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JAMES GORDON BENNETT PROPRIETOR.

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AMUSEMENTS THIS AFTERNOON AND EVENING

OLYMPIA THEATRE. No. 234 Broadway... VARIETY, at 9 P. M. Grand Opera House... Theatre Francaise... Boston Theatre... Terrace Garden Theatre... New York State Theatre... Fifth Avenue Theatre... Bryant's Opera House... Brooklyn Theatre... San Francisco Minstrels... Robinson Hall... Globe Theatre... Lyceum Theatre... Association Hall... New Park Theatre... Germania Theatre... Wood's Museum... Metropolitan Theatre... Academy of Music.

The Great Transit and the Sermon of Science.

The great astronomical event of the past century has transpired, and the expectation of all civilized nations is on tiptoe to learn the full results of observation. The inspiring motive which has actuated universal interest and co-operation in the transit observations is not alone the desire to gratify science in her cherished researches nor to secure the great practical ends which a successful solution of the solar parallax has so long promised to the world. These, important as they are to the cause of navigation, commerce and astronomical investigations of every kind, are lost sight of in the sublime aspiration to gauge the depths of the stellar universe. The notions of mankind regarding the solar system can be rightly shaped only as we determine the distance of the sun from the earth. This distance is the basis of measurement for the limitless celestial expanse, or at least the best meteorological unit for surveying the heavens which astronomy has yet proposed. The grand aim, therefore, in the observations of the transit of Venus has been to construct a true map of the universe and to determine the earth's relations to its most remote frontiers. In a word, we may regard the world-wide enthusiasm in this great astronomical investigation—in which scientists have been only the leaders and directors of the popular wishes—as man's eager effort to locate himself in the geography of the heavens, and, as it were, to feel his way through their undiscovered territory.

Such an ambition, whether uttered or unexpressed, has lain dormant in the human mind in all ages, but ever and anon wakened into intense activity with every announcement that there was a possibility of its gratification. If evidence were needed we have it in the enormous expenditure of time, money and labor, which, from immemorial ages, has been lavished in such researches as we are now recording. The sciences, upon the development of which human wealth and material prosperity mainly depend, have been left far behind by that which gratifies the human mind in its cravings for the infinite and its outcrochings after the mysteries of the celestial world. A great writer on the science of agriculture adverts to the strange fact that, though national development and opulence are chiefly conditional upon the accumulation of agricultural knowledge, it lags behind many branches which concern us but little. It is the consciousness, however, of a deep need that any material abundance can supply that has constantly impelled man to grope after higher things though they lie beyond the sphere of the visible. It is the restless spirit of intellectual labor, which, unsatisfied with the seen, as Humboldt says, is ever "striving toward the infinite and grasping all that is revealed to us amid the boundless and inexhaustible fulness of creation."

When the enthusiastic astronomer Le Gentil had resolved to observe the transit of Venus, in 1769, he spent eight years in preparation, and as the critical moment approached he repaired to Manila as the most eligible station. When the great day, so ardently looked for, arrived, and Venus approached the sun's disk, though the sky had been for several days before cloudless, the whole phenomenon of the transit was completely cut off from the observer. But in the modern transit no such cruel fate is likely ever again to overtake the astronomer. It was hardly within the range of possibility that the seventy or eighty bands of observers now in the East could have been simultaneously foiled, as the network of stations was more extensive than the largest cloud canopy ever known to have intercepted the sun's rays. And the intelligence which has already reached us shows that the experience of the past century has not been lost on our scientists.

