WASHINGTON.

General McMahon's Statement of the Troubles in Paraguay.

GRANT AND THE GOLD RING.

Congress to Inquire Into the Cause of the Wall Street Panic.

MINISTER LOW'S INSTRUCTIONS.

The Conciliatory Policy to Be Pursued Towards the Chinese.

GENERAL GRANT AS A STUDENT.

The Reticent Sphynx Learns to Be a Smooth Politician.

PROPOSED POSTAL REFORMS.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4, 1869.

The Coming Annual Message.

The reports of the various departments of the government will be handed to the President by the 15th inst. The President will then commence upon his first annual message to Congress, which will recommend a number of important subjects of legislation.

No More Interest in the Fisk-Gould Gold Conspiracy—Grant's Denials Conclusive.

The more than nine days' wonder produced by the Fiskiana-Corbiana-Gouldiana Wall street conspiracy seems to have died out completely in this neighborhood. No one bothers himself now about the gallant Admiral Humbug Fisk, or the wily Gould, who prompts him, or the Mephistophelian Corbin, whom Boutwell so well characterized as "a knave or a fool." The fact is, since your correspondent's talk with President Grant on this subject, when the President took occasion to deny *in toto* all the audacious charges of complicity in the gold conspiracy put forth by the arch-conspirators Gould, Fisk and Corbin, and also gave his opinion as to the "moral character" of the Prince of Erie, nobody has thought it worth while to spend any more time in endeavoring to unriddle the thing. In the minds of all but the most bitter partisans President Grant's sweeping denial and his amusing portraiture of the effervescing Fisk were deemed conclusive. The audacious but unsupported declarations of the Gould and Fisk crowd were regarded as too light to put in the balance against the solemn statements of the President in conversation with your correspondent. Hence it is that since that time so little notice has been taken of the continued assaults of Gould and Fisk—assaults as baseless as they are unprincipled and indelicate. All fair-minded people, whether republicans or democrats, or neither, are content with leaving the future investigation and exposure of the conspiracy to the Grand Jury of New York and to the Congressional inquiry which, beyond question, will be ordered in the early part of the coming session. Then the whole truth will be brought to light, and the result will show who have been the guilty contrivers and abettors of the great financial seriocomic drama of 1869. President Grant in the meantime folds his arms calmly and waits. He has nothing to fear, while his notorious maligners, bad as they are, have something to lose, in case the result brings forth the full depth of [illegible] Morally certain as their guilt now appears there are still some people who doubt and hesitate on that point, and among these sceptics are men of substance and wealth, upon whom the conspirators lean as a last support. When these sceptics shall have the film removed from their eyes and are forced to view the conspirators in their true colors, what will become of these wily plotters and schemers? They will no longer be able to hold up their heads among respectable men of business, and even some of their quondam confederates, who passed through the September crash unscathed, will turn upon them the cold shoulder. Perhaps a worse fate than even this may await the conspirators, but it is doubtful whether the merciful fangs of the law can clutch them.

Grant With That Veil Removed.

People who have visited the capital frequently within the last few years note a very marked alteration in Grant now. He is no longer that horrible Sphinx who puzzled all comers. That mysterious mask or veil behind which he concealed so successfully his thoughts has been removed. Grant of to-day is as little like Grant of nine or ten months ago as if he had been transformed into an entirely different person. With all but his most intimate acquaintances he was then cold, silent and impenetrable. Nobody could make head or tail out of him. He might have been copperheadish for aught any member of the republican party could tell, not even excepting the prominent leaders thereof. He was a puzzle—aye, even a terror to the very men who had done most—aside from his own superlative genius—to elevate and honor him. He was voted to be a social iceberg, and gave the chills and fever not only to inquisitive politicians who sought to pump and use him, but likewise to people who only went to pay visits of congratulation and friendship. Now how changed! Seated in his Presidential chair, he is approachable in the highest degree. He deals no longer in those horrible monosyllables. He talks now, and talks not only pleasantly but well. His dreadful reticence had led many to believe that his silence could have only one explanation—inability to talk sensibly. Let some of those people who, nine or ten months ago, ran away from Grant's headquarters disgusted and swearing, only revisit him now. They will find how easy it is to be mistaken. They will find Grant talkative, affable, and, within the proper official limits, communicative.

It is a very natural thing to ask an explanation of this change, and it is not very difficult to give it. Grant was then only the soldier. He had been chosen, it is true, to be the first citizen and magistrate of the republic. But he was unversed in politics; knew nothing of statecraft, knew little of the civil machinery of the government. Like a prudent man about to enter upon a new field of duty, he went to study. He adopted the same plan in this respect as a prudent general. He knew not the strange ground upon which he was about to operate. He was unacquainted with political tactics, and, until he should have posted himself, resolved to remain undisclosed. Hence that impenetrable mask which bothered alike friends and foes. But now he has studied and brushed against all the shrewd political celebrities of the country and feels his own strength. He is assured as to the proper tactics to adopt, and is unhesitating in expressing his views as before he was timid and reserved. The change is decidedly pleasant to all who have anything to do with him. He receives his scores of visitors, male and female, every day with as much ease and affability as the most accomplished of his predecessors in the Presidential chair.

The President and Judge Dent.

The statement in a New York paper that the President had written a second letter to Judge Dent in Mississippi in relation to the elections in that State is incorrect. The only letter written on that subject was that dated August 1, at Long Branch, recently published. The portions omitted in that letter alluded to and sustained General Ames' course in relation to the office-holders in Mississippi who opposed the administration.

The President and the Society of the Army of the Tennessee.

The President to-day addressed a letter to the Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee, stating that the approaching meeting of Congress and the attendant accumulation of public business will prevent his being present at the reunion to be held in Louisville on the 16th and 17th of the present month.

