DEFENCE OF THE RAILROADS.

Eloquent Counsel Harangue the Legislative Committee.

NEW YORK CENTRAL AND ERIE.

Ex-Judge Shipman Acknowledges the Power of the State.

The Assembly Committee appointed to investigate the management of railroads in this State met yesterday morning in the Chamber of Commerce building and listened to the arguments for the defence of the railroads. Mr. Depew finished his address in the morning, and the rest of the day was occupied by ex-Judge Shipman's argument on the part of the Erie Railroad. The investigation will be concluded in a few days.

At the opening of the session Mr. Depew continued his defence of the New York Central Railroad, taking up the question of freight rates and the alleged discrimination against New York. It was said that the Legislature should step in to alter the railroad charges. There was once a time when New York had a monopoly of the traffic, but Baltimore and Philadelphia began to compete, with the advantage of shorter haul and less mileage. The connections of Baltimore and Philadelphia with the West became so complete as to carry as cheaply as the New York Central and the Erie. Their disadvantages were made up for by the low cost of coal over New York. The average cost of freight per ton per mile from Baltimore became the cheapest in the United States. These roads had the backing of the State, while the New York roads had none. They declined to yield their advantages, and the New York roads were compelled to force the issue. Then began the great railroad war. Freights dropped from $1 to fifty cents, to twenty-five, to thirteen, to ten. There the New York roads stopped. Where the others went nobody knew. The Baltimore and Ohio and the Pennsylvania ceased to earn or pay dividends. The New York companies then came to a basis of agreement, each road securing a certain percentage of the business, entirely ignoring differences of distance. The war was terminated in 1877 by the pool. Under it New York gets seventy-nine per cent of the business and the other roads twenty-one. Maize was the only product in which the business of New York had fallen off. If the Legislature acted on the strength of the diversion of maize from New York, the result would be most amazing. (Laughter.)

STATE SUPERVISION.

Mr. Sterne had recommended for railroad ills a State supervision by the authorities to whom the railroads shall pay large salaries for interference with their affairs and interruptions of their business. Mr. Sterne had recommended a railroad commission. Mr. Depew did not see why the railroads should pay an enormous sum of money to get Mr. Sterne on a railroad on which there was no switch. Such supervision might do for monarchies, but would not do for a republic. There was a commission once in this State, but it only lasted a year, and there were no regrets at its death. The history of such commissions was that they started off with great promises and professions. They were ignorant of railroad problems, but felt that something must be done. The railroad manager always subscribed to public opinion and never opposed the government. When a commission cost four or five millions to a railway company and failed then the officer was removed and a new politician was put in his place under the same circumstances. "We have no objection to a normal school for commissions, but we do not want them to practice on us for their education." Mr. Sterne had instanced the English and the Massachusetts commissions. They drew their salaries like lusty citizens, but their services were inappreciable. There was no analogy in the case of the English Commission, as there the government reached out all over the Kingdom. Here the authority of such bodies stopped at the boundary of the State. The speaker recognized the singular ability of Mr. Charles Francis Adams, who was at the head of the Massachusetts Commission. From the day that it had been originated it had been in continual process of experiment. At last it was discovered that the Legislature could not meet the emergency and the Chairman of the Board resigned. He had now been chosen by the railroads to act as arbiter in the settlement of their national differences. The commission found themselves powerless to deal with discrimination, as their authority stopped with the limits of the State. If the railroads wanted to conceal their affairs the best thing they could do would be to adopt the system of railroad commissions, as no Legislature would have life enough in it for any committee to learn anything before their term of office expired.

"The morning papers, expressing public opinion from the standpoint of modified hostility or modified friendship to the railroad enterprises, giving their suggestions or kick to us and their suggestions or hint to you, say 'Mr. Depew talks like a trained advocate, but he does not rise to the broad dignity of this great question and admit the evils and suggest a remedy. It would be wiser for him and wiser for the people he represents if he would.' I claim for the railways in this discussion no immunity from the ordinary frailties of human nature. I have simply said that when it was charged that we were so acting as to commit the gravest injustice, though the acts might be proved the injustice could not be proved. I have simply said that the railway manager does what he can to meet evils as they arise. He meets them to the best of his ability. When you say to us, 'Prepare legislation by which the statute book shall run the railroad,' we say frankly, 'We have had twenty-five years' experience in the practical management of railways, but we cannot frame that law.' If the newspaper critic, the justice of whose criticism in many respects I admit, will provide the remedy and say what can be done and where it can be done, and that it will not inflict a thousand ills for one benefit, let him state it and the railroad will adopt it without the necessity of legislative interference. No talent is so easily cultivated as the talent to pull down.

"The New York Central, with electric telegraph and ocean cable making the marts of the world one, has done its best. It is for the committee to say whether it could do better. The road had maintained still for the city of New York a majority of all the business done. It was fighting for the rights of the city and the State. I return thanks to the committee for their courtesy and the substantial justice with which the investigation has been conducted. I think that it has been too broad and inquisitorial, but possibly that may be an error. Whatever the result the railroad does not deny the power of the State to act; it only questions its right on principles of equity and justice. Whatever the Legislature imposes we will do, but we think we can control our road better than anybody else. We deny the justice of the State to interfere unless the State can show that such interference will benefit somebody and not harm everybody. Whatever the State demands the railroad must do."

"ABOVE THE CONTROL OF LEGISLATION."

