WASHINGTON.

The Back Pay Grab Conversion in the House.

Confirmations by the Senate and the President's Further Nominations.

Mr. Cox's Resolution to Give Cuba Belligerent Rights.

SECRETARY ROBESON WANTS $5,000,000.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9, 1873.

Mr. Cox's Resolution to Acknowledge Cuban Belligerency.

Mr. COX, of New York, led off in the House to-day on recognizing Cuban belligerency with the following joint resolution:—

Whereas the inhabitants of a portion of the Republic of Spain—to wit, the Island of Cuba—have been waging war against Spain for a period of more than five years, the existence of which war has been and is acknowledged by Spain in sundry public acts and documents; and whereas during this war Spain has been allowed to supply her armies and navy from the factories, dockyards and arsenals of this country with every material requisite of warfare, while the Cubans, in direct opposition to a fair spirit of neutrality, have been denied similar advantages to vessels freighted with arms and ammunition destined for the Cubans, in accordance with the legal rights of American citizens to trade in arms with peoples and Powers who are at war, in the exercise of what has been declared by the Executive and a federal court to be a legitimate voyage, which vessels have an violation of law and equity been detained and subjected to delays by an unfair perversion of justice, to the detriment of the interests of American citizens; and whereas measures should be adopted to protect the rights and interests of American citizens engaged in legitimate commerce and to prevent the recurrence of losses which may arise from the fact that this government has not yet acknowledged the existence of the Republic of Cuba; and whereas a majority of the republics of this hemisphere have recognized the belligerence of Cuba, which acts have tacitly been admitted by Spain to be not incompatible with a spirit of amity toward Spain; that Spain herself, by acknowledging the independence of sundry republics on this Continent, once her colonies, has acknowledged the rights they had to wage war for their independence as Cuba is to-day fighting for hers, and that by the principles of international law an inherent right is vested in the sovereignty of every independent nation to declare when convenient the existence of belligerence between other nations, as between inhabitants of any integral portion of such nation, and that the rendering of assistance to all peoples struggling in this hemisphere for the rights of self-government, by all just means not in contravention of international law, is a thorough American policy consonant with the principles on which our American independence is based; and whereas the recent atrocities in connection with the steamer Virginius have given added significance to the action which the United States government should take in the premises, therefore

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That a state of war is hereby recognized between the Republic of Spain and the so-called Republic of Cuba, and we hereby declare both parties entitled to rights conceded to belligerents by international law.

During the reading of the foregoing preamble and resolution the profoundest attention was paid by the House, but on a motion to suspend the rules and adopt them 40 democrats voted in the affirmative, and about 200—the republican strength of the House—insisted that the resolution should come before the House in the regular way.

Demagogue Monday—The Salaries Bill and the Sinners.

To-day will be remembered in the annals of the Forty-third Congress on the side of the House as demagogue Monday. Mr. Hall, of Maine, on behalf of the special committee appointed to boil down the bill sprescented repealing the salary bill, submitted a bill, the substance of which was published in these despatches of yesterday. It followed the refusal of the House to give belligerent rights to Cuba. The House was not in a giving or a forgiving mood. Mr. Dawes wanted the matter fully discussed. The longer his back pay was at interest the greater would be his income. Mr. Garfield went into history for a precedent for back pay. Mr. Poland was factious under his wig about absent back pay grabbers, and wanted a strong resolution served on the unrepentant. Mr. Hawley, of Connecticut, cried "Amen!" So did Mr. Dawes. The Falstaff of the House said he had taken a solemn oath, an iron-clad oath in fact, to obey the laws of the land, which, interpreted, meant—Get all you can; keep all you get. Avaricious members grumbled because the President's salary permitted speculation. Finally Mr. Hale said, when he discovered the House was tired discussing the bill, he would move the previous question, so the debate will begin to-morrow. Two hundred and fifty members at least have 20-minute speeches to make, making the debate on back pay and increase pay something fearful to contemplate.

Secretary Robeson Asks for Appropriations—$4,000,000 for Work Done and $1,000,000 for Work Now Needed.

The Secretary of the Navy to-day sent the following letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, which has been referred to the Committee on Appropriations:—

Under the circumstances of the present emergency, I am compelled to ask that a special appropriation be made to cover the expenses of putting the iron-clads and cruise navy of the United States in a condition for immediate and active service. I have taken measures to put every available iron and wooden ship of our navy in a condition for immediate duty. I have ordered all the ships of the various squadrons within reach to rendezvous at Key West. I am enlisting men to supply and fill up the crews of all our vessels. I have accumulated materials, provisions and supplies for their maintenance and support, and ordnance, ammunition and all the weapons of naval warfare for their use. The circumstances which have constrained the Department to this unusual activity and consequent expenditure are known to you and to the country. The fact that they occurred during the recess of Congress made it necessary that I should myself assume the responsibility of prompt action, relying upon the wisdom and justice of the people and their representatives for support. I have not as yet exceeded the appropriations for the current year, but these measures, with the cost of preparing, transporting and concentrating everything necessary to carry them out have already almost exhausted the money of the working bureaus of the Departments, and this must be supplied at once if the work is to go on. The cost of putting our iron-clads in service, a work already undertaken and, in some instances, far advanced, will also require a large appropriation. The amount required to reimburse the bureaus so as to carry them through this year, and also to put all our available monitors in order, will not be less than $4,000,000. If our force is to be increased or if the powerful double-turreted monitors Miantonomah, Monadnock and Puritan are to be put in condition for usefulness at least $1,000,000 more will be required.

