sacred, as above and beyond the control of any military power, no matter by whom exercised.

General Schofield has been ordered to relieve General Foster, in command of the Department of the Ohio, the latter officer not being sufficiently recovered from his wounds to continue his duties. General Schofield left Washington for Knoxville yesterday.

The blockade of Wilmington, which is now under the charge of Admiral Lee, is progressing well. Our correspondence from that point will show how effectually the business is being carried out there.

We give to-day another batch of extracts from Mr. Seward's diplomatic correspondence, which bear principally upon the action of the rebel pirates, and the complaint of the British authorities in the cases of the destruction of the Jacob Bell by the Florida and the numerous delinquencies of the famous Alabama.

CONGRESS.

In the Senate yesterday, the bill to promote enlistments was taken up, but its consideration postponed till to-day, at the suggestion of Mr. Grimes, owing to its providing no bounty for colored soldiers. Mr. Davis' resolution calling for the correspondence with the rebel authorities in reference to the exchange of prisoners was taken up, but, without being disposed of, was also postponed. The report of Mr. Newton, Commissioner of Agriculture, in reference to the proposed tax on leaf tobacco, and adverse to the measure, was presented, and referred to the Finance Committee. The consideration of the oath required to be taken by Senators to support the government was then resumed, and Mr. Reverdy Johnson, of Maryland, spoke at length in opposition to it. He was replied to by Mr. Howard, of Michigan. Mr. Foot, of Vermont, also spoke against insisting upon an administration of the oath to Senators, after which the amendment of Mr. Powell was rejected by 26 nays to 12 yeas, when the subject was postponed, and the Senate adjourned until Monday next.

In the House of Representatives a new standing committee, to be entitled the Committee on a Uniform System of Coinage, Weights and Measures, was authorized. The discussion of the joint resolution amendatory of the Confiscation act was continued from the previous day; but, without receiving a final disposition, the matter was laid over. The House then, in Committee of the Whole, took up the bill to increase the internal revenue, and amendatory of the present Internal Revenue act, the debate on which consumed the greater part of the session, becoming at times somewhat bitter and personal. Some few amendments were agreed to, when the bill, as amended, was reported to the House, and it and a substitute which Mr. Stevens intends to offer for it were ordered to be printed. Without further proceedings, the House adjourned until to-day.

THE LEGISLATURE.

In the Senate yesterday bills were reported favorably to amend the charter of the Brooklyn Fire Department and to legalize the action of the Supervisors of this city in raising bounty and riot funds. Notices were given of bills to authorize the Erie Railroad Company to increase their capital stock and to enable the company to build a double track on their road, and to legalize the issue of certificates of indebtedness for the firemen and military of Brooklyn. A bill was introduced to incorporate the Central Park Hotel Company, and the bill amending the charter of the Protestant Episcopal Society was passed.

In the Assembly, in Committee of the Whole, the bill to extend the elective franchise to voters in the army and navy was considered, as was also that proposing to amend the Quarantine laws, and progress was reported thereon. A bill was introduced limiting the charges for freight on the Hudson River Railroad to the rates charged in November, 1862, with twenty-five per cent added, and passenger charges, way and through, to two cents per mile. The annual Appropriation bill was also introduced, under which the total amount to be raised is $1,342,059 26.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS.

The Board of Councilmen met at four o'clock last evening, when a communication was received from the Mayor, containing a petition signed by a number of merchants doing business on the west side of the city, complaining of the inconvenience caused by the managers of the Central Park and North and East River Railroad Company sweeping the dirt from their track and piling it in heaps close to the sidewalk. The Mayor recommended the adoption of an ordinance directing the superintendents and officers of all the city railroads to remove the dirt from their tracks to dumping grounds which the City Inspector should be authorized to provide. He also recommended the vigorous enforcement of the ordinance forbidding the use of salt on the tracks, which was referred to the Committee on Railroads. He also transmitted a copy of a letter announcing that Major General Dix had taken possession of the Park Barracks as a matter of "military necessity" for the reception of the returned soldiers, and also that measures had been taken for the thorough cleansing of the same. The request that the United States authorities be allowed to erect barracks on the Battery was renewed, and referred to the Committee on Lands and Places. Mr. Brandon offered a resolution that the Street Commissioner be authorized to remove the barracks from the City Hall Park forthwith, which was referred to the same committee. The Mayor, in another communication, urged the adoption of a resolution that a memorial be sent to the Legislature for the passage of an act authorizing the issue of stock to the amount of five millions of dollars to provide means for paving with Belgian or trap block pavement all streets below Fourteenth street not already thus paved. Referred to the Committee on Streets. On motion, the hour of meeting was changed to one o'clock P. M., and the Board adjourned until Monday next at that time.

