The Dispatch.

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PITTSBURG, SATURDAY, MAR. 23, 1889.

To First of April Movers.

Persons changing their residence at the first of April or before, can have THE DISPATCH delivered at their new addresses by ordering through postal card, telephone or in person at the Fifth avenue office.

THE SENSIBLE ALTERNATIVE.

If it is permitted to the high officials at Washington to exercise at all the graver functions of thought in regard to the Pittsburg postoffice—which seems to loom up in the proportions of a burning factional issue—the question might be put, "What is the matter with Larkin?"

It is true Mr. Larkin, the present postmaster, is a Democrat; but there is a year or so of his commission still to run. Nobody who knows the amiable P. M. will pretend that he is a "rascal." As even the Jeffersonian injunction which the spoilsmen of the Democracy kept dinning into President Cleveland's ears, to "turn the rascals out," manifestly cannot now be turned around to apply to Mr. Larkin, it will puzzle the Republican administration to give a single civil service reason why he should be ejected before his term expires.

To a good many people it must seem that by permitting the Democrat, whose efficiency or honesty is not impugned, to run his course, the Republican administration would come nearest to the letter and spirit of the Chicago platform, and of the inaugural address. Besides, it would give the eminent leaders of the opposing factions time to cool and, perchance, to arrive at an agreement which could not fail to relieve the mild Mr. Wanamaker from the unpleasant duty of bitterly disappointing the one side or the other.

STANLEY MATTHEWS' DEATH.

The death of Justice Stanley Matthews removes a character, whose very slight activity in politics compared rather strangely with the prominence given to him by the reports concerning the influences that secured his elevation to the Supreme Bench. Stanley Matthews' legal career was an unquestionably brilliant one, and, notwithstanding the assertion that he was a corporation appointee, it would be hard to point to any act of his on the Supreme Bench that justifies the conclusion that he was owned by certain corporation magnates. A somewhat remarkable point in his career is its coincidence with that of the late Chief Justice Waite. Sharing the leading positions at the Ohio bar first one and then the other was promoted to the highest tribunal of the land, and then at a closer interval both were removed by the even more supreme authority, Death.

THE CRIMINALS' DICTATION.

The hanging of the Barretts, who murdered a street car driver in St. Paul, Minnesota, last July, took place yesterday at that city. It is raised a slight degree beyond the ordinary run of vulgar murders by the extraordinary efforts to secure immunity for the murderers. The effort did not stop with presenting petitions for their pardon or commutation; but the Governor is stated to have received letters, declaring that if he permitted these men to be hanged, his own life should pay the penalty.

What hold these men had on the criminal classes is not apparent; but so far as the outside view discloses, the theory seemed to be that the government of that State was established for the benefit of protecting the most desperate and hardened offenders from the legal consequences of their acts. It is hard to perceive what other basis there could be for the demand, except the request that the wretches who murdered their victim for a few dollars should be preserved from execution.

Of course, unless government is to be surrendered to the sway of the professional thugs and robbers, the threat against the Governor must insure the execution of the men. It is a subject of gratification that such an effort should fail; but the criminal classes of St. Paul certainly have attained eminence in their claim to dictate the action of the executive.

A MEDICAL DICTUM.

An Eastern physician is quoted as saying that ladies who are in the habit of going to matinees suffer from neuralgia and rheumatism. This disclosure of the debilitating effects of the matinee habit is surprising and apparently revolutionary. Exactly why matinees should be more productive of these excruciating ailments, than going to evening performances, does not appear on the face of the returns. The suspicion is naturally created that the doctor in question has had his own nervous system deranged by troubles in buying tickets or securing seats at matinee performances; but it is evident that if he succeeds in shutting off female attendance at matinees he will shut off the matinees also. Whether afternoon theatrical performances should be suppressed on hygienic, social or moral principles may be an interesting question, but the scientific dictum would have had more weight if it had been that ladies got neuralgia and rheumatism by going out anywhere in paper shoes and gossamer underclothing.

SALT TRUST AND TARIFF.

The report concerning the formation of a salt combination or trust has caused a great deal of comment lately, particularly in low tariff journals. The organization itself is of the usual variety, being neither better nor worse than any one of its half-dozen predecessors. But the disposition of the free trade element to charge it to the tariff renders it pertinent to point out two facts.

In the first place, during the campaign last fall, every Democratic paper paraded among its list of trusts created by the tariff an alleged Salt Trust. Their acclamations over the fact that a trust is now being organized, reveals the fact that their list was as unreliable in alleging that a Salt Trust existed at that time, as it was in alleging the existence of a "general steel trust" and a "general iron trust."

Secondly, the fact in this case is that the present effort is a movement of the English Salt Trust, which finds it necessary to use this measure to shut off the competition of the American salt producers. When American salt has to be put up, so as to prevent its breaking the English combination, it is plain that the tariff has no more to do with it than it has with the petroleum, cottonseed oil or alleged beef combinations.