Ex-Judge Shipman then began the defence on the part of the Erie. The following is a very brief summary of his remarks:—

"All that I can hope to do in the observations which I shall submit will be to comment as briefly as possible on the pertinent questions which the committee will undertake seriously to consider. We have been told that the Legislature, in which this committee originated, represented a feeling of dissatisfaction throughout the State at the way in which the railroads managed their business. But popular discontent is not a safe guide in matters of legislation. Isolated instances of hardship are equally fertile as a foundation of legislation. The lawmaking power can only deal with the business of a community under general heads. All the laws which regulate the movement of business are as much above the control of legislation as the laws which regulate the movement of the solar system. The question is whether the evils complained of by those who asked for this investigation are curable by any legislation. It is necessary to inquire what these evils are and what are the leading charges. These were made by the Chamber of Commerce and the New York Board of Trade and Transportation. They are termed by the chairman of the committee of the Chamber of Commerce an 'indictment.' The notion that the railways are a parallel to the 'King's highway'—that they are mere public highways on which every one can travel at his own pleasure and in his own way—is embodied at some length in the indictment. Mr. Charles Francis Adams says that the railroads no more resemble the King's highway than the corporations who own them resemble a common carrier. The American legislation has been inspired by the theory that the railroad corporation is nothing but an overgrown common carrier, who has, in some way, got the monopoly of a highway. The Chamber of Commerce stated that the roads of this State have been capitalized on a basis of $2 to every $1 paid down. They mean that combination and co-operation among railroads is the only way by which they can earn dividends on their stock or interest on their bonds. According to their view a reduction of two-thirds in bonds and stock would be necessary to bring the railroads down to hardpan. Their conclusion is that the sooner such a basis is reached the sooner a permanent and enduring prosperity will be attained. Such a proceeding they admit would be hardship to many, and it was only a question whether or not the greatest good of the greatest number demanded such a course. This doctrine, although not technically Communism, was a recognition of the right of the Legislature to pass laws which might result in the destruction of property of one class for the benefit of another. It is no excuse to say that this sentiment was applied only to corporations. The securities of these companies are the private property of individuals and under the protection of law. It would be as just to suggest the sacking and plunder of Mr. Schultz's or Mr. Thurber's warehouses whenever a distribution of their contents among the mob might be deemed the greatest good to the greatest number.

"The third charge is that the rates of transportation are made unnecessarily high by the maintenance of subsidiary organizations, designed to deplete the revenues of the roads before they reach the stockholders. It plainly asserts that the officers of the companies are deliberately engaged in plundering the revenues of their companies. It has not been proved. The testimony shows that these outside companies were merely to facilitate the business of the railroads. The pretence that they are used in any manner to put money in the pockets of the managers of the railroad companies was fallacious. The next charge related to stock proxies. Neither Mr. Jewett nor the other managers of the Erie approve or practise the system of buying and selling stock proxies. The tender solicitude of the authors of the charges for the stockholding interest was intended to enlist the stockholders in a crusade against their own property."

The usual recess was here taken. When the committee reassembled Mr. Shipman continued as follows:—"The fifth charge is of an omnibus character. It calls for—1, a posting of the rates; 2, the establishment of a unit of quantity for freight; 3, it objected to the classification of freight; 4, it denounced the pooling arrangements. I shall ask attention here to the alleged depression of the interests of the city of New York. The jobbing trade, the grain trade and the milk trade were said to have been injured thereby. Dangers supposed to threaten the commercial prosperity of New York are a favorite topic.

THEN AND NOW.

"Horatio Seymour himself has said:—'The railways do not give New York the trade it had when the waterways were the main routes.' His fame will not be enhanced by such utterances. The point made is that the operations of the railroads injured the city, not that New York has less trade than formerly, but that she has less compared with her rivals on the seaboard. But the lakes, the Erie Canal and the Hudson River no longer give New York a monopoly of the trade from the West. It is true the city once commanded the entire trade. All this chain of waterways centred in New York. This happy state of things would have continued but for the invention and perfection of railroads as a means of transportation. But the railways have not abolished the waterways in any blameworthy sense. The explanation of the difficulty is simple. The railroad system has changed New York's relations to the West. It has brought Baltimore and Philadelphia and Boston in direct connection with it. The effect on New York was precisely the same as if rival canals had been opened to those points. It is not possible for New York to have that essential monopoly of the trade which she once had. A precisely similar case was that of San Francisco, which, before the building of the Pacific Railroad, had a monopoly of the trade on the Pacific coast.

"The Chamber of Commerce had dwelt with emphasis on the decay of the jobbing trade. The statement of the population of New York had been accurately given. An inattentive observer, on looking at the federal census, might conclude that Boston had gained more than New York. But counsel had fallen into an error by failing to notice that Roxbury and Dorchester were both annexed to Boston between 1860 and 1870. If New York's census had been increased by the addition of Brooklyn and Jersey City, the result would have been different. This would show an increase of seventy-five per cent and would be a parallel process to that by which counsel had estimated Boston's increase at over forty per cent. But the fair way was to take only the increase of Brooklyn and Jersey City and add to New York. This would show the real increase to be twenty-eight per cent, a greater ratio between 1860 and 1870 than any of her seaboard rivals. The statement of the gentleman was therefore misleading. The increase of New York was next compared with that of Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati and Milwaukee. These Western cities had increased more, as they were in the life and vigor of early manhood. They long ago laid their plans to throw off dependence on New York. In July, 1870, Congress passed a law authorizing the transportation of imported goods in bond from New York, Boston and other towns to the Western inland cities. The result is that a large and increasing jobbing trade has grown up in these inland cities, especially Chicago, and caused the great change in the jobbing trade of New York—a result which the railroads had nothing whatever to do with. To say as the Chamber of Commerce memorial does that 'the railroads have no right to break up the jobbing trade of the city,' was to use words in their basest and most inconsequential manner. To restore to New York the monopoly of the jobbing trade or to have continued it would be as impossible as to transfer the grain lands of the West to the seaboard or carry the shores of the Atlantic to the Mississippi Valley. To charge the railroads of this State with any improper agency in producing results which inexorably follow from the great movements of population and trade and the development of the interior of the country is as absurd as it is unjust.

"New York has suffered much more in other ways for which the railways were not responsible. For six years she has suffered from the general stagnation of business in the country at large. For nearly twenty years she has been plundered by municipal thieves. But this city has suffered more from the absolute destruction of her shipping interests than from all other causes combined. Her ships, her shipyards, her riggers, her calkers, her dealers in shipbuilding materials, her native seamen, her sailmakers, her princely shipping merchants have nearly all disappeared. Her foreign commerce is carried almost exclusively in foreign bottoms, both export as well as import. This vast business has been temporarily lost to New York. Not one great sail or steamship line engaged in the European trade is owned or managed here. The local agents of all these foreign lines necessarily labor for the foreign capitalists who own them. This great branch of commerce and industry has been transferred to Liverpool, London, Hull, Cardiff, Glasgow, Southampton, Bremen, Antwerp, Havre and other foreign cities. One would think the Chamber of Commerce could be better employed in endeavoring to restore this vast maritime business to what was once, and always should be, one of the greatest maritime cities on the globe, than in fomenting a blind war on the railroads of the State, which are the sources of much that remains of her supremacy and power.