The Secretary had a long conference with the Committee on Appropriations to-day, and will have another to-morrow.

The "Ring" Whipping in "Boss" Shepherd as Governor.

The Washington "Ring," which bears the same relation to Congress that the Casino Español does to the Captain General of Havana, having shaped the District Committee in both Houses to suit their jobs, further demonstrated its power to-day by whipping in the republican Senators to confirm "Boss" Shepherd as Governor. The democratic Senators refused to be present in executive session, lest the odium of the act should taint their political lives forever.

The Chief Justiceship Still Unsettled.

No definite action has yet been taken by the Senate Committee on Judiciary on the nomination of George H. Williams to be Chief Justice. The subject will be resumed in committee on Thursday or Friday next.

The Syndicate Not To Be Revived.

The Syndicate is not in a fair way to be revived. The European bankers refuse to combine with the firm of Jay Cooke, McCullough & Co., and the Secretary of the Treasury is not disposed to humor the exclusive notions of the aristocratic money changers. It will probably be some time before a new Syndicate acceptable to the Treasury Department can be formed.

Confirmations by the Senate.

The Senate in executive session to-day confirmed the following nominations:—

Martin Walker to be District Judge for the Northern District of Ohio, vice Charles T. Sherman, resigned; Nathaniel Shipman, District Judge for Connecticut, vice William D. Shipman, resigned; United States Attorney George P. Sanger, for Massachusetts; W. T. Lurtz, for the Western District of Virginia; William W. Bellson, for the District of Minnesota; Rufus Mallory, for the District of Oregon; Robert N. McLaren, Marshal for the District of Minnesota; George R. Maxwell, Marshal for the Territory of Utah; Henry R. Linderman, Director of the Mint; John Eckfeldt, melter and refiner at the San Francisco Mint; Jefferson T. Babcock, coiner at the San Francisco Mint; Henry C. Ball, of Connecticut, Consul General at Havana; Benjamin Gerrish, Jr., of New Hampshire, Consul at Bordeaux; Joseph J. Henderson, of Oregon, Consul at Amory; Emory F. Beauchamp, of Indiana, Consul at Aix la Chappelle; John L. Near, of Michigan, Consul at Windsor, Canada; Louis E. Cropsey, of Nebraska, Consul at Chemnitz; A. Bridgeland, of Indiana, Consul at Havre; Samuel L. Glasgow, of Iowa, Consul at Glasgow; Isaac H. Moulton, Surveyor of Customs for La Crosse, Wis.; William W. Copeland, Surveyor of Customs for Omaha, Neb.; H. F. Carter, Surveyor of Customs for St. Joseph, Mo.

Collectors of Internal Revenue.—William B. Elliott, First Pennsylvania; Edward H. Chase, Twelfth Pennsylvania; David F. Williams, Fifteenth Pennsylvania; Jonathan Merriman, Eighth Illinois; John Tillson, Fourth Illinois; Adam Vose, Third Illinois; William L. Pierwald, Fourth Virginia; Alva C. Knight, for Florida; Andrew P. Shattuck, First Mississippi; David F. Hollister, Second Connecticut; Benjamin F. Wallis, Ninth Massachusetts.

A. R. Easton, of Missouri, to be Pension Agent at St. Louis; David S. Goodloe, Pension Agent at Covington, Ky.; Alexander R. Shepard, Governor of the District of Columbia; Samuel Gedney, to be a member of the Council of the Legislative Assembly of the District of Columbia; John R. Blade and Henry A. Willard to be members of the Board of Public Works of the District of Columbia; Richard Harrington to be Secretary of the District of Columbia; John M. Rhodes, of Connecticut to be Third Lieutenant in the Revenue Service; Frederick L. Rockwood, of Maine, Third Lieutenant in the Revenue Service; Frederick A. Connor, of Massachusetts, to be Second Lieutenant in the Revenue Service.

