

NEW YORK HERALD

BROADWAY AND ANN STREET.

JAMES GORDON BENNETT, PROPRIETOR.

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AMUSEMENTS TO-NIGHT. TWENTY-THIRD STREET OPERA HOUSE. CALIFORNIA MINSTRELS, at 8 P. M.

WOOD'S MUSEUM. O'FLANIGAN, at 8 P. M. MATINEE at 2 P. M. LYCEUM THEATRE. WALLACE'S THEATRE. THE STOPS TO CONQUER, at 8 P. M.

TRIPLE SHEET.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, MARCH 20, 1876.

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

THE HERALD BY FAST MAIL TRAINS.—News-gatherers and the public throughout the country will be supplied with the DAILY, WEEKLY and SUNDAY HERALD, free of postage, by sending their orders direct to this office.

AN ITALIAN MINISTERIAL CRISIS hands over the government to the combative Parliamentary party on the Left.

THE FRENCH REPUBLICANS are content to ask only for what they can obtain. We may be sure they will take all they can get.

A SNOW BLOCKADE on the Scotch railways is unusual enough to be worth telegraphing, but that in the little span of earth north of the Tweed a railway train should be lost for three days is very strange.

"TO MAKE A CLEARANCE of an objectionable set," is what the London Times tersely, and we trust truly, regards as the desire of the American people, sickened by the revelations of official corruption.

AROUND MATAMOROS the delightful uncertainties of Mexican rule are felt to their full extent. The pickets of the revolutionists are in sight of the city and the governmental general is afraid to arm some of his men lest they should "pronounce." The case appears to stand thus:—"The soldiers want their pay and the commander has no funds. If they join the revolutionists they can share in the forced loans, and the latter way of collecting money is irresistible to your true Mexican. There is no sign at present that the Diaz movement is more than sporadic.

THE TWO MEN arrested in Paris on the charge of negotiating forged American railway bonds in Belgium will probably be released on bail, the United States officials not taking hostile action regarding them. We think this is a matter our Belgian Minister might well look after, at least to the extent of seeing that such offences do not inure detrimentally to the negotiation of genuine American shares and bonds abroad. We have no doubt the swindled brokers will protect themselves, but the Legation should see that if the offences can be proven the criminals do not escape by a compromise.

THE BOSTON Herald claims that in the city of Worcester the free soil movement had its origin, and that there also the first efforts were made to save Kansas from becoming a slave State. Encouraged by this record it anticipates important results from the meeting of independent republicans held in Worcester last week, and we, too, trust that the determination to reform the party will have a wholesome effect in the Presidential campaign. Everywhere the people should hold such meetings and make their indignation known. The motto of the Worcester independent republicans is a good one—"No chronic aspirant for the Presidency need apply at Cincinnati."

SPAIN'S DIFFICULTIES IN CUBA are so enormous that we do not wonder the friends of Spanish rule lose heart. The burning of large estates continues. A handful of insurgents inflict damages apparently at will. A large and useless army is eating up the resources of the island and a host of corrupt officials makes the oppressive taxation only go half way in its power to support those charged with overwhelming the rebellion. With the high taxes it becomes questionable to planters whether it would not be as well to abandon their estates for the time being rather than pay the government, which cannot protect them. The additional troops promised will only prove an additional burden. They can, doubtless, be supported for a time off the loyal people, but when these have no more to give the end will come with a crash.

Regulations for Counting the Electoral Votes.

