THE ALBANY LOBBY.

The Legislative Organ and Who Grinds It.

SKETCH OF THE LOBBY, PAST AND PRESENT.

The Real Law Making Power.

THURLOW WEED---HIS RISE AND FALL.

&c. &c. &c.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE OF THE HERALD.

ALBANY, Feb. 18, 1867.

Article 3, section 1, of the constitution of 1846 opens with the declaration that "the legislative power of this State shall be vested in a Senate and Assembly," and most people undoubtedly fancy that such is really the fact. But they fancy a thing that is not, and indulge in a most stupendous delusion. The legislative power of this State is vested in a "lobby," the constitution to the contrary notwithstanding. The lobby is the real law-making power, while Senators and Assemblymen are mere ornamental figures, like the little wooden men and women on the organ of a wandering minstrel, which are set in motion by cunning mechanism hidden from the spectator's sight. The musician turns the handle of his organ, sets the figures hopping and jumping about, and grinds out the music to the delight of the eyes and ears of his spectators. As the musician is to the organ the lobby is to the Legislature. The lobby turns the handle of the mammoth legislative organ, this brings into play a variety of springs and complicated contrivances, causes the figures up stairs and down stairs to move apparently in a very lifelike and serious manner, and grinds out your law for you in the most natural looking style imaginable.

It is a very delicate performance and quite entertaining at times. As an operation exhibiting a high degree of mechanical skill it is wonderful and might astonish the famous carpenter-mason of Salbris himself, of whom Victor Hugo tells us in his "Toilers of the Sea." But is it the correct thing after all, this cheating of the people out of their most sacred rights—the right to make laws to govern themselves through their legally chosen representatives? It is not only not correct, but it is a gross violation of the provisions of the constitution. If the lobby is the real governing power, of what use is it annually to go through with the expensive luxury of electing members to the Legislature? Better to omit the custom, abolish it altogether, and transfer openly the entire lawmaking power to the lobby, which now exercises it secretly. That would at least have the merit of being no cheat.

But to treat the subject seriously. If all one hears of the past and present be true, legislation at Albany is controlled by a few influential men, of whom the public knows little or nothing, and who have little or no interest in common with the public. No bills of a private or corporate nature can be passed without the assistance of these few influential men (about thirty in number), and their good will and services are only to be obtained for a valuable consideration. Sometimes the consideration is friendship; sometimes it is an interest in the subject matter of legislation, and sometimes it is money. These thirty influential men profess to be the conscience keepers of members, their intimate and bosom friends, and in many cases proprietors of their bodies and souls. They boast that they can make or unmake bills, and are regularly engaged frequently to make and unmake. Some are the recognized and paid agents of millionaires interested in promoting or slaughtering certain kinds of legislation. Others represent small corporation or private claimants; still others come on their own hook and hover about here, like Wilkins Micawber, "waiting for something to turn up." They seldom go away without turning up something or somebody to their own satisfaction. The best hotels and the highest rates of board are patronized by these enterprising adventurers. They live well generally, smoke and drink much, but sleep very homeopathically. They make themselves ubiquitous during the Legislative sessions, dogging members as closely as shadows. In 1859 Governor Morgan, in his message, referred to them briefly thus:—

The duties of legislators, always arduous and perplexing, have been rendered more distasteful and irksome of late years by the growth and prevalence of the practice of employing agents to surround them in their halls and to waylay them in their walks with representations and importunities in behalf of bills in which a personal or corporate interest is involved. These agents gain access to the legislative halls, and follow members even to their seats. So general and so annoying is this practice that lobbying has become a trade, often gainful but never creditable. Its existence and its excesses tend to create a general repugnance to all bills involving a private interest. A claim or other bill affecting a private interest may properly be explained and commended by the person or party interested, or by some one authorized to speak in his behalf, who should confine his efforts mainly to the committee or committees having in charge the measure in question. Beyond this lobbying is objectionable; and when it follows members to their private apartments, and intrudes upon hours reserved for studying documents and preparing reports, is insufferable. It is my deliberate purpose to discourage these practices, and to disapprove all bills which I shall have good reasons to believe have been passed by such means.

SHORT HISTORY OF THE LOBBY.

I don't know that anything like a regular, connected history of the New York lobby has ever been written, and I do not intend to attempt the task. But a short sketch of the institution with little photographs of its leading ornaments of the present day will not be out of season during this year's session. When and where lobbying had its origin I am unable to state. Perhaps it always existed where legislative bodies prevailed. But its establishment as a regularly organized institution does not date further back than some twenty years ago. Thurlow Weed is the man who built it up and kept it together for many years with rare tact and ability. How well "the old man" managed his cards, how often he carried the highest trumps and won the game in dashing style, it is hardly necessary to dwell upon. Thurlow for years was the absolute despot of the lobby. He ruled with almost undisputed sway, and held the reins of power in his hand with an iron grip. All who entered his dominions had to do homage before the throne of King Thurlow, and obeyed his commands like loyal and dutiful subjects. In those days his associates were such men as Grinnell, Simeon Draper, Jim Bowen (since Police Commissioner and Brigadier General, and now Commissioner of Charities), "Farmer" Avell, of Livingston county; Hollis White, of Niagara Falls; Vivus W. Smith, of Syracuse; Palmer V. Kellogg, of Utica; O. B. Matthson, of Utica; Sheriff Holmes, of Penn Yan; Oliver Ladue, of Little Falls; Austin Myers, of Syracuse, and others of the same stamp. Some of them are now passed into another sphere, but most of them still live, and no doubt look back to the glorious days of King Thurlow's zenith with feelings of pleasant regret. "Farmer" Avell was recently appointed Collector of Internal Revenue by President Johnson, but was rejected by the Senate.

