

NEW YORK HERALD

BROADWAY AND ANN STREET. JAMES GORDON BENNETT, PROPRIETOR.

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AMUSEMENTS THIS AFTERNOON AND EVENING.

- THEATRE COMIQUE, No. 514 Broadway. NIBLO'S GARDEN, Broadway, between Prince and Houston st. WALLACK'S THEATRE, Broadway and Thirteenth street. WOOD'S MUSEUM, Broadway, corner Thirtieth st. ACADEMY OF MUSIC, Hill street and Irving place. BROADWAY THEATRE, 728 and 730 Broadway. GRAND OPERA HOUSE, Eighth av. and Twenty-third st. FIFTH AVENUE THEATRE, 28th st. and Broadway. BOOTH'S THEATRE, Sixth av. and Twenty-third st. OLYMPIC THEATRE, Broadway, between Houston and Blocker sts. PARK THEATRE, Brooklyn, opposite City Hall. BOWERY THEATRE, Bowery. METROPOLITAN THEATRE, 85 Broadway. MR. F. B. CONWAY'S BROOKLYN THEATRE. TOMY PASTORS' OPERA HOUSE, No. 30 Bowery. BRYANT'S OPERA HOUSE, Twenty-third st. STEINWAY HALL, 14th st. BAIN HALL, Great Jones street. THE RINK, 31st avenue and 64th street. ROBINSON HALL, Sixteenth street. NEW YORK MUSEUM OF ANATOMY, No. 618 Broadway. DR. KAHN'S MUSEUM, No. 688 Broadway.

WITH SUPPLEMENT.

New York, Wednesday, Dec. 24, 1873.

THE NEWS OF YESTERDAY.

To-Day's Contents of the Herald.