Another Travelling Committee—The Travelling Fund Exhausted.

The sub-committee of the House on elections, appointed to proceed to South Carolina for the purpose of investigating certain election frauds in that State, are detained here for lack of funds. It appears that the contingent fund of the House, upon which these travelling committees are authorized to draw, is exhausted. As the committee are very anxious to go to South Carolina, the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House was on the street to-day trying to raise the wind, in the hope that on the assembling of Congress he will be reimbursed. Raising money under such circumstances is said to be a difficult job; but it is understood the Sergeant-at-Arms was successful, so the committee will be able to go on its way rejoicing.

A Postal Convention—Reforms in the Present System.

Postmaster P. H. Jones, of New York city; Postmaster Bingham, of Philadelphia, and Postmaster Dennison, of Baltimore, arrived here to-day by invitation of Mr. Creswell, who wished to confer with them relative to the advisability of reducing the postage on registered letters and of establishing a general free delivery system throughout the country. Mr. Creswell believes that by abolishing the private box system and employing the carriers to deliver letters and newspapers free and more promptly and expeditiously than at present, especially in the large cities, the general correspondence would be largely increased and a handsome revenue derived by the government. Mr. Creswell considers that quick and more frequent delivery would cause people to correspond more frequently, and probably he is right, for many people who now use the telegraph and private messengers to convey their letters do so merely because the postal facilities are so imperfect, and would naturally abandon the more expensive mode if they could accomplish their ends as well by means of the Post Office, which would do it more cheaply and with less probability of mistakes being committed. In this way, by the augmented number of letters sent by mail, the profits of the department would be increased. At present an immense quantity of room in the post offices of the large cities is given up to the private boxes. The same space rented out for other purposes, it is believed, would, when taken in connection with the increased quantity of mail matter, bring a bigger profit to the government. One example will suffice. In the city of New York, for instance, there are about five thousand boxes given up to private use, bringing an annual rental of about sixty thousand dollars. When the new Post Office is completed the space which would be devoted to private boxes would, it is calculated, bring a yearly rent of some forty or fifty thousand dollars. The same proportion would doubtless exist in other large cities. It is proposed to have a general conference of all the postmasters of the leading cities in the Union in this city next January, when this matter will be generally discussed. As regards registered letters Mr. Creswell is thinking of reducing the postage from twelve to six cents.

The Paraguayan Difficulty—Examination of General McMahon.

The sub-committee of the Committee of the House on Foreign Affairs met to-day at noon. There were present Messrs. Orth, of Indiana, chairman; Wilkinson, of Minnesota, and Swan, of Maryland. Mr. Willard, of Vermont, was absent, and will not arrive for two weeks. The business before the committee is the Paraguayan controversy. General McMahon, being the only witness present, was called. He was examined on the origin of the war between the allies and the Paraguayans, the strength of the armies of each, the manner in which he was received and treated by Lopez, the case of Bliss and Masterman and various other points entering into the Washburn-Lopez-Paraguay difficulty. General McMahon gave a detailed history of the events that led to the war, showing that it was the policy of Brazil to extend her domain and absorb the small South American republics with the ultimate view of extending slavery. The republics lying between Brazil and Paraguay were forced to join the former, as they had neither the will nor the power to resist so formidable an enemy as Brazil. General McMahon had no com- [illegible] of the conduct of Lopez towards himself or the government [illegible] had not attempted to interfere in the affairs of Paraguay, but had confined himself strictly to his duties as Minister of the United States. Lopez, he believed, was favorably disposed towards our government. With regard to the case of Bliss and Masterman General McMahon testified that when he arrived in Paraguay their case had been settled so far as any action on the part of the American Minister was concerned, and he did not feel at liberty to interfere with it without receiving further instructions from the State Department. Masterman being an English subject he did not think he came under his jurisdiction. Being asked his opinion of Bliss, General McMahon replied that he did not think he was a reliable person, and that he would not believe his statements under oath. The committee called General McMahon's attention to the various statements published in the newspapers relative to the opinions entertained at the State Department, on the subject of the Paraguay difficulty, and asked him what he knew about it. He replied that all he knew about it was that the State Department had endorsed his conduct, and he had mentioned this fact to some of his personal friends. The examination will continue on the regular committee days—Tuesday and Thursday of each week. On next Tuesday Mr. Worthington, ex-Minister to the Argentine Republic, will be examined, and on the Thursday following Mr. Webb, late Minister to Brazil.

The Tax on Pork Manufacturers.

The representatives of the Chambers of Commerce of the large cities, who are here to secure a reversal of the decision of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue relative to the tax on pork packers as manufacturers, had an interview with the Commissioner to-day and presented the following letter:—

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4, 1869.

To Hon. C. DELANO, Commissioner of Internal Revenue:—

DEAR SIR—In your decision of the 5th of June, 1869, addressed to John Cornell, Assessor of the Fourth Iowa district, you decide that packers of provisions are subject to a manufacturers' tax on sales, under section four of the act of March 31, 1868, and that they should be assessed as such. As representatives of their respective Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce, the undersigned very respectfully ask that you reconsider your decision, or if you do not feel fully justified in reversing it, that you issue an order suspending the collection of the tax until Congress shall have ample time to pass upon the subject. Feeling confident that Congress never intended to impose a manufacturers' tax on provisions, we have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servants,

BEN. EGGESTON,
For the Chamber of Commerce of Cincinnati.
V. A. TURPIN,
For the Board of Trade, Chicago.
W. H. SCUDDER,
For the Chamber of Commerce, St. Louis.
J. C. CHAMBERLAIN, New York.
JOHN BOTUME, Boston.
C. D. PENNEBAKER, Louisville.

To this the Commissioner replies as follows:—

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4, 1869.

