THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The tax-payers will open their eyes when they read the following letter from a gentleman who is, we take it, a school-teacher. The questions discussed are worthy of the serious consideration of the Legislature. To furnish 500 books for every school of forty or fifty pupils would cost the State, or the counties and corporations, not less than $700,000, if the books were all bought in one year. The annual cost afterwards would, of course, be small :

To the Editor of the Dispatch :

In behalf of the public schools of Virginia I address this communication to you, asking for it a place in your excellent paper.

I am heartily in favor of free schools, but am bitterly opposed to many things at present in their government as are found in connection with the country schools (I do not say city or town schools) of Virginia. For example: I am an applicant for the position of a teacher in the public schools. I receive a certificate of qualification; I then enter into an agreement with the board of trustees to teach a school which has thirty or forty pupils in its community. The printed contract is filled and agrees to pay me twenty-two dollars a month; a month to consist of twenty days, and there shall be an average attendance daily of twenty scholars; but if there shall be less than twenty scholars in daily attendance, then I am to receive one dollar and ten cents *per capita* per month.

This agreement is all right, if both the board of trustees and the teacher voluntarily enter into it; and when there are thirty or more pupils in a community a teacher would scarcely lose in making such agreement.

The question arises to my mind, Should the *teacher* be held responsible for the *non-attendance* of the pupils? The teacher cannot compel parents to send their children to school, neither can he control the elements, which often prevent children from going miles through rain and snow and mud and sleet to school. But the larger ones will go; and the teacher is also there, and stands or sits, as the case may be, through six and a half hours or more with only ten or twelve boys, and it counts for the teacher half a day. Should not the board of trustees, the county superintendent, and also the parents have something to bear in this respect, and not throw the entire burden on the teacher?

In this district the board gives the teachers a warrant on the county treasurer for full payment the first month, whether the teacher has an average or not. If the board has that right the first month, why not the same right the second month, the third, &c.?

As the contract calls for an average daily attendance of twenty pupils, some of the teachers, if they have over twenty, reserve all over that number and carry to the next month, and then in the second month's report place the surplussage in the first month's report of attendance if they have not the amount required—viz., twenty. This they do because, say they, the agreement is only for an average of twenty; and as they draw their salary monthly if they put down all over twenty they will be the losers if other months should fall short in the average. All this may be true, but it does not justify any teacher in stating that five or more scholars attending school the first month came the second month when they did not. It seems to me that strict justice would give the teacher the full amount of salary if, at the end of the term, the term report would show that there was an average attendance daily of twenty scholars.

If a teacher has an average daily attendance of fifteen scholars for the second month, his salary here will be $16.50; or he must teach on till he can have an average of twenty, thus trespassing on his time to make twenty days; and in this way he might have to teach forty days to make one month of twenty days by contract. This is gross injustice to the teacher. Then, the next month there is an average of twenty-five or thirty, and behold, the teacher is paid for twenty. Where is the justice in this case? If $1.10 *per capita* is to be deducted in one case, why not add the same amount *per capita* when there is over an average? Is there any wrong here?

Such rules as we now have are calculated to make the teachers resort to dishonest practices in order to receive their full pay. Instead of this, therefore, let the teachers have a clear conscience in this matter, and let that obnoxious AVERAGE of TWENTY be either blotted out, or else let this responsibility be borne by some others in connection with the teacher. God knows, if the teacher does his duty, he has trouble enough to stand all day and teach, even if it be no more than ten scholars.

The teacher must say in his report whether he enforces rigidly the eighth regulation. I have doubts if a majority of the teachers of this county know what that regulation is. I know what it is, and if the teachers should rigidly enforce it, it would cut down the attendance still more. Yet, as the agreement has been entered into, the teacher should enforce it, even if it should displease parents by so doing.

But again: I must say that a teacher cannot compel the people to send their children to school: neither can he, and he ought not if he could, compel poor people to buy books for their children. Something, therefore, should be done to relieve the teacher of this responsibility.

"Do you keep posted in your schoolroom the regulations of the Board of Education concerning text-books?" This is another query in the "Monthly Report." I doubt if a single teacher does it, from the simple reason I doubt if a teacher has one. I have no doubt but that the teachers would keep them if they had them; but where are the teachers to get them, or whose business is it to furnish them?

There are some other things which deserve notice, and I think the present is the favorable time when the people of Virginia should act through their representatives, and have the article in their late platform carried out faithfully. The members of the Legislature cannot, or should not, be allowed by the people to evade their plain duty by treating the doctrine of "free books for free schools" as a mere promise made to be broken. These promises are pregnant with meaning, and broken promises will be remembered in the future. The present Legislature should act upon that question, and also change some of the other laws respecting the free-school system of Virginia.

"Free books for free schools" should be the cry from this time till every school in Virginia shall be supplied. In one respect, at least, the country schools would be greatly benefited. The teacher would have little, if any, trouble in classifying his pupils. The books would be at hand, and every pupil would have the proper book placed in his hand, and the teacher would not be annoyed by pupils coming to school with books not used in the schools. Here, again, the teacher is blamed if he should not receive this scholar, and the law says the teacher shall not enroll him if the scholar comes without the proper books. The teacher feels his position is not enviable. He has a heart, and the school system is certainly to have the children grow up as intelligent boys and girls, so the teacher does not want to turn away from school one who comes for admittance because he has a wrong book, and who, perhaps, is unable to buy those required.