- THE VIRGINIUS CASE AND THE HERALD'S SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE! DIPLOMATIC LIES AND JEALOUS JOURNALISM.—LEADING ARTICLE—FOURTH PAGE. THE SPANISH-CUBANS CLAMORING FOR THE VIRGINIUS AND THE UNSLAUGHTERED PRISONERS! THE LONDON TIMES COUNSEL PATIENCE! BRITISH OFFICIAL DENIAL OF THE REMOVED NAVAL CONCENTRATION AT CUBA—FIFTH PAGE. THE REIGN OF TERROR IN CUBA! SANTIAGO DE CUBA FILLED WITH SPANISH SPIES! THE AMERICANS IN PRISON! THE CALUMNIES AGAINST VICE CONSUL SCHMITT—THIRD PAGE. SPAIN'S POLICY ADVERSE TO SLAVERY IN THE WEST INDIES! SENOR SOLER'S VIEWS! HOW HE LOOKS! EMANCIPATION TO BE COMPLETED IN 10 YEARS—CUBA LIBRE—WHO OWNED THE VIRGINIUS—THIRD PAGE. FATHERLAND'S COMING SORROW! ALARMING CONDITION OF THE AGED KAISER! CROWDS SURROUND THE PALACE—FIFTH PAGE. GERMANY ON THE ALERT FOR APPEALS TO FIRE THE FREE HEART OF FRANCE! ITALY SEEKS A RECONCILIATION WITH THE REPUBLIC—FIFTH PAGE. M. BAZAINE SAID TO HAVE FLED FROM FRANCE—PARISIAN BANQUET TO AMERICAN AND BRITISH PEACE PROMOTERS—FIFTH PAGE. THUNDERS FROM THE VATICAN! ANOTHER PAPAL ADDRESS TO CHRISTENDOM—SCARLET FEVER EPIDEMIC IN ENGLAND—FIFTH PAGE. JAY BICHAU'S VICTIMS! NAMES AND RESIDENCES OF THOSE WHO DEPOSITED WITH THE PHILADELPHIA COOKE HOUSE! THE AMOUNT IN EACH CASE—NINTH AND TENTH PAGES. A LONG BRANCH MYSTERY! WAS THIS A RING CULPBIT ON THE WING?—THE BLOODY WORK IN THE BROOM STREE TENE-MENT—THE WEST INDIES—THIRD PAGE. SHERIFF BRENNAN'S AGENTS ON THE TRACK OF THE FUGITIVE GENET! THE DESTINATION AND ROUTE OF "PRINCE HAL"—SAFE HAVENS FOR THE RINGITES—SECOND PAGE. WHEREABOUTS AND INTENTIONS OF THE DISCIPLES OF TWEED WHO LEFT THE CITY FOR THEIR OWN GOOD! THE EIGHTH WARD THUNDERBOLT TO COME TO TIME—THE BENGALISE FAMINE—SECOND PAGE. THE EX-MAYOR'S ABRAIMENT FORMALLY PRESENTED BY COUNSEL FOR THE PEOPLE! ANDREW J. GARVEY'S TESTIMONY—EIGHTH PAGE. THE WHEELS OF FINANCE AND COMMERCE CLOGGED BY THE NATIONAL POLICY! SECRETARY RICHARDSON! A GOOD FEATURE IN EXPORTS! NEW FOREIGN VALUATION—SIXTH PAGE. OUR NATIONAL CENTENARY—YESTERDAY'S PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARDS OF HEALTH, EMIGRATION AND EDUCATION—EIGHTH PAGE. OUB ENGLISH CONTEMPORARY the other day published the startling announcement that the English government had demanded the punishment of Burriel. Now this wonderful news is officially denied in London. JAY COOKE.—We give in to-day's HERALD a full list of the creditors of Jay Cooke & Co., with the liabilities of the house to each creditor; an interesting list and a valuable contribution to the financial history of the time. VERIFYING THE DESPATCHES.—We were told a few months ago that the correspondence about the Virginus outrage between Secretary Fish and the Spanish government could not be given to the public then, because, having been conducted mostly in cipher and by telegraph, it could not be accurately reproduced until verified copies arrived from Europe. Well, eight weeks have elapsed and no verified copies have yet been published. Why is this, Mr. Fish? Is there any danger that the verified copies will show how disgracefully our demands were modified and toned down to oblige our Spanish republican friends? THE KEYSTONE STATE PAYING UP.—According to the proclamation of Governor Hart-rant to that effect Pennsylvania has paid off over a million and a half of her State debt during the past year. This is much better than repudiation, which was the popular talk in the same State not many years ago.

The Virginus Case and the Herald's Special Intelligence—Diplomatic Lies and Jealous Journalism.

During the excitement attendant upon the unlawful seizure of the Virginus and the swift blotting of a large portion of her officers, passengers and crew, there was an evident and probably natural desire on the part of the administration at Washington to allay the popular indignation against the government which was responsible for the outrages, in order that a peaceful solution of the difficulty might be reached. The semi-official reports sent out from the State Department were designed to accomplish this object, and the administration organs, with unquestioning party fidelity, labored to the same end. The HERALD, as an independent journal, owing service only to the people, and more anxious to preserve the honor of the nation than to guard the interests of a political organization, did not think proper to conceal or misrepresent facts, or to aid in deceiving the people as to the true position of our government in the diplomatic negotiations to which the difficulty gave rise. The efficiency of our foreign service enabled us to obtain intelligence which was beyond the reach of our contemporaries, and we considered it our duty to place the news before our readers regardless of the wishes of officials or the interests of individuals. Our special despatches brought the first information of the demands made by our government upon the government at Madrid through our Minister at the Spanish capital, of the heated interview between our Minister and the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs to which those demands gave rise, and of the subsequent resignation of General Sickles. Our contemporaries published a portion of our news, in the absence of any special advices of their own; but some of them subsequently thought proper to question the truth of our reports and to make all sorts of stupid attacks upon their authenticity. They took their cue from the semi-official despatches from Washington, in which it was asserted that no demands had been made by our government upon Spain; that the five points alleged to have been presented to the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs had been concocted in the HERALD office; that no difficulty or controversy had arisen between our representative at Madrid and any member of the Spanish government; that General Sickles had not tendered his resignation, but that, on the contrary, his course throughout the Virginus controversy had met the approval of the administration, while the friendly relations existing between our Minister and our Secretary of State had remained undisturbed. It is possible that these false statements were regarded at Washington as demanded in the interests of peace, and that, in the singular ethics of our State Department, the attempt to place the brand of fraud upon truthful reports was applauded as a shrewd stroke of diplomatic policy. But the ferocity with which certain of the New York journals seized and enlarged upon these "lies diplomatic" indicated a petty envy as unbecoming as it was impolitic.