GENTLEMEN—I have received your communication of this date asking me to reconsider my decision of the 5th of June last, contained in a letter to Assessor John Cornell, Fourth Iowa district, that persons engaged in the business of packing pork and rendering and packing lard for sale should be required to pay a special tax as manufacturers and to return their sales in excess of $1,250 quarterly and pay the tax of two dollars per thousand on such excess. I have to say in response that I have very fully considered the matter, and am well satisfied that the decision referred to is correct. The taxes in accordance therewith will continue to be assessed; but in view of the statements made by you in behalf of the Boards of Trade and Commerce and the provision dealers of New York and the pork packers of Louisville, whom you represent, I have concluded to direct collectors to suspend the collection of the tax until the 1st day of January next, which will afford the desired opportunity of applying to Congress for its legislative action on the subject. This is not to be understood as referring to cases other than those expressly described in the decision of the 5th of June last. As to other cases which may by some be deemed to be analogous I do not desire to express any opinions until the questions in such cases are officially presented. Respectfully yours,

C. DELANO, Commissioner.

Decision of the Revenue Commissioner—Taxes on Express Companies.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF INTERNAL REVENUE,
WASHINGTON, Oct. 7, 1869.

SIR—I reply to your letters of July 29 and 22 that, in my opinion, a person, firm or company engaged in the carrying or delivery of money, valuable papers or any articles for pay, upon a vessel engaged in the United States coasting trade, is liable to special tax, under the act of June 30, 1864, section 79, paragraph 50, as amended by the act of July 13, 1866, even though such vessel is regularly enrolled and licensed and does not run on a continuous route. The definition of an express carrier contained in the paragraph above mentioned is twofold—first, a person, firm or company engaged in the carrying or delivery of money, valuable papers or any articles for pay, and, second, any person, firm or company doing an express business. There is no exception in favor of vessels that are enrolled and licensed, although by the last proviso to section 103 certain vessels that have paid special taxes under the internal revenue laws are exempted from liability to enrolment fees. The tax upon gross receipts, section 104, is imposed only upon persons carrying on or doing an express business. While, therefore, persons engaged in carrying articles for pay upon vessels like those above mentioned are all within the first part of the definition and are liable to the special tax imposed by paragraph 50 of section 79, they would not ordinarily be liable to the tax upon gross receipts from an express business. Very respectfully,

C. DELANO, Commissioner.

To R. S. DAVIS, attorney at law, Washington, D. C.

Minister Low's Instructions—The Conciliatory Policy to Be Pursued with China.

Minister Low had an interview yesterday with the President and Secretary of State, at which the various questions relating to the policy to be pursued by this government towards China, and particularly in regard to the large anticipated immigration from that country, were quite fully discussed. Mr. Low's suggestions on these subjects were found to accord with the views entertained by the President and Secretary Fish, and a basis was settled for the former's instructions which will outline the leading features of a policy the details of which he will be allowed the largest liberty in arranging and carrying into effect. The nature of the instructions, now in course of preparation, has not been made public; but it is understood on reliable authority that they contemplate giving a full and fair trial to what is known as "the conciliatory policy."

The Osage Lands in Kansas.

The Commissioner of the Land Office has written a letter to the Register and Receiver at Humboldt, Kansas, relative to entering the Osage lands in that State. The joint resolution of April last confers the privilege of purchasing upon *bona fide* settlers residing thereon, in quantities not exceeding 160 acres to each settler having certain prescribed qualifications as to citizenship. A person who has made a contract to sell the land he may acquire by title under the joint resolution cannot be regarded as a *bona fide* settler.

Internal Revenue Appointments and Assignments.

Supervisor Fulton, of the Maryland district, has been assigned to duty in California, where he will make a thorough investigation into internal revenue affairs in that State. General Cowen, of Ohio, has been requested by Commissioner Delano to accompany Supervisor Fulton to California and aid in the investigation of revenue affairs there. In the absence of Supervisor Fulton, Supervisor Harrison, of New Jersey, will be in charge of the former's district. Supervisor O'Donnell, of New York, is here receiving instructions preparatory to commencing official duties in Northern New York.

The following assessors of internal revenue have been appointed:—D. B. White, for the Fourth district of Virginia, and George W. Ross, for the Second district of Tennessee.

Personal.

General Sherman gave a dinner party at his residence in this city this evening, at which the President, all the members of the Cabinet, Governor Low, Minister to China, and General Marcy were present.

Mr. Orth, member of Congress, has rented a fine residence and will keep house this winter. His family will reach here next week.

General Banks will not arrive in this country from his tour to Europe until the beginning of the session of Congress. The General will attend the opening of the Suez Canal.

UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT.

Railroad Titles to Lands in Iowa—Duties of Common Carriers on the Plains—The Reeside Cases—The Government Pork Contractors.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4, 1869.

No. 181. *Tremont County, Iowa, vs. The Burlington and Missouri Railroad Company. In Error to the Supreme Court of Iowa.*—This was a chancery suit brought by Tremont county to quiet the title to certain lands within her borders, the claim of the county being [illegible] of the Swamp Land Grant act of 1850, and the amendatory act of 1857. The railroad company claims title to the same lands under the railroad grant of May 5, 1856, and amendatory acts and certain acts of the Iowa General Assembly.

The Secretary of the Interior, after a hearing of the parties, adjudged them to belong to the railroad company, and certified accordingly, before the commencement of the suit; but the State Court decreed in favor of the county, and from that decree writ of error is taken to this court. The case involves the construction of the several acts of Congress and of the Iowa Legislature, recited, and the question of the finality of the decision of the Interior Department; also the further question of the authority of the State court to interfere with that decision, in case it is held erroneous. The railroad company maintain that the decision is final, and if not that the State courts are without jurisdiction to review it. The county contends that where the decision of the Interior Department in such cases contravenes substantial rights the courts of the country are open to afford redress. There must be some tribunal to determine the question, and there is no valid reason why the courts of the State should not adjudicate it. The case was submitted on the printed arguments. Messrs. Harney, Ewing and Hall for Tremont county; Rover and Strong for the railroad company.