Then, again, the prices of our text-books are costing more at our State-contract prices than the price at which each teacher could supply all his scholars. This is nothing more, if true, than an imposition on the patrons of the schools, and better terms should be agreed upon between the State and the publishers, and the extra expense could be used in the procuring of the "free books." If such agreement cannot be made, then let the State publish its own books and let the schools have them at cost, or else let each teacher correspond with the different publishers and supply all the scholars with all needed books.

Here is a table I made last winter as I was thinking on this very subject, and was hoping the "Blair bill" would become a law of the land.

Suppose a school of forty or fifty scholars. For such a school, let us suppose we require the following books, and they would be amply sufficient for all purposes, as any one can see. I have named these. Any others would do as well.

[Here our correspondent gives names and figures. He shows clearly that all the books needed could not cost over $353.57, though there are in his list 40 dictionaries and 450 other books.]

Now, here is a list of books with prices annexed for a school of forty or fifty pupils, and it could easily be made a permanent library in any school by the board of trustees and teacher holding each scholar responsible for any book soiled or injured, requiring a new book to be placed in its place at the end of the term.

Every year, therefore, the school would open promptly with no waiting and annoyance which is connected with the present system. The cost of the books tabulated is $353.57, or an average of $7.07 per scholar. This certainly is a small sum for a perpetuating library for fifty scholars, and this too, for a number of books not now required in the school law, as per monthly report, but which would be valuable as helps to the teacher and scholars.

There would then be uniformity in the system of education throughout the State, and when persons moved from one county to another—which is often done—there would be no necessity to purchase new books, at a loss to the patrons, as under the present system.

In conclusion, allow me to say one thing is certain—country schools cannot be carried on at present under the same system of laws as city and town schools are conducted. There must be a change somewhere, and if the law is to be enforced in the country schools, as it is at present threatened, the time will soon arrive when we will all say, Good-bye, public schools, so far as the country schools are concerned.

Teachers will not teach when the sum of $22, $25, or even $30 per month is offered under present restrictions. With the bad weather, muddy roads, miles to go through rain, hail, sleet, and snow children cannot attend regularly, and the teacher goes and meets a few of the larger pupils, and has to teach extra days and get no extra pay for his time consumed when he must live those extra days as well as the others. Country schools are not like city schools, where the children have good pavements upon which to walk; where they are put in certain grades; have good houses in which to attend school, and all conveniences — teachers having as easy a time as country teachers and receiving more for it. I speak in behalf of our country schools and country-school teachers. Let there be a change in the law to their interest and nobody's injury, as well as to the interest of the country children. Let the people read, think, and then as one man demand a better system in behalf of the free schools in the country. Pay your teachers something, and do not let them waste their time and talents for such sums as you offer them—twenty-two, twenty-five, or thirty dollars per month—and give them schools for five or six months in the year. Let your teachers live!

P. H. CUTLER.

The School-Book Question.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:

That our legislators should be perplexed about carrying out the platform pledge of "free books" to the "public free schools" is not at all surprising. No subject of graver consideration (except the coupon) can be brought before the General Assembly. If great caution is not exercised a cut-worm more voracious and harder to kill than the coupon will be introduced into the State Treasury. Can Virginia at this time bear an additional burden of such weight? If she can, would it not be better to lengthen the school-term than to provide free books? Are not the public free schools being drawn into the machinery of politics? Can it be more important to redeem platform pledges that may have been unadvised than to retrace an unwise step? ***

FLEEING FROM HER HUSBAND.

Louise Balfe Makes a Railway Journey at the Peril of Her Life.

A Cincinnati special says: Louise Balfe, the actress, has been here nearly a fortnight in the closest seclusion in the Grand Hotel and under the doctor's care. She was unable to keep her engagement at Havlin's Theatre on account, it was alleged, of extreme nervous prostration. Abe Erlanger, her manager, occupied the next room. Every effort has been made to keep her real condition and the cause of it a profound secret. She was not seen out and she answered no letters, and admitted no visitors but her surgeon. Her failure to appear on Sunday night at the theatre was the first circumstance that excited curiosity, but efforts to satisfy it were baffled until last night, when Miss Balfe, on fifteen minutes' notice to the hotel, packed up and left on the 9:15 train with her manager for Cleveland.

Her physician said she was able to stand the journey, but it was observed that she had to be lifted in a chair to the carriage and taken in the same way from the carriage to the car at the railway station. Her sudden departure at the risk of her life was because she had news that Leonard, her husband, from whom she parted at Dayton last summer, and whom Abe Erlanger shot in Philadelphia not long ago, was on his way to Cincinnati, and was expected to arrive to-night. He has not been heard of here to-day, and the rumor to-night is that he is in New York. Miss Balfe was hardly expected to recover from her illness three days ago.