The subject of debate on the last day the Senate was in session has been under consideration in that body several times of late, and we presume the bill intended to supersede the twenty-second joint rule will eventually pass the Senate, either with or without amendments. As to the necessity of repealing that joint rule there is no difference of opinion, but there are almost as many opinions as Senators respecting what ought to be substituted in its place. It is pretty generally admitted that the matter ought to be regulated by a law of Congress, and not merely by a joint rule of the two houses. The difficulty of agreeing upon a proper law results from the ambiguity and absurdity of that part of the constitution; but as there is not time to secure amendments previous to the next counting of electoral votes it is to be hoped that Congress may find some makeshift for the immediate occasion, and that soon after the next President is in office the constitution may be changed by dropping the whole of its second article and substituting a better method, not only for choosing the Chief Magistrate, but of enforcing Executive responsibility. Even if the Senate should agree on a bill the House may refuse its concurrence, for there is no possibility of framing one not exposed to grave objections so long as the constitution remains unaltered. As Senator Christiancy said, in his speech on Thursday:—"It would almost seem, and some Senators appear really to be of the opinion, that our fathers, in framing the constitution, must have acted upon the Irishman's plan of constructing a cannon, which was first to make a large hole and then cast the cannon around it. The constitution, in one view of it, certainly seems to have taken one step in that process and seems to have left us only the ingenuity of taking the other." This satire is not undeserved if limited to that article of the constitution which relates to the Executive. After explaining his own views as to the best method of flanking the difficulty Mr. Christiancy said in conclusion, in an equally satirical vein:—"I am far from being very confident of the correctness of this conclusion or the reasoning by which I have reached it, and may change my opinion entirely in the course of the discussion. The silence, the apparently utter hiatus in the constitution, makes it very difficult to find any landmarks by which I can, with any confidence of certainty, guide my course. And I feel some of the same kind of uncertainty as I can imagine I might feel if thrown out into void space beyond sight of the stellar universe, and should then undertake to ascertain courses and distances and to divide that void space into definite areas."

The only effectual remedy is a thorough revision of this part of the constitution; but as that cannot be done this year some substitute must be discovered for the twenty-second joint rule, which puts it in the power of either house to throw out the electoral votes of any State. It happened once that the returns of Arkansas were thrown out, on the objection made by a Senator that they had not the great seal of the State affixed, but only the seal of the Secretary of State, and it was not discovered until after the election was declared that Arkansas at that time did not possess a great seal. So trivial may be the excuses of informality on which, under this twenty-second rule, a State may be deprived by either house of its Presidential vote.

It is proposed by a Senate committee which has investigated the whole subject to remedy all the defects of the present electoral system by a constitutional amendment causing the President and Vice President to be elected directly by the people, who are to vote in districts similar to and the same in number as Congressional districts, each State having also two electors to be chosen on a general ticket. The vote of each district is to count one in the electoral returns for those candidates who have, not a majority, but a plurality. By this plan the President would at any rate be the choice of the people, though having only a plurality. Under the present system he may be, and often has been, the choice of the minority when only two candidates were voted on. For instance, fifty thousand votes properly distributed may now elect a President by a majority of States, at the same time that his defeated opponent would have an actual popular majority of half a million votes. The following figures show how wide has been the disparity between the popular vote and the electoral vote in Presidential elections:—In 1872 General Grant received only fifty-five per cent of the votes of the people, but in the Electoral College he received eighty-one per cent; in 1868 General Grant received fifty-two per cent of the popular vote, but seventy-three per cent in the Electoral College. In 1864 Mr. Lincoln received fifty-five per cent of the popular vote, and ninety-one per cent in the electoral body; in 1860 Mr. Lincoln received but forty per cent of the popular vote, and fifty-nine per cent of the Electoral College. In 1856 Mr. Buchanan received only forty-five per cent of the popular vote, and yet had fifty-nine per cent in the Electoral College. In 1852 Mr. Pierce had fifty-one per cent of the popular vote, but eighty-five per cent of the electoral vote. In 1848 General Taylor—like Mr. Buchanan, and Mr. Lincoln in his first election, a minority President—received but forty-seven per cent of the popular vote, but got fifty-six per cent of the electoral vote. In 1844 Mr. Polk, another minority President, received less than fifty per cent of the popular vote, but sixty-two per cent of the electoral vote. It shows the essential falsity of the returns under the present system to compare the Electoral College returns with those of the popular vote during this series of years. Party leaders, and, more still, the people, are deceived by an apparent but fictitious preponderance of opinion. For instance, in 1872 General Grant was popularly believed to have swept the country by an overwhelming majority. He had eighty-one per cent of the votes in the Electoral College, and he and his party seemed to have received an extraordinary token of popular approval, while, in fact, on the popular vote his administration barely escaped condemnation and defeat.