No. 182. *E. R. Young & Sons, Plaintiffs in Error, vs. William Martin. In Error to the Supreme Court of Utah Territory.*—In July, 1865, the Overland Despatch Company received certain goods at Atchison, Kansas, and agreed with the plaintiff in error to transport them to Salt Lake City. In May, 1866, while the goods were in transit, another agreement was entered into to relieve the Overland Despatch Company from the duty of further carriage, in which the owners stipulated to receive them, free of charge, at Denver, and pay to McWhist & Co., carriers, for the transportation of certain other goods (also received at the same time at Atchison by the Overland Company) to Salt Lake City, according to the terms of the bill of lading then delivered by McWhist & Co. to the Overland Company, and to save the latter harmless from the freight charges of McWhist & Co. The plaintiff in error received the goods from McWhist & Co. without paying freight and the Overland Despatch Company was compelled to pay it. They also, by their agent at Denver, waived the delivery agreed upon there and the goods were carried thence to Salt Lake City by J. C. & J. Irvine, who delivered them to the defendant in error; and the plaintiffs refusing to pay the freight, the Overland Despatch Company paid freight to the Irvines amounting to $2,055 30 and to McWhist & Co. $4,720 59, and claimed a lien on the goods retained for freight on all goods carried. There was a single original shipment having the same point of departure, the same point of delivery, one consignor and one consignee. The plaintiffs in error sued to recover the goods, and the verdict in the District Court of the Territory was for the defendant, sustaining the lien claimed. The plaintiffs in error appealed to the Supreme Court of the Territory and their appeal was dismissed. This writ of error was taken to the judgment of dismissal, the plaintiff in error claiming that under the laws of the Territory the Supreme Court erred in that judgment.

L. De Wolf for plaintiff in error; J. N. Van Cott for defendant.

Nos. 187 and 188. *United States vs. Reeside and Reeside vs. The United States. Appeals from the Court of Claims.*—These cases are familiar from frequent publication. They are appeals from the same judgment and are really one case, brought here in two modes. General Fremont, in August, 1861, being in command of the Department of the West, with headquarters at St. Louis, appointed Reeside, who claimed to be an expert in buying horses, inspector of horses for that department, to be responsible that every horse purchased should be worth the price paid, adding, "You will be allowed two and a half per cent commission." On the same day of his appointment Reeside was directed to go to Cincinnati and purchase 2,000 horses for the service at prices not over $130 per horse. Under this appointment Reeside purchased 5,027 horses, which, by order of General Fremont, were turned over to the quartermasters of the department, by whom vouchers were given to the venders and the horses were put into the military service. The court below held the appointment of Reeside and the agreement for commissions to be unauthorized and void; but finding that Reeside had rendered valuable service, the benefits of which were accepted by the government, he was given a judgment for $4,000, as compensation for the time employed, about four months. From this judgment the government appeals, claiming that Reeside must go to Congress for compensation for his services; and Reeside appeals, claiming that he is entitled to his commissions and expenses, which together amount to $20,876 62.

T. Lyle Dickey, Assistant Attorney General, for the United States. J. D. Fuller, for Reeside.

Nos. 189 and 195.—*United States vs. Speed & Davies, and United States vs. Robert Floyd. Appeals from the Court of Claims.*—In October, 1864, the Secretary of War, through the Commissary General, authorized Major Simonds, of Louisville, to buy hogs and enter into contracts for slaughtering and packing them, to furnish pork for the army. Under this authority Major Simonds made contracts with Floyd and Speed & Davies for slaughtering and packing; and for such work performed the Court of Claims gave judgments as follows:—Speed & Davies, $19,720 80; Floyd, $20,293 80. The government appeals on the grounds that pork packing and curing bacon is not a business within the scope and power of the Secretary of War or his subordinates; that the contract is not binding upon the United States because it contains no provision for its termination, and because there was no advertisement for proposals before the contract was made. The contract is not binding on the United States, because it was by its terms subject to the approval of the Commissary General, and is not binding until so approved. It is not binding, because by a true construction of the contract the claimant was required to slaughter any number of hogs up to 50,000, but the United States was not bound to furnish any specified number. G. L. Dickey, Assistant Attorney General, for government; Hughes, Denner and Peck for claimants.

George Burgess, of Washington, D. C.; B. W. Huntington, of New York, and Reuben Arnold, of Atlanta, Ga., were admitted to the bar.

United States vs. George W. Lane. Appeal from the Court of Claims.—This case involves the detention, in North Carolina waters, of cotton, which, during the rebellion, had been brought from within the rebel lines and under safe conduct of the military authorities of the United States.

OBITUARY.

GEORGE PEABODY.

At half-past eleven o'clock last night, at his residence in Eaton square, London, there passed away from earth a man whose name will ever be remembered and whose memory must ever be cherished so long as the virtues of benevolence and generosity are regarded with approval. Standing almost alone among his fellow-men he taught philanthropists what real philanthropy is—taught the wealthy a lesson whose moral is priceless, because it shows them how, from the measure of their abundance, the poverty of man can be made less irksome without adding to its poignancy or encouraging its disposition to idleness by the degradation of almsgiving. And yet, while the fame of George Peabody springs from his unprecedented philanthropy, we do not here express our sincere regret at the announcement of his death because of that which he gave. Rather let our sorrow arise from the knowledge that if we now look over the broad field of benevolence the central figure towering far above others is no more seen—that nothing now remains but the immortality of good deeds, which, shine as they may in the records of the truly great, are as but tiny gleamings beside the living embodiment of him who created and gave them light. That Mr. Peabody should die was natural. His fate was the inevitable. But never before did death cut down a being of greater service to a world full of misery, of penury and of weakness than he. Wherever Christianity obtains there will a loss be felt. In the two great Anglo-Saxon nations, where his benefactions were conferred, in all parts of the world, where his was a bright example, there will he be mourned with a depth of sincerity hardly fathomable.