It would be wrong to represent all the parties I have named as regular lobbyists. They were not so strictly within the meaning of the word, but came whenever "old man Weed" called, and gave their assistance with a good will. Some of them expected a large interest in jobs, others stipulated for a money consideration, some asked merely for their expenses, while some more took a hand in merely for the love of the thing, considering it honor enough to be summoned by "the old man" or to show letters from the veteran chief calling them to Albany. No man ever before or since exercised the same amount of control as Thurlow; but like all other sovereigns, no matter how high or how potent, his authority was sometimes disputed. Occasionally there would be a defection, and some ambitious lobbyist would strike out on his own hook, openly or secretly, but the influence of Thurlow and his numerous satellites would soon squelch the rash mortal who dared attempt competition with the wily manipulator. The squelched mortal would be happy indeed if afterwards he could find refuge under the broad ægis of King Thurlow.

WEED'S POWER ON THE WANE.

It is a very common but true saying that "every dog has his day," and so has every human, not excepting even lobbyists. Thurlow's day was a very long and a very bright one, but it had its end, and power slipped from his hands never, perhaps, to return. About 1854 there came on the scene a new figure which was destined to play a very important part in the history of the New York lobby. This was a pretty tall and a pretty smart figure known as

ABRAM VAN VECHTEN,

or as he is popularly termed among the boys of the capital, "Abe." Brought up in the wit-sharpening school of the law, Abe commenced life as an attorney and counsellor, practised regularly for some time, and made his debut in political life as Adjutant General on the staffs of Governors Hamilton Fish and Washington Hunt. While filling this honorable position he was necessarily brought into contact with the leading spirits of the lobby, and thus picked up some crumbs of curious information as to its ways and means. When the term of his adjutant generalship expired, he went out a wiser if not a better man, and took to the lobby, of which he soon became one of the bright, particular stars. He is entitled to come first among those I intend to sketch, because he was the first man that succeeded in gaining an independent foothold in opposition to the power of Weed & Co., and may be said to be the pioneer of the present guerilla system of lobbying. Van Vechten made his specialty New York city matters, taking charge of the interest of banking and other corporations, which he engineered with much skill and success. He was as often engaged to kill legislation as to promote it, and was about equally reliable in either line. Van Vechten comes of one of the oldest and most respectable Knickerbocker families in the State, and traces back his ancestors to the time of the first settlement of Albany by the Dutch. As a lobbyist he has been one of the most successful, and is now said to be a man of independent fortune. He keeps a large establishment in Albany and lives in good style. In appearance he is decidedly Knickerbockiersh, having many of the peculiar features of the old stock, and a good deal of its thrift and care of worldly goods. He is a man nearly, if not quite, six feet in height, has a sharp eye, is a ready talker, and uses a little Dutch blarneying with good effect. Altogether he is a pleasant enough fellow.

DAN WOOD.

About the same time as Van Vechten's successful effort at independent lobbying, Dan Wood, of Syracuse, turned up as an advocate of canal claims about the halls of legislation and with the members of the Canal Board. He set himself up as an independent in this line, and was quite successful. Indeed his field of operations was in a measure one untrodden by any before him, and he did not, therefore, have to encounter the same opposition as others who invaded the peculiar precincts of long established lobbyists. Mr. Wood may be said, consequently to have built up the canal claim business himself, and it is asserted he did not find it unworthy of his talents. Rumor has it that the smiling, oily and insinuating Dan found the Canals an El Dorado more reliable and certain than California or Australia. Rumor has a slanderous tongue, however, and this may be only one of her malicious inventions. Whether or no, I do not back her up in this instance. Wood, according to Henry Smith, of Albany, is now a "very venerable and experienced gentleman from Onondaga." No longer a member of the third house he is at present the republican leader of the Assembly. He has been a member for many years, and in the present House fills the position of chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means. He is a prosy speaker, but a good worker and a thorough adept in the tricks and intricacies of legislation. He has few of the glittering but some of the solid attributes of a leader: is decidedly better in manipulating a caucus than in discussing a nice point in debate, where eloquence and taking wit are essentials. He is the recognized champion of the canals.

BEN FIELD.