If there were no other reason for the proposed change, to prevent such a mystification would justify it. But there are other reasons, among which one strikes us as very important—the localization and easier prevention of frauds. At present successful frauds in the New York, Philadelphia or New Orleans city elections might give the whole electoral vote of New York, Pennsylvania or Louisiana to the guilty party; under the proposed amendment such frauds would affect only the district in which they occurred; the temptation to commit them would, therefore, be less; the temptation to connive at and conceal them in counting the electoral vote would also be less. As to the "twenty-second joint rule," that ought in any case to be at once either abolished or changed. It is not well that one house shall have the right, without debate or scrutiny, and simply on the motion of a member, to throw out the electoral vote of a State. At least the consent of both houses should be required to so momentous an interference with the right of the people of a whole State to have their vote for President counted. Under the present rule the presumption is actually against the vote of any State being counted. Any member of either house may object to its reception; thereupon the two houses separate and vote ye or nay, not upon the objection, but upon the question, Shall the electoral vote of the State of — be received? And the rule absurdly and mischievously requires that "no vote objected to shall be received, except by the concurrent votes of the two houses." There is no constitutional warrant for making Congress a "returning board," or giving it power to scrutinize the returns. The two houses are to be witnesses, and no more, to the counting of the electoral vote. The twenty-second joint rule, adopted by the republicans in 1865, is undoubtedly unconstitutional; but there does not appear to be any method of testing the question without the most serious disturbance of the regular order of the government. As it stands it may be easily made the means of upsetting the popular verdict at the next election, and that in a very dangerous manner. When the electoral vote comes to be counted in the presence of the two houses a democrat may object upon some technical point to the counting of a republican State; if he is supported by the democratic majority in the House of Representatives the vote of that State, under the rule, would be thrown out. Thereupon, again on some technicality, a republican might object to a democratic State, and the republican Senate might throw that out. This parring down of the electoral vote might go on until no candidate could receive what the constitution requires, "a majority of the whole number of electors appointed," and the election would be thrown into the House of Representatives, where, the vote being by States, it is possible that nineteen States, with only forty-five members, out of the total of two hundred and ninety-two, and representing less than a fifth of the total population of the Union, should impose a President upon the country. Evidently such a course would be very unsatisfactory to the people, and very unjust as well, for it would impose upon them a policy to which the majority might be utterly opposed.

The constitutional amendment proposed in the Senate would prevent all such possibilities as we have mentioned, and would remand the election of President to "those who are furthest removed from the influence of his patronage—that is, to the whole body of American citizens," as Mr. Benton once said.

The Republican State Convention—Mr. Conkling's Prospects.

The State Convention for choosing delegates to represent the republicans of New York at Cincinnati will assemble at Syracuse day after to-morrow. The composition of this Convention is already known, and the Presidential preference of the primary conventions has been so fully declared that Mr. Cornell, the chairman of the Republican State Committee, has sent a telegram to Senator Conkling congratulating him on the ascertained fact that the party in this State is practically unanimous in adopting him as its candidate. We regret that our esteemed republican contemporary, the Times, is unhappy over this result, and tries to console itself by telling its readers that, although Mr. Conkling may have the unanimous support of the New York delegation, he has no chance of securing the Cincinnati nomination. We commiserate the leading republican organ on its discomfort in finding itself out of harmony with the general sentiment of the party in this State. The Times entertains a faint hope that, although the New York delegates will all vote for Mr. Conkling at Cincinnati, they may not be bound to do so by positive instructions. Our contemporary hugs a vain phantom, for although it is true that a few scattered Assembly district conventions have expressed a preference that the New York delegation to Cincinnati shall not be pledged, the greater part of them have taken a different view, and the Syracuse Convention will be controlled by its strong Conkling majority.