For time could not fail to substantiate the truth of all our intelligence. The facts of the heated interview between General Sickles and the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and of the hostile demonstrations against the American Legation in Madrid soon appeared in the European papers. The President's Message officially confirmed the despatches of our Madrid correspondent by recapitulating the demands made by our government upon Spain in almost the exact words in which they had been originally transmitted to the HERALD. And now we have the announcement in the party organs of the administration, not only that General Sickles has actually resigned his Spanish mission, but that he has done so on unfriendly terms with the State Department. So that all the news we exclusively obtained in regard to the Virginus negotiations and their consequences is now fully confirmed. We do not call attention to these facts as a mere journalistic triumph, nor do we allude to them for the purpose of assailing the motives or the judgment of our jealous contemporaries. A journal which enrolls upon its recent successful enterprises the Livingstone expedition, the O'Kelly mission, the Modoc campaign, the Polaris triumph, the cable correspondence from the Vienna Exposition, the Ashantee and Khiva missions and the exclusive news in regard to the Virginus controversy can very well afford to smile at the envious snarlings of would-be rivals. Our object is to publish an independent and thorough newspaper, and to trust to an intelligent people for our reward; hence we are indifferent to the personal squabbles and abuse in which certain journalists seem to suppose the public feel a deep interest. We have a higher motive, then, than personal triumph in alluding to the complete verification of our Virginus news. We desire to prove to the administration the folly and danger of that Machiavelian diplomacy in which European nations have been wont to indulge and the advantage of openness and candor in our transactions with foreign Powers. It is unquestionably true that the first demands made of the Spanish government were such as the honor of the American nation required and such as the American people could endorse. They were made distinctly and firmly by our representative at Madrid, and if they had been at once avowed by our government and resolutely adhered to they would have been complied with by Spain. But as soon as the HERALD made them known to the world the mysterious diplomacy of our State Department took alarm, and their authenticity was disclaimed. We foresaw in this retreat of our government from its first and honorable position and a compromise disgraceful in the present and pregnant with danger for the future. We felt convinced that our original demands would be modified and tinkered until every particle of vigor and honor would be extracted from them. We warned the people that such would be the result, and our predictions have been fully verified. The administration and its organs have claimed the triumph of a "peaceful settlement" of the Virginus affair, but what sort of a settlement has in truth been made? The vessel, sneaked out of the port of Havana under the cover of darkness, has been surrendered to us as a thief would restore stolen goods. Every indignity that could be offered has been shown to us in the filthy condition of the vessel when put into our possession. The salute to our flag has been waived, because it would have been

The Dutch Victory in Acheen—A Companion to the Ashantee Expedition.