And all this, which if spoken of most other men would be a fulsome laudation, is but a feeble, though truthful, tribute to the virtues which distinguished the career of Mr. Peabody.

HIS ANCESTRY.

Mr. Peabody sprung from good old English stock. Six generations back his ancestor was Francis Paybody, of the ancient family of Paybodys, of Leicestershire, in England, who at an early age left St. Albans, in Hertfordshire, and went to New England. For twenty-two years he appears to have resided in various parts of the country, but in 1657 he finally settled at Topfield, a small town in Essex county, Mass., where he ever after resided. The residence that he erected and the mill (the first one in the town) that he built, are standing at the present day, venerable in their two centuries of age. He was wealthy—that is, wealthy compared with his neighbors—and being, in addition, a man of education and respectability, naturally attained to prominence. His wife was Mary, daughter of Reginald Foster, by whom he had fourteen children, from the eldest son of which the late Mr. George Peabody was descended. Francis Paybody died in 1698, at the advanced age of eighty-four years. He left behind a large landed estate, which was divided principally among his six sons. The descendants of these have been distinguished for their mental and moral worth. During our revolutionary struggles they espoused the patriot cause, and their devotion to [illegible] more than once severely tested. By what means and at what time their family name was changed from Paybody to Peabody we are unable to state with any degree of certainty. It is not improbable that it was one of those almost imperceptible changes which often occur, less from design than from accident.

BIRTHPLACE AND EARLY LIFE.

Misfortune appears to have befallen the descendants of Francis Paybody. When, on the 18th of February, 1795, the subject of this sketch was born in the town of Danvers, his parents were persons in very poor circumstances. The boy consequently grew up lacking in the advantages of a good education. Indeed, at this time educational facilities were not so abundant as they now are, and none but the sons and daughters of those in affluent circumstances were able to obtain more knowledge than is embraced in the bare learning how to read and write. In addition the parents of George Peabody were unable to support him for any length of time in idleness, so that even had the system of free schools been as perfect and efficient as they now are, it is extremely doubtful if he would have obtained a more perfect education than he actually received. At the tender age of eleven years he embarked in business as clerk to Mr. Sylvester Proctor, an estimable man, who kept a grocery in Danvers. Three years later he left the shop and lived a year with his grandfather, Mr. Dodge, in Thetford, Vermont, from whence he went in 1811 to Newburyport as clerk to his brother David, who had about that time opened there a dry goods shop. Unfortunately, ill luck pursued him. The business had scarcely been more than started when a disastrous conflagration destroyed the business portion of Newburyport, involving in total ruin a number of persons, among whom was David Peabody. This disaster, though of a most serious character, did not dishearten the lad. Stout of heart and energetic he looked about him for some other means of earning a livelihood. The prospect was by no means favorable. The embargo placed upon American commerce, the great contest between France and England, and the strong probability then existing—afterwards turned into a certainty—of the United States being drawn into the struggle, combined to produce a stagnation in trade which was felt throughout the republic. Business was dull everywhere. The trade that was doing was of the most languid character imaginable. Failures were numerous. Everywhere uncertainty of the future, mingled with anxiety for the present, pervaded the commercial mind. It was, altogether, a most untoward period for a lad of seventeen to begin life upon his own account.

REMOVAL TO GEORGETOWN.

Among his relatives was an uncle—John Peabody—who had done business in Newburyport, and had been looked upon as a man of large means. When the general crash came he succumbed, with many others. In the hope of retrieving his fortunes he moved to the District of Columbia, settling at Georgetown, to which place he invited his nephew to follow him. Being somewhat heavily involved in debt and oppressed by his creditors prudential considerations necessitated his conducting business under a name other than his own. He had every confidence in his nephew, under whose name the business was carried on, and who was entrusted almost entirely with its management. During the two years he remained with his uncle he manifested that aptitude for commercial undertakings which, at a later date, carried him on to fortune. The business, however, was not so successful as it might—and doubtless would—have been had he been left untrammelled. But, although ostensibly the proprietor, he was really but a clerk, and one, too, receiving but small pecuniary compensation for his services. We find it stated that upon the expiration of two years he retired from his uncle's service, mainly because of an apprehension that he would be held liable for claims and engagements which did not belong to him. Of the truth of this statement we have no means of judging. Still it is not improbable, although it is more likely that he was influenced to sever his connection with Mr. John Peabody because of the poor prospect held out by its continuance, and because of opportunities which presented themselves at this period for the bettering of his condition and advancement of his fortunes.

THE WAR OF 1812.

Meanwhile the long threatened war between Great Britain and the United States had broken out. In midsummer of 1812 a British fleet ascended the Potomac and menaced the capital. Patriotic men took up arms in defence of the republic, and among them was George Peabody, then still a lad and exempt from military duty. But the same spirit of patriotism which had actuated his ancestors now influenced him to volunteer in a company of artillery formed at Georgetown, under the command of Colonel George Peter. A few days later he was doing soldier's duty with his company at Fort Warburton. The expected attack was not made by the British, so that no opportunity was afforded for his participation in battle, and on the discharge of the volunteers he returned to his commercial avocations. Previous to this he had served for a brief while at Newburyport, and it was but a short time since he received a grant of 100 acres of land voted by Congress to those who volunteered in defence of the republic during the war with England.