"SUPREMACY AND POWER OF NEW YORK."

"But the supremacy and power of New York as the first city on the continent are not nor will they be destroyed. She is still and will continue to be the first of American cities. By means of through lines of rail and water communication the whole country and its resources are made tributary to New York. She is the money centre of the continent and will be of the world. She still has it in her power by insisting on the repeal of the destructive legislation of the federal government to recover her lost maritime interests and become the first maritime city of the world.

"I now come to the second allegation against New York railroads—that their policy has diverted a portion of the grain trade from this city, or, rather, has failed to retain to that city all the increase of that trade throughout the country. New York has not suffered from the rivalry of Montreal and Boston, as they have lost more than she has. The increase of Philadelphia and Baltimore is the particular subject of complaint. A disinterested and unbiassed oberver would wonder, not that New York had lost so much, but that she had lost so little. The opening of through lines of railroads had removed the natural barriers from other points and given them, on account of nearer routes, great advantages over New York. That after this alteration in the means of reaching the West by the rival cities of Philadelphia and Baltimore New York should fail to increase her percentage of receipts as much as those two cities was inevitable. That the position of New York has not been changed very much more for the worse was due to the desperate struggle of the New York Central and Erie roads to protect New York—a struggle which cost these companies millions of dollars. Great sacrifices had been made by the New York roads to retain control of the through traffic for New York by lowering through rates. The Chamber of Commerce now demands that the local rates be reduced to a pro rata with the through rates. The suggestion was flagitious in view of the fact that these local rates were lower than on any other railroads in the world. The tendency of the pooling arrangements was to diminish the difference between through and local rates.

"The pool was a combination among the railroads for a fair division of tonnage. It tended to prevent the ruinous results of competition. It was the result of the best efforts of the best minds endeavoring to remove evils which had hitherto proved incorrigible. If permitted to continue it would bring order out of confusion. The agreement of April 5, 1877, the pooling agreement, was a cause of complaint. But it was not a discrimination against the natural or geographical advantages of New York. Its practical effect was not discrimination against New York in any sense. It had placed the trade of New York in a better position than it had been at any time since the rival roads became through freight lines. The benefit to the trade of New York was due to the persistent struggle of her railroads. Nature had placed Philadelphia and Baltimore nearer the sources of this great through traffic than New York. On the other hand, New York had the natural advantage of being nearer the European market and directly on the open sea. The railroads of New York could not dictate to the London, Liverpool or Bremen shipowner what his rates of freight should be. If the complaint about through bills of lading were valid, all I have to say is that the New York roads are not responsible for the practice. The New York companies were as much interested as the people in having this through traffic pass through the city. They were much more intelligently alive to the question than their assailants."

Mr. Shipman here broke off his remarks, and the committee adjourned until Monday morning at ten o'clock, when he will resume the defence.

GENERAL MERRITT'S COLUMN.

WHITE RIVER AGENCY, Col., Nov. 21, 1879.

The news received this morning transferring General Merritt, with the Third cavalry and one company of the Fifth cavalry, from this point has set the whole camp by the ears. We regarded the news, up to the moment of opening our papers, as the preliminary act of the breaking up of this most expensive and formidable expedition. But papers received by the mail speedily disabused our minds of this idea, and now speculation is rife as to General Merritt's course. He must take one of two routes—that is, he will either join the force of Hatch, south of the hostiles, or he will go by way of Salt Lake and operate via the Uintah Agency, using the latter as a depot of supplies. Perhaps it is as well that the Indian Department has been permitted to play their hand and exhaust every argument and expedient to bring about a peaceful solution of the difficulty with the Utes. But it has been an expensive experiment for the government, and it is an open question whether or not the government finds the amount of "taffy" exchanged worth the money paid for it. The expense of transporting supplies to the troops now upon White River must be something enormous and only equalled by the difficulty of getting the supplies in at all. There is over two feet of snow upon the other side of the divide. This, too, while there is no grass as a matter of course, and very little wood to be obtained *en route*. After Merritt's column leaves we will have here four companies of the Fourth infantry, six companies of the Seventh infantry, four companies of the Fourteenth infantry and four companies of the Fifth cavalry—altogether about six hundred men, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel C. C. Gilbert, of the Seventh infantry. What part we are to play in the programme laid out time will show. At present we have not the slightest idea. The major portion of our force being infantry, we can only hope to deliver an effective blow, if they come in our neighborhood, by surprising them. Mr. Adams, now serving upon the Peace Commission, was formerly agent for the White River Utes. He it was who built the upper or old agency, which consisted of three buildings, exhausting an appropriation of $15,000. A subcontract was let for the three buildings. They were not built, or should I say builded, by General Adams.

THE BROOKLYN NAVY YARD.

VIEWS OF THE ENGINEER CORPS OF THE NAVY ON THE MACHINIST SYSTEM—EFFICIENCY IN THE PAST AND INEFFICIENCY NOW—MOVEMENTS OF VESSELS.

The views of Engineer-in-Chief W. H. Shock, Chief of the Bureau of Steam Engineering of the Navy Department, in relation to abolishing the machinist system of the navy and reassigning the engineers to duties in the engine room, instead of being supervisory officers as now, as set forth in his annual report to the Secretary of the Navy, seem to meet with approval among the ranking officers of the Engineer Corps. The following are the condensed views of those engineer officers of the navy who have expressed themselves on the subject. The many mishaps which have occurred during the past few years to the machinery of naval vessels and the recent unfortunate occurrence on the Alaska have been incident to the desired change from the machinist system to that of the immediate supervision of the steam department by the engineers in regular watches. The present organization of the personnel of the steam department of the naval vessels is considered greatly deficient. It is not only inferior to the excellent organization of previous years which it superseded by the machinist system, but is much inferior, by the introduction of that system, to the merchant marine. In time of absolute peace, with but a nominal duty to be performed, this inferior organization has not demanded the attention which it inevitably would were it to come to the real test of war service, the consequences of which would not be found of a nature which could be measured by a money loss.