The immense undertaking of observing the recent transit, or our special despatches have told us, is an accomplished success, and the work of reducing the manifold data will be rapidly advanced. The photographic observations secured in the northern hemisphere suffice to solve the great problem involved, even should the observers in the southern hemisphere have failed. The weather at the southern stations, now experiencing their summer, was probably better than the winter weather with which the northern stations had to contend. The several hundred photographs known to have been taken will be carefully examined by the aid of the micrometer. Each photograph contains an image of Venus at a given moment of time as she appeared on the sun's face. This appears as a small spot, and all such spots are laid down and marked by the micrometer, so that they make a dotted line, or curve, from which, by the mathematical method of least squares, the problem can be finally worked out. While the work of reducing the photographic observations is going on at the home observatories the undetermined longitudes of the stations will be ascertained, and all the computations proceed *pari passu*. Thus, it may be expected, in less than a year our American results will be finally announced. These, unless we except the probable deductions from the similar transit in 1882 (when America will be in the most favorable position for observations) will, perhaps, make the most extensive and exact contribution to astronomy which the nineteenth century will record.

The contact observations, however, can be worked up as soon as the latitudes and longitudes of the stations at which they were taken are fully determined. Professor Hall's results will tally and compare with those of the Russian and English astronomers, obtained by the Delisle method, and, if the party at Kerguelen Island were as successful as that at Nagasaki, their conjoint results will also compare. The Russians have twenty-five stations, so that the reported failure of five of these can hardly affect the final summary in any serious degree. Their stations, like our own, were so sagaciously located, and their work so arranged, that entire failure was made practically impossible. There can, therefore, be no room for doubt that out of all the ingathered material there is an abundance for solving the great problem. It would be, as yet, premature, perhaps, to draw any further inferential conclusions as to the precise results obtained by the various transit observing parties; but, as far as the present indications go, the establishment of the photographic method and its great advantages are made manifest. The application of photography in astronomical work has been greatly ad-

WITH SUPPLEMENT.

New York, Saturday, Dec. 12, 1874.

From our reports this morning the probabilities are that the weather to-day will be clear and colder.

WALL STREET YESTERDAY.—Stocks were dull. Gold advanced to 111 and closed at 111 1/2. The shipments amount to about \$1,700,000. Money on call loans was three and four per cent.

THE REPORT of the National Bureau of Statistics will be found interesting to the business community.

PRESIDENT JEWETT's report to the Board of Directors of the Erie Railway Company is published in full elsewhere.

THE FRENCH ASSEMBLY.—It is very likely that the numerous divisions in the French Assembly are impossible to reconcile. The Left Centre declares that it has gone to the utmost limit of concession, and the Extreme parties will probably be as positive.

COUNT VON ARMIN accepts the full responsibility of the disappearance of the papers of the German Embassy in Paris—an indication that the question of the right to the disputed documents is to be argued upon its merits, and that the main issue with Bismarck is not to be avoided.

GOOD APPOINTMENTS.—Both the changes in the Diplomatic Corps in Europe that seem likely to be made involve proper recognition of the services of excellent officers. Moran's patient fidelity in London, his years of devotion to the dull drudgery of office routine, are at last fitly rewarded in a minor ministry which has a respectable if not altogether adequate salary. And there is no man in our service who by training, industry and intelligence is fitter than Colonel Hoffman to take the place in London and prevent the departure of the laborious secretary from being a detriment to the business of the legation.

SERIOUS TROUBLE IN NEW ORLEANS is anticipated. The Board of Judges, which meets on Sunday, is expected to declare the republican candidate for State Treasurer elected, and to give the republicans a majority in the lower House, and it is said this decision will be resisted by the White Leaguers. The President yesterday declared that he would not take military action in anticipation of trouble, but that "if disturbances occurred 'somebody would be hurt.'" He would not tolerate a new rebellion. In the event of trouble General Sheridan or General Terry will probably be sent to Louisiana.

The Hawaiian Reciprocity Treaty.