Secretary Manning and some others in Washington have formed a "syndicate" for the consumption of fresh venison, which will be sent them regularly all the way from Fort Worth, Texas, as long as cold weather lasts.

INNER JAPANESE LIFE.

MADISON-SQUARE COLONY.

How the Japs Eat, Sleep, Worship, and Amuse Themselves When off Duty.

[New York Tribune.]

"How do you people amuse yourselves when you aren't working?" asked a young girl the other day as she bent over the booth of one of the "Japanese young men," who tinker away so industriously day after day at the Madison-Square Garden.

"No speak Inglis," said the modest Oriental, with a sad, sweet smile; and the inquisitive daughter of Eve was forced to drop what might have become an interesting conversation at that point. It is doubtless a matter of curiosity to many of the visitors to know what the inhabitants of this little section of the Orient do in the fifteen hours a day during which the public are excluded.

To the south of the workshops are the rooms where the members of the colony eat and sleep. Sliding-doors of Japanese construction admit the visitor, who has to back through like a loyal subject escaping from a royal reception-room. The first hall is divided up into a number of little state-rooms, in which the workmen sleep. Some of these are reserved for the women and children. Beyond is an apartment used as kitchen and dining-room. Here Shinamura, the big cook, reigns supreme. Shinamura is a personage of importance, and no mean menial. He was formerly a member of the Japanese embassy to Germany, and can express himself in Teutonic gutturals with the greatest fluency. He is a master of the art of Japanese cookery, and turns out maibushi, miso, shoyu, and other toothsome sauces and delicacies in endless variety of Japanese names and flavors. Shoyu is a pungent compound that forms the basis of Worcestershire sauce, and is exported to England in large quantities. The Japanese eat it on their fish. At the dinner-hour the rattle of knives and plates is continuous, and the food disappears as quickly as at a railroad restaurant. Some of the men use their knives like chopsticks, and the result, although hardly up to the standard of modern etiquette, is a vast improvement on the practice of using them like shovels.

The Japs sleep on raised couches. The most extraordinary feature of the bed-furnishings is the makuro, or pillow. This promises about as much comfort as the similar article of torture used by the Feejee Islanders. It looks like a wedge-shaped piece of cord-wood, the edge of the wedge being protected by a little roll of cloth or cotton. On this wedge the Japanese woman rests her neck when she wants to take a nap, letting her head hang over on the other side. How she escapes strangulation or the dislocation of her vertebral apparatus is a mystery. But, like many acts of their American sisters, this is not done by the Japanese women because they enjoy it, but because it saves their back hair from "mussing."

Miss Ida Yuki, who serves as hair-dresser to the women of the colony, is uncommonly ingenious. She designs all those wonderful structures of silky black hair which are the admiration of the beholder. The hair is first combed and brushed, then parted in half a dozen different directions, and drawn each way from the parting until the whole looks like the geographical divisions of the Eastern hemisphere. Each strand is then turned and twisted on itself till the desired effect is produced, and then it is deftly tied in place with black thread, which is bitten off neatly by the white teeth of the hair-dresser. Of course all this takes time, and the results are preserved for three or four days by the use of the curious pillow described.

After work is over in the evening there is a gathering about the big stove that heats the sleeping quarters, and Suto Sadahei, the gray-haired patriarch with the steel-bowed spectacles who runs the loom, discourses words of wisdom for younger members of the colony. Ogara Torakakichi, the barber, is also a man of proverbs and wise saws.

In the morning all are awakened by the roar of the gong. This is a peculiar instrument. It is made of bronze, and is shaped like a cocoanut with one end cut off. Not being provided with any particular bottom on which to stand, it has the chronic aspect of a drunken dinner-pot. When struck with a stick it gives forth a deep, reverberatory sound. After breakfast until the hour of the morning reception, they amuse themselves as they choose. Gossip among the women and some Japanese substitute for politics among the men keep the conversation going. Sometimes there are impromptu wrestling matches at which the two carpenters are the acknowledged champions. The contestants squat on the left foot, opposite to each other, and extend the right leg until the soles of their feet touch. Then they wriggle and hop about like two game chickens until one gets a shove or a twist on his opponent that sends him over on his back with everything flopping in the air.

Sumi, the girl whose pretty name has the prosaic meaning of ink, trots up and down with Tenzabaro—the solemn little baby—strapped to her back like a pappoose. Kurataro, a most mischievous youngster, slides down the banister without regard to the duration of his Japanese trousers; and the rest of the "six little Japanese kids" play at steam-cars with rows of blocks. Sometimes a meditative young workman will sit off by himself, thinking perhaps of the sunny skies of his native island, and humming a song in a monotonous undertone like the sound of the wind among the dry pines.

The members of the colony sometimes suffer from throat- and lung-troubles. When anything is the matter with them they run to Mr. Deakin, the manager, like so many children, show him where the pain is, and ask for medicine. It doesn't trouble them what they get if it is only medicine of some sort, and it disappears immediately—no matter what the quantity given. Another child-like quality is the delight they take in a watch. The gravest of them is as eager to "shee wheels go wound" as ever Toddy was.