It is worth while to remember that this experiment has been tried again and again in the salt business, and while it has sometimes met with temporary success, the laws of trade have always revenged themselves. Twenty years ago there was a combination comprising the essential features of a trust or a pool in the salt business; but it broke itself up by calling new concerns into operation. The attempt has been renewed at times, one of the contracts calling forth the very plain doctrine from the Ohio Supreme Court, that all such combinations are outlawed. The lesson has been more plainly taught in this industry than in any other, that unless the combinations find some means of excluding new establishments, their efforts to artificially enhance prices must bring the penalty of increased production and resulting depression.

As to the connection of such schemes with the tariff, there is no plainer doctrine than that declared by the New York *Tribune*, that "the Americans who enter into such a combination are not the friends but the worst enemies of the protective system. If they carry out the plan ascribed to them, they at least will have no right to complain if a Congress representing American consumers should sweep away every cent of the duty on foreign salt."

THE ALIEN TAX PROPOSAL.

Representative Dravo, in a communication to THE DISPATCH this morning, says strongly everything that can be said for the extraordinary bill taxing alien labor. But Mr. Dravo is candid enough to admit that the proposition involves difficulties which the framers of the measure scarcely pretend to have fully considered, much less overcome, by the step they suggest.

As pointed out in these columns yesterday, no one can dispute either the danger from the immigration which does not contemplate citizenship, or the inconsistency and injustice of allowing the importation of cheap contract labor while avowing the policy of protection to home industry. But the Federal Government has grappled with the latter issue. The importation of labor under contract is prohibited under severe penalties. All needed on that score is an honest, determined enforcement of the law.

Representative Dravo is of opinion that if an amendment is made to the tax bill exempting immigrants who declare their intentions to become citizens, it will operate sufficiently so as to meet the other objection. He thinks this test will distinguish between the undesirable and the desirable immigrants, leaving the first subject to the proposed tax, the second free from it. This argues a remarkable faith, on the part of Mr. Dravo, in the truthfulness of the obnoxious class. With the prospect of facing starvation by being excluded from work, or of returning to the country they left, what proportion of the undesirable immigrants would hesitate long about a mere declaration of intention to apply for citizenship? It needs no deep discernment to see that by leaving this loop-hole open to protect the desirable class, the undesirable would be first to take advantage of it. Of course, the whole bill would at once become inoperative.

The member from Beaver frankly states that he expected severe, possibly savage, criticism for sustaining the bill. If its introduction and support were to be attributed to mere demagogy, such might result. But Mr. Dravo is not a demagogue; and judicious checks upon immigration are occupying wide and serious attention as a necessary thing. The only criticism that can justly be made on the bill now at Harrisburg is that it is a blundering and hastily considered attempt to have the State of Pennsylvania deal with a problem which the national Government alone can cope with, and which, even from Congress, will require a careful and thorough inquiry into economic questions, before an efficient law can be framed.

As a "starter" for thought, the Harrisburg measure may be passed lightly over; but the Legislature is hardly the proper place for exploiting crude theories.

ATTACKED FROM BOTH SIDES.

It is an interesting fact that Postmaster General Wanamaker has been the target of more attacks than any member of the Cabinet. He was generally assailed by the Democratic press as having secured office by his campaign contributions, and neither his upright character nor his unquestioned business ability were permitted to condone that offense in the opinion of his political opponents. Against this is the fact that so far at least his administration has shown the most promise of being run solely on business principles.

But that fact promises to bring down attacks on Mr. Wanamaker from the other quarter. When Mr. Wanamaker declared that there would be no politics in his department but that the idlers must go, it was instructive to notice how rapidly the opinion began to crystalize among Republican politicians that Mr. Wanamaker's stay at the Postoffice Department must be brief. When he declined to take a Kansas Congressman's orders to appoint a certain postmaster off-hand, without knowing who the other candidates were, the Congressional mind became excited, and threats of war against such an administration were heard. Finally, when Mr. Wanamaker tramples on the principles of partisan politics by actually urging that a Democrat be retained as Minister to Turkey, for such a trivial reason as that he is remarkably fitted to discharge the business of the post, the cup of his iniquities is pretty nearly running over. Mr. Wanamaker starts out with being the object of attack by Democratic politicians, and is now becoming the target for the Republican politicians. This augurs well for the satisfactory character of his services to the great mass of the American people.

AN EGOISTIC CROCODILE.