When the Times expresses the opinion that the unanimous support of Mr. Conkling by the delegates from his own State will be an idle compliment the wish is father to the thought. Why should it be construed as a vain compliment so long in advance? What other candidate will go to the Convention with so strong a support? Not half the number of votes to which New York is entitled has been pledged to any of his rivals, and both on the score of fitness and the score of expediency we know not which of them can claim any advantage over our distinguished Senator. His eminent abilities are conceded and speak for themselves, but the point of expediency may require some elucidation. New York is the pivot of the Presidential canvass; neither party can succeed without the electoral votes of this State. If anybody can rescue the State from democratic hands it is Mr. Conkling. It would be preposterous to say that Morton or Blaine or Hayes or Washburne would have the same strength with the New York republicans as their own favorite candidate. If the Cincinnati Convention should think that a republican President can be elected without the electoral votes of New York, it may nominate Mr. Morton or some other of Mr. Conkling's numerous rivals; but that would be a perilous cast of the dice. New York will be the most closely contested of all the States, and its electoral vote is so large that the recovery of the State from the democrats will make the whole difference between victory and defeat. There is no concentration of republican sentiment on any other candidate, and the divisions among Mr. Conkling's opponents are favorable to his chances; and if the party should be convinced that New York is indispensable to success Mr. Conkling, who can probably carry it, while no other candidate has anything like his strength in the Empire State, ought to receive a strong support at Cincinnati after the delegates from other States shall have distributed complimentary votes on Morton, Blaine, Hayes, Washburne and other personal favorites. It is doubtful whether Morton would get the electoral vote of his own State; but even if he could Indiana is entitled to only fifteen electoral votes, whereas New York has thirty-five. Blaine could undoubtedly carry his own State and all the other New England States except Connecticut; but Conkling would carry them with equal certainty, while Blaine would have no chance of carrying New York. But these five New England States, which would be equally certain for Conkling or Blaine, have only thirty-four electoral votes, and New York, which Conkling may carry and Blaine cannot, has thirty-five. No nomination at Cincinnati has any chance of success if it puts New York in peril, and there is no likelihood that any other republican than Conkling can carry this State. It is said and trumpeted that Morton is strong with the republicans of the Southern States; but it makes little difference whether he is or not, since it is certain that nearly every Southern State will support the democratic candidate. In the strong republican States any candidate of that party would succeed, and nothing is to be gained or lost by the selection. In the strong democratic States, on the other hand, no republican has any chance, and it would be absurd for the Cincinnati Convention to select its candidate with a view to those hopeless States. It is indispensable to carry New York, which can be wrested from democratic hands by no other candidate than Mr. Conkling. If the Cincinnati Convention looks at facts as they are, and makes a true estimate of the situation, it will see that New York is the grand hinge of the Presidential canvass; that it is a doubtful State at best; that it would be bad strategy to nominate any of Mr. Conkling's rivals, who have no chance of securing its thirty-five electoral votes. His advantages are so manifest and so solid that the shrewd politicians who will pledge the New York delegates to him at Syracuse have no idea of doing it as a pure compliment.

Independent Journalism.

It is always pleasant for the HERALD to acknowledge the enterprise and independence of its contemporaries, especially those who have strong political predilections. Thus the manner in which Mr. Tom Nast, the brilliant artist of Harper's Weekly, treats the Belknap business shows that he has a soul above partisanship. In his magnificent cartoon we have Belknap and Babcock, Grant and Shepherd, held up to public censure as the enemies of the public virtue. Columbia stands in the attitude of the great Master (for, as our readers know, Mr. Nast is fond of illustrating his comic pictures with sacred themes), and the drove of thieves and jobbers are running down to the sea before her like the swine when possessed by devils. Over all we see drawn, with that effective vigor which marks the efforts of Mr. Nast, the rising of the sun of economy and patriotism. This cartoon is the more remarkable because in the faces of the swine as they rush toward the sea we discover the portraits of Babcock, Belknap, Shepherd, Williams, Delano, and the President himself as the head pig of all. The moral of this cartoon is salutary and striking, and remembering the devotion of Mr. Nast to the President, and his unflinching allegiance to the republican party, we cannot too highly praise him for the sacrifice of personal feeling he makes in the interest of pure and honest government.

While commending Mr. Nast for his masterly cartoon we must also note the vigorous and trenchant manner in which the World has treated the Pendleton case. Always on the alert to detect corruption and show up the villainies of men in power, the World in this case, like Mr. Nast, rises above the temptations of party and personal associations, for Pendleton is one of the most gracious and generous of gentlemen. There is probably no man in the democratic party, unless, perhaps, it is our Uncle Dick, who would make the money of the people go further and do more good than "Gentleman George." Therefore when the editor of the World found it necessary to hold up this trusted leader and charming gentleman to the censure of the party and the country we know what the sacrifice must have been. The lash which has fayed Blaine, scarified Babcock, torn the hide of the impenetrable Butler and stripped from his quivering limbs the flesh of Belknap was not withheld from the back of the bribe-taking Pendleton, fine a gentleman and true a democrat as he is. These trenchant, biting, serious, illuminating, sarcastic, ironical articles of the World on "Pendleton, the unworthy democrat," will live in our newspaper history as evidences that even a democratic editor can rise above the temptations of party and do his duty. They will live with the great cartoon of Nast showing how the administration hogs possessed by the devils of corruption ran down into the sea.