The Dutch have so long been playing a jacksal game in colonizing that when we learn how manfully they have gone out against Acheen, and how summarily they are reported to have brought the Sultan to his knees we may wonder for what lion they are providing colonial meat. The Dutch have been the most pertinacious of traders in the Eastern Archipelago, and there they hold the most valuable of their possessions. They have made frequent attempts to obtain entire possession of Sumatra. In the Malacca war of 1641 the Sultan of Acheen joined hands with the Dutch, but when he discovered that he was simply acting as a convenient tool, to be cast off when his services would be of no further value, he withdrew from the conflict, and Acheen has managed ever since to maintain a powerful place in the politics of the Archipelago. Her sultans have been, with some rare exceptions, opulent, sagacious, Mahometan princes, carrying on a large trade with the Asiatic Powers. This prosperity was ripe even at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the present capital was an important commercial mart. The European Powers were attracted by the fame and wealth of this end of Sumatra and commercial treaties were eagerly sought by the different nations. The Dutch, meanwhile, watched this little State, containing but four hundred thousand people, with restless jealousy and ambition, but Holland never had the power to gratify her greed in that direction. She found that Acheen was not her only enemy. English influence began to assert itself, and by and by the truth of that well known saying that "Holland has cooked the dinner and England has eaten it" began to pass around the world. One by one the Dutch strongholds passed into England's hands and the hardy enterprises of the Dutch admirals and statesmen became the roadmakers to British success. Even in the past few years Holland has been ceding to England forts, islands and coastwise colonies, and the next generation may see even Holland herself ceded or annexed to her grand and grasping neighbor, Germany. Yet as long as the Low Countries have possessions in the East their ambition will never diminish. In October, 1872, a proposition was made to the Sultan of Acheen for the cession of certain islands to Holland, together with sites for several lighthouses. These propositions were declined by the Sultan Siri, who is a man of progressive ideas, great wealth and fully alive to the necessity of extending and protecting his commercial relations. He said that if any lighthouses were necessary he would provide the beacons, and as to the islands, he would keep them. These complications led to war, and the Bataks prepared an ambush for the Hollanders, who were defeated with severe losses. Every European house in the vicinity of Acheen became a fortress, and the garrisons were obliged to retire behind entrenchments. The subsequent slaughter of the Dutch troops in April last, when they lost over five hundred killed, is fresh in the memory of our readers. They were badly beaten; nothing remained to be done but to retire toward the coast and await the action of the Ministry. The answer soon came, and operations were suspended. A rigid blockade was established and the flower of the army was levied upon for troops now on their way to Acheen. The Sultan, however, sought an ally in Turkey, and the Sublime Porte hastened to his rescue by the issue of an emphatic protest against the further invasion of the rights of a Mahometan State. The appeal might as well have been addressed to the winds. It was not heard. The Consul of the United States was also addressed, the Sultan promising extensive commercial concessions in consideration of moral or physical aid. Commodore Jenkins, then cruising in those waters, declined to interfere, and thus far Acheen must stand alone. It should be said that Holland made graceful overtures to the Sultan after her bitter defeat, offering to pay all the expenses of the war and to acknowledge the independence of Acheen; but she demanded certain trading advantages in return. Siri, like all Oriental princes, imagined that the Dutch were at his feet, and he spurned them and their offers and declared his intention of clearing Sumatra of their presence. Further negotiations were, of course, impossible, and Holland went forward with her expeditionary preparations, notwithstanding the fact that a Turkish fleet was held out as an eventuality in the dispute.

The Dutch expedition was a formidable one, and fifteen thousand Hollanders, furnished with all the modern appliances of war, supported by a fine fleet, took possession of both sides of the river running through Acheen. The submission of the Sultan, if authenticated, will leave the island in Dutch hands; for it is scarcely probable that Holland, dealing with Acheen, will do less than Russia dealing with Khiva. It has been a big expedition for Holland, and appears to have ended with credit to the little nation. The British expedition to Ashantee is a venture of the same kind, but the outlook is scarcely so brilliant in the African direction.

A Herald Prediction Verified—A Clear Christmas Day.