When bils gets the better of Dion Boucicault, the actor and dramatist, as it not infrequently does, he generally indulges himself in a burst of abuse of some person or thing. In one of these splenetic moods recently he attacked the newspapers and especially the dramatic critics, saying that to them was chiefly due the deterioration of the drama and the small calibre of the actors of the present day. There was some truth in what he said, and a great deal of nonsense. It was brilliantly phrased, however, as all that Mr. Boucicault writes is, and it has served the writer's purpose well.

Everybody knows Willie Winter, the soft and sympathetic being who writes beautiful pieces about play acting in the New York *Tribune*. His status as an egoistic sentimentalist of the crocodilian order is high. But nobody would have dreamed what depths of unsalted self-esteem could be sounded in his nature, till he undertook to answer "Mr. Boucicault and other censors of the American newspaper in its relation to dramatic art." More than this, in the supplement to *Harper's Weekly*, of which this great reply occupies nine long columns, the ridiculous lack of knowledge, the prejudice and bad judgment of Mr. Winter are fully revealed.

What can be said for a critic who classes among the good actors who have arisen since 1850 Mrs. Langtry and omits Miss Ada Dyas? Or of an intelligent man who denies that honest and competent criticism is to be found in the newspapers of any American cities except nine which he deliberately designates? The ignorance of the critic is only equaled by the insolence of the man. It will be a pretty spectacle to see this inflated egoist used as a mop by Mr. Boucicault. The pity of it is that the Messrs. Harper should have allowed such a paltry ignoramus to exude twaddle upon their broad pages.

TAMMANY has made a material addition to its membership by voting to admit Grover Cleveland. It is to be hoped that this will conduce materially to Mr. Cleveland's personal comfort, which was once very much diminished by strained relations with that organization.

STANLEY MATTHEWS' reported retirement was overruled by a higher authority, and the President now has an opportunity to show how much foundation there was in the report concerning his successor. By the appointment of a Supreme Court Justice and the two Inter-State Commerce Commissioners, which he will have at his disposal during the next year, the President will be able to show his position on corporation issues sooner than was expected.

SOME innocent people are speaking of the acquittal of Kerr, Jake Sharp's partner, as a defeat of Colonel Fellows. The people who think Fellows is beaten when boodlers go free, do not know what he is there for.

THE negative recommendation on a bill in the Legislature to fix the weight of a ton of anthracite coal at 2,000 pounds, is indorsed by the Philadelphia *Ledger* because the act of 1871 fixed it at 2,240 pounds. But there is a harassing doubt in the minds of coal consumers whether the act of 1871 fixed it so as to stay. The acts of the coal dealers are sometimes alleged to have taken about 540 pounds off the legal standard.

MR. CLEVELAND'S debut as an after-dinner orator is alleged to be threatening the supremacy of Chauncey M. Depew. Is it possible that the ex-President has the English mission in his mind's eye?

IT IS reported that the white-winged dove of harmony now hovers over the relations between the Blaine family and Senator Edmunds. The basis for this opinion is that the Vermont Senator moved the confirmation of the Secretary of State and also of the Secretary's son. This looks like the fulfillment of the prophecy of the lion and the lamb lying down together—with the lamb occupying his usual quarters inside the lion.

WOULD not the advisability of Mr. Wherry's resolution to invest the State sinking fund in United States bonds depend upon the premium at which those bonds can be purchased?

THE assurances of promotion for Colonel Stewart, a Pittsburger, who has efficiently and satisfactorily acted as Consul at Antwerp, and whose merits have been recognized by Democratic as well as Republican Secretaries of State, shows that Western Pennsylvanians are not to be forgotten in the distribution of diplomatic honors. The selection of Colonel Stewart for the Sandwich Islands would certainly be a good one.

THE wheat boom is the latest change in that uncertain market. It plainly represents, not the action of supply and demand, but the manipulations of some big operator.

NUMEROUS esteemed cotemporaries are worrying themselves over the word to be used to describe the new process for executing murderers by electricity. The general verdict against such words as "electrothanatos" and "electrocised," warrants the expectation that they will eventually settle down to the use of plain English and call it "killed by electric shock."

THERE seems to be a belief among the local Republican politicians that the real issue which was at stake last fall was the possession of the Pittsburg postoffice.

"IF consumers had only coppered the scheme of the big Copper Trust!" exclaims the Philadelphia *Press*. But the results seem to show that consumers did copper the Trust by refusing to buy copper at its prices, and as a consequence the Trust is in the stew boiled in its own copper kettle.

PERSONAL POINTS.

THE Emperor of Austria has given orders that his son's name shall never again be spoken in his hearing.

EX-SENATOR BRADBURY, of Maine, has almost reached his 88th year, in perfect mental and physical health.

AMONG Mr. Irving's pensioners are a family which, when he was a very young and a very poor actor in Scotland, once invited him to a Christmas dinner, and took occasion at the same time to present him with a suit of clothes prepared for the occasion, and offered with much delicate kindness.