Sunday is literally a day of rest and amusement. In the words of the poet, adapted—

"They don't go much on religion.
They never ain't had no show."

The company contains members of the Buddhist and Shinto sects. As there are no shrines or temples within reach, they are forced to forego the outward performances of their religious rites, but the privation does not seem to trouble them much. The Shinto theology is much like the Grecian polytheism, though not as extensive. **There are seven gods in the calendar. In the temple hangs a gong. The worshipper beats the gong to attract the attention of the particular divinity to whom he wishes to appeal, and then goes on with his petition. The gods are: Hotai, who is supposed to bestow happiness; Diakoko, who gives his faithful followers wealth; Fukurokiyin, who is conceived of as having a big head full of knowledge; Jurojin, who gives length of days and takes care of aged Japanese; Bishamon, the patron of war; Benton, a dusky Venus, the object of the lover's supplications when his dreamy-eyed mistress refuses to smile upon him; and Yebisu, the food-provider, who may be supposed to be the patron of the beggars of Japan.**

Inoye, a bright, intelligent young fellow, who trips about among the workmen and often attracts the notice of visitors, is the son of a well-to-do Japanese merchant. He is here in the care of Mr. Deakin. His ambition is to be an electrical engineer. He is said to have read everything touching upon his profession that could be gotten in Japan, and has come over here for new worlds to conquer. He is well-informed concerning the lives and achievements of Edison, Brush, and Morse; and has so far mastered the practical details of his science as to plan the system of electric bells now in use about "the village," put it in practice, and keep it in working order.

The artisans are the most skilful of their class, who were known to Mr. Deakin, or who were numbered among the 300 men employed by his firm in Japan. They were also selected for docility and evenness of temper, and no trouble has been experienced with them except once. A would-be-funny article appeared in a Philadelphia paper, illustrated with fearfully- and wonderfully-designed wood-cuts. The interpreters translated the article. The men gazed, with heaving breasts, at the cuts, and there was war. All of Mr. Deakin's diplomacy and powers of Japanese oratory were required to quell the insurrection.

The Courts of Virginia.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:

In some of the recent issues of your paper I have noticed communications recommending not only amendments to the Constitution so that only a portion of the Court of Appeals should be elected at a time, but also changes in the circuit courts. While, therefore, these subjects are under consideration I trust I may be excused if I recommend a remodelling and change of the whole judicial system of the State, and especially the county courts.

For more than forty years I have observed the different systems that have been adopted by the State, and of all the present is not only the most expensive, but the most inefficient. The old county courts, that in the convention of 1829-'30 were so beautifully eulogized by the Hon. B. Watkins Leigh, are now nothing more than a shadow of what then claimed his admiration. The condition of society and the institutions of the State now are vastly different from what existed at that time. The county courts of that day were composed of gentlemen of wealth, character, and influence, recommended to and appointed by the Governor. Their jurisdiction was limited, but extended to both law and equity, civil and criminal. They served without pay, and the only compensation they could receive was, if after long service any one became the senior magistrate, he was entitled to the sheriffalty, which, if he accepted, he could farm out to deputies, who paid him a small sum for the office and furnished all the security required on his official bond. Of the men that constituted the magistracy I have an abiding recollection. They were gentlemen of practical sagacity, combined with patriotic principle and lofty independence. They mingled with the people on the court-green, and were truly the exemplars of the community in which they lived.

This continued till 1849-'50 when a change in the Constitution made the magistrates an elective body from whom they should select a presiding justice who was the presiding officer of court. He, with not less than two others, constituted a court that had the same jurisdiction as its predecessor. They were paid a per diem for every day either of them acted as a member of the court. The members of these courts were mostly men of standing in their respective neighborhoods, but not generally of that lofty character that distinguished their predecessors. Of our county courts after the war, up to the time when the present system was adopted, it is useless to express an opinion. It was incidental to if not a consequence of our then unfortunate condition, but there was no friend of his race felt a relief when that era of ignorance and corruption was abolished.