The Sanitary Neglect of the Schools.

The very careful inspection of the sanitary condition of a number of the downtown public schools made by the reportorial staff of the HERALD, the details of which we print on another page, shows that our strictures on the management of these important institutions are fully justified. No matter where the blame should rest, the facts demonstrate that many of our schools are dangerously overcrowded and that nearly all are defectively ventilated or otherwise sanitariously neglected. Perhaps the policy of turning over for political purposes the immediate control of the schools to local boards of trustees, the members of which are in too many cases incompetent to fill the offices with intelligence, may be

The Return of the Fugitive Marsh.

Everybody but the culprits against whom he is to testify will be glad that Marsh, the frightened witness who fled to Montreal, has received assurances of protection and pardon, and will presently be on his way to Washington. The steps taken to bring him back would have reflected more credit on the President if they had not been so tardy. If it be proper to give Marsh a guarantee against personal prosecution now it was equally proper seventeen days ago, when he absconded. What excuse can the President give, or can anybody give for him, for keeping the wheels of justice blocked for so long a period for want of evidence when it was in his power to call back the fugitive witness by the same means he has at last adopted? He confesses by taking this step now that there was no legal objection to his taking it at once, for there has been no change in the law since Marsh's flight. If the assurance of protection is given in the interest of justice the delay is indefensible, for it equally concerned justice to have Belknap impeached and indicted as soon as his crime was brought to light. Both the impeachment proceedings and the action of the Grand Jury have been kept at a dead halt for more than two weeks by the failure of the President to do promptly what he now, at last, acknowledges to have been his duty.

Although it is impossible to justify the delay, it is easy enough to explain it, or, rather, to account for the action of the President now without any change in the legal aspect of the case. As soon as it was discovered that Marsh and his wife were important witnesses against Pendleton and that a distinguished democrat could be dragged down in the same disgrace as Belknap, the President suddenly overcame his reluctance to promise safety to the fugitives and induce them to come back. Pendleton stood higher in the democratic party than Belknap did in the republican party, and when it was found that both could be engulfed in the same ruin by the testimony of Mr. and Mrs. Marsh the President was quick to recognize the duty he had so long neglected. We think it utterly discredit to him to have waited until he found that their testimony would be as blackening and fatal to a prominent democrat as to a prominent republican before recognizing his obvious duty in so important a matter.

The Sermons Yesterday.

It often happens that several of our leading preachers select similar themes for their sermons, and yesterday the wide-branching one of God's providence received a number of diverse interpretations. Dr. Hepworth thinks that "His blessings are scattered with such struggle and apparent confusion that to our human judgment they have no meaning." Nevertheless, we must take all on the faith that God knows what is best. Mr. Backus in his sermon said, "We may sow and water, but it is God that gives the increase." Mr. Frothingham, in drawing the line between creed and conduct, says that "If a man in society trusts implicitly in Providence for everything he is called insane." Dr. Bellows says, as if in answer, "Providence does not mean interference." The inquiring Christian in reading over our sermon reports can compare these utterances with his own belief. Mr. Beecher defended the "gospel of gush" on the ground that it is a gospel of goodness, and championed the right of a man filled with the spirit to preach what is in him without asking the leave of the stiff-collared theologians, whom he would not hesitate to ridicule with Dryden as

"God Almighty's gentlemen."

In the Catholic churches the virtues of St. Joseph were duly praised.

The Twenty-second Joint Rule.