HIS PARTNERSHIP WITH MR. RIGGS.

While Mr. Peabody was engaged in business at Georgetown his steadiness and capacity gained him many friends. Among those who were struck by the ability he displayed was the late Elisha Riggs, afterwards of this city, who died in 1853 deeply regretted. This gentleman proposed to enter into a partnership with the young man in the drapery business, he to furnish the capital. It was not long before the firm was engaged in a profitable business, which was moved to Baltimore in 1815. Seven years later it had become so extensive that branch establishments were opened in New York and Philadelphia. In 1826 Mr. Riggs retired from the firm and Mr. Peabody became the head of it. The relations that existed between the two gentlemen were always of a friendly and confidential character. Each was indebted to the other for numerous favors, not least of which was the business connection which enabled the one to increase his fortune by means of the other's business sagacity and tact, and laid the foundation of that vast wealth which Mr. Pabody turned to so benevolent an account.

MR. PEABODY AS A LONDON BANKER.

Some months after the retirement of Mr. Riggs Mr. Peabody paid his first visit to England for the purpose of purchasing goods. During the succeeding ten years he visited Europe repeatedly for the same purpose, and in 1837 became a permanent resident of London. In 1843 he retired from the business he had pursued so many years and established a commission agency and banking house in the English metropolis. At this time he was already a man of large wealth. He had also performed noteworthy service for the public. During the commercial and financial crisis of 1837 he was appointed by the Maryland Legislature one of three commissioners to negotiate a loan. This duty was none of the lightest. In England all American securities were looked upon with suspicion because of the neglect of some of the States to pay the interest on their debt held abroad and because of the numerous failures which were weekly reported. Mr. Peabody's influence, however, was sufficient to obtain the loan, and in appreciation of his service on this occasion the State afterward officially recorded her obligation "for his generous devotion to the interests and honor of Maryland." During these trying days he struggled manfully to sustain the credit of his native country, and it is not awarding him too much praise to say that the restoration of confidence in the ability and purpose of the United States to pay their debts was due more to his efforts than to those of any other man.

The business which Mr. Peabody did in London was extensive. On both continents he was widely known for his sterling integrity and reliability, so that men were ever ready to place their business in his hands, feeling confident that it would be faithfully transacted and that their interests would be properly attended to. To the fortune which he possessed at the time of his permanent residence in London a large sum, variously estimated at from $20,000,000 to $30,000,000, was added.

HIS DEEDS OF LIBERALITY.

Throughout his life George Peabody was noted for his charitable disposition. To the full extent of his means he had given to the poor. In England Americans in straitened circumstances had only to apply to him to receive a practical illustration of his generosity. One of the first acts of public liberality, which gained him considerable popularity in the United States, was performed in the summer of 1851, during the great exhibition at the Crystal Palace. By reason of Congress refusing to appropriate a sum of money for the purpose, the American department bade fair to make a sorry show in the midst of the productions of all the nations of the earth. In this emergency Mr. Peabody was applied to, and the response was prompt and princely. The entire expense of arranging and garnishing the American department was defrayed by him, and thus, as a biographical writer justly observes, "a private individual did that for his countrymen which their own Congress had shamefully refused to do, and which in every other case had been done by the governments of the nations there represented."

The same liberality was exhibited a year later, when Mr. Henry Grinnell offered his vessel, the Advance, to make a second voyage to the Arctic seas, under Dr. Kane, in search of Sir John Franklin. Congress had been applied to for the means of outfit, and had neglected making an appropriation. The proposed expedition would have been abandoned had not Mr. Peabody generously handed over to Mr. Grinnell the sum of $10,000, which paid the expenses of the voyage.

DEVOTION TO THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION.

The one hundredth anniversary of the corporate existence of Danvers, Mass., occurred on the 16th of June, 1852, and that day was celebrated in a manner befitting the occasion. Among the invitations to attend the festivities was one to George Peabody, who replied, expressing regret that he could not be present to join in the celebration of this the centennial of his native town. He, however, sent the committee a sentiment enclosed in an envelope, "which was not to be opened until his name should be called in due course at the dinner table." After the dinner had been eaten and several speeches made Mr. Peabody's name was called, the envelope opened and this sentiment read:—"Education—A debt due from the present to future generations." In continuation he wrote, "In acknowledgment of the payment of that debt by the generation which preceded me in my native town of Danvers, and to aid in its prompt future discharge, I give to the inhabitants of that town the sum of $20,000 for the promotion of knowledge and morality among them." To this sum he afterwards added largely, the donations altogether exceeding $200,000.

Five years after this event Mr. Peabody paid a visit to the United States, and one of his first acts was to contribute the sum of $300,000 for the founding of an educational institution in his adopted city of Baltimore. To this he afterwards added $200,000, and in 1866 the donation was increased by $500,000, and on the 22d of September last he gave $400,000 more, making a total contribution of $1,400,000. In 1858 the corner stone of the building was laid, but, the rebellion soon after breaking out, its erection and dedication were delayed until after the close of the war. In his letters to the trustees of this institution Mr. Peabody expressed the hope that it would be "so conducted throughout its whole career as to teach political and religious charity, toleration and beneficence, and prove itself to be, in all contingencies and conditions, the true friend of an inestimable Union, of the salutary institutions of free government and of liberty regulated by law."

While in the United States Mr. Peabody was the recipient of marked attention from all classes of people wherever he went. Numerous public receptions were tendered him, all of which were declined, save one in Danvers, which was one of the most enthusiastic that was ever bestowed upon a philanthropist.

HIS GIFT TO THE LONDON POOR.