Any history of the lobby, long or short, would be incomplete without some mention of Ben Field, of Albion, Orleans county. It would be wrong, perhaps, to class Benjamin among the regular lobbyists, for he is not one whose aid is to be obtained for mercenary considerations, any more than could Grinnell and others of the same class that flourished in "the good old times," now dead and gone. He does not buy and sell for personal gain, nor does he advocate jobs because he has an interest or prospective share in them. Ben is what may be called a political lobbyist. He has figured in Albany circles for a number of years, and has worked himself up to the position of leader by dint of good management and remarkable shrewdness. Ben was originally a Weed man, like most of the prominent politicians of his party, but he fell out with "the old man" one fine day, and has ever since been one of the most determined, able and industrious opponents of the deposed king of the lobby. He comes here regularly every winter, boards at the Delavan during the legislative term, and occupies himself with lobbying for and against bills for political reasons. About a month or more ago I gave you a sketch of Ben during the excitement attending the Senatorial canvass. It was a faithful photograph as far as it went. Ben is a large, plump, rosy mortal, with a massive head surrounded with plenty of hair and mystery. He is a strange, unfathomable genius, ever moving about with a thoughtful brow, and supposed to be eternally plotting and planning some tremendous scheme or schemes that are to shake Albany to its very centre. He is provokingly reticent, and talks little, like most oracles; never "blathers" nor blurts out his secrets unnecessarily, but gets all he can from everybody else. Ben is interested, I believe, in sleeping cars, and has a nice farm in Albion, Orleans county.

With these preliminary observations as to the lobby in general in the past and present, let me without further ado proceed to sketch the live men of to-day, who seem to control, each in his own way, the machinery of legislation.

It is proper to premise that I do not wish it to be understood that the people whom I have and shall mention come within the descriptions I have already given of the general characteristics of the lobby. Some of them are men who now occupy high social positions, and who are above the breath of low suspicion. This is particularly the case of a few of the old associates of Weed—men who dabbled in lobbying merely for the love and excitement of the thing. But the sketches I am about to give are of individuals whom common fame makes members of the present lobby, and I have no doubt common fame is right. Of one of these individuals, Van Vechten, I have already given a very true and sufficiently correct account, but I may add here that the success which he and Wood met with was the means of inducing others to attempt independent lobbying, and thus was undermined gradually the Weed influence, until now the "Old Man" is a mere cipher, deserted by nearly all his former adherents and totally disregarded by the new men that are springing up all over the State. There is no successor to his power and influence, however. What he wielded is now divided among some score of hungry imitators, each independent of the other, and no one exercising that large and extended sway over both democrats and republicans that so distinguished the Weed era. A great big job has now to be accomplished by a combination among several of these people, effected by nice diplomacy and the most skilful manœuvering, while before the same thing could be done by the simple nod or frown of one man. Verily times have indeed changed!

The leading lobbyists of the present time seem to be A. B. Barber, Abram Van Vechten, Hugh Hastings, George O. Jones, M. P. Bemis, William Richardson, Thomas G. Alvord, Henry Smith, Dan D. Conover, J. C. Carey, Frederick Littlejohn, James J. Belden, Peter C. Ward, Kirk Bruce, C. P. Shaw, Charles H. Thompson, Thomas B. Van Buren, George Sherrill, Waldo Hutchins, O. P. Stuart, John Thompson, D. D. S. Brown, William S. King, Colonel Vandenberg, Jas. B. Swain, Benjamin F. Manniere, Charles Vandervoort, ex-Speaker Hoskins, Croffut, Nelson J. Waterbury, and some members and friends of the Citizens' Association. Behind these, and the real powers who set all the machinery in motion, but who seldom appear here *opis persona*, are such men as George Law, the Vanderbilts, Oliver Charlock, Jacob Sharpe, Peter B. Sweeny, Henry Keep, Joel Wolf, John Kerr, Bill Tweed, Hugh Smith and a host of national, State and municipal officers, besides many business men of the metropolis interested in the passage or slaughter of certain legislation.