Postmasters.—Henry H. Howe, Ithaca, N. J.; James McLean, Mercer, Pa.; Newton Wells, Renova, Pa.; James A. Gibson, Foxburg, Pa.; A. O. Newpheo, Millersville, Pa.; O. O. Tichenor, Conneantville, Pa.; Benjamin F. Ensingle, Pittston, Pa.; James S. Slocum, Scranton, Pa.; John A. Wyler, Allegheny, Pa.; Thomas D. Thomas, Hyde Park, Pa.; Leander M. Morton, Milton, Pa., Robert Dennison, Warren, Pa.; John S. Wilgus, Brownsville, Pa.; Robert W. Cram, Petrolia, Pa.; J. E. West, St. Cloud, Minn; Joseph Bobteller, New Ulm, Minn; John A. Harmon, Staunton, Va; George W. Parmenter, Brandon, Vt.; J. H. Orcutt, Northfield, Vt.; R. W. Clark, Brattleboro, Vt.; Russel Hyde, Bellows Falls, Vt.; William Marland, Andover, Mass.; Augustus T. Jones, Nort Bridgewater, Mass.; Francis P. Vincent, Vineyard Grove, Mass.; Silas P. Blodgett, Hyde Park, Mass.; Rufus C. Wood, Canton, Mass; John B. Bass, Quincy, Mass.; David W. Low, Gloucester, Mass.; Henry A. Willis, Thomaston, Me.; James W. Wakefield, Bath, Me.; David A. Baldwin, New Milford, Conn.; John Brown, Willimantic, Conn.

Nominations Sent by the President to the Senate.

The President sent the following nominations to the Senate to-day:—

Postmasters.—Gerge B. Roberts, at Rochester, N. H.; Mrs. H. A. Poland, at North Brookfield, Mass.; Bartlett Bent, at Middletown, Conn.; Charles E. Bristol, at Ansonia, Conn.; James W. Hill, at Waterbury, Conn.; Miles W. Brown, at East New York, N. Y.; Jesse E. Wills, at Carthagena, N. Y.; Joseph Hudson, at Peekskill, N. Y.; William Ward, at Newark, N. J.; L. D. Williams, at Meadville, Pa.; Wm. M. Pyle, at Wilmington, Del.; O. H. Pattie, at Warrington, Va.; Wm. E. Williams, at Orangeburg Court House, S. C.; A. S. Richardson, at Chester Court House, S. C.; Nelson M. Page, at Fort Dodge, Iowa; L. A. Hamlin, at Owasco, Mich.; M. L. Demotte, at Lexington, Mo.; William H. Gilliam, at Seattle, W. T.; William H. Mann, at Gillman, Ill.; H. L. Boyce, at Sycamour, Ill.; Lucius Whitney, at Morris, Ill.; C. Y. Long, at Carthage, Ill.; R. J. McKnight, at Verden, Ill.; Emory Gregg, at Fairbury, Ill.; Cadet Taylor, at Wenona, Ill.; John R. Cameron, at Ottawa, Ill.; Eliza J. Graves, at Onarga, Ill.; Mrs. R. Tritt, at Farmer City, Ill.; Thomas Moore, at Metropolis City, Ill.; Daniel C. Hitt, at Urbana, Ohio; Mrs. Lavenia Adair, at Portsmouth, Ohio; Rufus A. Temple, at Santa Rosa, Cal.; M. J. Wright, at Vallejo, Cal.; John R. Johnston, at Crete, Neb.; A. B. Chamberlain, at Ashland, Neb.; and Howard Wells, to be an assistant surgeon in the navy.

FLOGGING SCHOLARS BARBAROUS.

Letter from a Father.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., Dec. 7, 1873.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—

I wish with you and every sensible man to raise my voice against a return to the barbarous practice of corporal punishment in our public schools, and I send you the following extract from a medical work by an eminent physician in London, a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and formerly President of the Queen's College Medico-Chirurgical Society. He says:—