In 1858 Mr. Peabody returned to England and set about putting into practical effect a scheme of benevolence which had occupied his mind for several years previous. This was "under a sense of gratitude" for his success in England, "to make a donation for the benefit of the poor of London." To this end he consulted his friends C. M. Sampson, Sir James Emerson Tennent, his partner, J. S. Morgan, and the Right Rev. Bishop McIlvaine, of Ohio. In a letter dated "London, March 12, 1862," and addressed to Charles Francis Adams, the United States Minister to England, Lord Stanley, M. P. (now Earl of Derby), and others, whom he appointed trustees, he wrote, after explaining the motives which actuated him:—"My object being to ameliorate the condition of the poor and needy of this great metropolis and to promote their comfort and happiness, I take pleasure in apprising you that I have determined to transfer to you the sum of £150,000, which now stands available for this purpose on the books of Messrs. George Peabody & Co., as you will see by the accompanying correspondence."

This munificent gift was afterwards swelled to the sum of £350,000, or nearly $2,000,000. The English papers were filled with eulogies on this act of philanthropy, which one editor declared almost bewildered him "by its magnitude and splendor." And not only in England but on the Continent and in the United States the same praise was awarded him, and he was at once placed at the head of living philanthropists. Of the success which has attended the Peabody building in London we have not space to speak. They must ever remain a great monument to his memory.

The people of London were not slow in showing their appreciation of his munificence. The freedom of the city was bestowed upon him by the Corporation of London, and at the close of the Working Classes Exhibition in the Guildhall, in 1866, when for the first time he consented to appear in public, he received a welcome so unbounded in its enthusiasm as rarely to be equalled. During the same year, and shortly prior to sailing for America, he was tendered either a baronetcy or the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath. He declined both, but in answer to the question, what gift he would accept, said:—"A letter from the Queen of England, which I may carry across the Atlantic and deposit as a memorial of one of her most faithful sons." The Queen promptly complied with this request, writing Mr. Peabody a most graceful letter of acknowledgment of his "more than princely munificence," and adding to it a portrait of herself. The letter and portrait are both deposited in the Peabody Institute at Danvers.

RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1866.

For the second time since his departure for London in 1837 Mr. Peabody visited America in 1866, and was received with a heartiness and enthusiasm that gratified him greatly. As before, his restless benevolence exhibited itself, and this time with a munificence never before equalled by a private individual. One donation of $1,500,000 was made for a Southern educational fund, to which, on the occasion of his last visit, he added another million. To Phillips Academy in Andover he gave $25,000; to the Newburyport Library, $15,000; to building a new church in Georgetown, Mass., $100,000; to a library in the same town, $16,000; to the Essex Institute at Salem, $140,000; to the library at Thetford, Vt., $5,000; to the Massachusetts Historical Society, in Boston, $20,000; to the Peabody Institute of Archæology, at Cambridge, $150,000; to found a geological branch at Yale College, $150,000; to the Peabody Institute at Baltimore, the additional gift, alluded to above, of $500,000; to the Maryland Historical Society, $20,000; to Kenyon College, Ohio, $25,000; for a library in Georgetown, D. C., $15,000; making altogether considerably over $3,500,000, besides an additional gift to the Peabody Institute at Danvers.

His relatives were also remembered in this lavish distribution of his wealth, he presenting them with various sums, amounting in the aggregate to $1,500,000.

HONORS PAID TO MR. PEABODY.

The unparalleled munificence of Mr. Peabody gave rise to the liveliest enthusiasm in all parts of the country, and was extolled throughout the civilized world. Congress voted him a resolution of thanks and a gold medal as a mark of the republic's appreciation of his services in the cause of education. Several of the State Legislatures passed complimentary resolutions, while from all parts of the country came eulogistic expressions regarding him. No public man was ever received with more sincere pleasure than he wherever he went.

RETURN TO ENGLAND AND LAST VISIT TO AMERICA.

At the close of a year's sojourn in America Mr. Peabody took his departure for England, and early in 1868 made a brief tour of the Continent. While at Rome he was presented to the Pope, who gave him a most flattering reception. Before leaving he presented the charitable institutions of the city with a liberal donation, reported by some correspondents at $1,000,000. The precise sum, however, has never been ascertained. Soon after he proposed to make another visit to America, and the Queen upon learning that he would probably not return to England expressed a desire to see him. He was accordingly presented to her. On the 10th of June he arrived in New York and within a month had presented another $1,000,000 to the Southern Educational Fund. During the summer months he went to White Sulphur Springs, Va., for the benefit of his health, which had become feeble. At one time he was so low that fears were entertained of his life, but by careful nursing he recovered. Shortly before leaving the Springs he presented Washington College (General Lee's) with $50,000, and on the 22d of September donated $400,000 to the Peabody Institute in Baltimore. He made some other donations of smaller amounts, which we cannot at present recall. Indeed, his gifts were so numerous that it almost bewilders one to recount them. The annals of philanthropy do not record any equal to Mr. Peabody in munificence. He seemed happy only when giving of his wealth for benevolent purposes.

During Mr. Peabody's absence from England a statue of him was unveiled in London. The ceremony was performed before a vast concourse of people by the Prince of Wales, who made a speech highly laudatory of Mr. Peabody. This statue was erected by the merchants of London as a mark of their respect and esteem for the distinguished American.

BACK TO ENGLAND TO DIE.

On the 30th of September of the present year Mr. Peabody took his departure for London, to the regret of his fellow citizens, who had hoped that his last days would be spent in his native land. It was not to be so. Soon after his arrival his illness returned, and, as stated in the first lines of this sketch, he died in London yesterday, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

Mr. Peabody never married—a fact that occasioned many speculations. At one time it was rumored that he was about to marry Miss Burdett Coutts, but the rumor proved to be false.