Senator Morton, the chairman of the Committee on Privileges and Elections, has brought in a bill providing for the counting of votes for President and Vice President. The Senate has been for a week and is still engaged in the consideration of this important subject, and it would be well should it receive more general attention. The object of the bill is to prescribe a method of counting which shall take the place of the twenty-second joint rule. That rule, lately referred to in these columns, was adopted in 1865, and retained until this year by the two republican houses of Congress. It empowered a mere majority in either house to refuse, without a word of debate, to count the vote of a State. The country was thus unable to judge of the fairness of such rejections, and those who might be guilty of any criminal partisanship in objecting to votes cast for an opponent could escape in silence and with impunity. In 1873 Louisiana and Arkansas were disfranchised and the three votes cast by Georgia for Mr. Greeley were thrown out, according to the following clause of the rule:—"And no vote objected to shall be counted except by the concurrent vote of the two houses, &c., and upon any such question there shall be no debate in either house."

It was fortunate for the peace of the country during the present administration that the rejection of those eighteen electoral votes did not change the result, and that Mr. Grant was lawfully elected President, even without taking them into account. Early in this session of Congress the Senate, without consulting the democratic House, retired from the joint rule to which two republican houses had so long remained parties, and referred this whole matter of counting to Mr. Morton's committee. As might have been expected, the spirit of the legislation proposed and advocated by Mr. Morton and his friends, in 1876, is quite the reverse of that which we find in their rule of 1865, 1869 and 1873; and the new bill provides that no vote of a State shall be rejected "except by the affirmative vote of the two houses," and gives ample opportunity for debate.

While Senators are exercising their ingenuity in establishing some method not only of counting the votes, but also of questioning and deciding the legality of electoral certificates, we may inquire what constitutional authority they have for so doing. The twelfth amendment says that "The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and the House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted. The person having the greatest number of votes for President shall be the President." This means that the President of the Senate shall open the certificates, and that Congress shall count the votes—that is, may adopt convenient modes of computing the number cast for each candidate, and shall declare the result. But can this be construed to give either or both houses power to reject the list of the votes of a State sealed and certified by the electors, together with a list of the names of the electors certified under the Executive authority of such State? Are not these certificates primary evidence of the true vote of a State, which Congress is bound, under the constitution, to accept? And apart from constitutional objections is it expedient that Congress should have the jurisdiction claimed, and could a debate in that body, during the exciting process of counting the votes in a close contest, ever satisfactorily settle the questions which might arise?

It seems, however, necessary that some tribunal should decide which of two sets of certificates are to be counted and which rejected; for it has been seen that a State had two Legislatures and two Governors, and consequently transmitted to the seat of government two sets of votes. Still, had it not been for federal and military interference, Louisiana would not have made two returns at the last election and occasioned an apparent necessity for legislation. But whatever law may now be devised and whatever tribunal may be provided, the country will not soon forget the twenty-second joint rule of 1865, nor that the Senate and the House have, for three elections, usurped a power to silently disfranchise a State; that this power has been exercised, that it is only because of overwhelming popular majorities in favor of one candidate its dangerous consequences have not already been upon us, and that although they are now anxious to place themselves on the record in condemning their own rule, it is only to-day that the republican leaders are proposing a remedy. Mr. Bontwell says, "at that time (1869) there was a decided opinion that the rule was a bad one." Mr. Morton refers to a former speech in which he said:—"But it was certainly adopted without much consideration, and with a view apparently of furnishing an additional safeguard against receiving electoral votes from States that had been in rebellion." At the same time he says:—"It is, in my judgment, the most dangerous contrivance to the peace of the nation that has ever been invented by Congress; a torpedo planted in the straits with which the ship of state may at some time come into fatal collision." Yet these leaders have dared to maintain their "dangerous contrivance," their "torpedo" during President Lincoln's last term, and during President Grant's two terms, and until their opponents had gained control of the other house. Will they be held responsible?

REMARKS SOCIAL AND MEMOROUS CHARACTERISTICS

are not those usually regarded by the world which, outside his immediate friends and relations, has judged him in his high, hard character of "The Man of Blood and Iron." To show how amiably and enjoyably this lion of diplomacy can purr at the proper times is the object of a book of the Imperial Chancellor's letters and sayings recently published at Leipzig, an interesting résumé of which will be found elsewhere in our letter from Berlin. Two Catholic Bishops were consecrated yesterday, Dr. Galberry as Bishop of Hartford and the Right Reverend J. Twigg as Bishop of Pittsburgh. In addition, Bishop