Yesterday's and to-day's weather affords a striking verification of the HERALD's last week's prediction. On the 20th instant, in an editorial upon the late misty weather and its probable import, we argued that the great prevalence of fogs at that time proved the storm-breeding proximity of the Polar and Equatorial air currents, and the result would be a frosty and wintry, if not stormy spell, and also dangerous gales on the coast. This predicted result has been fully realized. Yesterday's weather bulletin states that cloud, rain and snow extended over the southern portion of the Middle States, and thence westward to the lower Ohio Valley and Tennessee, with a storm centre off the South Atlantic coast, attended by heavy rains. The probabilities, yesterday morning, also warned this and contiguous Northern ports of stormy weather on the coast during the night—a caution which was fully sustained. There was quite a heavy and extensive snowfall in the Middle States, as there had been the day before in the Central Mississippi Valley, Missouri and Tennessee. This whole disturbance, which commenced in the Gulf of Mexico, was probably induced by an invasion of its humid air by a fork of the

Genet and the Detectives.

It is part of the general political demoralization of the community that the authorities should not only contemplate roguery with a lenient regard, but that in their view of society the fundamental distinction between honest men and rogues should be broken down and disappear. If half the officers of the law are found to be dishonest, if office proves to be only a standpoint from which to operate against the public treasury, it can scarcely happen that the atmosphere of political life should continue pure; or that those who may not be actually thieves should be able to keep themselves so far above their daily associates as to regard them in the only way in which honest men should regard dishonest ones. They who habitually treat as honest men those whom they know to be rogues will lose the perception of nice phases, and will, sooner or later, treat all other rogues also on the same terms, and thus the authorities will acquire that easy indifference of demeanor, that tolerance toward all violators of law that is one of the worst facts in our public life. In this way the line is drawn, not between one man and another—dividing honest from dishonest—but it is drawn at the threshold of the State Prison or the Penitentiary. One must have passed that line to feel himself cut off from the ordinary political fellowship. As for the offence, the political philosophy clearly is that it is just as innocent to steal as not to steal unless one is caught; and even then there is nothing to be greatly regretted unless one is convicted; and if there is still hope for escape between conviction and incarceration, why, it is just as good to be safe as to be guiltless; for to the ordinary political mind the only valuable feature in guiltlessness is immunity from the molestations of justice. It is only when a political magnate really becomes an inmate of the prison that his glory is gone in the eyes of his former fellows. There is not a point of our political system that is not affected by this looseness of thought on points that the people outside of politics regard as corner stones in the fabric of life. It is this that makes possible all our public misdoings from greatest to littlest—from the Louisiana usurpations of the National Executive and the Credit Mobilier down to a common assault in the streets, which cannot be punished if an influential friend can buttonhole the proper authorities. And with this condition before us everywhere what a mockery it is for the public to be told that the detectives are set to discover Genet! Who and what are the detectives? Are they like the rest of our public functionaries? Are they also what is called "human"? Is not the universal recognition of their character such that no one can for a moment doubt but Genet's escape, if caught by half the detectives in succession, would be a question of what he had with him?

PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE.