EFFICIENCY IN THE PAST.

In the organization which preceded the machinist system of ten years ago the personnel of the steam department on board of our naval vessels consisted of a sufficient number of engineers belonging to the regular corps, thoroughly educated, practically and theoretically, in the duties of their profession. They were appointed, and promoted from grade to grade after passing a most rigorous examination by a thoroughly competent board of engineer officers, embracing not only the practical, but the highest scientific developments of their profession. Their standing in the corps rested in their character, experience, length of service, their record at the Navy Department and intellectual attainments. The corps was noted, as it is to-day, for the highest proficiency, and under their personal supervision the machinery of our naval steam vessels was not only made to perform all that was possible, but great improvements were made in the designs, and it was always maintained in the highest degree of practical efficiency. The subordinates attached to the steam department—oilers, firemen of different grades and coalpassers—performed the regular manual labor. The engineers personally kept the regular watches and superintended and made on the foreign stations all the necessary adjustments and repairs to the machinery that could be done with such tools as could be carried on board of the vessels. Under this system there was never any complaint or cause for inefficiency, and no questions of doubt as to responsibility, so that both the pride and the interests of the engineers were stimulated to maintain the machinery in the best condition with the least cost. The economy of coal and other stores, for the same reasons, was narrowly watched, and the expenditures of the steam department were reduced to the lowest limit that could be judiciously reached. A corps of thoroughly practical, scientific and competent engineers was thus established and organized into a homogeneous whole, conversant with and specially adapted to the naval service. During the recent war they performed invaluable service, but necessarily not of the nature to attract public attention like military achievements, though these last could not have been accomplished without its aid. Of the engineer corps of the navy, also those who have resigned from it, together with those who volunteered for the period of the war, among its members could always be found many who excelled in the different branches of their profession, such as designing machinery, experimenting with it, determining its relative value, defects and merits; and the old organization, including the firemen, oilers and coalheavers, who were in excellent discipline and became skilful in their respective occupations and remained in the service for a lifetime, reshipping as regularly as the term of their enlistment expired, was admitted by the officers of all foreign navies coming in contact with our vessels to be the best in the world.

INEFFICIENCY OF THE NEW ORGANIZATION.

The new organization is quite as inefficient as the old one was efficient. Instead of a sufficient number of competent engineers to take charge of the watches being detailed on board of each vessel only one or two are placed there: and the absence of the others is sought to be compensated by the presence of a number of incompetent persons shipped under the name of machinists, but who rarely if ever have the right to such title. Many of these men are wholly ignorant of the profession of which they become members, and in conjunction with the one or two engineers on board a vessel make a larger detail for the steam department than was required under the old organization, and the attempt to substitute machinists for engineers has proved a failure, because of the qualifications which they were not possessed of and because of the greater number required. Nor is the cost of the new organization, in mere amount of salary paid, less than that of the old, for the machinists receive $900 per annum, nearly the same as paid to the third assistant engineers, and their number is greater, while the value of their services is incomparably inferior. The comparison of salaries does not show the real money cost, as the money loss to the government in permanent injury to its expensive and complicated machinery of new pattern, of which the machinists are not thoroughly conversant, and in the daily waste of fuel and stores, due to incompetent management, is vastly more than the total cost of the old organization, while the decreased efficiency of the vessels with machinery under such handling involves losses not to be reckoned, excepting so far as it affects national reputation. The incessant change of *personnel*, which is inevitable under the machinist system, results in preventing the improvements which would naturally follow with increased experience; delicate machinery becomes corroded and ruined; expensive boilers are burned out; the consumption of coal is increased; the speed of the vessel is not maintained; there is an unnecessary loss of the use of the vessel by detention for repairs of injuries resulting from negligence and ignorance, and all tending to an inevitable increase in the cost per annum of maintaining a vessel in commission. The reason for this is that the machinists, being uneducated men shipped for the cruise, are without responsibility for the consequences of their conduct, receiving neither reward for good nor punishment for bad, deserting whenever their interest or passion prompts, and, avoiding all labor, which in their case would be unappreciated, naturally care only to draw their pay for the least return.

MACHINISTS AND ENGINEERS.

The duties of machinists on board ship are the same as those of competent engineers under the old system—viz., to stand the watches, keep the logs and make the repairs, under the supervision of the one or two engineers on board. However, this supervision must be necessarily incomplete, as it is a physical impossibility for one or two engineers to remain on duty the twenty-four hours through, and it is possible that the most costly engine or boiler may be ruined in five minutes. That the system has worked at all is due to the untiring efforts of the engineers themselves, who have done their utmost to meet the wishes of the Navy Department; and as the naval regulations declare "machinists and other engine room petty officers are to be given charge of the watches in the engine and fire rooms under the supervision of the engineer officers, when the number of engineers or graduated cadets is not sufficient for that duty," the engines and boilers of our naval vessels are always under the charge of the machinists; the engineers are wholly relieved from responsibility for the machinery not under their management, and cannot be held accountable for any injuries or deficiencies.

It was intended that the United States frigate Tennessee, which is to be the flagship of the North Atlantic squadron, and to which the officers of the Powhatan are to be transferred, should go into commission on Friday, but the inclement weather has caused a delay of a few days, and the officers are ordered on board to-morrow. The engineers of the Tennessee have completed the steam trial of the engines at the dock and everything has been found to work satisfactorily.

The training ship Minnesota has gone to the Navy Yard from the foot of Twenty-third street, North River, and is ordered into winter quarters at New London, to which place she will proceed next week.

The Marion is lying at Cob Dock, and a new crew is being shipped for her. Most of the new detail of officers have reported on board.

The sloop-of-war Vandalia is expected at the Navy Yard at any hour, having been ordered here from Aspinwall.

DIPHTHERIA.