King Kalakaua is to arrive in Washington this morning. He will be received with the respect and honors due to royalty, and will attract attention as being the first King in office who ever visited the United States, though we have had several kings retired from business. Through a semi-official notice from San Francisco has told us that Kalakaua does not intend to disturb himself with business, and means to leave the negotiations for a reciprocity treaty entirely in the hands of the envoys he has appointed for that purpose, Judge Allen and Mr. H. A. P. Carter, yet in the conversation of the dinner table he will no doubt know how to advance somewhat the fortunes of the proposed treaty, for he will be asked numerous questions, and, being an intelligent man, will be able to give such answers as may enlighten his visitors. He may, for instance, surprise some of our Senators by telling them that the small and apparently unimportant kingdom over which he rules already buys more from us than many far more important countries. The King could tell them that while Cuba took from us last year less than twenty per cent in value of what we bought from her the Sandwich Islands bought from us more than we took of their products. He could show that while we pay a heavy annual subsidy to maintain our commerce with China that country took of our products, excluding gold and silver, last year but little more than the Sandwich Islands.

The Beecher Trial.

An order was issued yesterday by the City Court of Brooklyn putting off the trial of the crim. con. suit of Tilton vs. Beecher to the January term of the Court, on the ground that the trial is likely to be so protracted that it cannot be brought to a conclusion at the present term. This seems proper enough on its face, but whether anything is reached under the postponement it would be hazardous to conjecture, after the surprise which fell on the public in the sudden termination of the Proctor-Moulton libel suit. It is probable that the trial will proceed in January, since the decision of the Court on the application of Mr. Beecher's counsel for a bill of particulars does not exclude the alleged confessions. There would have been a manifest violation of fairness if the order had confined Tilton to proofs of adultery at specified times and places, excluding all evidence that does not bear on particular places and times. If the order had taken that form the plaintiff would have been so hampered and crippled that he would be virtually non-suited before the trial begins. In his sworn statement submitted to the Court Mr. Tilton acknowledges that the most important part of his proofs do not fix the dates or point out the scene of the criminal intercourse. An order excluding such proofs would have disabled him from proving his charge, even if he held in his hands a written confession of the defendant acknowledging the adultery in general terms, without specification of time and place. If such a written confession existed we suppose there can be no doubt that it would be valid and conclusive evidence, even if it consisted in a mere general admission of the fact, without circumstances or particulars. Now, it accords with common sense that oral confessions of the same character, if it can be proved on good testimony that they have been made, should be equally admissible as evidence, and be held equally conclusive in establishing the guilt of the defendant. Tilton makes in his affidavit a clear statement of the nature of the proofs he expects to offer. Their main groundwork is confessions which he declares to have been made by Mr. Beecher to three different persons, whose names he gives, and other confessions of the same tenor and purport alleged to have been made to four persons, who are likewise named, by Mrs. Tilton. If he shall satisfy a jury that such confessions were actually made by the alleged parties to the criminal connection, there is no reason for doubting that the verdict will be in his favor. Mr. Beecher's and Mrs. Tilton's letters are to be relied on as corroborative evidence, and they will be likely to have some influence on the minds of the jury in estimating the credibility of the testimony to the confessions.

Improvement of Street Railroad Travel.

Under the new dispensation the people of New York hope for the boon of rapid transit. Some of our contemporaries fail to discover a solid basis for this hope, and, indeed, regard the new amendments to the constitution as an insurmountable barrier to its realization. Nevertheless, with a democratic Mayor, a democratic Board of Aldermen, a democratic Governor, a democratic Assembly and a Senate closely balanced politically, but so constituted as to insure the success of any well considered and desirable public measure, we have a right to expect harmonious and energetic official action on this important subject. In regard to the alleged constitutional difficulty, it exists more in imagination than in reality. The amendments provide (1) that no private or local bill shall be passed "granting to any corporation, association or individual the right to lay down railroad tracks;" (2) that a general law providing for such a case shall be enacted; but (3) that "no law shall authorize the construction or operation of a street railroad except upon the condition that the consent of the owners of one-half in value of the property bounded on, and the consent also of the local authorities having the control of that portion of a street or highway upon which it is proposed to construct or operate such railroad, be first obtained; or, in case the consent of such property owners cannot be obtained, the General Term of the Supreme Court in the district in which it is proposed to be constructed may, upon application, appoint three commissioners, who shall determine, after a hearing of all parties interested, whether such railroad ought to be constructed or operated, and their determination, confirmed by the Court, may be taken in lieu of the consent of the property owners." Two points present themselves in these amendments so far as they affect rapid transit in New York. If a steam railroad from the Battery to or beyond the Westchester border is not a "street railroad," then such a road could be constructed under the provisions of a general law. If it should be held to be a "street railroad"—although we believe that a contrary decision has already been made by the Courts—then the predicted opposition of property owners, if really encountered, could be overcome by the action of the Supreme Court. So we see no good reason why the people of New York should not still hope for rapid transit, and solicit the boon at the hands of the party about to succeed to power in the city and State.