The trial of John B. Holmes for the murder of Policeman Gourley, nearly ten years ago, was concluded in the Court of Oyer and Terminer, before Judge Leonard, on Wednesday, and resulted in the prisoner being convicted of manslaughter in the fourth degree. The prisoner's counsel announced that he would prepare a bill of exceptions, and that he would be ready with the necessary documents on Wednesday next, to which day the court adjourned.

Louis J. Olmstead, whose case has been under investigation for the past few days, was yesterday discharged from custody by Marshal Murray, on the ground that he had successfully refuted all the charges brought against him in connection with his alleged complicity in sending contraband of war down South. In addition to this several of the leading men of New York came forward and gave testimony as to the loyal character of Mr. Olmstead.

The steamer Cambria arrived last evening from Hilton Head, having on board the Twenty-fifth Ohio Volunteers (veterans), under the command of Major N. Haughton. The regiment will leave New York on its way to Ohio as soon as transportation can be furnished, where they will enjoy the benefit of the furlough granted in cases of reenlistment.

The stock market was not so firm yesterday, and, under the pressure of sellers, prices gave way one to three per cent on a majority of the railroad shares. Gold could not maintain the speculative premium which it had attained by the operations of a combination, and it fell yesterday to 155¼, but rose again and closed at 157¼. There was no alteration in the loan market. The five-twenty government bonds are now reduced to about seven millions, and the supposition was that the balance of the loan would be taken before the close of business to-day.

The sudden fall in the price of gold had the tendency to unsettle the market yesterday, and greatly restricted commercial transactions. At the Produce Exchange a fair business was done, but generally at lower prices—particularly for flour and grain. Provisions were not affected to any great extent. Groceries were nearly nominal, as were most imported goods. Cotton was about steady. Petroleum was firm for crude and dull and lower for refined. Freights were dull and heavy.

The Presidential Question—Not Too Soon to Consider It.

For some weeks past we have been actively discussing the Presidential question, and urging upon the loyal masses of the country of all parties, regardless of party managers or party conventions, the adoption of General Grant as their common candidate. The scheming politicians of the day, startled by this unexpected agitation of the waters, have, by various silly devices, been vainly endeavoring to put a stop to this popular movement. Thus the New York *Tribune*, which in the outset tried to console itself with the idea that the HERALD had taken up General Grant only to kill him off, now falls back upon the suspicious plea that in this early agitation of the next Presidency we are guilty of "the most short-sighted and mischievous error of the day."

We are further admonished by this patriotic philosopher that "the business immediately in hand is the overthrow of the rebellion;" that "we ought to, and probably will, finish it by the Fourth of July;" that this "will be in ample season for the selection and nomination of our best and strongest man for next President;" that "there is not a partisan, open or secret, of the rebellion who does not fairly ache to see the loyal millions quarrelling as to who shall be our next President;" and, to cap the climax, that "this is the impulse of the HERALD's periodic starting of a fresh candidate and exalting him to the skies, then dropping him forever."

Now, in reply to these positive statements and accusations, a few words will answer our present purpose. First, then, it is because "the business immediately in hand is the overthrow of the rebellion" that we are advocating the fusion of all parties upon General Grant for the next Presidency. The present administration, so far as it has attempted the handling of our armies in the field, has deplorably failed to achieve a vigorous and satisfactory prosecution of the war. General Grant, pursuing his own judgment, has succeeded, on the contrary, far beyond the public expectation. He commands the confidence of the country. Let us have, what we can have, a spontaneous movement of the people in his behalf, and the Presidential canvass and the election will be brightened by the crowning triumphs of the war. The rebellion will be thoroughly subdued, the Union will be re-established on a solid basis of internal harmony, and, with General Grant as our next President, we shall have, against every offending foreign Power, great or small, ample "indemnity for the past and security for the future."

This is our argument for the substantial settlement of the Presidential question now by an overwhelming popular movement in support of General Grant. What is the prospect if we leave this important business in the hands of the President-making politicians till July? The prospect is that each of the little scheming cliques now at work will be strengthened into a powerful and irrepressible faction, and that the result will be a demoralizing scrub race, involving the people of the loyal States in fearful scenes of revolutionary violence; or the prospect is that, against the divided opposition elements, President Lincoln will be re-elected—an issue which, judging by the past, promises only an indefinite prolongation of the war, and the expansion of our public debt and paper currency to the point of a ruinous revulsion.