I consider corporal punishment in schools decidedly injurious both to body and mind. Is it not painful to witness the pale cheeks and the dejected looks of those boys who are often flogged? If their tempers are mild their spirits are broken; if their dispositions are at all obstinate they become hardened and wilful and are made little better than brutes. A boy who is often flogged loses that noble ingenuousness and fine sensibility so characteristic of youth. He looks upon his school as his prison and his master as his jailor, and, as he grows up to manhood, hates and despises the man who has flogged him. Corporal punishment is revolting, disgusting and demoralizing to the boy and is degrading to the schoolmaster as a man and as a Christian. If schoolmasters must flog let them flog their own sons, if they must ruin the tempers, the dispositions and the constitutions of boys they have more right to practise upon their own than on other people's children. Oh, that parents would raise—and that with no uncertain sound—their voices against such abominations, and the detestable cane would soon be banished the schoolroom! "I am confident that no boy," says Addison, "who will not be allured by letters without blows will ever be brought to anything with them. A great or good mind must necessarily be the worse for such indignities, and it is a sad change to lose any of its virtue for the improvement of its knowledge. No one has gone through what they call a great school but must have remembered to have seen children of excellent and ingenuous natures (as have afterwards appeared in manhood)—I say no man has passed through this way of education but must have seen an ingenuous creature, expiring with shame, with pale looks, beseeching sorrow and silent tears throw up its honest eyes and kneel on its tender sneer to an inexorable blockhead to be forgiven the false quantity of a word in making a Latin verse. The child is punished and the next day he commits a like crime and so a third, with the same consequence. I would fain ask any reasonable man whether this lad, in the simplicity of his native innocence, full of shame and capable of any impression from that grace of soul, was not fitter for any purpose in this life than after that spark of virtue was extinguished in him, though he is able to write 20 Latin verses in an evening?" How often is corporal punishment resorted to at school because the master is in a passion, and vents his rage upon the poor schoolboy's unfortunate back! Oh, the mistaken notion that flogging will make a bad-behaved boy a good boy! It has the contrary effect. "I dunno how 'tis, sir," said an old farm laborer in reply to a question from his clergyman respecting the bad behavior of his children, "I dunno how 'tis; I beats 'em till they're black and blue, and when they come down kneel down to pray I knocks 'em down, and yet they ain't good." In nearly a quarter of a century's experience with soldiers the writer has always, and without a single exception, found that flogging makes a good man bad and a bad man worse. With equal truth it may be said that, without a single exception, flogging makes a good boy bad and a bad boy worse. How many men owe their ferocity to the canings they received when schoolboys? The early floggings hardened and soured them, and blunted their sensibility. Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, one of the best schoolmasters that England ever produced, seldom caned a boy—not more than once or twice during the half year; but when he did cane him he charged for the use of the cane each time in the bill, in order that the parents might know how many times their son had been punished. At some public schools nowadays a boy is caned as many times in a day as the worthy Doctor would have caned him in the whole half-year; but then the Doctor treated the boys as gentlemen and trusted much to their honor. But how many schoolmasters trust much to fear, little to honor and treat them as brute beasts? It might be said that the discipline of a school cannot be maintained unless the boys be frequently caned—that it must be either caning or expulsion. I deny these assertions. Dr. Arnold was able to conduct his school with honor to himself and with immense benefit to the rising generation without either frequent canings or expulsions. The humane plan, however, requires both trouble and patience; and trouble some schoolmasters do not like, and patience they do not possess. The use of the cane is quick, sharp, decisive, and at the time effective. If caning be ever necessary, which it might occasionally be—for the telling of lies, for instance, or for gross immorality—let the head master himself be the only one to perform the operation; but let him not be allowed to delegate it to others. A law ought in all public schools to be in force to that effect. It is high time that something were done to abate such disgraceful practices. Never should a schoolmaster or any one else be allowed to strike a boy upon his head. Boxing of the ears has sometimes caused laceration of the drum of the ear and consequent partial deafness for life. Boxing of the ears injures the brain, and, therefore, the intellect. It is the bounden duty of every man to lift up his voice against the abominable, disgusting and degrading system of flogging and to warn parents of the danger and mischief of sending their sons to those schools where flogging is, except in rare cases, permitted.

Pardon me for having taken up so much of your valuable space, but it is a subject that involves the health, prosperity and happiness of our children, and is, therefore, a most important one to every man who is, like myself, A FATHER.

A MYSTERIOUS ASSAULT.

BOSTON, Dec. 8, 1873.

Mr. Britton, a States street broker, was severely assaulted in his office a few weeks since, and the case has created much interest, from the fact that he has positively refused to divulge the name of his assailant for the reason that it would tend to criminate himself. Mr. Britton has recovered, and the District Attorney has brought the case before the Grand Jury.

The physicians who attended Mr. Britton were summoned, but, on the ground that it would be dishonorable to divulge professional secrets, they refused to testify. Judge Aldrich decided that they must, and they will do so before the Grand Jury on Tuesday. Britton has sworn that he did not know who his assailant was, and is now under arrest on the charge of perjury.

The case has excited much attention because of the belief that very interesting developments may be made if the case comes to trial.

AMUSEMENTS.

"Home" at Wallack's.

The fourth of the present series of new and old comedies was played at Wallack's Theatre last night. The play was Mr. Robertson's charming comedy of "Home," in which Mr. Lester Wallack and Mr. John Gilbert acted their original parts. Mr. Wallack's Colonel John White is a charming piece of acting from beginning to end. He develops every phase of the part with remarkable skill and grace, and presents a most complete picture of what we may call a manly man. It is the manliness of his rendering and its extreme freedom from anything that would not have been done under the circumstances which renders it such a perfect embodiment of the ideal of the dramatist. Mr. Gilbert's Dorrison was full of the unctuousness and beauty of a generous old age and the best test of the actor's merit was in the fact that he did not make his love for the young widow ridiculous but rather created sympathy with its earnestness. Mr. Edward Arnott played Captain Mountraffe, the brother of Mrs. Pinchbeck. It was the first time we have seen this actor under circumstances to test his capacity, and while his performance was not remarkable it was free from that exaggeration which was a temptation difficult to resist. In this he shows a taste and discernment which augurs well for his future. Mr. W. R. Floyd as Bertie Thompson, the betrothed of Lucy Dorrison, played the spooney lover with ease and pleased the audience by his uneffected simplicity. Miss Katherine Rogers was the Mrs. Pinchbeck, a most difficult part, because of the equipoise necessary to make its rendition acceptable. If we found fault with her acting it would be that it was a little too stately, and yet this is much better than to have rendered her Pinchbeck only a pinchbeck, for it is impossible to suppose a country gentleman like Mr. Dorrison would readily fall in love with a woman who possessed the manners and exhibited the tastes of a vulgar adventuress. The same reason induces us to complain of her stateliness, and her acting would have been better if Miss Rogers had thrown into the part a little more of the captivating power which is attributed to Mrs. Pinchbeck. Miss Effie Germon as Lucy was piquant and charming. As a whole the performance was as delightful as it was satisfactory. The farce "Ici on Parle Francais," in which Mr. Harry Beckett appeared, followed the comedy.