In person Mr. Peabody was tall and well built. His countenance had all the appearance of that benevolence for which he was distinguished, and in manners he was most genial and inviting.

CONCLUSION.

Even as we begun so do we close this sketch by expressing the sincere regret which the announcement of Mr. Peabody's death has occasioned and will occasion. He has left behind him a name as imperishable as civilization, for until civilization ceases it will be cherished and revered as few names are cherished and revered.

Ephraim K. Avery.

Over thirty years ago Ephraim K. Avery was a Methodist minister living in Fall River, Mass. He bore an excellent character, was widely esteemed, not only by the members of his own congregation, but by the townspeople at large, and was looked upon as a truly humble and devout Christian. With the members of his church he was very popular. As a preacher he was talented and eloquent, in social life he was agreeable and entertaining. His influence with the Methodists of Fall River was great, as, indeed, is the influence of all ministers of religion in country places. Their confidence in him was unbounded; with many he was not only a spiritual adviser and instructor, but to these offices was added that of social mentor.

Among the members of Avery's church was a young girl named Susan Maria Cornell. In social rank she was hardly the equal of the preacher; in personal appearance she was no beauty, though it was said that she was prepossessing enough to win the love of another. Mr. Avery seemed to take a strong interest in this girl. He was frequently in her company—so frequent that, had he not been a minister, it is likely the gossips of his town would have associated the names of the two as those of persons either engaged to be married or engaged in an immoral intercourse.

But the relations of "pastor and people" were such that the intimacy gave arise to no scandal. And even if one or two persons uttered a suspicion that all was not right, the utterance was considered so outrageous a slander as to carry its own condemnation with it. It was not until a crisis arose that people discovered in the frequent meetings of the two evidences of guilt. Then every little action was noted as pregnant with wrong, every attention to the girl as proof of immorality, every word uttered as that of the seducer.

How long Susan Cornell and Ephraim Avery were on intimate terms we cannot now say. It might have been three or four years; it might have been but a few months. Certain it is though that one day this intimacy ceased, for on that day the dead body of the girl was discovered by the side of a haystack in an open field some distance from the main road. That there had been a murder was apparent at a glance; that the girl had battled desperately for her life was also evident. The struggle between her and her murderer must have been frightful, for her garments were rent, and upon her person were marks of violence which told an eloquent though mute tale.

A combination of circumstances pointed to Ephraim Avery as the murderer. It would require too much space to record all the evidence which was collected to convict him. In the first place, his relations with the girl were of so intimate a character that people instinctively believed him guilty. He was last seen with her; the investigation of the Coroner proved that she had been betrayed by some one, and the deduction drawn from this fact was that her seducer had murdered her for the purpose of concealing her crime. She might have importuned him to marry her and thus save her from disgrace. There is no telling.

Mr. Avery, on being arrested, declared his innocence of the charge brought against him. When tried there was no lack of witnesses to testify as to their suspicions. Strong as the circumstantial evidence was—and it was strong—it was insufficient to convict. Probably three-fourths of the jurymen believed him guilty, but they were compelled to return a verdict of acquittal, because of the inconclusiveness of the testimony. Had he been tried in Scotland the verdict would have been "Not proven." In the Ecclesiastical Court there was the same result, with the addition that the ministers composing it acquitted him, fully convinced of his innocence.

The excitement which this case occasioned has never been surpassed in the United States. Not even the celebrated Burdell murder so profoundly affected the people. From one end of the republic to the other the theme of conversation was for weeks the tragedy at Fall River. In this city the excitement attained to such a height that Thomas Flynn, the comedian, reaped a harvest of money by producing a drama describing the murder. For this purpose he leased the Richmond Hill theatre, which was located at the corner of Charlton and Varick streets, and performed to crowded houses. Months after the trial the feeling against Avery was intense, and it is related that a travelling showman named Barnum, who afterwards became notorious, narrowly escaped a riding on a rail in Annapolis, his would-be lynchers mistaking him for the minister.

Acquitted by the law, Avery was nevertheless held a criminal by a large majority of the people. He resumed his occupation as a preacher only to find that he had gained a most unenviable notoriety. People flocked to his church, not to hear him preach, but to get a glimpse of the man who had been on trial for his life. And, while this was the case, his social relations became almost unbearable. His warmest friends in the past abandoned him. Except on Sunday, he lived almost solitary and alone, an object of suspicion. If guilty of the murder, he was punished far more effectively than if he had been hanged. If innocent, many years of his existence were passed in martyrdom. From the hour of his arrest the sphere of his usefulness had been contracted to the very narrowest limits. For some years he struggled on, in Richmond, Mass., and other places, hoping for a restoration of that confidence which had once been reposed in him. It never was restored, and at length he retired from the ministry, never more to preach the word of God to his fellow beings.

Mr. Avery moved to Pittsfield, Ohio, then, more than now, a quiet, secluded spot. Here, for over twenty years he pursued the occupation of a farmer. Going among strangers, who knew but little or nothing of his past, he made friends and many. On the 23d of last month, at the age of seventy years, he passed away from earth to the regret of those who knew him. The startling march of events had almost obliterated from the minds of men the great tragedy which suddenly lifted him up to an unwelcome notoriety, and which blasted his after life. Whether he left a family we are not aware; nor, indeed, can we say if he married in Ohio.

As for the unfortunate Susan Cornell, her fate is wrapped in an impenetrable mystery. From the day when her body, disfigured by ghastly wounds, was found hanging to the stack of hay to the present hour the truth regarding her murder has never been revealed. It is not impossible that another than Avery took her life. But if he was the murderer he planned and executed the deed skilfully and preserved his secret well.

Whether guilty or innocent he is now in the presence of his Maker, to receive either punishment for his crime or rewards for the unmerited obloquy that was heaped upon him.