It is evident that even Greeley has had enough of Abraham Lincoln; it is apparent that the *Tribune* is asking for time in order to undermine him and blow him up, as the unsuspecting Mr. Seward was blown up at Chicago. But if we indulge these politicians in this dangerous business of mining and countermining, they may give us another edition of the Charleston and Baltimore conventions of 1860 and their terrible consequences. Hence we are urging upon the independent masses of the people the saving policy of taking this Presidential election into their own hands, and with General Grant as their champion. Our objects are a smooth and harmonious Presidential campaign—a perfect union of the people of the loyal Sates in the prosecution of the war, and a man in the place of Abraham Lincoln who has satisfied the country of his competency to restore the Union to its rightful dominion at home, and to make it respected abroad, and first in power and influence of all the nations of the earth.

Is the Honorable Massa Greeley answered? If yea, let him brush up and join us; if nay, let him show his hand.

The Chevalier Wikoff and the Presidential Campaign.

Just at present the Chevalier Wikoff is very busily engaged in Presidential electioneering. He has left the pleasant fields of foreign diplomacy, and has plunged head foremost into the Presidential campaign. He has ranged himself under the banner of Seward and President Lincoln, in opposition to Chase, the financial Don Quixote, and Sancho Panza Greeley. We have no doubt that the Chevalier will do his devoirs gallantly, gain plenty of victories, and secure plenty of plunder.

When Napoleon was only a President of a republic, the Chevalier Wikoff went to Paris, on a salary of five hundred pounds a year, as the special agent of Lord Palmerston and the British government. His mission was to manage the French press and establish the *entente cordiale* between France and England. In this the Chevalier succeeded, and thus laid the foundation of the fortunes of the present Emperor. If Napoleon were not as ungrateful as the rest of mankind, he would long ago have acknowledged this great service by bestowing upon the Chevalier the Cross of the Legion of Honor and wealth sufficient to support this dignity. Not satisfied with this success, however, the Chevalier Wikoff engaged in other diplomatic enterprises. He endeavored to secure a wife for the Prince Napoleon, in the person of the daughter of the then American Minister, and a wife for himself, in the person of Miss Gamble. Both schemes fell through, and the Chevalier fell out with Miss Gamble and into prison. Being released, he started for home, and, as it happened, Senator Seward was his fellow passenger across the Atlantic. The Chevalier soon established an *entente cordiale* between himself and Seward, and they have been bosom friends ever since. Indeed, the attachment between Damon and Pythias, or that between David and Jonathan, seems like the bitterest hatred when compared to the mutual affection of Seward and Wikoff.

Upon his arrival here, the Chevalier sent his old comrade, Buchanan, to the Furies, and followed the fortunes of Senator Seward. When Seward was defeated at Chicago, Wikoff nearly broke his heart, grew visibly thin, and had a strong inclination towards sackcloth and ashes. He revived again, however, when Seward was appointed Secretary of State, and marched into the White House with the new Secretary, like a true and faithful squire. Then Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln quickly discovered the Chevalier's rare virtues and conceived a great fondness for him. His advice was eagerly sought, and it is said he directed the policy of the State Department towards perfidious England. This ascendency of the Chevalier soon excited the jealousy of the other Cabinet members, and they were base enough to conspire against him, just as discontented people used to conspire against Cardinal Richelieu or Cardinal Mazarin. Unfortunately, however, the enemies of the Chevalier enjoyed a temporary triumph. They had him arrested and cast him into the Capitol prison, but not before he had realized fifteen or twenty thousand dollars from contracts under Cameron. This sum the Chevalier safely invested in California and other gold paying State bonds. In this he proved himself a better financier than poor Greeley, who also had contracts under Cameron, but allowed the harpies of the *Tribune* Association to rob him of most of the proceeds. But why should we dwell upon the sufferings which the Chevalier endured while he languished in a damp and doleful dungeon, a victim of adverse circumstances and the Hickman Kitchen Committee, and a martyr to his devotion to Mrs. Lincoln? Suffice it to say that an angel in crinoline, who shall be nameless, visited him in his gloomy prison, and he soon found himself again free and doubly endeared to the Lincoln dynasty.