We now come to the present system of county-court judges, which we have tried for fifteen years, and which I think experience has proved to be utterly inefficient. 'Tis true courts are held monthly in the counties, as in the olden time, so that the people can assemble and exchange with each other their ideas upon subjects in which they feel an interest; but the judges generally are not men of that talent and experience we should look for in men to be entrusted with the lives and liberties of the citizen. How honest soever they may be, they are not such men as we would consult as counsel upon subjects affecting life or liberty. And yet they are entrusted with the decision of legal questions involving the most important consequences. You cannot but admit their ignorance, and yet submit to their incapacity. It is but a natural result of the system. The average pay of a county judge does not exceed $500, and no lawyer in full practice (unless he be old and wealthy and desirous to retire) can afford to give up his practice for so small a consideration. I say "give up his practice," for while he as county judge *may* practice in other courts, yet his judicial duties so interfere with his practice that he cannot properly attend to it, and it will leave him. Hence we find generally that men with little legal reputation and less practice are the only lawyers who can be induced to accept the office. This being the evil, how can it be corrected? Being but a plain countryman, I shall only consider what, in my judgment, is the remedy for the evils of the county-court system, leaving to others more experienced to suggest any changes they may deem necessary in corporation courts. What I would suggest is that the Constitution be so amended as to authorize the Legislature to divide the State into districts composed of three or four counties, according to their population and general amount of business. From each district so laid off let there be one judge elected, who shall receive from said counties as a salary the aggregate amount now paid to the county judges of the district. Let him hold in each county, as at present, his monthly court, and so enlarge his jurisdiction that all questions of law and equity could be cognizable before him. If the criminal docket could not all be tried at the monthly term let the alternate quarterly terms be devoted to that exclusively and the other quarterly terms be devoted to civil causes. Abolish the circuit courts, and constitute every five of said district judges an intermediate appellate tribunal, before whom certain questions should be considered and adjudicated. The other minutiæ of the system could be regulated and fixed by the Legislature, as the workings of the system might make necessary. **This I consider a system that would be greatly preferable to the present. It would insure able judges, inasmuch as the salary would induce able lawyers to accept the position. While it would in no manner degrade the judiciary, it would place the judge where he could see more readily the wants and necessities of the people and more promptly relieve them.** It would expedite the administration of justice, and "the law's delay" would cease to be proverbial. The State would be relieved of paying annually the amount now paid to the circuit-court judges, and a system adopted suited to the wants and necessities of the people.

REFORM.

As Virginia has no power to send convicts to Alaska, we omit what our correspondent says on that point:

America's Siberia.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:

Alaska, left to natural growth and development, has a great future before it. Ten years ago one scarcely ever heard of Alaska, but now every few days we get glimpses of its greatness which compel us to praise the wisdom that advocated its purchase, however much it was decried at the time by ignorant editors and opposing politicians. The influence of a great monopoly, the Alaska Fur Company, has long kept the people of the United States in almost total ignorance of Alaska by systematically suppressing all Government investigation. In one instance this company prevented a Government geological survey by representing the country to Congress as a vast sterile waste, valuable only to the trapper and fur-trader. These misrepresentations were made by a California senator, who was at one time president of the company and was at that time a large stockholder in it. The senator knew that a full survey and a report of the vast natural wealth there stored must result in the rapid settlement of the country, and as the company then held, and holds now to a great extent, a complete monopoly of every interest there, it would be detrimental to the company's interest; and thus a senator's cupidity robbed the people of a knowledge of their own. "D" describes the country in glowing terms, yet he hardly does it justice.

It was my good fortune last winter to meet with Lieutenant Ray, of the United States army, who spent two winters at Point Barrow, in northern Alaska, latitude 72, for the purpose of taking meteorological and magnetical observations. The expedition, of which he was the commander, was sent out by the United States Government about the time that Lieutenant Greely sailed for Cape Sabine for similar purposes. The portion of Alaska where he wintered is, of course, uninhabitable by a Caucasian as it is above the Arctic circle, and consists mainly of *tundras*, but the Lieutenant acquainted himself thoroughly, while on this expedition, with all of Alaska explored up to that time, and informed me that the southern portion was truly a country of great promise. He represented the cod-fisheries as far surpassing the Grand Banks, the salmon- and trout-fishing as the finest in the world, and the forests as inexhaustible, while valuable minerals, including gold and coal, seem to vie with each other in enriching this favored country. The Aleutian islands, which are treeless, he thinks will at some time be the grazing-land for the States, for they are covered with a magnificent growth of grass; and such is the favorable influence of the Japan current, whose tepid waters skirt their southern borders, that the winters are sufficiently open to render the housing of cattle unnecessary. This current tempers all Southern Alaska, and is as kind to it as the Gulf stream is to England and Norway.

J. B. F.

A Word for the Convicts.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:

"Tremble, thou wretch, that goest unwhipt of justice."

I ask a short space for a few words on the convict question.

A convict is a person proved guilty of a crime charged against him. If all that commit crimes could be caught and convicted and society cleansed of the perilous stuff, it would be easier to determine what to do with the convicts. We might put them in a pen and blow them up, or take them out to sea and drown them, or tumble them all into an exhausted coal-mine, or the like. But the great trouble is that society is in an uncomfortable condition in respect to criminality. Town and country have both their convicts in every stage of development and maturity. Countrymen think they know commission-merchants who have rendered them false returns or squandered the proceeds of their crops; and they think they are almost as bad as the "nigger" who was made a "convict" for stealing a $20 hog or forging an order for $3 worth of groceries. And then the commission-merchant thinks the same of the brother who gets an advance on his crops and then sells them and spends the proceeds and leaves him with his finger in his mouth. Then there are some little unsavory practices, a good deal too familiar for comfort, such as branding flour with a false brand, packing inferior articles in prime packages, adulterating vinegar with sulphuric acid, and every article of consumption with deleterious substances—and generally obtaining money under false pretences; collecting money and appropriating it, or merely buying goods without the hope or intention of paying for them—the commonest form of stealing—or the thousand tricks to "delay, hinder, and defraud creditors." Well, when we talk of the treatment of "convicts," we may as well calculate the chances. And when in our zeal for honest men we are indulging our indignation against "convicts," we had best consider what a convict in fact is. As I see it, a convict is a person doubly unlucky. He has been so unfortunate as to yield to temptation; and he has been so unlucky as to be caught and have no rich friends to cover his crime or secure his escape.