- Miss Annie Louise Cary has apartments at the Everett House. Congressman Thomas Swann is registered at the St. Nicholas Hotel. General James A. Garfield, of Ohio, has arrived at the Windsor Hotel. General J. S. Negley, of Pittsburg, is staying at the St. Nicholas Hotel. State Engineer W. R. Taylor, of Utica, has arrived at the Metropolitan Hotel. State Senator James Wood, of Genesee, N. Y., is at the Metropolitan Hotel. Lieutenant Colonel Dawkins, of the British army is living at the Windsor Hotel. Commodore Pickering, United States Navy, has quarters at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. General George S. Hartuff, United States Army, is quartered at the St. James Hotel. Congressman George F. Hoar, of Massachusetts, is registered at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Congressman L. P. Poland, of Credit Mobilier renown, is staying at the Grand Central Hotel. Ex-Governor Warmoth, of Louisiana, is among the recent arrivals at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Senator Roscoe Conkling and family arrived at the Fifth Avenue Hotel yesterday from Washington. Governor C. R. Ingersoll, of Connecticut, yesterday arrived at the Albemarle Hotel from New Haven. Madame Nilsson-Pouzaud, accompanied by her husband, arrived at the Clarendon Hotel last evening from Baltimore. THE WEATHER. WAR DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER, WASHINGTON, Dec. 24-1 A. M. Probabilities. FOR THE INTERIOR OF NEW ENGLAND AND THE MIDDLE STATES, CLEAR AND CLEARING WEATHER, WITH BUT SLIGHT CHANGES OF TEMPERATURE AND LIGHT VARIABLE WINDS. FOR THE SOUTHERN STATES, EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI, SLOWLY INCREASING PRESSURE, WITH LOW TEMPERATURE AND CLOUDY WEATHER. ON THE IMMEDIATE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND GULF COASTS, NORTHERLY TO EASTERLY WINDS, WITH LIGHT RAIN, WILL PREVAIL. FOR THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC COAST, FRESH TO BRISK NORTHWESTERLY TO WESTERLY WINDS, WITH CLEARING WEATHER. CAUTIONARY SIGNALS CONTINUE AT CAPE MAY, NEW YORK, NEW HAVEN, NEW LONDON AND WOOD'S HOLE. THE WEATHER IN THIS CITY YESTERDAY. The following record will show the changes in the temperature for the past twenty-four hours in comparison with the corresponding day of last year, as indicated by the thermometer at Hudson's Pharmacy, Herald Building: 1872. 1873. 9 A. M. 10 28 3:30 P. M. 34 36 12 M. 12 27 9 P. M. 29 31 9 A. M. 15 30 9 P. M. 25 31 12 M. 23 32 12 P. M. 15 30 Average temperature yesterday 30.4 Average temperature for corresponding date last year..... 30.6

WASHINGTON.