PROF. MOMMSEN attended the recent sitting of the Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in Paris. He was entitled to be present by his character as a foreign corresponding member of the French Academy, and in spite of his being so decided a "Prussian" was welcomed with great enthusiasm by his learned colleagues. The Paris newspapers compare him with M. Renan.

AMELIA B. EDWARDS, the novelist, is engaged making selections for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts from 100 tons of sculpture from Bubastis which recently reached Liverpool, England. One selection which is soon to be forwarded to Boston is a colossal head of Hathor in excellent condition. It is said to be of greater weight than the entire colossus of Rameses II.

IT is said that when the Shah last visited England he was taken to Newgate and shown, among other objects of vertu, the gallows. In this engine he evinced the greatest interest, and, expressing a desire to see how it worked, asked the governor to hang a man. The Governor explained that he had not a man ready for the experiment, whereupon the Shah expressed his contempt. "Hang one of these," he said, pointing to his suite. Needless to say the governor did not comply.

THE TOPICAL TALKER.

A Moving Anecdote—The Readers of Dime Novels Not All Boys—A Dog of Sense.

MOVING? Everybody seems to be moving, about to move, or to have moved.

A couple of days ago, after a certain family had safely accomplished its removal with all the furniture from one house to another, and when the children's bed time was approaching, a little tot who has barely learned to speak approached paterfamilias and said: "Say, popper, let's go home!"

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YOU think, and most of us think, that the cheap novels usually called "blood and thunder," and which sell for 5 cents or a dime, are read exclusively by schoolboys, the terrors of the office and juveniles in general. Any way if a man or woman ever takes to exciting his or her soul with cheap and dreadful literature it is popularly regarded as an exception to the rule. But is it such an exception?

Probably not.

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FOR example, only last week a wealthy and remarkably well-known merchant found his youngest son—who works in his father's office—greedily devouring the awful details of the life and death of "Deadwood Dick" or some other hero of juvenile fiction. The worthy old merchant confiscated all the dime novels in his son's possession and bade him buy no more.

The chief book-keeper of this eminently respectable merchant told me yesterday that since the latter obtained the lurid tales from his son he has been addicted to reading them himself on all possible occasions.

***

IN examining the desk of a brother newspaperman the other day—in the vain hope of finding some smoking tobacco—I unearthed about a dozen dime novels of the most ferocious and untamed stamp. They were all thumbed, and torn with much handling.

This student of "Fly-foolish-man-or-I-will-kill-thee" literature is a gentle, placid writer with a taste untainted with bloodthirstiness. But he is passionately fond of feeling his hair rise.

***

BUT it remained for a woman to give me the most interesting and novel information as to the personnel of the dime-novel-reading contingent. She said: "Why, most women that I know have a sneaking love for tales of adventure; and they don't mind if there is a spice of horror thrown into the mess, either. I think young married women are the greatest readers of dime novels, but in the very best society of this country I know many maids as well as matrons who like a story paper, or a straight-out 'blood and thunder' novel, better than 'Robert Elsmere' or the respectable magazines."

***

A GREAT mastiff the other day followed one of the servants from a house in a suburban village as she stepped out to do some small errand. The dog is very big, but has a reputation for good humor and rare sense. The servant girl was German and had only been in the service of the owner of the mastiff a few days, but she wasn't afraid of her companion, who quietly trotted behind her to the store and was still near her as she returned.

When she came back she accidentally passed the gate of her employer's garden, and was going on, when the great mastiff caught hold of her dress and pulled it sharply. She was a little scared, but as the dog kept pulling, she gave way, and was gradually drawn inside the right gate. She saw she had been led to her proper destination by the dog, and made no more resistance, though the dog did not let go of her dress.

Her dress was a little torn when she got inside the house, but she went directly into the parlor, where sat her mistress, exclaiming with hands above her head: "Mein Gott, that dog have sense!"

PROHIBITION NOT A SUCCESS.

A Party in Rhode Island Necessary to Prevent the Repeal of the Law.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., March 22.—The State Convention of the Fourth party, the Law Enforcement party, or the Anti-Resubmissionists, as they are called, was held in Blackstone Hall this morning. There was a fair representation of country towns, and the recent origin of the movement considered. The nominations, which were made with much enthusiasm, were: For Governor, James H. Chace, of Lincoln; Lieutenant Governor, Franklin Metcalf, of Charlestown; Secretary of State, J. Barclay Foster, of Westerly; Attorney General, H. Rogers, of Providence; General Treasurer, E. A. Green, of Lincoln.

The platform opens with a recital of the adoption of the prohibitory amendment in April, 1886, the laws passed to carry into effect the purpose of the amendment, claiming that no earnest effort has yet been made to enforce the law in the State as a whole, and that the laws on the statute book are just beginning to be operative.