The Earthquake in New York.

If a volcano should suddenly appear in the peaceful Palisades, nobody could complain that it did not give the dwellers along the Hudson proper warning. For there is no doubt that on Thursday evening, between ten and eleven o'clock, an earthquake shook the foundations of those beautiful and famous hills, "rock ribbed and ancient as the sun," as Mr. William Cullen Bryant would describe them, and even disturbed the milkpans in the dairies of Westchester. We have reports from too many different places and persons to doubt that New York was the scene of a subterranean upheaval. It sounded like the echo of the recent election, and was terrifying to those who heard it as the democratic majorities were to the republican politicians. Its duration was probably not more than from ten to twenty seconds; for, though many persons supposed that it lasted much longer, an accurate measurement of time is difficult to untrained and excited minds. It sounded, we are told, "as if the earth had opened with a dull thud," as if "a train of cars was passing over a distant bridge," like untimely thunder, and as if cannon had been fired or a powder mill had exploded. Of the scenes at Fort Washington, White Plains, Mount Kisco, Yonkers, Spuyten Duyvil, Sing Sing, Tarrytown, New Rochelle and other places we give full accounts, and religious revivals may reasonably be expected among the inhabitants. The meaning of such an unusual occurrence should indeed be a subject of serious thought, and although this city did not experience much of the shock of the earthquake we are disposed to think it a warning to our inhabitants. Poe seemed to think that New York is by no means a safe city to reside in, for he certainly referred to it when he said in one of his poems, "And when, amid no earthly groans, Down, down that town shall settle hence, Hell, rising from a thousand thrones, Shall do it reverence."

Enforcing the Amendments.

A case that is known as the Grant parish case is to be argued in the Supreme Court of the United States during the present term. It is an appeal from a decision of Mr. Justice Bradley, which arrested judgment in the case of The United States vs. Nash and others, indicted and convicted for conspiracy and murder under the Enforcement act of 1870. The appeal will require a decision by the Supreme Court of the meaning and effect of the clause placed at the end of the late amendments of the federal constitution, by which power is given to Congress to "enforce" those amendments "by appropriate legislation." The amendments prohibited the States from doing certain things. This, however, was not the first time that the federal constitution restricted the power of the States in relation to matters that were otherwise within their exclusive province. The original constitution contained ten or twelve such prohibitions, among the most familiar of which are those which prevent the passage of any ex post facto law or law impairing the obligation of contracts. But the constitution did not create in Congress any special or substantive legislative power to enforce these prohibitions. It was assumed that they would enforce themselves, so to speak, through the operation of the judicial power, which, being made to extend to all cases arising under the constitution, would reach any case in which a State law violated one of these prohibitions, and thus it would be declared void and become inoperative. All the legislation that would be needed would consist in provisions that would keep open the access to the Supreme Court of the United States, which would be accomplished by providing for the transfer to that ultimate tribunal of any case that involved the construction or operation of any part of the federal constitution. The framers of the constitution therefore did not consider it needful or wise to provide for "enforcing" the prohibitions addressed to the States by the creation of a special affirmative legislative power in Congress.

PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE.