After spending several months in New York, where he recovered from the effects of his cruel tortures and regulated all the operatic *impresarii* and artists, the Chevalier Wikoff returned to Washington some time ago, and consulted with Secretary Seward in relation to the next Presidency. The results of this conference may be seen in the almost simultaneous renomination of Mr. Lincoln by the republicans of New Hampshire and Pennsylvania. According to the programme then agreed upon, other States are to follow up this renomination; and the Chevalier and the Secretary of State think that they can re-elect President Lincoln—with Seward for the succession—and annihilate Secretary Chase and poor Greeley without any serious difficulty. We acknowledge the genius displayed in this plan, and the success which it has achieved thus far; but there is one move in the game which neither the Secretary nor the Chevalier appears to have considered. They are fighting against Secretary Chase, whom they believe to be their most dangerous opponent; but suppose that Secretary Chase should slip aside, and disclose the formidable apparition of General Grant, armed *cap a pied*, and ready for the fray? What would become of Mr. Lincoln and his champions then? This is a contingency for which Mr. Seward and the Chevalier are altogether unprepared; and yet nothing seems more probable than that Secretary Chase will resort to this very manœuvre. Every day we are expecting the intelligence that Chase has formally withdrawn in favor of General Grant, and that he will eventually do so we have not the slightest doubt. As soon as that occurs the Presidential contest will be decided beyond a peradventure. Lincoln may then go back to Springfield, and retail his juicy jokes by a barroom fire, and the Chevalier Wikoff may go to London and write his autobiography. But what will become of poor Secretary Seward? Our feelings overcome us, and we pause for a reply. Thurlow Weed, what say you? But, if by any accident Mr. Lincoln should be re-elected, Seward ought certainly to be his successor, with the Chevalier Wikoff as his Secretary of State. Then, indeed, our foreign affairs would be well managed.

NORTH CAROLINA GETTING HOTTER AND HOTTER.—Enclose a scorpion by a circle of fire and he will sting himself to death. Southern secession, that scorpion of Southern folly, is now undergoing this process. The Raleigh *Standard* warns the rebel Congress that if the sweeping despotic military and financial measures now pending before that body are passed, "the people of North Carolina will take their affairs into their own hands, and will proceed, in convention assembled, to vindicate their liberties and their privileges;" and says further that "there is no power to prevent them from doing this, and woe be to the official character who shall attempt to turn the arms of Confederate soldiers against the people of this State!"

Reduced to plain English, this means that with the passage of the intolerable tax bills and conscription bills now before the rebel Congress, the people of North Carolina will, through a State convention, secede from Jeff. Davis, and fight him should he attempt by arms to dispute this Southern State right of secession. But what right has he to interfere in this business? Is not the right of secession emphatically affirmed in the so called Confederate States constitution? It is. Let us rejoice, therefore, that the scorpion is stinging away its own life. The people of North Carolina may now put an end to their own sufferings and to their insupportable rebel despotism within thirty days.

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.—The scandal in the Board of Education, which has just resulted in the expulsion of one of its members, is giving rise to a good deal of bitter feeling. Those who feel an interest in the proper working of a system which, but for the politicians, would be the best ever devised, are naturally indignant that such a slur should be cast upon it. We tell them, however, that this case is not a solitary one. We can pick out a number of men, both in and under the Board, whose character and antecedents render them utterly unfit for their positions. Had these been subjected to a proper scrutiny they would not only not be entrusted with the care of children, but with the care of anything. Of course when persons of this stamp have the appointing power the selections of female teachers will be guided by their individual preferences. We are satisfied that if the Board will pursue their investigations they will bring to light many more such scandals as that which has just edified the town. They owe it to themselves, they owe it to the usefulness of the system of which they have the management, and they owe it to the community that there should be a thorough weeding out of all such contaminating influences. What has occurred both here and in Brooklyn will, we trust, direct attention to the necessity of a change in the present mode of selecting these School Commissioners. As long as the politicians have a controlling voice in their election the public must expect to have its feeling shocked by a repetition of these scandalous occurrences.

STILL KNOW NOTHINGS.—They who imagine that the *Express* newspaper managers, in joining their fortunes with the copperhead democracy, have repented of their follies as Knights of the Dark Lantern, are under a great mistake. The proceedings in court in the *Express* case show that its managers are still inveterate Know Nothings. They know nothing of the expenses of their mysterious journal, they know nothing of its receipts, they know nothing of its circulation, and they know nothing of its advertisements. Under such extraordinary Know Nothing engineers it is not very surprising that the *Express* has fallen so low in its circulation that, when called upon to tell it, the man who ought to know everything about it is a regular Know Nothing.

