The Sunday Herald.

VOLUME XV. WASHINGTON, SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 13, 1881. NO. 55

THE CIVIL SERVICE.

A LIFE TENURE CONSIDERED—III.

Competitive Examinations and the Question of an Aristocracy of Office-Holders Considered.

"Should the newly-elected President of the United States," resumed the old examiner the next morning, as I entered the room, "immediately upon assuming the duties of his office, call together the people of the whole country in one vast assemblage, and say to them: 'Fellow-citizens, you have reposed in me a great and important trust, which is no less than the administration of a government of fifty millions of people; I alone am to be held responsible for its good conduct, but its duties are manifold and its labors are enormous; I must have help: I want ten thousand picked men around me here at the seat of Government: what kind of men would ye that I should choose as co-laborers?' Immediately one and all would cry out with one general acclaim, 'Give us good men.' 'But,' continues the President, 'do you mean simply good men or the best men we can get?' 'We mean the best men you can get.' 'By what sign shall ye know them: by their religion, by their politics, by their sex, or by their color?' 'By neither the one nor the other, but by their capacity for the business in which they are to be employed.' 'But in what way are we to ascertain their capacity? Shall we take somebody's word for it, or shall we examine them for ourselves by a method which is calculated to put them to the severest test?' 'By no means take any man's word for it, but put them to the test, examine into their qualifications, and judge for yourself.' 'But I must know,' continues the President, 'what kind of an examination you mean. Now, there are two methods: one is where a man is appointed through political influence and undergoes a sort of pass-examination merely to fulfill the requirements of the law. These may be called political appointments. By this method you will frequently get very good men, but just as often indifferent men. But there is another method by which you can always get the very best men, and that is by open, competitive examination.'

"Now, you all know that the effect of competition is to produce the best material in every trade, occupation, or profession in life. When the Government wants, for instance, the best quality of paper and writing material with which to transmit its vast, multifarious business, and, too, at the most reasonable rates, it invites competition by way of proposals. Immediately all the manufacturers in the country enter into an animated competition for excellence in manufacture and cheapness in price. The result is that the Government gets the best, and gets it cheaper than it could have done in any other way. You all know that the most useful inventions have had their origin in small beginnings, and that they have advanced step by step to perfection through the competition of inventors. The moment there is a demand for a certain invention or discovery, that moment a thousand busy minds are at work scheming and contriving how to improve and bring it to such perfection as will meet the demands of the public. Now, why cannot the spirit of competition likewise enter into the calculations of men when they want public servants to carry on the Government? You have all read how in the olden time the historians, the poets, the orators, the painters, and the sculptors, as well as the athletes, used to meet upon the plains of Olympia and contend with each other for the mastery; and that the result of this competition was that they became the model and the study of all succeeding ages. Here," continued the examiner, "the President passes for a reply; and should the people decide that all offices, all places of public trust in the Executive branch of the Government, should be filled by open competitive examination, methinks I hear the President with a loud voice cry out:

"SCHOLARS, TO THE FRONT!"

and then continue his discourse as follows: 'What you have decided upon, fellow-citizens, is very good, and I think that time and experience will approve the wisdom of your choice. But there is one thing more I wish to ask of you. That office-seekers shall be weighed in the balance and not found wanting, nor untrue to their trusts, I want you to see to it that they shall not be turned out to starve whenever an administration comes into power that happens to be adverse in politics to that under which they were appointed. I ask that you will demand the enactment of laws which will prohibit the removal of men for no other reason than because they have served the Government faithfully and efficiently all their lives.'"

"Just there," said I, "I should like to interrupt you and the President both. In the first place, how could a mere competitive, literary examination prove that a man was honest or dishonest? It might prove that he would make a capable public officer, perhaps, but would it prove that he would make an honest one, for honest men, above all, is what we want? In the second place, is there not danger, if the tenure of these offices is made permanent, that it will raise up an aristocracy or bureaucracy of office-holders, and thus contribute to the creation of a class of citizens—something that is contrary to the spirit of the Constitution and the traditions of our people?"