"Old Heads and Young Hearts" at the Fifth Avenue.

Last evening Boucicault's sparkling five act comedy of his earlier and less meretricious days, "Old Heads and Young Hearts," was produced at the above theatre with a very perfect cast and with admirable success. It bears the stamp of that period in English comedy when the young rakes of England were seen on the stage from the most hopeful side of their natures. Full of humorous situations, pointed in dialogue, and, like its brother, "London Assurance," never tripping in its action, the purity of its tone is apt to make us regret that the dramatist has not kept his earlier works in view instead of progressing into the glittering badness of the modern French school.

Littleton Coke, as played by Mr. George Clarke, needs but very few touches to be a finished piece of acting. He was in full sympathy with his part, and although easy and unconstrained, wants to feel a trifle more at home in it before it can rank beside the triumphs of comedy. Mr. Charles Fisher, as the bluff, honest-natured brother Tom, was nicely fitted, and presented one of those life pictures which are his forte. The Colonel Rocket of Mr. Frank Hardenberg was as grimly comic as possible, while the simple minded senility of Jesse Rural was well rounded by Mr. Davidge. Lord Charles Roebuck was capitally played by Mr. George Parkes, while Bob, Littleton's servant, was commendably presented by Mr. Owen Fawcett. Miss Davenport as the dashing young widow Lady Alice Hawthorne exhibited the archness and coquetry which the *rôle* demands. Miss Sara Jewett was engaging in her simple part, and the small part of the Countess Pompion was made a feature by Mrs. G. H. Gilbert. It is very seldom that comedy is so completely seen on any stage as in this piece as played last night from the highest to the lowest parts. It generally happens that theatrical companies fit particular plays exactly and are unfitted in others. This wise reflection is intended to lead to the suggestion that this comedy be repeated a few times at least during the season as a contrast to the "emotional" dyspeptic stuff which so enchants managers and public nowadays. "New Year's Eve" is announced for this evening.

Academy of Music—Rentree of Signor Salvini.

Last evening Signor Salvini made his reappearance in this city after an absence of several weeks in Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore and Boston. The audience was large and sympathetic. The play was Voltaire's "Zaira," and when Signor Salvini entered, as Orosmanes, he was greeted with that long and deep applause which is the spontaneous expression of the warmest admiration and respect. The tragedy of "Zaira" has been mentioned in the same breath as "Othello." The only element common to the two is that of jealousy. As an exposition of human character and of the inter-play of contrastive temperaments, of course these two masterpieces will not sustain comparison with one another. It is sufficient to the purpose to admit that Voltaire has handled his theme with a powerful and picturesque touch, and that his manipulation of it has been considerably aided by the local conditions among which it was placed. The tragedy principally concerns itself with three characters—Orosmanes, the Sultan of Jerusalem; Zaira, his slave, and Nerestan, her brother. Orosmanes has become enamored of his captive and seeks to wed her. He is not aware of the relationship between her and Nerestan. In an unfortunate hour Nerestan adjures her by her love to her father to quit the palace of the Sultan and to return to her home and the religion of her ancestors. A letter, furthering this design, and addressed by Nerestan to Zaira, is intercepted by Orosmanes and construed by him into a proposal for an assignation. Blinded by his fury he himself meets Zaira at the place and hour appointed in the note, and stabs her at the moment she thinks she is grasping the hand of Nerestan. Instant upon this comes Orosmanes' discovery of the true relationship between them, when, overcome with horror and remorse, he puts an end to his existence.

This is the plot, stripped of all unessentials. How well suited Signor Salvini is to the portrayal of the violent passions here indicated will easily be understood by all who have seen his Othello. Orosmanes shares to some extent the nature of the Moor, without his intellect. It is a nature full of generosity and sweetness, but capable of being stirred into an activity which seems, for the moment, cruel. It is one of Salvini's chief merits that he differentiates the same passion, giving distinct embodiments to creations whose temperaments are partially alike. His greatest scene last night was the last, after the killing of Zaira, and perhaps the most thrilling point in the entire impersonation was his exclamation of horror at mistaking his cloak, which becomes tangled around him, for the clinging form of the woman he has just deprived of life. Praise scarcely secondary is due to the effort of Piamonti. Her Zaira is an exceedingly gracious, subtle and sweet performance, an exquisite idiom, so to speak, in the language of flesh and blood. "Samson" will be played to-morrow night.