Theatrical.

MR. FRANK DREW AT THE OLYMPIC.

Mr. Frank Drew made his first appearance in this city at the Olympic theatre on Monday evening, before a very crowded house, in the burlesque of Mazeppa. The performance was repeated last evening.

Mr. Frank Drew is the brother of the late Mr. John Drew, the Irish comedian. He is a great favorite in Philadelphia, and has just returned from a very successful engagement in England. We are glad to say that he has fully justified the reputation which had preceded him here, and that he has made a most decided and emphatic hit.

The burlesque of Mazeppa is one of the best that Mr. H. J. Byron ever wrote. It ran a long while in London, and was produced at the Winter Garden, three or four years ago, by Mr. Joseph Jefferson and Mrs. Chanfrau. Those who remember Mr. Jefferson in the part of Casimer will not be disappointed with Mr Drew, whose style is entirely different, and who has had the advantage of seeing Robson play the role, which Mr. Jefferson had not. Mr. Drew's incidental imitations of Kean, Kemble, Booth, Forrest, Couldock and other actors are especially fine, and his singing and dancing are excellent.

Of the rest of the characters it is not necessary to say anything, except that Mrs. Wood plays Olinska with her usual jollity, and that Mr. Davidge has his old part of the Water Khan of Tartary. The scenery and dresses are very good. We think that the present programme at this theatre can be retained almost indefinitely. The roars and screams of laughter provoked by Mr. Mortimer—an American Charles Matthews—in A Bull in a China Shop, and the screams and roars of laughter elicited by Mrs. Wood and Mr. Drew in Mazeppa, must be heard to be appreciated, and—to use another original phrase—may be imagined, but cannot be described.

The Sunken Government Steamer.

BALTIMORE, Jan. 20, 1864.

The government steamer General Meigs, which was sunk on Tuesday night off Fort Carroll, Patapsco river, was loaded with gunpowder, &c. General E. B. Tyler and Captains French, McDowell and Gwin were among her passengers. She was bound to Fort Tobacco. The steamer was fast in the ice when the steamer Adelaide came down upon her, and the steamship Georgia, on the other side, causing her to sink.

The General and his staff were rescued, and soon succeeded in reaching the city.

Soldiers' Riot in Seymour, Ind.

CINCINNATI, Jan. 21, 1864.

A riot occurred in Seymour, Ind., on Tuesday last, between some drunken soldiers and the guard, which resulted in the death of two of the rioters and the wounding of several others.

Amusement.

THE GERMAN OPERA.

Poetry and romance are more attractive with the masses than the obstruse studies of astronomy or mathematics; and yet it is conceded that the latter are, with other equally important and dry researches, the foundations of human knowledge and skill. As the lullaby, or the shepherd's song to his dulcimer, was the first germ of Italian opera, who can assert that the great work of Richard Wagner, the Tannhauser, is not the commencement of a musical epoch which shall conduct future generations to the understanding and enjoyment of scientific music—bearing the same relation to the music of to day as does "Newton's Principia" or "Euclid" to "Mother Goose!" The production in this city of the Tannhauser is an event of interest to our musical circles. This opera has been sung in Europe with indifferent success. It was produced in Paris under the most advantageous circumstances. The composer himself led the orchestra, and spent months overlooking the *mise en scene*, and attending the rehearsals. Artists of undoubted ability sang the principal *roles*; in fact, all that could be done to render the performance a success, independently of the merit of the music, was lavishly accomplished.

The opera was pronounced a bore by the Parisians, and, beyond doubt, was a failure. There are some very beautiful things in Tannhauser. The overture is fine, there is a march which has become popular everywhere, and there is a fine chorus; but, taken as a whole, the opera is dull, tedious, at times positively provoking; there are great agglomerations of sound without melody, which last so long that the ear pleads for relief and would welcome any change. We have no prejudices in the matter, do not feel inclined to belittle this opera even if it were in our power, but simply state that we deem it very tiresome. To our thinking there are too few plums in this huge and indigestible pudding.

We are quite ready, however, to admit our inability to understand or appreciate the "music of the future," and merely state the fact that we were among the number of those who at the two performances of the opera which have taken place at our Academy of Music wondered at the enthusiasm displayed by persons who, it seems, are fully conversant with the beauties and grandeur of Mr. Wagner's style. It must be recorded that about this period this eccentric composer was agitating all Germany with his new ideas. Musical circles here were likewise tormented by the production of American musical eccentricity. Mr. Fry brought forth an opera which people wondered at, and could not understand. But Fry and Wagner, in their different styles, will no doubt be better understood by posterity.