Who questions it that there are as many essential felons out of the penitentiary as in it? I have heard an inebriate abuse a drunkard, and a fine lady condemn a weak sister; but the indignation did not convince me of innocence. I have read in sacred history of a "convict" who escaped death because no sinless one was found to throw the first stone.

I do not mean to scandalize society, but merely to call to mind truths familiar to every man, and as old as Adam.

It is unquestionably the State's duty not to damage any of her citizens; certainly not to let herself be or appear a competitor, with all her resources, wealth, and advantages, against the poor and hard-working classes. And her counsellors can't spend too much time or labor on the problem how to utilize convict labor. But "convicts" are not brutes nor devils. If the State treats them as such she will commit a great crime against humanity; and she will harden and perfect them as brutes and devils, and they will punish her for her crime. Her prisons will not hold the ever-increasing multitudes of savages, and she may depopulate her territory and bankrupt her treasury in perfecting criminals.

A convict is a great offender, but he is still a citizen. The State punishes him to deter him and others from a like offence. Beyond the vindication of the law and the preservation of order, for her own best interests as well as his, she owes him mercy. It is her interest that he shall not be returned to prison. It is her interest that he shall be a better citizen. By injustice and cruelty she may make him her implacable enemy. By disabling from earning an honest living she may leave him the alternative of crime or starvation. Whether we like it or not we must consider the fact that the only difference between the "convict" and many with whom we deal and associate is the simple luck of escape or conviction.

We do pray for mercy, and that same prayer should teach us all to render the deeds of mercy.

ONE OF THE PEOPLE.

A Torpedo-Catcher.

[London Times.]

The construction of torpedo-catchers was as much a necessity in naval warfare after the development of the torpedo system of small, quick-steaming torpedo craft as armored protection for battle-ships became in consequence of the growth of the gun. The catchers, or police of the sea, do not differ, except in bulk and speed, from the active and dangerous little enemies which they are intended to capture or destroy, and in this respect the Admiralty would appear to have applied the old detective principle of setting a thief to catch a thief. The first of the new craft yet afloat was tried in Stokes's bay, near Portsmouth, on Friday last, with remarkable results, not only as regards speed but also as regards manœuvring power. This latter quality of the torpedo-catcher was even more noteworthy than the former, and has been secured by the application of a principle which, though successfully tried in steam pinnaces and launches and in various submarine miners built for the royal engineers, had not previously been adapted to first-class torpedo-vessels. During the past four years we have on various occasions noticed the gradual development of the invention of Mr. John Samuel White, of East Cowes, which is now popularly known in the service as his "turnabout" system. Boats built according to this plan have their deadwood removed in order to obtain facility in turning, and are fitted with an inner and an outer rudder, simultaneously actuated, either of which would suffice to steer the vessel in the event of the other being lost or disabled. The present experimental torpedo-boat was undertaken by Mr. White for the purpose of demonstrating the applicability of his invention to larger vessels, and with a view to her acceptance by the Admiralty on her fulfilling all the conditions guaranteed. She is considerably larger than any of the existing torpedo craft in her Majesty's navy, being 150 feet long, 17 feet 6 inches broad, and 9 feet 6 inches deep. Her displacement is about 125 tons. Her lines resemble those of similar vessels now in use, but she is fitted with a turtle deck and a spur ram. Like the others, she is built of thin steel, and has a conning tower amidships, from whence she will be steered in action. Messrs. G. & E. Belliss, of Birmingham, the makers of all the machinery of Mr. White's boats, joined with him in the undertaking, supplying compound engines of the three-cylinder type, the high-pressure cylinder being twenty inches and the two low-pressure cylinders twenty-four inches in diameter, the whole being supported on light steel columns. The stroke is eighteen inches. Great care has been taken in the design to keep the weights as low as possible, having due regard to efficiency. There are two air-pumps driven off the low-pressure cross-heads, while the feed-pumps are driven direct from the crank-shaft. Steam is supplied by two locomotive-boilers, with the feeds so arranged as to insure an equal supply of water to each boiler, and as the result of the trial the possibility of successfully employing two boilers with forced draught without difficulty, either as regards the feed or priming, was clearly demonstrated. A great feature in the design is the division of the boiler-room by a longitudinal water-tight bulkhead, the connections being arranged so that either boiler can be worked independently in case of accident. The vessel is also steered by steam. The trial was conducted by Mr. White and Mr. Morcom. The weather was somewhat boisterous, but notwithstanding the state of the sea the vessel was remarkably steady, and also free from vibration when going at her maximum speed. The total weight on board was twenty-five tons, fifteen tons representing coal and ten tons (furnished by iron ballast) her armament of Whiteheads and rapid-firing guns. Provision, however, has been made for carrying thirty-five tons of coal in the bunkers, while the space forward and aft for the accommodation of officers and crew and stores is unusually large. Six runs on the measured mile were first made for the purpose of ascertaining the speed under the special conditions of load, which resulted in the realization of a mean speed of 20.70 knots, the mean boiler pressure being 126 pounds, the revolutions 319 per minute, and the indicated horse-power 1,387. The highest speed in the direction of the wind was 22.43 knots, and the following times which it took to complete the miles will show the regularity with which the speed was maintained: With the wind, 2:43, 2:40½, and 2:40½ (repeated); against the wind, 3:09, 3:07, and 3:05. The average indicated horse-power, per square foot of grate, was 23, which was maintained with a mean air-pressure in the stoke-holes of of 2¼ inches, which was considered a very high result. The vessel was afterward tested in the usual manner for manœuvring power. At full speed, with the helm hard over 30 degrees, the starboard circle was completed in 1:17 (238 revolutions of the engines), and the port circle in 1:12 (270 revolutions). At half speed the starboard circle was completed in 1:14 (237 revolutions), and the port circle in 1:15 (246 revolutions). The diameter of the circles was about a length and a half of the boat, or 225 feet. The craft was finally run for three hours' continuous full-power steaming to test the endurance of the mechanism. No mishaps occurred, and the speed and revolutions were maintained throughout.