Irish Drama at Booth's Theatre.

Falconer's Irish drama, "Eileen Oge," was played last evening at Booth's Theatre. Mr. and Mrs. Florence performed the parts of Bryan O'Farrell and Bridget Maguire, which they have made well known by the repetition of the play. Setting apart the moral purpose for which all plays are supposed to be written, the reason for the construction of Irish dramas is not apparent. Mr. Florence would probably say they are written, first, for the pleasure of auditors, and secondly as vehicles for display of his talent as an exponent of Irish character. The first reason would be vague, for sketches, such as are given in a variety performance, would serve equally with them; the second reason would be false, as Mr. Florence has no ability as an actor in the Irish drama. He talks the brogue like an inexpert imitator of a language he cannot speak, and he conceives it only necessary to dance a jig or "hurroo" to accurately present the Irish peasant to the imagination. Perhaps it is wrong to blame Mr. Florence for doing exactly as some of his predecessors did and contemporaries do yet. Still, he should not have copied anybody but the peasant whom he assumes to depict.

Niblo's—The Children in the Wood.

The Vokes family appeared at this theatre last evening in a spectacular burlesque, the handiwork of a London playwright. It bears on the bills the formidable title of "original, dramatic, musical, comical, fairy spectacular extravaganza," whatever that may mean. It is an unadulterated spectacle, such as we are favored with nowadays, possessing no claims to be considered dramatic art. It was very handsomely placed on the stage, some of the scenes surpassing the "Black Crook," if not in splendor, in what is more valuable, taste combined with richness of design. The transformation scene at the close is the best of the kind that this theatre has exhibited since spectacle became its specialty. The next feature of the representation that calls for particular commendation is the ballet, which in the groupings of the forest scene in the second act, with children in the disguise of squirrels, formed some very pretty pictures. Mlle. Bontanti, who was a very popular danseuse some years ago at this house, made her *rentrée* and seemed to have lost, during her absence, none of her Terpsichorean talents. It is unnecessary to allude to the plot, or rather the succession of incongruous incidents that necessitated the existence of a cast. The peculiar talents of the Vokes family, the extraordinary agility and elasticity of limb of Fred Vokes, the boydenish and merry character of the sisters, Misses Victoria and Rosina, as the children under the care of the cruel uncle, and the dancing attainments of Miss Jessie and Fawdon, had an ample opportunity for display which they improved to the extent of making a genuine hit in those particulars. Unfortunately there were many songs distributed throughout the spectacle, and the absence of voices capable of singing them rendered their introduction anything but agreeable. Mr. Cahill undertook with success the character of a criminal ruffian. The piece will depend for its success upon the scenery and ballet, and may prove a formidable rival to the hitherto unconquerable "Black Crook."

Mr. John McCullough at the New Park Theatre, Brooklyn.

The merits of Bulwer's "Richelieu" are well known to all playgoers. It is unquestionably, so far as the author is concerned, a great dramatic effort. It is not without faults; but it has many excellencies, and, judging from the past, it is likely long to keep its place on the stage. It is one of those plays which must be got up in a superior style. If the characters are imperfectly sustained and if the stage surroundings are inferior the play degenerates into a farce.

Last night, at the Park Theatre, Brooklyn, this piece was put upon the stage in a style which commanded the admiration of a large and appreciative audience. So far as upholstery went there was little to be desired. It is pleasing, also, to be able to add that in the main the acting was good. The principal characters were well sustained. Mr. John McCullough, who played the title *rôle*, comes to us with a high reputation from the West; and, judging from his first appearance in these parts, we are not unwilling to concede him great ability. It was somewhat daring to select for his first appearance the difficult character of Richelieu. The result, however, justified his daring. From the commencement to the close he never allowed the attention of the audience to flag. Some of the passages were admirably rendered, and he was repeatedly called before the curtain.

BOUCICAULT "LED ASTRAY."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—

The HERALD dramatic critic is scarcely just in yesterday's HERALD to the Union Square Theatre, its management and its company. That the play is not "original" goes without saying. Boucicault, in his egotistical but truthful speech, frankly admitted it. It was, indeed, almost an affront to the intelligence of the public for the daily journals to tell them that Octave Feuillet wrote the "Tentation." Nobody expects originality from Boucicault now-a-days. No man, not even Shakespeare, could keep the leading theatres of two capitals (New York and London) and innumerable provincial towns in plays and be always "original." Let us be satisfied if he is always good. The author of "Old Heads and Young Hearts," "London Assurance," "Louis XI.," "Colleen Bawn" and "Arrah Na Pogue" could not write a bad play if he tried.