"The members of the majority party in the Legislature, elected on a platform pledging them to impartial and effectual enforcement of the prohibitory law, having now, in violation of the spirit of solemn party pledge, voted to resubmit to popular vote the fifth amendment, we declare our opposition to the resubmission of the prohibitory amendment to a popular vote at the present time, and demand the passage of more stringent laws for the enforcement of the prohibition amendment."

1 IN 1,069,487,620.

The L Road May be Slow, but It is a Miracle of Safety.

[From the New York Evening Sun.]

In the pithy plea which Jay Gould made for his elevated system yesterday appeared one statement of fact so extraordinary as to merit special comment.

Mr. Gould said that up to the beginning of the current year the Manhattan system had carried 1,069,487,620 passengers—a total, we may notice, by the way, that approaches the estimated population of the globe—and out of this vast traffic only one person was killed in the cars.

It is a fact, as Mr. Gould says, that this record has no parallel in any country or time. Of course, the journey of each passenger was brief, but this circumstance, involving as it did hurried exits and entrances, adds to the marvel rather than detracts from it. And on a mileage basis the percentage of fatality would still be unique for lowness of rate.

The existing rapid transit facilities of the city are shamefully inadequate. But we can afford to be fair to the elevated. It is slow, irregular, and intolerably crowded. But it has been a miracle of safety.

THE POPE WON'T LEAVE ROME.

Cardinal Gibbons Says His Holiness Isn't Coming to America.

BALTIMORE, March 22.—In reference to the remark of Cardinal Parocchi, at a banquet in Rome Tuesday, that if the Pope should find it necessary to leave Europe at some future day, he would receive an honorable hospitality from the American Bishops, Cardinal Gibbons said to-day that Cardinal Parocchi's expression was no doubt meant as a tribute to the hospitable spirit of the American bishops, clergy and people.

"For," said Cardinal Gibbons, "there was scarcely any foundation for the statement so often made, that the Pope would leave Rome. The papacy is too intimately connected by past associations and memorable events to make the Pope's removal from Rome at all probable. The same reports were circulated as long ago as the time of Archbishop Eccleston."

They Will Get Something.

[From the Chicago Tribune.]

There can be no harm in rejoicing mildly over the fact that the postoffices in Illinois, at least, will be given to Illinois men.

In Cultured Boston.

[From the Chicago Inter-Ocean.]

The Boston station houses' "drunks" are booked as dipsomaniacs.

DEATHS OF A DAY.

Charles B. Barrett.

PHILADELPHIA, March 22.—Ex-Postoffice Inspector Charles B. Barrett died suddenly at his home in this city, of apoplexy. Mr. Barrett was about 70 years old, and he had been Postoffice Inspector for over 12 years. At the beginning of the civil war President Lincoln appointed him a member of the Board of Enrollment of the Forty-fourth district. He was ranked as a lieutenant of cavalry, and was honorably discharged at the close of the war. He was made postal inspector in 1875, which position he held until relieved, two years ago.

A. H. McCulloch.

CHAMBERSBURG, March 22.—A. H. McCulloch, formerly General Passenger Agent of the Cumberland Valley Railroad, died here yesterday, aged 76 years. He had been in the service of the company for 53 years, but retired in 1886.

OUR MAIL POUCH.

Mr. Dravo More Fully Explains His Support of the Alien Tax Bill—He Does Not Claim That It is Perfect.

To the Editor of The Dispatch:

House bill 140, taxing alien labor, seeks to deal with a difficult and unsolved problem, and hence I fully appreciate your editorial criticism in to-day's issue of THE DISPATCH. The bill is not what I could desire. I found it on the calendar of the House when it was too late in the session to undertake a recast; but I have strong convictions of the enormous evil arising from the increasing influx of foreigners with mercenary motives solely, having no comprehension of the nature or sympathy with our institutions—coming to remain only long enough to secure sufficient means to return whence they came. In an economic view they add nothing to the prosperity or the activities of trade. They build no houses; they furnish no homes; they purchase no merchandise to any appreciable extent; the vast majority live in filth and self-enforced poverty, that their gains may be more rapid and their return the more speedy.

As in Fayette county, they pay no tax; their children, when not old enough to work, crowd our schools; they fill our prisons and protract the sessions of our courts, increasing very largely the costs of local government.

Recognizing the evils of indiscriminate immigration the bill, imperfect as it is, seeks to secure two important ends. First, and primarily, to make a start in the direction of restraining undesirable immigration. All reform must have a commencement. The aim is to start the movement in the right direction.

Second—The bill seeks revenue for local government, to meet increased cost of administration brought about by the presence of the parties to be taxed. The provisions of the bill impose no burdens upon, and places no obstructions in the way of moral and intelligent foreigners who come to stay, to uphold our institutions and love our flag. All such are prepared to declare their purpose as soon as they arrive. They are already American citizens, save only the legal form of naturalization; a declaration of their intentions exempts them from the restrictions sought to be imposed upon a class who have no such qualification and no such purposes.