Wedded One and Eloped with Another.

A Milwaukee special says: Charles Denver, employed at the insane asylum near Juneau, Thursday married the attractive daughter of a wealthy farmer of that section. Directly after the wedding Denver and his bride completed arrangements for an eastern trip and were promptly on hand upon the arrival of the evening train. While the good-byes were being said Denver excused himself for a moment to look after the baggage and the train moved away without him. The bride was fully twenty miles from Juneau, when a search revealed that her husband was not aboard. She returned by the first train, but Denver had hastily driven to the Insane Asylum, summoned his first love, a chambermaid of the institution, and with her boarded a Chicago train, which is the last heard from him. The father and brother of bride No. 1 swear vengeance on Denver, and are said to be in search of him with guns.

A COLORADO BONANZA.

More About the Mine in Which Blaine is Interested.

[New York Times.]

When ex-United-States-Senator Jerome B. Chaffee returned from the country Wednesday to New York, he found awaiting him a telegram from Colorado which conveyed a most gratifying statement of facts. The telegram told him that the Henrietta and Maid-of-Erin mining properties, near Leadville, had been discovered to be the richest "finds" ever known in the history of Colorado. Mr. Chaffee was informed that a shaft had been sunk to the depth of thirty-four feet five days ago, and that the yield was over $30 to the ton, the principal part of which was lead. Last night, reclining on a sofa conversing with Mr. Uriah Painter, sat Senator Chaffee puffing a good cigar and as indifferent about and unconscious of the addition which his interest in the Maid-of-Erin and Henrietta mines will add to his worldly possessions, to all appearances, as he could be.

"The Associated Press telegram from Leadville about the Henrietta and the Maid of Erin is correct so far as it goes," remarked Senator Chaffee, "but it don't go very far."

"So I hear," said Mr. Painter.

"Yes," resumed Mr. Chaffee, "the find is really bigger than described. I guess the plants cover nearer eight or ten acres than one or two. We bought them in 1879, and I always felt that they would prove to be good properties. A year ago our men worked sixty feet distant from the present discovery, and after getting down some distance had to quit on account of water. Then I went west from here and saw Mr. Moffatt, who is my partner in the properties. We looked at them, and he agreed to try another place and go down deep. The result is that now, thirty-four feet down, we are getting ore that nets us $30 a ton and find no bottom. I guess there is a great body of ore there."

"Let me see," said Mr. Painter with a business-like knitting of the brow as he danced the point of a new lead-pencil over the surface of a memorandum scrap. "There are 44,500 square feet to the acre, and 5 tons of ore to a square foot of ground, or in that number of square feet which equal one acre of ground 222,500 tons of ore. The yield at $30 per ton net must therefore be per acre $6,675,000. Did you say there were 20 acres?" asked Mr. Painter, evidently astonished at the enormous evidences of the yield.

"Oh, don't calculate too much," said Mr. Chaffee; "there's enough prejudice now against us silver fellows, and especially here in New York. I really don't see what's got into the people."

"I believe you said eight or ten acres," put in the *Times's* reporter.

"Well, yes, that's something like it; but the truth is we scarcely know ourselves how much there is. I guess it will prove as big as Comstock anyway."

"To what extent is Mr. Blaine interested?"

"Umph, let me see. I think, yes, Mr. Blaine has a thirty-second interest in each mine. Mr. Moffat, who is president of the Denver and Rio Grande railroad, and myself own a little over one half, about half of one property and four-sevenths of the other. The other gentlemen who have proprietary rights are General Wilson, who has an equity interest, Mayor Du Bois, of Leadville, and ex-Senator Tabor."