We append a synopsis of the plot of Tannhauser:—

FIRST ACT.

In the first act Tannhauser, a celebrated singer of the eleventh century, is seen in the Cave of Venus, living in the enjoyment of his impure love with that goddess; but he longs for the earth, and, entreating Venus to fulfil his desire, she does it under the condition that he will sing only of love as enjoyed with her. Here the scene changes to the castle called the Wartburg, where the Prince Regent, who is on a hunting tour, in company with his friends, recognizes Tannhauser and invites him to join the Prize Singing Festival at the Wartburg.

SECOND ACT.

Tannhauser enters and greets the [illegible] Regent and his niece Elizabeth, who is secretly [illegible] with him. Shortly after the invited princes and [illegible] arrive for the singing festival, in which Tannhauser hopes to be the victor. Instead of singing songs of true love, he sings of the enjoyments with Venus, and consequently is banished by the Prince Regent. Elizabeth interferes, and begs that Tannhauser may be allowed to join the pilgrims who pass on their way to Rome to get absolution of their sins from the Pope.

THIRD ACT.

Return of the pilgrims from Rome, when Elizabeth seeks in vain among them for Tannhauser; and, not seeing him, she dies broken-hearted. Soon after Tannhauser arrives, and, seeing Wolfram, reveals to him his hardships on his travel from Rome, and that the Pope would not grant him a pardon. He seeks to return to the Cave of Venus; but Wolfram persuades him not to go, and describes the love of Elizabeth, who is just being borne to the grave. Tannhauser, in seeing the body of his beloved, dies, uttering "Holy Elizabeth, pray for me;" when, to the astonishment of Wolfram, his pilgrim's rod commences to bloom again.

Large audiences have attended the performances of this opera, curiosity drawing together even those who are not partial to German music. On each occasion there were hundreds of persons in the Academy of Music who came there evidently with an idea that a feeling of hostility was entertained against Mr. Wagner's production, and with the settled purpose of applauding the opera through thick and thin. The injudicious demonstrations of these persons rendered it quite impossible for us to judge how the public liked the work. The artists, one and all, acquitted themselves creditably of the arduous task of singing this heavy opera. The *mise en scene* was rich. Some of the choruses were attractive, while the instrumentation was really fine. The great merit of Tannhauser is the orchestral music. Herein Mr. Wagner evinces genius. To-night this opera will be given for the third time. The cast includes the whole of the German troupe.

ENGLISH OPERA.

Mr Harrison's opera troupe have been performing to crowded houses in both cities since the beginning of the week. On Monday Maritana was produced in Brooklyn for the first time, and, notwithstanding the weather was of a character to deter any but ardent lovers of music from leaving home, there was a very full attendance. We were glad of this for two reasons. First, for the sake of Mr. Harrison, whose enterprise in the production of a charming but risky class of entertainments entitles him to a cordial and generous support; and, secondly, for that of the Brooklyn public, which has hitherto been charged with indifference to the art to which they have erected so pretentious but ill-supported a temple.

The first in point of date, and the most popular of Wallace's operas, Maritana is to be admired rather for its orchestral and concerted effects than for its other merits. In this it differs from the Bohemian Girl, which is rich in simple melodies that will ever keep hold of the popular heart. Artistically speaking, Maritana is a work of higher aims, and was written to disprove the assumption that an English composer was unequal to the difficulties of such an undertaking. Its combinations are intricate, but skilfully and delicately wrought out, and they evince a thorough acquaintance with the resources of both string and wind instruments. In the concerted pieces are to be found some charming effects, and, owing to the excellence of the cast, they were fully developed on this occasion.

The part of Maritana is well suited to Madame Borchard. She has features of that Eastern type which accords well with the character of the gipsy, and their mobility, coupled with a by play that has been acquired in the best schools, enables her to give an original and striking version of it. Her voice at the beginning of the evening was slightly veiled by cold; but this soon wore off, and her performance suffered but little from it. In the opening romanza, "He was a Knight of Princely Mien;" the well known and favorite song, "Scenes that are Brightest;" the fine quartette at the end of the second act, and the prayer with Lazarillo at the end of the third, which embraces all the salient vocal features of the part, her highly cultivated method and brilliant execution elicited for her even warmer applause than on the first night of her appearance. We should be glad, however, to see, on the part of this lady as well as on that of the other artists, a closer adherence to the text of the story. They must not forget that they are singing in English, and that it will not do to slur over the words of the piece as if it were an Italian libretto.