I am pleased at the fairness and tone of THE DISPATCH editorial. I was prepared to have the press rake me fore and aft for my advocacy of this measure. While adverse, even savage, criticism, would have no terrors in the face of duty and convictions, yet it is very pleasant, when one is groping his way in the dark—wrestling with difficult and unsolved problems, seeking the right as the right may be discovered, to be treated, at least, considerately. True this is a national question, and yet the State may lead the way to the extent of State authority. The bill is a venture, an experiment—an attempt to redeem promises—better to save America for Americans, native or adopted. If in practical working it develops merit, future legislation can amend and perfect. If it works ill then repeal.

JOHN F. DRAVO.

PITTSBURG, March 22, 1889.

Thanks, for the Correction.

To the Editor of The Dispatch:

"Ecce Homo" was written by Prof. Seeley, professor of modern history, Cambridge, England, a man one of his pupils, and we used to chalk "Ecce Homo" on his desk. Renan wrote "La Vie de Jesu," which every one ought to read.

WALTER E. KOCH, M. A. (CANTAB.)

Notes.

Oscar S., White Ash, Pa.—It is willow.

THE OCCULTATION OF JUPITER.

Professor Brashear Anticipates an Interesting Astronomical Event.

An interesting astronomical phenomenon will occur on the morning of the 24th (Sunday), viz, an occultation of the planet Jupiter by the moon. Unfortunately it will be daylight at the time of the immersion of the planet, but it can be seen with a good opera glass or spy glass. As it will be of interest to amateur astronomers, of whom there are are a goodly number in our two cities, I append the times below, only approximate.

There is to the astronomer very considerable interest in observing an occultation of a large planet. When a fixed star is occulted or passed over by the moon, it is instantly extinguished, but a planet having considerable of a disc requires time to be covered by the moon in its eastward journey around the earth, and the contrast of color and other interesting phenomena may be studied. The third moon of Jupiter will be occulted about ten minutes before the planet, which in itself will be interesting, but will require a fairly good-sized telescope—say 3½ inches aperture—to show it well.

The estimated time of the immersion, or beginning of the occultation, is 6:20 o'clock Sunday morning. The emersion, i. e., the reappearance of the planet, will occur 58 minutes later. This is Pittsburg mean time, so that 20 minutes must be added to the above figures. I should be glad to receive any notes from observers who may witness the phenomena.

A cablegram reached me last week that Dr. Terby, of France, had discovered a strange white spot on the rings of Saturn. This was confirmed by Dr. MacLeod, of Montreal.

Observations were made on the night of the receipt of the telegram, and though the seeing was poor, the light spot could be seen. On Saturday night last Prof. Vey and I made observations with the large telescope of the Allegheny Observatory, and both observers saw the whitish appearance without difficulty, but both concluded that, as it borders close by the line of the dark shadow of the ball on the rings, it is probably the effect of contrast—and not a change in the condition of the ring system.

J. A. BRASHEAR.

MUST BE GOOD WORKMEN.

Military Records Alone Won't Secure Positions Under Secretary Tracy.

WASHINGTON, March 22.—Secretary Tracy has defined his intentions in the matter of retaining or reinstating navy yard employes in the following letter, addressed to an employe in the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Washington Navy Yard:

I have your letter of the 19th inst. concerning your discharge from the position of clerk in the Bureau of Yards and Docks in the Washington Navy Yard, in which you state your record as a soldier, and also that this record was the sole cause of your appointment. In reply, and to correct erroneous impressions concerning the same, I have to state that you were discharged upon the recommendation of the Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks for inefficiency in the performance of your duties. At the time of my approval of the recommendation for your dismissal I was not aware of your military record, and it is a cause of deep regret that such a result should happen to a soldier, but nevertheless it is necessary to the proper transaction of the business of the Navy Department that persons holding positions thereunder shall be able to discharge their duties in a manner satisfactory to their superior officers.

While the fact of a person having a good record as a soldier will be considered among the best of recommendations for retention in or appointment to a position under the Navy Department, ability to perform satisfactorily the duties of the position which he holds or to which he aspires must be a condition precedent to favorable consideration of an application for retention or appointment.

THE CHAMPION HUNGRY MAN

Cannot Get Enough to Eat at Home and Robs the Neighbors' Larders.

Special Telegram to The Dispatch.

ELLIOTT CITY, MD., March 22.—About three months ago the residents of this city complained that their larders were being plundered. Neither money nor goods were touched, but everything in the shape of food was cleaned out. For over a month the police searched for the thief, who was finally caught while regaling himself in a neighbors' kitchen. His name is John Darby, and he has a wife and family.