"Astray" is not a bad play. Of the moral we need not speak. It was a decided, an electric success. A crammed house hung on the words of the author from the rising of the curtain to its going down. No one left, not even the *blasé* critics. That is a crucial test. When the audience came forth there was a general buzz of congratulation and delight from every quarter. In my opinion it is scarcely right to judge a play by a first night's performance. Crudeness and irregularity must to a certain exist, just as in the trial trip of the most perfectly appointed steam yacht; much is improved to insure future perfection. But "Astray," except in a few minor points, left nothing for author or stage manager to change. One defect was the disproportionate length of the acts. The first act occupied 55 minutes, the last 18. The playing was not bad, as your critic states. His standard of excellence is pitched too high for this work-a-day world. There is not a company in all London which could have represented this comedy with such fire, intelligence, address and well-bred finish of costume and manner as that of the Union Square Theatre, not even Marie Wilton's (Prince of Wales) or Buckstone's Haymarket Company. Granted that Boucicault is egotistical, egotism and genius go hand in hand; but let the public seriously ask itself what would we do on the stage if Boucicault had never written for it?

PLAYGOER.

ART MATTERS.

Brooklyn Art Association.

The fourteenth season of the Brooklyn Art Association was opened last evening by a reception, the twenty-seventh of the kind, held in the Art Building and Academy of Music, of that city. About 400 pictures were hung, but of these only a very small proportion were worth admiration. We remarked yesterday that these receptions always attracted attention; but we should have expressed ourself more accurately if we had added that their attention was due to the very few pictures rather than to the many. It is at all times an ungrateful task to point out what is execrable and thus to confer a certain notoriety upon artists who would do better to remain in obscurity, or to turn their industry into channels for which nature has better fitted them. It is pleasant to be able to add that in the present case such a task is as unnecessary as it is impossible, for the bad artists in Brooklyn, as well as in this city, are petty generally recognized as bad, and we have not the space at command in which to enumerate all the false and mean expressions which last evening disfigured the walls of the Brooklyn Art Building. Turn we to the good things instead. Most of these have already been described in these columns, and are contributions of New York artists. Here and there were interspersed a few pictures by foreign hands, such as some children by Meyer von Bremen, and some cunningly painted figures of fashionably dressed ladies by Caraud. Chief among the excellencies was Mr. J. Beaufain Irving's Meissonier-like elaboration, named "The Recital," which has already been described at length in this department, and which is the most powerful and delicate piece of work Mr. Irving has yet given to the world—so powerful and delicate, in fact, that every connoisseur who sees it will wish that the artist possessed the opportunity of perfecting his studies abroad. Then there are some excellent marines by William F. and M. F. H. de Haas—noticeably by the latter, the "Moonlight View at Sea," which has just been completed by him, was exhibited by Moore, of Union square, for a day or so, and deserves to be classed among Mr. M. F. H. de Haas' best works. Mr. Thom has two of his large pictures; one a snow scene, representing peasants, seen by torchlight, going to church; one a scene in the open country, filled with rustics, in wooden shoes; both pictures painted with that quaint sympathy and rustic life which distinguishes this artist. There are some excellent marines by Bricher, one of the most rapidly advancing of our younger artists in this line of work; a landscape or two by Casilear, full of quiet and peace; some well drawn and well painted cattle by James Hart and several autumn views by his brother William, though not in William Hart's very best style. "The Morning Bath," by Eastman Johnson, justly won much admiration, and so did one or two strong pictures by S. R. Gifford, showing openings among mountain tops, wreathed with mist and showered with sunshine. Mr. E. L. Henry had a small interior, very felicitously hit off, apropos of olden times, when the spinning and delf ware were in vogue. These were among the principal attractions, but as a whole the exhibition was poor. It will be open to the public on and after to-day.

LONG ISLAND CITY.

The Mayoralty Question Determined—Opinion of Mr. William M. Evarts.

The controversy between Mayor Debevoise and certain members of the Board of Aldermen came to a focus a few days since, by a claim being made by Alderman Hunter, that the Mayor, Mr. Debevoise, was under impeachment by the Common Council, and that he, as President of the Board of Aldermen, was entitled to act as Mayor. He thereupon drew a warrant upon the City Treasurer, Mr. Horan, in favor of Solomon B. Noble, for some claim upon the city. It then became necessary for Mr. Horan to have the question determined as to the pretensions of Mr. Hunter, and, for the purpose of obtaining the best legal opinion in the country, he consulted the Mr. William M. Evarts, who, upon consideration of the question, rendered the following opinion, which, of course, authoritatively settles it:—

Mr. Evarts, after citing in full the different sections of the Long Island City charter bearing on the subject, concludes as follows:—

I have examined the charter of Long Island City and considered its true construction, as well as the operation upon the provisions of the charter of the constitution of the State applicable to the subject, and am of opinion that the City Treasurer cannot accept the signature of Mr. Hunter, as "acting Mayor," to warrants, but must require the signature of Mr. Debevoise, the Mayor. The Mayor is not "under impeachement" by valid or operative proceeding of any competent authority, and exercise of the function of Mayor by the President of the Board of Aldermen is wholly unwarrantable.