- WASHINGTON, Dec. 23, 1873. The President and his party returned here this morning from St. Louis. The President on His Return from His Visit to the Chief Justice. The President stated emphatically to-day that the nomination of Attorney General Williams for Chief Justice would not be withdrawn, and that he had never contemplated such a thing. A Bill to Abolish the Office of Chief Justice. A bill has been framed and is to be introduced, after the recess, abolishing the office of Chief Justice. It is said to have the support of Conkling, Morton and others of the leading legal minds in the Senate. It is contended that the presiding officer of the justices should be selected by the voice of the body, if at all, and that his compeers would be best able to make a selection which would be satisfactory and creditable. Important Change in the Presidential Policy of Territorial Appointments. In a conversation with Deputy Magistrate, of Montana, the President announced an important change in his policy of Territorial appointments. He said that he had concluded to reverse his civil service rule, made some time ago, that except in the cases of judges and Indian agents, all appointments in the Territories should be made from the inhabitants thereof; that in all the Territories the republicans seemed to be divided into two factions, and if he appointed a republican from one wing of the party the other portion deluged him with remonstrances and complaints. In Dakota these fights had been particularly bitter, and had resulted most tragically in the death of McCook, the Secretary of the Territory. He had therefore come to the conclusion that the only way to preserve peace among the federal officers and the republicans of the Territories was to appoint strangers from the outside, who were not identified, and who would not become identified, with either faction. On this principle, A. L. Smith, of New York, had recently been appointed Surveyor General of Montana, and I. B. Wham, of Illinois, Register of the land office at Salt Lake City. War Department Estimates To Be Reduced. General Belknap, Secretary of War, is disposed to cut the estimates of the War Department down to the lowest possible limit. Those for the military service proper, which were submitted to him, received his personal attention and were calculated as closely as possible, but he proposes to readjust them and reduce them as far as the actual requirements of the service will permit. The estimates of appropriation for fortifications, armament of forts and for rivers and harbors, amounting in the aggregate to about \$20,000,000 and which were simply submitted by him to Congress without a recommendation, but merely for their action, say very materially reduced. So far as those items are concerned, Congress can decide as to the locations where appropriations are needed. It appears that almost all the departments of the government are burdened with additional clerical work by the operation of the act requiring separate accounts to be rendered under each head of appropriation and for each fiscal year, as well as by the numerous calls from Congress for reports. A reform in this matter would enable a reduction of the clerical force. Alexander H. Stephens on Civil Rights of Colored Citizens. A colored delegation, composed of George F. Downing, Frederick Douglass, N. W. Conroy, F. G. Barbados, B. A. Stryker and William J. Wilson, had an interview to-day, by appointment, with Representative A. H. Stephens, of Georgia, who received them in a most friendly manner. They report that in course of conversation Mr. Stephens freely admitted that colored men as citizens were entitled to full protection in their civil rights without any invidious proscription, but that it was the duty of the respective States, and not that of the federal government, to act in order to secure them. He stated that he was preparing a speech to be delivered in the House of Representatives on the Civil Rights bill, and in this his views were fully expressed. The Louisiana Federal Court Investigation. Representatives Wilson and Eldridge, of the Judiciary Committee, will leave here not later than Saturday, for New Orleans. It is their intention, while avoiding state politics and complications, to investigate all the acts of the federal court which is charged, said Judge Darre's official conduct. Financial Tribulation of the District of Columbia. The financial lambs, under their shepherd, are in great distress, having failed to get aid from Congress, and the gnawing wolf of obligation is upon them to provide sustenance to pay the interest due by the District of Columbia on January 1, and, to make matters worse, \$1,000,000 of bonds have been hypothecated for \$250,000, which must be paid at the same time, or serious consequences will arise. The District authorities feel as Jay Cooke & Co. did in desiring to have the United States Treasury assume their indebtedness. Unjust Discrimination in Railroad Rates. The travelling public here, who often are on the railroad highways, wonder that, in the rivalry between the Baltimore and Ohio and Pennsylvania roads, the decrease in rates of fare, recently made, to points in the West, has not been made to extend to the route between here and New York. Official Observance of the Holidays. To-morrow will be practically a holiday in the executive departments here, as they all close at noon, and the morning work will be devoted to the opening of letters and the answering by telegraph of any that may be of extraordinary importance. All the departments will be closed at noon during the holiday week, and the only business performed will be of the routine character above mentioned. Opening and Organizing of the Washington Stock Exchange. The Washington Stock Exchange opened to-day at noon. The hour of session was occupied in the drawing for seats and making rules for the government of the Board preparatory to active business to-morrow. John Fitz is President of the Board, and D. W. Middleton, Jr., is Chairman of the Exchange. Special Post Office Agents to be Examined as to Qualification. The Postmaster General to-day issued an order that hereafter appointments of special agents of the Post Office Department shall be made subject to examination by a Board of Examiners, to be duly appointed, and whose duty it shall be to examine special agents and report in writing, particularly as to the qualifications of candidates. Persons found not qualified will be dismissed the service. Sioux Depredations. The Interior Department is in receipt of a telegram from J. B. Brown, Secretary of Wyoming Territory, stating that a number of the Sioux Indians are off their reservation, killing stock and committing other depredations in that Territory. The nearest military post is Fort Laramie. Orders have been given to Gen. Crook to move the Sioux Indians as allowed by the treaty of 1868 to 60 of their reservation at certain seasons to hunt game. Sale of Indian Lands. The Indian Bureau received a despatch from Omaha this morning saying the Omahas, in council, have agreed to sell a portion of their reservation to the Winnebagoes in Nebraska, and nine Omaha chiefs will visit Washington to conclude the sale. The land purchased is to be occupied by the Winnebagoes, who are now being removed by United States soldiers in Wisconsin to the Nebraska reservation. CALIFORNIA. End of the Senatorial Contest. SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 23, 1873. Judge Hager, of this city, the anti-radical candidate, was to-day, at Sacramento, elected United States Senator for the short term, on the second ballot. ANOTHER PHASE OF THE BOSTON MYSTERY. BOSTON, Dec. 23, 1873. Simon A. Britton, the Devonshire street broker, who was assaulted in his office some time since, and about whom so much has been said in the Average temperature for corresponding date last year..... 30.6