After a preliminary hearing he was sent to the county jail pending his trial by the court. He has now been in the institution two months, and the warden says he has proved the most expensive prisoner the State has ever harbored. His appetite is enormous. Though weighing only 130 pounds, he is tall and gaunt, measuring 6 feet 1 inch. It seems impossible to satisfy his cravings, and his attacks upon his neighbors' larders are now explained. His regular daily meals are four times greater in the way of amount of food than those of any other prisoner.

A Doubtful Market.

[From the Toronto Empire.]

Two car loads of eggs consigned to local dealers arrived in Toronto on Tuesday from the United States. What is the matter with the Canadian hen? Where is the market of 60,000,000 which was "hankering" to the extent of 40 cents a dozen for the Canadian egg? When the American farmer ships his eggs into Canada because he gets a better price than in his own markets, the theory which Mr. Erastus Wiman held before Canadian farmers to tempt them into annexation to his adopted country must have been wild indeed. The Canadian hen is still living, but the enticing tale connected with it is (h)ended.

There's Something New.

[From the Philadelphia Ledger.]

There is something New under the Harrison—John C., Consul General at London.

GOTHAM'S GOSSIP GRIST.

Steamships Delayed by Heavy Fogs.

[NEW YORK BUREAU SPECIALS.]

NEW YORK, March 22.—The steamships which were delayed outside the bar by the recent bad weather and fog came into port this morning. One was the Wisconsin, of the Guion Line, which arrived off Sandy Hook at 10 o'clock Wednesday night and was prevented from getting any further by the fog. Her passengers suffered from the strain due to the 36 hours' delay. The Indiana, from Liverpool, was delayed even longer. The Ward Line steamship Manhattan, from Havana, reached the Hook last night and had to come to anchor there on account of the fog. The other delayed vessels which arrived to-day were the State of Nevada from Glasgow, the Alexandria from Messina, the Seneca from New Orleans, the England from London, and the Lake Superior from Liverpool.

Free Trade Wanted by Artists.

A number of artists of this city who are not afraid to compete with the pauper painters of Europe and some of their friends got together at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, Thursday night, and organized the National Free Art League, the purpose of which is to secure the abolition of the tariff on works of art. J. Carrol Beckwith, who presided, said the object of the League was to make a perpetual protest against the 30 per cent. tariff on art. H. R. Butler said that art was on the free list up to 1861, when a duty of 10 per cent. was put on it as a source of revenue. March 3, 1883, this duty was increased to 30 per cent., apparently by mistake, for the increase was asked by none. America, he added, is the only civilized country in the world which imposes a duty on art, except Spain, which charges a nominal duty per pound. Kenyon Cox hoped the League would have no political color. An executive committee of 12 was appointed.

Ice Must be Kept Up.

Notwithstanding the considerable cold weather which toward the close interrupted the mildness of the winter, and which, at the time, was reported to have made ice of average thickness in the upper Hudson, the ice dealers are already announcing that the shortness of the crop will compel them to increase the price to 50 cents a hundred pounds. A meeting of ice dealers will shortly be held to determine what the price will be this summer. The shortage at Hudson and Newburgh is estimated at 65 per cent, as compared with last year's crop, and the ice is also said to be of poor quality. From other gathering points come similar reports, and there is not an ice dealer but predicts a dear summer for ice, if not a famine.

Only $200 for a Big Toe.

While David Czaeske, a barber, was passing along Broadway, Brooklyn, in November, a keg of beer fell from one of brewer William Ulmer's wagons and crushed his big toe. At his suit for $5,000 damages, he claims that the accident was due to the carelessness of the brewer's employes, and experts were called to show how beer wagons should be loaded. They decided that they should be so loaded that the kegs wouldn't fall off. The jury gave the plaintiff $200, which seemed so little for a big toe that his attorneys offered to set the verdict aside and take a new trial. The offer was not accepted.

Not on a Political Mission.

Russell Harrison arrived from Washington, this morning. He says he's here for the purpose of consulting with W. J. Arkell about *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, in which he has an interest, and not for any political purpose.

Was a Friend of Cleveland's.

William Woodward, Jr., the cotton exchange broker, who died suddenly of apoplexy, Wednesday night, was an intimate friend of ex-President Cleveland, and, it is said, that it was owing to his representations that Mr. Cleveland concluded to make New York his home. Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland dined with Mr. Woodward last Friday, and afterward went to the opera with him and his wife.

TO BENEFIT A CHURCH.

A Grand Musical Entertainment is Given at East Liberty Hall.

A grand musical entertainment was held last night by members of the Fourth M. P. Church, in East Liberty Hall. The proceeds of the entertainment are for the benefit of the church.