HUGH HASTINGS

is one of the most remarkable and prominent among those I have enumerated as actual lobbyists. His first appearance in Albany was in the *rôle* of a bright Irish lad, fresh from the native sod, and overflowing with the love of fun and adventure. He was without friends and without money, but soon managed to fall in with both. One of his earliest occupations was that of clerk to an auctioneer, in which capacity he does not appear to have hammered away much to his own profit pecuniarily. But he attached to him the good will of all the fast young fellows of the town, and by their efforts was soon elevated to the dignity of editor and proprietor of a weekly paper called the *Switch*, a publication which had a meteoric-like existence—short but brilliant. The *Switch* indulged continually in the expensive luxury of sensation libels, and its Celtic proprietor finally met his reward in the shape of a prosecution for defamation of character by a gentleman named Stone (if I am correctly informed), who carried the thing on with so much earnestness that Hastings, it is said, in order to escape a regular trial, publicly apologized for the article he had written, acknowledged its falsity, and in fact performed that very refreshing operation of eating up his own words. This occurred about fifteen years ago, and was a heavy blow to our hero. But he was not to be daunted by such an obstacle, even though his enemies made the most of it. He survived the obloquy necessarily excited against him by this unfortunate incident of his career, and played his points so well that not very long after he was elected Clerk of the Senate. The *Switch*, meantime, had switched itself completely out of existence, and its quondam owner established the *Knickerbocker*—a daily paper—which is still in existence, under the fostering care of the gay but erratic Hastings. Hugh served his term out as Clerk of the Senate, and thereafter took to lobbying, in which he has since become one of the most famous adepts of the day. He soon became quite wealthy, put up a large brown stone mansion in State street, opposite the Capitol, and lived in a style corresponding with his new and elegant establishment. Hugh is what is popularly called "a good fellow." He is lively, makes jokes and spends money freely. His hospitality is genuine and cordial. He takes the world easy, like a philosopher, and has the good sense never to get worried when unpleasant passages in his checkered career are raked up for his mortification by political enemies. Hugh has "a seat" in the House, being one of the regularly appointed reporters of the Assembly, and may be seen any day during the session perched on a somewhat high stool before a still higher desk, with a pen stuck over his left ear and his hands stroking the full-grown whiskers that ornament his smiling countenance. He is said to have had a finger in several very large pies that have been cooked in this virtuous capital, and some state he is now worth about $200,000. His operations are not confined within strict boundaries, but he has been somewhat identified with city bills, and has often worked them through, but sometimes labored to defeat them. He is about forty-five years of age.

A. D. BARBER

is a half brother of Judge Noah Davis, Jr., the late formidable candidate for United States Senator, against Roscoe Conkling and Ira Harris. Barber took a very active part in that contest, and in laboring for the election of Davis found himself, it is said, opposed by the adroit and dashing Hastings, who threw his influence in favor of Conkling. The result of that interesting race is now a matter of history, but it is not generally known how large a share of the secret working and manœuvering was performed by the rival lobbyists, Barber and Hastings. In fact some people say that these two skilful generals together, of course, with the veteran Ben Field and a few others did the chief part of the organizing and procuring of votes. Barber is now a man of about fifty years, and is believed to be worth at least $100,000. Originally he was the keeper of a canal grocery store in the little village of New London, near Utica. While quite young he was sent as a delegate to some of the whig conventions, and showed so much cleverness and utility as a political worker that he acquired quite a name for himself. Some twenty years ago he was made superintendent of canal repairs, and held office as such for ten years, when he was appointed one of the Harbor Masters for New York. His time as Harbor Master expired two years ago. He joined the lobby fifteen years back, and, under the tutelage of Thurlow Weed, soon became a proficient in that peculiar calling. He has ever since been a regular attendant during the Legislative sessions, generally engaged in supporting Weed schemes, but for the last few years on his own hook, promoting such jobs as he could get an interest in. For about five years he has been Thurlow Weed's intimate friend, confidant and adviser.

GEORGE O. JONES

is a plump, jolly, rosy looking customer, fond of cigars and good things generally. George hails from Syracuse, and is one of the sharpest and shrewdest members of the lobby. He commenced his political life as a Know-Nothing during the exciting period when Dan Ullmann (since become famous as the first organizer of colored soldiers) ran for Governor in the triangular contest between himself, Seymour and Clarke. For two or three years he figured as a light in the native American firmament, and then turned up as a member of the hardshell democracy. About the same period he commenced dabbling in legislation, and in a short time became a recognized ornament of the lobby, and a bright one at that. His principal achievements have been the passage of Shaw's iron piers and wharves bill, and some measures of equal importance. He resides in Albany, and devotes his winters to the lobby and his summers to Wall street. He is fond of speculating, and if he is not rich, it is more the fault of Wall street than the lobby. At present he seems to be interested in railroad legislation, and working against commissions.

MATHEW P. DENIS

is the representative of Central Railroad interests here, and also one of the opponents of commissions. He has also a hand in some of the New York railroad schemes, particularly such as George Law has an interest in, and though not a regular annual visitor in the capacity of lobbyist, is justly regarded as one of the shrewdest in the State. Until this winter he had not made his appearance at Albany for three years. Whenever he figures here, however, he takes a very leading part, and this is due as much to his own adroitness as to the fact that he represents George Law, the wealthy and grasping monopolist. I should state that Bemis was one of Weed's selectmen and used often to be called to Albany by "the old man" to perform important services. The skill and success he exhibited on these occasions brought him to the notice of Erastus Corning and George Law, and thus he contracted business relations with two of the most influential men of the State. Bemis was connected with Law's ferry and gridiron railroad schemes. He resides at Mayville, Chautauqua county, and was many years ago clerk of that county. He is a farmer, and has a nice property of between one and two thousand acres. He is said to be now worth nearly half a million. He is a pleasant, gentlemanly fellow.