Ex-Senator Tabor attended the meeting on the silver question at the Metropolitan Hotel Wednesday night. He confirmed all that ex-Senator Chaffee had said, and stated his own interest to be one fourth. "I always had faith in these mines, and bought them with Mr. Moffatt, paying $25,000 for the Henrietta and $47,000 for the Maid of Erin. Moffatt and I let the others in later. The present shaft, so my superintendent, McCourt, telegraphed to-day, is now down thirty-nine feet. The beauty of the whole thing is that the ore is what we call second contact, always a sign of great and practically exhaustless riches."

"Will you stock your properties?"

"No. I believe in practical mining; and it is a sure thing that we will work the veins simply for the ore development."

Expulsion of Poles from Prussia.

[London Times.]

The sufferers belong to all classes. They comprise farmers, millers, miners, gardeners, coachmen, artisans, and shopkeepers. * * * The decree made no allowance for age, grief, and sickness. A man and his wife, each eighty years old, are among the exiles. Another couple lost its only child and had to bury him on the day, being refused a delay of twenty-four hours. A paralyzed septuagenarian, so long domiciled in Prussia as to be unable to speak his native language, and pregnant women within a few hours of their confinement, are in the tale of its victims. They have had to quit a country they scarcely remembered was not their native land for one which had forgotten them. The Russian Administration is naturally suspicious, and especially of Poles. It has declined to let the refugees enter unless they can prove their Russian nationality. Fifteen hundred miserable beings are said to be camping out now on the Prusso-Russian frontier, disowned simultaneously by the State in which they were residing and by that in which they were born. Horrible hardships have been and are being inflicted upon a multitude of helpless creatures, and civilization makes no signs of protest. Riotous and stolid mobs perpetrated hardly worse enormities in Russia upon Jewish traders, and the world with one voice denounced the scandal. A Government which prides itself upon its enlightenment is here the culprit, and it is not ashamed to publish its outrage in a decree. A sovereign who is administratively autocratic permits himself to be the blind instrument of a cruel oppression upon thousands who have been living under his protection.

The Highland Widow's Lament.

Weary wi' roamin' I sit in the gloamin',
I sit on myain door-stane;
The flocks i' the fauld nestle close fra' the cauld,
I sit an' sigh here, my lane.

The bent trees are groanin', the sad wind is moanin',
The shadow creeps over the hill,
The burn as it flows tells the tale of its woes,
But I as the shadow am still.

The road at its turnin' my dim eye discernin',
I mark where he cam wi' the kye,
When the day's wark was done at the set o' the sun
In the season forever forbye.

Fond hope that deceived me, cauld death that bereaved me;
My gudeman he left me sae young,
That, eld an' forlorn, he might hold me in scorn,
Should I take his dear name on my tongue.

Still, I oft by my gleamin' lone hearth fall a-dreamin',
And think of that season of auld—
Of a love was sae near, of a love was sae dear,
It has gared every ither seem cauld.

Should the grave in undoin' once bring me renewin',
More bonny for sairly-tried truth,
I wad dare then to name you, my Willie, an' claim you,
Nae longer sae fashed by your youth.

[*Emily Pfeiffer, in the Academy.*

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DIVIDENDS.

NOTICE.—THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS of the MERCHANTS NATIONAL BANK OF RICHMOND, have this day declared a DIVIDEND OF 3½ PER CENT. (free of tax) out of the net profits of the past six months, payable to the stockholders on and after January 2, 1886.

J. F. GLENN, Cashier.

RICHMOND, December 24, 1885.

de 25-tJa5

THE PLANTERS NATIONAL BANK OF RICHMOND,

RICHMOND, VA., December 23, 1885.

THE DIRECTORS OF THIS BANK have this day declared a DIVIDEND OF FOUR PER CENT. (free of tax) out of the profits of the last six months, payable on and after JANUARY 2, 1886.

MANN S. QUARLES, Cashier.

de 24-tJa5

PETERSBURG SAVINGS AND INSURANCE COMPANY,

PETERSBURG, VA., Dec. 24, 1885.

THE DIRECTORS OF THIS COMPANY have declared a SEMI-ANNUAL DIVIDEND OF 3 PER CENT. (free of taxes), payable on and after January 2, 1886.

EDWARD W. BUTCHER, Secretary.

de 24-10t

RICHMOND AND PETERSBURG R. R. Co.,

TREASURER'S OFFICE,

RICHMOND, VA., December 21, 1885.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a DIVIDEND OF 2½ PER CENT. on the capital stock of this company will be paid at the office of the company, in the city of Richmond, Va., on and after the 2D OF JANUARY NEXT.

The transfer-books will be closed on the 25th instant until 2d of January.

M. W. YARRINGTON, Treasurer.

de 20-tJa2

OFFICE VIRGINIA FIRE AND MARINE INSURANCE COMPANY,

RICHMOND, December 17, 1885.

DIVIDEND NOTICE.—The Board of Directors of this Company have this day declared out of the profits of the past six months a SEMI-ANNUAL DIVIDEND OF FIVE PER CENT (free of tax) payable to stockholders on and after JANUARY 1st next.

WM. H. McCARTHY, Secretary.

de 18-tJa1

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