The choir of the Second M. P. Church and several well-known vocal and instrumental musicians assisted in the rendition of the many parts of a well-selected programme.

The members of Lion's Orchestra then played a very beautiful introductory selection. The choir then sang, "Awake, Æolian Lyre"; Miss Lulu A. Butler recited "Christmas Day in the Workhouse"; Mr. F. W. Butler executed a beautiful solo, "Out of the Deep"; Messrs. John and Isaac Rosser rendered a duet entitled, "See the Pale Moon." The concert was concluded by a cantata, called "Crown of Reward," in which Miss Emma McManigle and ten other young ladies took part.

Prof. Richard Prosser acted as director, and Mr. G. F. Marshell as accompanist.

The hall was filled to its capacity and the entertainment proved a great success.

TWO RIVAL SOCIETIES.

The Pittsburg Academy Societies Have an Interesting Contest.

The Emanon and Knickerbocker, rival literary societies of the Pittsburg Academy, held a literary contest in the Liberty Street M. E. Church last evening. Each society had its champions and the audience was allowed to judge for itself. The programme consisted of original orations by A. Hays and Everett Phillips, and readings by Miss Annie Blackadore and Lillian Cready.

Then there was a debate on the subject, "That a General European War Would be Beneficial to the United States," with Harry Robbins in the affirmative, and A. G. Smith in the negative, followed by essays by Miss Susie Bryar and Jessie K. Moore, recitations by Maggie Minick and Loella Blockinger, a vocal solo by Miss Bell Tomer and a violin solo by Miss Margaret Martin. The society papers were read by Ira Fix and John R. Speer.

A SUCCESSFUL COURSE.

The Final Y. M. C. A. Entertainment for the Winter Last Evening.

The last entertainment of the winter course given by the Young Men's Christian Association, of this city, at the Second Presbyterian Church was held last evening. Mr. Henry T. Bryant opened the programme with ventriloquial oddities. Mr. D. W. Robertson played a sleighbell solo. Mr. Bryant gave "A Little Nonsense." A tumbleronicon solo was performed by Mr. Robertson. More nonsense by Mr. Bryant and a sleighbell solo concluded the entertainment.

The course of entertainments given this winter have been very successful, both in attendance and the quality. The church in which they were given was crowded every night. It has shown the necessity of the association having a larger hall of its own for the accommodation of members and guests.

A SELECT MASQUERADE.

The Misses Moreland, of Forbes Street, Entertain a Euchre Club.

The Misses Moreland, of Forbes street, Oakland, gave a masquerade yesterday evening to the members of the Bellefield Euchre Club, among which are the Misses Moreland. The affair was very informal, as only about 40 persons were present

Caterer Kuhn furnished the refreshments, while Monsieur Frank presided at the piano in order to give the dancers a chance.

Some very artistic and unique costumes were worn, and the affair was thoroughly enjoyed by all on account of its novelty.

A Pleased Audience.

The railway branch of the Y. M. C. A. gave an entertainment last evening in the railroad ward of the West Penn Hospital. Nobody was present but the patients. Messrs. Taylor and Miller, Miss Butler and the three children of Mr. Taylor presented an interesting programme.

A Successful Concert.

A musical and literary entertainment was given last night in the Butler street M. E. Church by the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. Rev. Dr. Norcross, principal of the Pittsburg Female College, delivered an address.

A Cotillion in the Sterrett School.

The young people of Shadyside gave a cotillion last evening at the Sterrett Schoolhouse, in Homewood. There were over 150 couples present, and Gernert & Guenther's Orchestra furnished the music.

CURIOUS CONDENSATIONS.

—It only requires 24 hours to convert corn into sausage at Wichita.

—Around Bangely lakes, in Maine, sleighing is still being enjoyed.

—The cattle in the vicinity of Westphalia, Kan., are "dying of brain fever."

—A Chicago woman has published a story of which the scene is laid in heaven.

—Several members of the faculty of Dartmouth College voted against prohibition the other day, while two-thirds of the boys voted for it.

—A Burlington, Iowa, man who had been reporter, editor, sheriff and chief of police by turns, was bunkoed out of $6,000 the other day by a very shallow device.

—Nine persons were carried a distance of 1,000 yards, and four of them killed outright, by an avalanche near St. Michel, Savoy, a week ago, and on the same day another avalanche destroyed the village of Nivollet in the same neighborhood.

—An Indiana citizen, though he made his living from the sale of drugs, always refused medical advice, and even in his last sickness would not consent to see a doctor. Friends finally though insisted on calling in a physician, who found the sufferer pulseless and dying.

—An Englishman has produced a piece of mechanism containing 400 figures representing horses, cannon, artillery, infantry and a band of 52 men, each with an instrument. A tiny windmill turned by the current from burning candles furnishes the power to move all the figures automatically.

—John Smith, of