WILLIAM RICHARDSON

is a gray haired, smooth faced Englishman, who some years ago carried on in an humble way the paper hanging business in Albany. By a lucky combination of circumstances he became Clerk of the Assembly about ten years since, and from being a teetotal temperance lecturer and a demure Baptist deacon, suddenly emerged into a trading politician and successful lobbyist. While Clerk of the House several most important city railroad schemes were passed, and the ex-deacon and Croton water advocate gained great credit for his services in helping the jobs along. He is now President of the Dry Dock Railroad Company, and is snug. Mr. Richardson's name was mixed up recently with a capital joke played on one of the Kings county members. During one of the severe snow storms that occurred a few weeks back the afternoon passenger train of the Harlem Railroad for New York got snow-bound near Chatham Four Corners. Among the passengers were Richardson, the Kings county member in question, and a number of other members, besides some ladies. A good deal of fun and practical joking took place, and the following Sunday an exaggerated account of the whole affair appeared in one of the metropolitan sensation weeklies. Richardson was represented as cutting up capers unbefitting his gray locks and pious antecedents. The Kings county member was the author of the article, and on his return to Albany was alarmed to hear from his friends that Richardson had taken mortal offence at the publication of his name in such a connection. The same evening the member discovered a note on his desk, and on opening it found it to contain the following warlike invitation:—

SIR—In last Sunday's —— I find an article which I think grossly assails my character. Understanding that you are the author of the scurrilous composition, I demand an immediate apology, or warn you I shall chastise you on sight.
WM. RICHARDSON.

The Kings county member looked aghast. He had got himself into a nice fix by his confounded *cacoethes scribendi!* Visions of pistols, coffins and graveyards floated before his mind's eye in a moment. He saw himself a corpse, or his friend Richardson "a dead body" and he a murderer, an outcast from society. He was not married, but there were his constituents, who depended upon him and looked to him to become famous or perish in the attempt. Would he offer himself up a sacrifice to the bloodthirsty ex-deacon, or would he not? That was the question. Would he apologize or fight? He would do the former, and forthwith dashed off an humble explanation to the terrible Richardson. He showed this humble answer to some of his friends, at whose suggestion he tore it up, and resolved to go boldly forth and confront his challenger. Accompanied by two of these friends he sallied out from the Capitol and bent his steps toward the Delavan House. On the way he favored his friends with a singularly accurate and close analysis of the disparity between Richardson and himself in the matter of feet and inches. He demonstrated how readily Richardson, supposing him to be cannibalistically inclined, might "chaw" him (the member) up and reduce him to a pulverized condition in a remarkably short period. He exposed the positive folly and downright impiety of duelling, and strengthened his arguments by some half dozen or more drinks all round at different hotels and restaurants between the Capitol and the Delavan House. At length the latter place was reached, but Richardson was nowhere to be seen, neither in the barroom nor refectory, nor reading room nor office. The more Richardson was not to be seen the more anxious the member was to see him. In fact, the member played a second Winkle to perfection. Inquiries of Mr. McCloskey, the clerk, at last disclosed the important fact that Richardson was not in Albany at all, and that the member consequently had been sold. Subsequent developments showed that the challenge was the invention of some New York member, who desired to test the Kings county member's metle. The coolest part of the proceedings was the protestation of the victimized legislator that he knew all along it was a mere joke, and was only keeping it up himself.

THOMAS G ALVORD

is a too well known public character to require an extended biographical sketch, and I shall merely state that he has been a member of the lobby for many years, looking after the interests of salt manufactories at Syracuse, and that he has at present a nice little job before the Committee on Roads and Bridges. He is one of the proprietors of the Salina and Central Plank Road Company, a corporation given great privileges by the Legislature some years ago, and authorized to charge certain tolls to parties travelling on their road. He now asks for the privilege of increasing the tolls and having the time originally allowed extended for many years. A singular feature of the job is that Alvord has placed before the committee a petition from people living along the road begging that the Legislature allow them to be charged more by Alvord and his company. This, of course, is a humbug on its face, but it is so perfectly cool that it can only be described as the sublimity of impudence. When last I spoke with members of the committee about it they were teetotally opposed to the job. Alvord got Dan Wood to introduce the bill and petition, and had written on the former, "Shove this through," but to little effect. It may have been shoved through since, however, for aught I know to the contrary; for strange things sometimes happen in committees.

J. C. CAREY,

of Brooklyn, figures quite largely and mysteriously here as a lobbyist. He is one of the queer, whispering geniuses who affect an air of profound mystery all the time, and strut about as if their every move was big with the fate of unheard of numbers of jobs, and even legislation itself would have to stand still without them. He would not for the world wish you "good morning" in a tone above a whisper, for fear it might be suspected he was talking of something of no importance. He wears a large diamond cross, on a shirt bosom liberally displayed by a low vest, dresses in black, and cultivates side whiskers, which he delights to stroke. With all his nonsense, however, Carey is a shrewd lobbyist, and was often employed by the late Dean Richmond in matters requiring tact and judgment in the handling. His present job seems to be the Christopher street cross-town railroad scheme, which he works at day and night unceasingly. He is also supposed to be ready to take a hand in, whenever assistance is needed by the Central Railroad folks.