Minister Shishkin's Prescription Coldly Received by Physicians.

SPECIFICS GENERALLY DISCREDITED.

The Nature of the Disease and Modes of Treatment Discussed.

The "Remedy for Diphtheria," as given in a communication from Mr. N. Shishkin, Minister from Russia to the United States, in the HERALD of the 19th inst., has caused quite a flutter of excitement among the medical fraternity in this city. Physicians, as is well known, guard with a jealous eye any attempt at invasion of their functions, not liking at all to find a layman stepping beyond the sacred precincts of the temple in which the hidden rites are performed. When a HERALD reporter called on Dr. A. Jacobi, at his residence, No. 110 West Thirty-fourth street, he was met at the very outset by a startling announcement in regard to the subject on which he sought information. The Doctor directed the reporter's attention to an article of his own which had appeared in Gerhardt's "Kinderkrankheiten," and which contained twelve pages of closely printed matter giving only the very titles of the works written on diphtheria. The inference was that one prescription more or less for the treatment of this terrible disease was not likely to reach the end sought for already by so many thoughtful minds. Other physicians, as will be seen below, had heard less of benzoate of soda than had Dr. Jacobi.

To get at the general medical opinion regarding Minister Shishkin's prescription a number of prominent practitioners were called on. The prescription may be here repeated:—

Natr. benzoic pur. 5.0 solv. in aq. distillat aq. menth. piper. ana 40.0 syr. cort. aur. 10.0.

This means benzoate of soda, five grammes, dissolved in distilled and in peppermint water, forty grammes of each, with syrup of orange peel, ten grammes. This would give about sixteen doses of a teaspoonful, but the prescription does not state in what quantities the medicine is to be taken. It will be noticed also it is prescribed for a child.

ESSENTIAL FACTS.

Dr. Beverley Robinson, of No. 37 West Thirty-fifth street, a specialist in the disease of diphtheria, stated that there was nothing new in benzoate of soda; but that it was not, so far as he knew, commonly used. He did not know any physician who prescribed it. So many specifics were introduced as remedies for diphtheria that this one might or might not be of some use. He himself had introduced one, and while some physicians found it acted admirably others did not think so well of it. In fact, physicians had each some method of his own for treatment—not his own specific, but a method based upon a general principle. Each naturally leaned to the instructions he received from his teachers. It is impossible to say in what the contagious nature consists or how the disease is caused. The trouble is that cases which are not diphtheria are classed as such, and as a result the remedies applied and which are supposed to have effected a cure are then supposed to be efficacious in genuine cases of the disease. Among those who admit the parasitic nature of diphtheritic poison there is a difference of conviction in regard to the way in which monads penetrate the system. According to some authorities they are taken up immediately by the circulatory system and occasion the outbreak of the disease, under the form of constitutional phenomena, which become the result of blood changes, possibly of a chemical sort. By others it is believed that general manifestations of grave import only follow, after a shorter or longer period, the primary local signs which are evident upon the mucous membrane of the fauces and tonsils. These distinct theories of the processes by which the blood and viscera of the body become infected by the diphtheritic poison are important, because they also lead to variances of treatment. Medical men who believe in the primary local nature of the disease, and who acknowledge, also, the direct agency of lower forms of organized life in occasioning it, attribute the greatest importance to the prompt action of antiseptic drugs applied topically in weaker or stronger combinations. Those who admit the existence of blood poisoning by similar organisms from the very beginning and who understand the throat manifestations to be but a consequence of the blood changes already produced, and that the bacteria present upon the false membranes and mucous linings are only a concomitant fact of very secondary value, are extremely anxious to start remedial measures with frequent and relatively large doses of disinfectants given internally. They are but little disposed to attribute importance to local applications.

IS IT PARASITIC?

Is diphtheria in reality of a parasitic nature, may thereupon be asked, and is it rational to continue the use, either externally or internally of the so-called disinfectant remedies? The contagious character of diphtheria is to-day accepted by all. The inoculability of the disease is not so universally admitted. Dr. Robinson believed it was an inoculable disease, and nearly if not quite as certain to be transmitted in this manner as variola. Practically, two things should be remembered, he held. Attention should be paid to the condition of the cutis covering the fingers and hands; again, after an operation, care should be taken to avoid placing one's face too close to or immediately in front of the neck of the patient, for during the first effort of expiration which follows the opening made into the windpipe and also the insertion of the tube, contagious products are thrown to some distance and may alight upon the operator, and thus cause direct transmission of the disease. For the treatment of the disease he had found powder of cubebs to be the most reliable medicine. In 1872, when he was resident physician at the Paris Hospital, there was a children's diphtherian epidemic, and he had had experience of the disease in all its forms.

Dr. Thomas F. Healy, of No. 309 West Nineteenth street, stated that he was aware that recently there had been some discussion going on in German medical literature about benzoate of soda, the drug named in the Russian Minister's prescription. But he had never himself prescribed benzoate of soda for diphtheria, nor did he know any physician in the city who had done so. He felt sure that it was not in common use among practitioners. As to its value as a medicine he could not, of course, speak, because a test alone, and an abundant test at that, would be required before it would receive full recognition. There were so many specifics year after year presented as a sure cure for diphtheria that a physician had to be very careful and accept those only that had passed through the ordeal of investigation. This disease of diphtheria had occupied the attention of very able specialists, and as the practice now stood there was reasonable safety, he said, in the advances that had been made.

Dr. Healy then consulted some of the works on the subject in his library and directed the reporter's attention to the following as defining what benzoin is:—"Benzoic acid is a local irritant acting on the general system as a stimulant, with particular attention to the mucous surfaces."

"Benzoin is the concrete juice of styrax benzoin (tree), found in Sumatra, Java, Borneo and Siam."

In further conversation the Doctor stated that benzoin was given now frequently in throat diseases and for inflammation of the throat. Chlorate of potassium and muriatic tincture of iron were also given for these diseases.

DR. LOOMIS' OPINIONS.