Gerrit Smith keeps a private orphan asylum. The liberal republican primaries were spiritual manifestations. State Senator D. P. Wood, of Syracuse, is at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Captain V. E. Law, of the British Army, is registered at the Brevoort House. Colonel A. K. McClure, of Philadelphia, is residing at the Hoffman Hotel. Mr. Adolph Sutro, of Nevada, is among the latest arrivals at the McKim Hotel. General D. B. McKibbin, United States Army, is quartered at the Metropolitan Hotel. Solicitor Buford Wilson, of the Treasury Department, has apartments at the Brevoort House. Congressman-elect Elias W. Leavenworth, of Syracuse, is staying at the St. Nicholas Hotel. Vice President Henry Wilson arrived at the Grand Central Hotel yesterday from Washington. Colonel John S. Mosby, of Virginia, arrived in this city yesterday and is at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Mr. Brand (liberal), member of Parliament for the borough of Stroud, England, has been unseated for bribery. An iron steam ram of 650 tons, built for the Mexican government, has just been launched at Liverpool. Some one proposes a lecture on the war cry and whoops of Scotland, with illustrations and the bagpipes. Two of Robert Bruce's bones were sold in Edinburgh for £5, and one of the vertebrae of William the Lion for £5 10s. Before leaving Balmoral the Queen drove to Bueh, in the neighborhood, to visit William Brown, the brother of John. Sir T. Fowell Buxton, of England, returned to this city yesterday from Washington, and is at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Ex-Governor William Bigler and ex-Congressman James K. Moorhead, of Pennsylvania, are at the St. Nicholas Hotel. "I am very happy," said a French mother, "to have a son-in-law whom everybody discusses and a daughter whom no one talks about." Mme. Lima di Murza, who has just returned from a concert tour in the West, has taken up her residence at the Union Square Hotel. The confidential Herald, a daily paper in the English language hitherto published at Geneva, will in future also be published at Paris. One of the republican candidates in France signs himself Leon Masse, but his name is Louis Lucien Joseph Napoleon Jerome Masse. Upon the whole it is rather ridiculous as Black says that the Americans as a people should have no curiosity in regard to the life of Mr. William Black. Can it be possible, as seems likely from the last affidavit in the Beecher case, that Theodore Tilton will put his daughter on the stand against her mother? Mr. Henry T. Blow, of Missouri, formerly a member of Congress, and more recently United States Minister to Brazil, is sojourning at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Mr. Walker, of the Bureau of Education at Washington, D. C., is at Ottawa, Ont., collecting information concerning the Canadian system of education. Hon. Mr. Childers, President of the Great Western Railway Company, left Hamilton yesterday. He will visit Washington, the Southern States and Cuba before returning to England. Julius L. Clarke has resigned the office of State Insurance Commissioner of Massachusetts, and Governor Talbot has appointed as his successor Stephen H. Rhodes, of Taunton, the Deputy Commissioner. The Hsuei-Pao, of Shanghai, opposes the introduction of railways into China because of the accidents, and because all the products of the country already reach the seaboard by steamers on the rivers. MM. Ernoult, La Bouillerie, Lucien Brun and the Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Bisaccia have been hastily called to Rochefort by the Count de Chambord, and the royalists in France apprehend that Henry intends to put Rochefort and the manifesto. Mr. Roberts, an English agriculturalist, will know as a judge and official reporter of several agricultural societies of England, has been appointed successor to Professor Metcalf as Principal of the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph. Alopathy—Paddy (he has brought a prescription to the chemist, who is carefully weighing a very minute portion of calomel), "Oh big yer pardon, sor, but 'y' are mighty near to that mid'em! And (coaxingly) I may tell ye—'tis a poor motherless child!"—Punch. It was a pet dog and very pretty. Her name was Fafan. One day it went away from its home, No. 51 avenue Matignon, Paris. Some hours passed and Mme. Coulon went to the police station to inquire if the dog had been seen. There she heard it had been killed in the street as she then remembers that a few days before the dog had bitten her little Louise, five years old. Imagine the trouble. Her anxiety was too great. In two days the little Louise was teething with her teeth at the cheeks of her dog, and in another day it was all over.