FREDERICK LITTLEJOHN

is made after pretty much the same pattern as Carey, and belongs also to the City of Churches. He is a brother of the able ex-Speaker, Dewitt C. Littlejohn, and is a dark-eyed good looking man, of medium size and fair ability. His hobby this year is the Three Tier Railroad of General Swain, in which he is interested, and by which he swears. Dan. D. Conover, of your city, and Charles Thompson, are also here to assist Swain in his enterprise.

LORENZO SESSIONS

is a brother of the present Senator Walter Sessions. He is from Chautauqua county, the same place as that from which Governor Fenton hails, and is said to possess a very large influence with the amiable gentleman now at the head of the Executive branch of the State government. "Lo" Sessions, as he is familiarly styled, is said to have manifested considerable power in procuring pardons, and to him in connection with a certain New York Alderman is believed to be due the liberation of Zeno Burnham, the auctioneer, about whom there was such a fuss a short time since. There is a queer rumor that young Ketchum's pardon will shortly be insured, through the negotiations of this champion of big criminals. Sessions has the fame of being a very reliable man in anything he undertakes to manage.

CHARLES VANDERVOORT.

It may be William, Frederick, or Henry Augustus Vandervoort, as well as Charles, for I am not sure as to the Christian prefix. But the man himself was originally a reporter on the New York *Evening Express*, next a member of Mayor Woods puffing bureau, next a police clerk, and finally a lobbyist. In the few things he has undertaken he has been quite successful. At present he is striving to change the law as to police clerks, with what prospects I know not.

JAMES J. BELDEN AND KIRK BRUCE

have as their peculiar province of the lobby canal claims, a very extensive and lucrative field. The former was last year in with the Jacob Sharpe railroad combination, but has been counted out this year. He also figured in the baggage express bill. He has the reputation of being a sharp business man and people say he makes piles of greenbacks. He is a large contractor on canal repairs and has considerble employment in attending to his own interests. With the "Canal Ring" he is believed to be on the best of terms. Kirk Bruce is a brother of General Bruce, member from Madison county, and is here to look after (particularly) the Oneida Lake Canal. He lobbies claims through both the Legislature and Canal Board.

EX-SPEAKER HOSKINS AND PETER C. WARD

flit about here occasionally on lobby business. Hoskins is from Wyoming county and Ward from Steuben county. I scarcely know what the former is particularly in search of, but the latter is nursing his old darlings, to wit, roads and bridges and internal affairs of towns and counties.

HENRY SMITH,

better known under the euphonious prefix of "Hank," appears on the scene again, it is supposed in the interest of Jake Sharpe to slaughter things generally and to slaughter the little commission bills of the citizens association. "Hank" is President of your Board of Supervisors," and has such a decided hankering for the good things enjoyed by him in that capacity that he objects to any legislative action having a tendency to curtail or abolish them.

WALDO HUTCHINS, NELSON J. WATERBURY AND ORLANDO STUART

make visits here every other week. Hutchins, with his broad brimmed hat and unctuous countenance, was quite busy during the Senatorial contest working for Greeley, but with little effect. Instead of hoisting the *Tribune* philosopher into office, he managed to hoist a democratic member, Lewis Gregory, from his seat, contested by Colonel Stephen Baker, for the which he is to be well paid, it is to be presumed. Nelson J. Waterbury, when he comes up, has his pockets chuck full of little bills to abolish and reform everything under the municipal sun. His pet measure is one to get himself into the Croton Board, vice Tommy Stephens. Orlando Stuart early in the session appeared as one of the supporters of Judge Davis for United States Senator, but later turned up as an advocate of Carey's cross town railroad scheme and the Citizens' Association bill for a Board of Public Works.

D. D. S. BROWN AND WILLIAM S. KING

are acting as the friends of the underground railroad scheme of our old friend Sam Nowlan, who calls it "the arcade plan." Brown and King are proprietors of the Rochester *Democrat*, and the latter has a seat in the House as a reporter. They are assisted in their efforts by Messrs. Gardner and Smith, friends of the hard struggling Nowlan.

CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW AND JOHN B. DUTCHER

cannot fairly be classed among regular lobbyists, both appearing here simply as the counsel of the Hudson River and Harlem Railroad Companies. I mention them, however, as prominent parties who figure here during the legislative session.

BENJAMIN F. MANNIERE

has quite a number of irons in the fire. Indeed he is one of the great powers at Albany, having at his back so many influential people, and being thoroughly posted in all the dodges and arts of law making and law shaking. His chief projects this winter are one, seeking increased powers for the Board of Police Commissioners, and another to remodel the whole school system of the metropolis as developed in Assemblyman Berryman's bill. Both are highly important measures, and the latter has created a vigorous opposition from nearly every class affected by it. Manniere's antecedents are well known. He was State Senator, United States Provost Marshal in his district during the war, and filled other positions. He is a small man, but full of vitality and inexhaustible in expedients.