Dr Loomis was called on at his residence, No. 31 West Thirty-fourth street. He said he never prescribed benzoate of soda for cases of diphtheria and did not know that other physicians were in the habit of prescribing it. He did not believe it was commonly in use. Any number of remedies were being constantly presented for diphtheria, and it required care in accepting them. There was nothing specially to recommend this medicine more than others already well known to the profession.

Dr. Delafield, of No. 12 West Thirty-second street, attached no importance at all to the prescription. There was nothing in the drug that would warrant the belief that anything new had been discovered. It had been well known for a long time, though not in the combination as a remedy for diphtheria. As to its proving to be a sure cure for diphtheria time alone could determine, but these new cures were constantly arising, and, after a time, as surely disappearing.

Dr. George M. Lefferts, who has devoted much time to the disease, was called on at his residence, No. 6 West Thirty-third street. He consulted several works in his library and showed the reporter where soda, in two different forms, had been long in use in the treatment of diphtheria. The doctor said that there never had been found a specific for diphtheria, and this was not one. In the first place, he said, constitutional treatment, as well as local, was a necessity in the treatment of a genuine case of diphtheria. So far as the Russian Minister's prescription was concerned, he said that the drug was an old one, and had been used before in the treatment of diphtheria. It was, however, not commonly in use in this city for diphtheria cases.

DR. HITCHCOCK IN CONSULTATION.

Dr. Urban G. Hitchcock, of No. 51 West Twenty-ninth street, stated that the combination of benzoic and soda was a novel preparation, as far as he knew, in the medical practice of the city. In fact, said the doctor, medical authorities do not speak very profusely even about benzoin itself. The doctor then took from his library the work "Materia Medica and Therapeutics," by Roberts Bartholow, M. A., M. D., LL.D., in which benzoin is thus disposed of:—

The physiological effects of benzoin and its preparations are due to benzoic acid. Taken in very considerable doses (half a drachm) benzoic acid produces some epigastric heat, increases the pulse rate and promotes bronchial and cutaneous transpiration.

Recent observations have shown that benzoic acid has decided antiseptic properties. It manifests the same power to prevent fermentations and putrefaction and to destroy minute organisms, possessed by salicylic and boracic. The tinctures of benzoin were formerly used as expectorants in chronic bronchial affections. They are now sometimes resorted to for the local treatment (by atomization) of chronic laryngeal affections. The most important use, however, is in the treatment of foul smelling wounds, flabby granulations, &c.

From another authority was taken the following:—

Benzoin is a tropical irritant, and after absorption stimulates the mucous passages, especially the aerian membranes. It is adapted to chronic bronchial affections, but is seldom employed alone. As a fumigation in chronic laryngitis it has been recommended by Trousseau and Padoux.

The Doctor then accompanied the reporter to a neighboring drug store, where he consulted the "Dispensatory," in which was given the method of preparing benzoate of soda as:—"Saturating a solution of benzoic acid with a solution of carbonate of soda."

Dr. Jacobi was questioned as to what he thought of Minister Shishkin's communication, and he replied:—"I think it will give the public a favorable opinion of the gentleman's generous heart, and will prove that even a diplomat must be excused for not knowing the most commonplace truths. The first of these is that no intelligent person believes in specifics, and this letter recommends a specific for diphtheria. To tell an intelligent person nowadays that diphtheria may assume different shapes and forms, and that it will have to be treated differently in different individuals; that a large number of cases, moreover, have a tendency to get well, even spontaneously, is like carrying coal to Newcastle. The very worst forms of diphtheria, however—those occurring in the nose and in the larynx—cannot be reached at all by internal treatment only, and are very apt to prove fatal unless a more rational treatment is resorted to. The second is, that the great mass of the people are very apt to rely on such statements as that contained in this letter, and will lose the time in which an attack can be met with success. Matters are no better when the public know that the writer is not an advertising quack waylaying their purses, but a man in a high social position. On the contrary many a case may be treated, perhaps, with the prescription of the Russian gentleman, and will be lost simply because the right thing was not done in the right time. Perhaps it is worth while for me to allude to the fact that this very moment diphtheria is nowhere so fatal as it is in his own country."

"Is benzoate of soda a new remedy, Doctor, and do you think the medical gentlemen named in the Minister's letter are authorities?"

"Dr. Letzerich is a practitioner in a small German town. His reputation is founded on microscopic investigations, mainly of diphtheretic membranes. Dr. Klebs is professor of pathological anatomy in Prague. But they are not even the first who recommended benzoate of soda. Schüller preceded them long ago. I believe there is no drug store in town where you cannot find the article, which has been widely used in this city. I have, with many others, used it in typhoid fever, scarlet fever, puerperal fever and diphtheria. I can mention the names of practitioners who employed the remedy long and faithfully and are thoroughly discouraged and disgusted. No one remedy can be relied on in all individual cases of an infectious or any other disease which may be either very mild or very insidious."

KENTUCKY FOR GRANT.

DEMOCRATIC SENTIMENT FAST SOLIDIFYING IN FAVOR OF THE GREAT UNION GENERAL—REPRESENTATIVE SOUTHRONS TO MEET THE EX-PRESIDENT IN LOUISVILLE.

OWINGSVILLE, Ky., Nov. 26, 1879.

During the last week I have been interviewing prominent democrats of Kentucky as to how they feel toward General Grant's nomination for the Presidency in 1880 by the democratic party. I will start out by saying that I have always been a consistent democrat, never having cast a republican vote. It is the universal opinion among the leaders of the democracy in Kentucky that the recent elections in the North have thoroughly demoralized the democratic party; that there is no chance to elect either Tilden, Bayard, Hancock or Thurman; that the South cannot depend upon the Northern democrats, and that they will have to make other alliances. It is conceded by democrats in Kentucky, such as J. Stoddard Johnson, of the Kentucky *Yeoman*; John Radman, Judge Alvin Durall, Judge William Lindsey, Henry Watterson, Robert Wooley, Judge W. B. Kincaide and General John B. Houston, that Tilden cannot carry New York; that Thurman is filed away; that Bayard lives in too small a State; that Hancock cannot carry his own State and that the democracy of the South have to look elsewhere for a candidate that will protect their interests and at the same time give peace and good government to their section. And as marvelous as it will appear, they are and a majority of the democratic party of Kentucky to-day are in favor of nominating General Grant.