WILLIAM M. EVARTS.

A YOUNG NEW YORK THIEF IN TRENTON.

A youth giving his name and address as William A. Hewett, No. 530 West Fiftieth street, New York, was arrested in Trenton last evening, on the charge of stealing a watch, two gold rings and a chain from the jewelry store of E. H. Murphy, of the latter city, while bargaining for another lot of jewelry. He acknowledged the theft and pleaded hunger in extenuation. He said he left home three weeks ago in search of a situation in a theatre. He is 15 years of age, dressed with good taste, quick in perception and a very good specimen of the New York lad of the period.

OBITUARY.

Right Rev. Bishop Armitage.

Right Rev. Dr. Armitage, Bishop of Wisconsin, died at St. Luke's Hospital, in this city, on the morning of Sunday, the 7th inst. The news of his demise will bring great surprise, as well as grief, to his many friends and the members of the distant congregation. His more intimate associates were aware, however, that his life has been in deadly peril during some months past, owing to the existence of a tumor at the base of his spine. He came to New York last week to undergo an operation, which proved unsuccessful, for the shock to his system was so great that he survived only a few hours. Up to the last he retained his consciousness, and his death bed was surrounded by his nearest relatives and by several clergymen of his Church to whom he was personally known. After a successful ministry at Portsmouth, N. H., and elsewhere Dr. Armitage was, in 1866, elected Assistant Bishop of Wisconsin, over which diocese Bishop Kemper was then presiding. On the death of Dr. Kemper, in 1870, Bishop Armitage succeeded to his office and title, and as Bishop of Wisconsin has been prominent in the Church. He is described as a scholar of quiet, studious habits. The House of Protestant Bishops has of late years experienced many changes. At present two-thirds of its members date their consecration since 1866. Since Bishop Armitage was consecratrd new bishops have been elected to the dioceses of Maine, Montana, Florida, Georgia, Virginia (assistant), Vermont, Missouri, Oregon, Long Island, Albany, Central New York, Nevada and Arizona, Arkansas, New Hampshire, Maryland, South Carolina, Central Pennsylvania, Niobrara, Cape Palmas, Massachusetts, Colorado and North Carolina (assistant).

The burial of Bishop Armitage will take place in St. John's church, Detroit, on Thursday morning, 11th inst., at eleven o'clock. Prayers will be offered in the chapel of St. Luke's Hospital at half-past eight o'clock on Tuesday morning.

John C. Underwood.

John C. Underwood, United States District Judge for the District of Virginia, died suddenly at a late hour of the night of Sunday, the 7th inst., of apoplexy, at his residence in Washington. During the previous day he seemed in better health and spirits than usual, but was carried from life by an unexpected stroke of illness.

Judge Underwood had passed the middle period of life, verging towards sixty years of age, having had an adventurous and rather eventful career. He was born in Herkimer county, New York, and remained a resident there until about the year 1850. After being admitted to the bar he opened an office in the village. The precise time is not now recollected, but it must have been about the year 1838. At that time he was a member of the whig party. From his defeat for office in the whig party he became an abolitionist, and down to the time he left the county was an Abby Kelly Foster abolitionist. He opened a law office, but he never was able as a lawyer to command much practice. At one time some mischievous boys in the village drove a donkey into his office and left him there all night. Failing as a lawyer he made himself conspicuous in the abolition movement, and occasionally delivered abolition and temperance lectures, until at length he purchased some standing wood and commenced getting out wood and ties for the railroad company. Finally, he broke up and went with his family to Fauquier county, Virginia, to live upon lands which belonged to his wife. His wife is a lady with whom he became acquainted while teaching school in Virginia, and to whom he was married about 1830. She is a Virginian and honorably connected, being a double cousin of the late Confederate General Stonewall Jackson. Mr. Underwood continued to reside on his wife's lands until 1856, when he turned up as a delegate from Virginia in the National Republican Convention which nominated Fremont for President. His sentiments on the subject of slavery were obnoxious to the people, and, therefore, modestly concealed until an opportunity of their safe exposition was afforded, at the time of the Fremont campaign, when, in the midst of a few fishermen, he raised a pole at Occoquan, bearing a flag inscribed with the name of the abolition candidate for the Presidency. This was more than his neighbors felt like enduring, and Mr. Underwood was forced to leave to avoid sharper castigation than he had been wont to inflict on the rising heirs of Fairfax. During the war he was appointed to a judgeship, and the conclusion of peace left him the highest judicial officer in the Eastern district of Virginia. The first official function of a public nature which he discharged was, on the return of peace, to launch against a citizen of the State a proclamation which rendered his name famous, to a very considerable extent. No sooner had this charge been issued than its object was unfolded in the summoning of a cloud of witnesses before the Grand Jury, in order to base on their evidence an indictment against General Lee. The Judge became largely interested in the disposal of confiscated property at the South. The Richmond