For the closing sketches of my picture gallery of lobbyists I have reserved some of the underground and elevated railroad folks, not because they are least important, but because I prefer to wind up, as well as open, with some of the big bugs. Foremost among them I should mention

COLONEL VANDENBURGH,

who is a perfect enthusiast on the subject of a tunnel railroad for the relief of Broadway. He is a civil engineer by profession and is undoubtedly a man of considerable ability and extensive information. He was born somewhere in the interior of the State, but has had the rustic verdancy knocked out of him by travel abroad and close study. Happening to be in London during the construction of the underground railroad there, he became thoroughly acquainted with the subject of tunnelling, ventilation, grades, sewers, gas and water mains, and everything relating to subterranean passage-making. On returning home he found the idea had just been broached before the Legislature of relieving Broadway by a tunnel railway, and he announced himself as an ardent advocate of such a plan. A Canadian named Wilson had submitted to the Legislature a rather impracticable plan for a route down below the sewers and gas and water mains somewhere in the region of Orcus. Colonel Vandenburgh changed the whole design, and prepared one which recommended itself somewhat more strongly to the common sense and critics of the learned Senators and Assemblymen. Ever since he has been the most devoted friend of the tunnel system, and has spent his time and money in improving and forwarding the prospects of his darling scheme. It is his theme of conversation by day and he dreams of it by night. If he falls into a premature grave, it will certainly be from an attack of tunnel on the brain.

CHARLEY SHAW

is Vandenburgh's shadow. Wherever "the Colonel" is there Charley is almost sure to be found, unless it be early in the morning, when Charley's head is snuggled under the bedclothes, while "the Colonel's" is industriously marching up and down the halls of the hotel. Charley is a gay and festive, dapper little body, full of gossip and good nature. He is a distinguished graduate of Yale or Harvard, and a lawyer by profession. He scorns to be called a lobbyist, and believes all lobbyists are his mortal foes; says they regard him as an intruder, and won't tolerate him at all. A smart, industrious little fellow is Shaw, with a tongue that never tires unless his throat is sore, and a brain that is constantly in a ferment. He has been mixed up with a few important schemes, and is now Vandenburgh's indefatigable assistant in the underground railroad project.

THOMAS B. VAN BUREN,

an ex-member of Assembly and a prominent republican of the Twenty-first ward, is another advocate of the Vandenburgh scheme, and, as a lobbyist, is clever. He is said not to object to take a hand in anything that comes in his way.

GENERAL JAMES S. SWAINE

is the originator of the three tier railroad scheme, about which so much has been heard of late, and is one of that class of people who when they take hold of an idea allow themselves to be run away with and stake everything on its success. He is an enthusiast on the subject of his railway plan to relieve Broadway. The General keeps bachelor's hall up here, and keeps plenty on hand for his friends. He is a hard and persistent worker. Fred Littlejohn, Dan Conover and General Serrell support him in his efforts to have his plan sanctioned by law.

JOHN THOMPSON,

the principal party interested in the underground railroad scheme recommended by the special committee of the Senate, is a small man, about Shaw's size, and a very shrewd, sharp fellow. He was originally connected with Vandenburgh, but is now associated with Wolf and other wealthy men of the same stamp. He is aided here by an ex-*Tribune* reporter named Croffut, a sort of a half developed lobbyist, who does the scribbling for Thompson and tries to operate favorably on the correspondents and reporters. Croffut is a fair newspaper man, but of his genius for the lobby there has been little chance to judge yet. Davison, the Pneumatic Railroad man, is also working in the interest of Thompson.

Besides those I have mentioned above there are a few other underground and elevated railroad men, such as Willson, the first projector of a Broadway tunnel plan; Williams, inventor of an elevated mode, and some parties interested in the bulkhead and Yonker's patent projects. But I have given you a sufficiently full account of the lobby for the present, and if I have more that might be added will reserve it for a future paper.

CUBA.

OUR HAVANA CORRESPONDENCE.

Treaty Between St. Domingo and the United States—Gallant Act of the United States Steamer Winooski—Important Failure—Commercial, &c.

HAVANA, Feb. 20, 1867.

The result of my investigations about the Havana mail bag per Eagle, sent to Key West and not returned till recently, is that the bag was erroneously labelled "Key West;" and therefore the delay was caused by your Post Office. The mistake has done a good deal of mischief, without saying anything about the disappointment and confusion which it created.

The Bay of Samana, affording us as good a harbor as we could desire, having, besides many other advantages, a good coal mine, for the supply of our men-of-war, is well worth all the perseverance which our government has brought to bear in that quarter; and Samana must now be supposed to have been finally secured. If it is not in my power to say so officially or upon authority, let me at all events announce to your readers that the "Treaty of amity, commerce, extradition," &c., which our Chargé d'Affaires in St. Domingo, Mr. Sommers Smith, had in hand, has been concluded, and goes by this steamer—the son of Mr. Smith, who arrived here last Sunday, being the bearer of that very interesting document. Mr. Folsom, our Consul at Cape Hayti, accompanies Mr. Smith, in the Columbia. We wish them a safe trip, and congratulate Mr. Sommers Smith, whatever may be the tenor of the treaty.