GRANT AND HAMPTON.

The recent utterances of General Grant at Chicago to the correspondent of the *Courier-Journal* has given an impetus to this feeling among the democracy that is surprising. It is contemplated that when General Grant visits the city of Louisville on the 10th of December to have concentrated there the representative men of the Southern States, and to take some definite action looking to his nomination by the South. You can hear it whispered around in democratic circles—Grant for President and Wade Hampton for Vice President. This is almost the universal sentiment of the rank and file of the democratic party in Kentucky—a State that generally gives from thirty to forty thousand democratic majority.

"ON TO THE WHITE HOUSE!"

You can hear democrats say with pride that Grant is showing as much generalship in his march across the Continent as he showed when he marched "on to Richmond." He believes in the force of numbers. He is silently carrying each State as he moves forward on his march to the White House. He keeps his flanks well protected and leaves no enemies in the rear. He will capture Blaine, Sherman and Conkling in detail, and the democracy of the South are fully aware that no power on earth can arrest his progress or turn his course from his effective point, the White House, and they are preparing to fall into line and assist him in his march. The Southern democrats know that they have nothing to lose, but everything to gain; and they hope by this movement to conciliate General Grant and thereby defeat their inveterate enemies—Blaine, Thurman and Conkling.

This is no idle fancy, but a deep laid scheme, and one that is meeting with more success than the originators at first imagined.

GENERAL GRANT AND THE SOUTH.

[From the Mobile (Ala.) Register—dem.]

Among the absurdities of politics is the idea that there is a disposition among Southern democrats to accept General Grant as a Presidential candidate. He would be accepted only in a certain state of affairs. If the North is determined to take away the liberties of the Southern States and destroy their equality in the Union, these States will protect themselves by thrusting the poison down the throats of their persecutors. If the South is to be ruled by the bayonet we will see to it that all the country is ruled by the bayonet. If the Southern States are once more to be converted into provinces, we will endeavor to extend imperial government over all the States alike. If by quarrels among Northern democrats and by the crusade of Northern republicans we are to lose the liberties of State, we will not hesitate to do all in our power to preserve the liberties of the individual by rendering it no longer necessary for the party in power to oppress us. * * * Not a Southern State will vote for Grant. He is the representative of unbridled and insolent centralized power. The babble of the few rattle-brained fossils who are now assuring the friends of Grant that he is looked upon with favor at the South, does not represent the sentiment of a corporal's guard of Southern white voters. Indeed, the Southern whites would prefer the nomination of Grant because it would call out a united black vote in his behalf, and thus keep the white vote united for the democratic ticket.

PHARAOH AND MOSES.

[From the Philadelphia Enquirer—rep.]

It is not easy as yet to determine whether or not there is any real significance in what is called the Southern Grant "boom," but it has not thus far exhibited very alarming proportions. The most noticeable thing about it is that, intangible as it appears to be, it has effected a most marked cooling off of the Northern stalwarts' boom. The gentlemen who were crying out so vigorously and strenuously for Grant "as a strong man," with a strong iron heel for Southern use, are ominously silent at this time, as if General Grant were not precisely the man they supposed him to be. Part of this is undoubtedly owing to his Chicago speech, in which, with great emphasis, he deprecated both sectionalism and partisanism. The stalwarts may rightly reason that if General Grant is going to be neither a sectionalist nor a partisan he can be of no use to them, or that if the South finds in him a man after its own heart he cannot be the man they thought him to be. Mr. Alexander Stephens declares that there is nothing whatever in the Southern boom for the General and that the South does not want him. But other Southern politicians, as likely as Mr. Stephens to represent Southern sentiment, declare that the only way of the South out of its troubles and tribulations is by accepting General Grant as their Moses. It is rather remarkable to find both Pharaoh and Moses in the same man, but that is what the fire-eaters and stalwarts seem to find in Grant. Judging from the experience of others from the beginning of the world the chances are exceedingly great that one section or the other will, if they accept the General in his dual character of destroyer and saver, come to grief.

AN ECUADOR MYSTERY.

Inquiry Into the Assassination of a Presidential Candidate.

THE PRESIDENT IMPLICATED

A Government Confidential Agent Charged with the Murder.

The situation in Ecuador is exciting, and an intense feeling has grown out of recent developments in connection with the assassination of Dr. Vicente Piedrahita. Evidence is accumulating that the murder was instigated from official sources and the secret kept by government employés who were sent to make a pretence of investigating it. In September, 1878, Dr. Piedrahita, who was the most popular and wealthiest citizen of the Ecuadorian Republic, was struck by a bullet from an unknown rifle and fell dead at his own doorway. The crime was committed in broad daylight, as the Doctor had returned from Guayaquil to his farm, which is a large estate on the Daule River, not far from the city. The murdered man had held many high positions at home and abroad, and would, in the event of the revolution which was then threatened, have probably succeeded to the Presidency, although he had not instigated the uprising. The crime created such universal indignation that the government took the matter in hand and sent Colonel Manuel Castro, one of its trusted men, to make a special investigation. The affair, however, seemed involved in inextricable mystery, and although numbers of persons were arrested on suspicion and subjected to tedious and vexatious examinations, not sufficient evidence was found against any of them, and one after another they were discharged.

NEW LIGHT COMES.

Now evidence has been brought out which puts the affair in a very different light. The charge is openly made, and substantiated by sworn testimony that the murder was committed by Colonel Castro, who was afterward sent to investigate it. This charge has been made and the evidence substantiating it has been printed in a Guayaquil paper. It is charged also, though direct evidence has not yet been produced, that the murder was instigated by General Vientemille, the President of the Republic. The motive alleged is the popular prejudice against Vientemille, the growing enthusiasm over Piedrahita, and the impression prevailing with the government that in the event of a popular uprising the first named would be deposed and the latter elevated in his place. The evidence so far as it now appears under oath is as follows. Other evidence is promised and the developments of any hour may be all important to the administration and to the Republic:—

A LETTER TO CASTRO.