Mr. Castle's Don Cæsar, a trying role for such a stage novice, was played with more spirit than we had reason to expect. To its vocal points he did as much justice as their scanty merits would allow. The best part in the opera, to our notion, is that of Don Jose, which could hardly have a better interpreter than Mr. Campbell. No baritone within our recollection has given with finer effect Burns' beautiful ballad "In Happy Moments" and the noble aria "To My Courage Still Regaining." They created a perfect tempest of enthusiasm, and, of course, had to be repeated.

Another gratifying feature of the evening was the debut, in the part of Lazarillo, of a young vocalist, Miss Myers, partially known, we believe, to our public as a dramatic reader. She made quite a hit. Her natural gracefulness, her stage intelligence, and her sweet, well trained, though not very powerful voice, secured for her as once a cordial reception. In the little she had to sing she was repeatedly encored, and the favor that she won was enhanced by her apparent unconsciousness of having done anything to merit the applause lavished on her. She will prove an agreeable acquisition to Mr. Harrison's troupe.

As was to be expected in a theatre of such limited resources, the first night's performance did not go off quite smoothly. The mishaps were, however, principally confined to the stage business, and did not affect either orchestra or chorus, which were in creditable working order. On its repetition this evening we expect that a marked improvement will be noticeable. On Tuesday and last night the Bohemian Girl was again given in New York to crowded houses. Notwithstanding the competing attractions at the other theatres, there seems to be a determination on the part of the public to give English opera all the encouragement possible. Unfortunately, so far as New York is concerned, Mr. Harrison will be unable to profit by this disposition, as from the present date to the 3d of February Niblo's Saloon is let for other performances. From that time out, however, he will be able to pursue his career of success uninterrupted. In the meanwhile New Yorkers wishing to hear English opera will have to make a pilgrimage to Brooklyn.

The Emancipation Question in the Maryland Legislature.

BALTIMORE, Jan. 21, 1864.

The proceedings in the Legislature to-day, in both houses, were favorable to the immediate emancipation scheme.

The motion to postpone the election of delegates to the Convention was voted down.

Count Joannes Convicted.

BOSTON, Jan. 21, 1864.

The trial of George Jones, known as Count Joannes, for being a common barrator, resulted to-day in a conviction of the defendant.

The Sales of Five-Twenty Bonds.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 21, 1864.

Nearly a million of the five-twenty loan was sold to-day by the government agent. Eight millions were ordered by telegraph.

THE WILMINGTON BLOCKADE.

Destruction of the Blockade Runners Ranger, Bendigo and Hero.

Duels Between the Gunboats and the Rebels.

DESTRUCTION OF THE GUNBOAT IRON AGE

SAFETY OF ALL HANDS,

&c., &c., &c.

The Wilmington blockade is now superintended by Rear Admiral Lee in person, and letters from our correspondents show the good results. We announced some time ago that quite a number of the blockaders were found quietly lying at Beaufort when they should have been cruising. Their excuse was they were coaling. That notice of their dereliction of duty has wakened them up, and now they are busy at work breaking up the blockade business. Admiral Lee and the officers of the fleet are determined that the port of Wilmington shall be sealed up, and from present appearances it will soon be accomplished. We append despatches from one of our correspondents on that station.

OFF WILMINGTON, Jan. 11, 1864.

On the afternoon of the 3d inst. Admiral Lee, in the Fah kee, chased the Bendigo ashore, ten miles southwest of Fort Caswell. On the 4th inst. four of our fleet spent most of the day in raising shot and shell on her, although she had been burned on the day previous by the Fah-kee. On the 9th it was decided to tow her hull off the beach, and the day was spent in bailing and pumping her out, heaving up her anchors and in plugging up shotholes; for, comparatively speaking, she was uninjured, and, as she was an iron vessel, her hull would be worth about $50,000.

At noon on the 10th inst. the Montgomery and Iron Age attempted to tow her off. Advantage was taken of the high tide. While tugging at her the eddy swept both boats around on the bar, which made out at right angles from them, and is made by the current cutting into Folly Inlet. The Montgomery succeeded in getting off; but the Iron Age stuck fast, although the Daylight and Governor Buckingham done their utmost to relieve her from her perilous situation. She was in time, and after every effort proved unavailing, abandoned. About four o'clock on the morning of the 11th inst., after having been set on fire, she blew up. Nothing could have exceeded the magnificence of the scene. Leaping in mid-heaven for a moment stood a pillar of white fire, surmounted by a dome of fiery red clouds. Bursting shells, brands of the burning wreck, the air filled with glowing embers, made up a picture seldom witnessed and never to be forgotten.