On Sunday morning last, at half-past ten o'clock, the English Consul happened to meet Mr. Minor, our own representative, and speaking of the disaster consequent upon the wreck of the English ship Martha (recently advised to you), and of there being no English man-of-war at hand to rescue the beings that may have remained on the vessel, Mr. Minor spontaneously offered to send one of our gunboats to the wreck. The generous offer was gladly accepted by the English Consul, and as promptly responded to by the commander of the United States steamer Winooski. The object being to save, if possible, the lives of sixteen of the missing mariners, including the captain, the Winooski left the harbor in less than half an hour, the mate and three of the Martha's men (which had been picked up and brought in here by the Arcadia), serving as the pioneers in the search. When the Winooski got to the wreck, as near as was deemed prudent, the necessary signal swere fired; but, not being replied to, it was evident that no one was on board. The Winooski made a thorough search along the coast, but, not being able to find any of the missing men, she returned yesterday afternoon. As the weather has been fair for several days past it may be presumed that the men have been picked up by some vessel or vessels bound to other ports. A humane act like the present on the part of a man-of-war, which generally have other fish to fry, I could not allow to pass without recording.

I regret to have to register the suspension of the old firm of Don Cosme de la Torriente, merchant and planter, of Matanzas, who owns three large sugar estates, and was always supposed to be immensely rich. The assets, according to book statements, are estimated at more than $5,000,000, and the liabilities at only about $2,500,000. I understand that he offers to pay his creditors in full at the rate of $150,000 for two successive years, and then at the rate of $200,000 annually, until the total extinction of the debt. It is feared that this misfortune will be followed by the stoppage of his brother, Don Antonio, who is one of our wealthy merchant planters. It is besides rumored that the Banco de San Carlos, of Matanzas, being a sufferer from the failure to the extent of $300,000, may fail or have to suspend its payments. Mercantile matters look very dubious, and there is no lack of persons who pretend to foresee a deplorable future. Some predict a real crisis in August; others opine that we shall be in difficulties as early as April or May. All I can say is that the Bank of Barcelona, which was to have remitted a large sum, say $600,000, by the last mail, has failed to do so; and that while the Madrid Bank has its own difficulties to get over, it can scarcely be expected to send the promised million and a half, which I alluded to previously. We have already had half a dozen failures of dry goods dealers since the December panic, and it is feared that more will follow, not only in this, but also in other branches of trade. For these and many other reasons I would merely warn your traders with Cuba, without creating any unnecessary alarm.

As a proof of the prevailing state of things, I can cite the sale at auction of the coffee plantation "Flasencia," near Santiago de Cuba, consisting of eight hundred and twenty-five acres of good land, and including the entire gang of negro slaves, the cattle, buildings, &c., for the sum of $54,000, of which $12,000 in cash, and the balance in four years, without interest.

According to the news from Spain by the last mail the army is to be augmented to two hundred thousand men.

The sugar market is not very lively, and it is difficult for planters to obtain 8 reals at present for No. 12. We have seen very good lots of No. 12½ sold at 8⅛ reals, and No. 15 at 9⅛ reals. The stock in Havana and Matanzas is about 150,000 boxes, against 170,000 at same date last year. That of muscovado compares more favorably, being 11,200 hhds., against 9,800 last year. There is no variation in molasses. The market is dull. Freights to Europe are in fair demand; the supply of tonnage has been better; charters have been made at £2 5s. to £2 7s. 6d. The demand for the United States has improved, and the rates have advanced. The last freight coastwise was effected at $8 per hhd. sugar. Exchange continues firm. Sterling at 14 to 14½ per cent premium. A fair business is done on the United States. New York currency at 23½ a 24 per cent discount, and sixty day gold bills at 2⅛ a 2¼ per cent premium.

MEXICO.

OUR ZACATECAS CORRESPONDENCE.

Ortega Sent to San Luis for Court Martial—Juarez Wants Civil Dissensions to be Avoided—The Mines Near Sombrerete—Description of Fresnillo—Arrival at Zacatecas.

ZACATECAS, Jan. 23, 1867.

We left Durango Monday, January 14, 1867, about six A. M., escorted out of the city by a number of the leading citizens. There was not, however, so much enthusiasm displayed as has heretofore been noticed at other cities and towns. About two P. M. we reached the hacienda of La Punta, where we breakfasted. We afterwards proceeded to the hacienda of San Quentin, which we reached at a quarter to eight P. M—seventeen leagues for the day. The road throughout the day's journey was very rough and the country thickly spread over with volcanic limestone boulders. The valleys traversed are well watered, for Mexico, by the southern branch of the Rio del Mezquital, which flows through Northern Jalisco into the Pacific. The mountains are tumbled about in wild confusion and frequently covered with extensive forests of mezquit and other trees. The lands in the valleys are of a good quality, and, irrigated by the waters of the river, produ