In *La Nacion* of October 15 appears a short article addressed to Colonel Castro, in which the latter is asked certain pressing questions. The author puts his interrogations to "the celebrated and also notorious Colonel Manuel Castro, to whose low condition I hope never to fall." The writer goes on to say:—"It is true that Colonel Manuel Castro received, as he informed me, from the Treasury Department a certain considerable sum of money, accompanied by orders from the government to persecute and arrest a certain Manuel Cabrera, whom the notorious Colonel Castro branded as the assassin of Dr. Vicente Piedrahita. Under the cover of prosecuting criminals he every day denounced to me as assassins and their accomplices men who were, in accordance with his demands, incarcerated and consigned to the care of the court. These commissions may possibly have been executed by the celebrated Colonel with some of the money furnished him by the department.

"Colonel Manuel Castro, as the only course open to you is to stir up a noise, I leave to you the columns of the entire press, in which you may say whatever pleases you; but when the time for legal proof comes we shall see. Calumny and perversion of facts are to prevail over public opinion and a jury! Happily, Enrique Avellan and the renowned Colonel Manuel Castro are well known by the people of the whole country. Pray tell me, Colonel Manuel Castro, do you recall the assassination of Antonio Suárez which took place in the province of Manabi? And do you remember that the assassin was accused before the jury by Dr. Vicente Piedrahita? Do you not think from such an occurrence there may have originated a profound rancor, leading to infamous vengeance?

"Tell me also, Colonel Manuel Castro, do you remember who was the person who called on Dr. Castellanos, a lawyer, and threatened his life because he had defended something? Do you remember, my renowned Colonel Castro, that a fortnight after the murder of Dr. Piedrahita you came into my room with strained features and said with a tremulous voice that you were afraid these rascals might accuse you of complicity in the murder and that you wished to leave the country and that you said many other things to which in due course we shall come? Tell me also, if the lunatics should, as you say, go to the asylum, should not the murderers, liars and other criminals go to the scaffold or to the penitentiary to pay the penalties of their crimes? By way of proof that the present crime may not go unpunished, I shall attempt to show its history. Without descending to insult or calumny or using language unfamiliar to gentlemen, I shall attempt, so far as possible, to produce proofs of the actual facts. You have declared in Daule that on the day of the assassination you were ill in Piñal (calling as witnesses Messrs. Aranjos), and now ask for declarations and certificates of that fact from the merchants of that town. That is no way to vindicate yourself. Recollect that Colonel Manuel Castro, during the last of August, went on board the steamer Milagro, on board of which was the respected family of Manuel Nobos, with Señor Plazas Iglesias, Señor Ramon E. Benites, and, I think, Señor Enrique Amador.

"With this, Colonel Castro, allow me personally to take leave of you for the present. The proofs of your crime will follow. I leave you to write what you will to the press; my time is too valuable to waste in any attempt to answer foolish misstatements."

The letter is signed "Enrique Avellan, Guayaquil, October 16, 1879."

LETTERS PUT IN AS PROOF.

DAULE, August 21, 1879.

Señor JESUS VERA:—

DEAR SIR—Will you please to inform me whether, when Colonel Manuel Castro invited you to accompany him in carrying out a certain plot in which you refused to assist him, and also refused to lend him your rifle, he told you positively that he desired your assistance and your weapon for the purpose of murdering Dr. Vicente Piedrahita? I hope you will make your reply clear and full. I am yours, very truly. ENRIQUE AVELLAN.

To Señor DON ENRIQUE AVELLAN:—

DEAR SIR—In reply to your kind letter of the 21st I will say that its contents are true in every respect. He came to invite me to accompany him and to murder Dr. Piedrahita. I refused, upon which he asked me to lend him my rifle. Upon this I replied. "You can have neither me nor my rifle," with which he took his leave.

AUGUST 28, 1879. JESUS VERA.

To THE FIRST ALCADO OF THE CITY—FROM SEVERAL CITIZENS:—

Enrique Avellan, living in the city and a citizen in full standing, appears before you and respectfully demands justice. Exact an oath from Señor Jesus Vera that he fully admits the truth of the enclosed letter in all its details. He explains fully that one Colonel Manuel Castro proposed to him to go with him and to murder Dr. Vicente Piedrahita. This was early in the month of September, 1878. We ask also that he acknowledge the signature which appears at the bottom of the letter and testify to the various public and private acts done in that connection. I wish also that the original documents shall be returned to me, in order that I may use them to the best advantage and in behalf of the justice which I implore.

E. AVELLAN AND OTHERS.

GUAYAQUIL, Oct. 14, 1879.

At Guayaquil, on October 14, the presiding judge took the oath of Jesus Vera. He adds that Colonel Castro went to him to arrange matters and to make the murderous offer—which he did not accept—early in September of last year.

DEATH FROM VIOLENCE.

Deputy Coroner Goldschmidt made an autopsy yesterday at the Chambers Street Hospital on the body of Mrs. Mary Forse, of No. 150 Cherry street, who, it is alleged, was brutally assaulted by a number of boys on Wednesday night. It was said that the boys stoned her and in other respects treated her shamefully. Her injuries, it is claimed, caused her to be prematurely delivered of a dead child. No marks of violence were found on the body. The husband of deceased stated to Deputy Coroner Goldschmidt that the stone throwing did not cause the injuries which resulted in the woman's death. The boys, he said, had "butted" her and thrown her down. Violence of this nature, the Doctor said, would produce fatal results in a woman in her physical condition without, however, leaving any external marks or discoloration. The immediate cause of death was peritonitis.

THE CANNON STREET FIRE.

The Fire Marshal has concluded all the testimony he intends to take in reference to the Cannon street fire that occurred on the morning of the 14th, with the exception of that of Mrs. Burbischer, who jumped from one of the windows and is now in hospital for treatment. Mr. Sheldon says that while many of the circumstances connected with the breaking out of the fire are suspicious he is not satisfied that it was of incendiary origin. He inclines to the belief that the lamp in Mrs. Cohen's rooms accidentally exploded, and the burning oil, falling upon the floor, started the fire. The Coroner will not begin an inquest until after the Fire Marshal has closed his investigation.