When daylight came, not a mile further south, hard and fast ashore, was discovered another blockade runner. She was probably chased the day previous by the other division of our fleet. An attempt was made to get her off, and a hawser was sent out; but the rebels killed one of the boat's crew and wounded another. The Emma sent a boat, but recalled it. Admiral Lee then ordered the Minnesota to open fire on the rebels and the blockade runner. She was loaded with saltpetre and cartridges.

[The vessel alluded to is probably the Hero.—EDS. HERALD.]

WILMINGTON BLOCKADE, WESTERN BAR, Jan. 13, 1864.

Since my last a blockade runner, called the Ranger, has been run on the shore and destroyed by our fleet. The vessel was boarded before being set on fire. The rebel soldiers from the shore fired upon the officers and men boarding her, and the result was, one man from the Minnesota was killed and one wounded. This happened on the morning of the 11th.

On the afternoon of the same day a sail was seen off shore, outside from the fleet, and the Aries went out under full steam, and still another blockade runner, a steamer, was destroyed in the same way. I do not know the particulars. These two steamers were without doubt misled during the night by not having the lightship for a guide.

The Bendigo, mentioned in my last, being an iron steamer, only the inside was injured, and an attempt was made on the 10th to haul her hull off. The Iron Age, the Montgomery and the Daylight went in for the purpose, but with ut a good result. The Montgomery got aground, and for a time it was thought she would be lost; but, her engines being very powerful, she was backed off without sustaining the slightest injury.

The Iron Age next got ashore, and could not be got off. During the night her guns were thrown over and the steamer blown up. The scene was grand and sublime. The concussion was felt by vessels four miles distant. I have not time to give particulars.

The Montgomery for a day or two past has been shelling rebel cavalry, &c., along the coast, the route they had taken to get to the place where the Iron Age was aground; also the Bendigo and Ranger, all within a short distance of each other, near what is called Lockwood's Folly. Four wrecks are now seen close together near this place, with those I have already named. To these must be added a steamer destroyed by the Marratanza and Montgomery in September last.

The times here are exciting, and the blockade runners are fast being used up.

The officers and crew of the Iron Age were all transferred to the other vessels of the fleet.

The two blockade runners destroyed were inward bound.

Admiral Lee has been here all through these actions.

While the Montgomery was firing at the enemy on the coast a house in the background was set on fire by a bursting shell. Two baggage wagons on the shore were also upset.

The following is a list of the officers of the Iron Age:—

Lieutenant Commander—Edward E. Stone.
Acting Ensign and Executive Officer—Robert W. Roundtree.
Acting Ensigns—E. T. Manter, Ulrick Fieldberg, John H. Putnam, William C. McDermott.
Acting Assistant Paymaster—N. C. Freeman.
Acting Assistant Surgeon—James E. Barbour.
Engineers—Acting Second Assistant, Edward F. McGinnis; Acting Third Assistants, —— Hamilton, David Reed, James Curran, George H Brown.
Acting Master's Mates—Benj. Atwood, John McGovern.
Captain's Clerk—Charles M. Collins.

Police Intelligence.

OFFERING COUNTERFEIT MONEY.—Henry Stockman, driver of a coal cart, was arrested by officer Moran, of the Fourth precinct, charged with offering a counterfeit $2 bill on the Bank of Albion, of this State, to James Hutchison, of 153 Chatham street. Being told that the note was worthless, Stockman offered Mr. Hutchison a counterfeit $10 bill, purporting to be a genuine issue of the New England Pacific Bank, at North Providence, R. I. The prisoner was taken before Justice Hogan and locked up for trial. The $10 counterfeit has the appearance of being genuine, and is well calculated to deceive even good judges of money.

Margaret Baker, a boarding house keeper, living at 762 Second avenue, was arrested by officer Ackerman, of the Ninth precinct, charged with offering a counterfeit $10 bill on the bank of Geauga, at Painesville, Ohio, at the store of Augusta Aaronson, 170 Sixth avenue. Not being able to satisfactorily explain her possession of the bill, Justice Dodge committed the accused for trial.

ARREST FOR THROWING VITRIOL.—Detective King arrested Fannie Raymond, a young woman living at No 45 East Houston street, on the charge of having maliciously thr