"I am glad you have asked those questions, for if you had not I should have both asked and answered them for you. In the first place I should like to know what method there is of determining any man's honesty except by actual trial? In order to carry on the affairs of this world it is necessary to have some confidence in human nature. A man is supposed to be honest until he is proved to be a knave, and unless he has proved to be such we owe it as duty to our fellow-men to repose confidence in him. There are only two methods of appointment: the one by competitive examination, the other by political influence, as the President has just told you. Now compare the two classes of men which these two methods bring to the front. On the one hand you have the scholar, on the other the politician. Now, admit, for argument's sake, that both may be very bad men, or both very good men. But at the mere mention of the two names, to which one does the average mind naturally incline? Has the pursuits of the professional politician inclined him to the greater cultivation of the amenities of life than those of the scholar? Well, I will pursue this comparison no further, for we have good authority, you know, for saying that comparisons are odious!"

At this pause in the examiner's remarks I again took occasion to refer to the question which he had as yet left unanswered, namely, the practicability of making a life tenure of these public offices, and to repeat that I was not yet prepared to argue the case from his position, but so far as I was able to judge of the temper of the people, and judging by the well-known barriers which the Constitution had thrown up against the creation of an order of nobility, and, by implication, of a privileged class of any kind, I could say that, in my opinion, it was an impracticable thing to even attempt to create a life tenure in the Civil Service. It would certainly lead to the building up of an aristocracy of office-holders, and might end in the establishment of an aristocracy, indeed.

During the delivery of these remarks, of which the above is but an abstract, the old examiner sat with his elbow resting on the desk and his head upon his hand, gazing abstractedly upon the floor, as if rapt in the solution of some absorbing "conundrum," or, it may have been, wandering in imagination amid the ruins of Palmyra. But no sooner had I finished than up he sprang with a scream, "And so the people of the United States," said he, "are afraid of building up an aristocracy of office-holders, are they?" And hereupon he strode across the room to a looking-glass, and, after viewing himself from top to toe, he again planted himself before me, and, in a supplicating manner, said, "Do I look like an aristocrat?"

"Why, man," continued he, "I have been an office-holder for 16 these sixteen years, and I feel less of the aristocrat to-day than ever before. Time was when I might have had some pretensions to such a distinction, but that time ceased from the moment that the doors of this department closed upon me. What do you mean by an aristocracy of office-holders? What does aristocracy in this country mean, anyhow? It means wealth—solid, stolid wealth—nothing more. If I were to stay here until I were as old as the oldest patriarch—or George Washington's body-servant—I might save up money enough to bury me, it is true, but I never could become a wealthy man. A man ambitious for wealth and social distinction would no more think of expending his sort of life to accomplish such a result than an orthodox Hebrew of the time of Moses would have thought of marrying among the heathen in order to secure the favor of the God of Israel. But there are men, poor souls, whose thirsts are duckbloms enough for them, and, though ambitious, would willingly embrace a life that promises steady employment and fair remuneration. An aristocracy of office-holders, forsooth! Pish! Think of an aristocracy of twelve hundred dollar clerks! Why, an aristocracy of office-holders means simply an aristocracy of poor devils, if it means anything. No, no; so far as the accumulation of wealth and the assumption of its natural concomitant, aristocracy, are concerned, every man who enters the brazen doors of these departments may read, if he will, the terrible inscription which Dante places over the gates of his Inferno:

"All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

After a short pause and another tour of the room the examiner proceeded:

"If you are so afraid of an aristocracy why do you allow a life-tenure to the officers and soldiers of the Army and Navy? When war comes why don't you then ask them all to step down and out, and give their places to others who are more needy? An Army officer holds his office only during good behavior after all, and this is all we ask for officers in the Civil Service. If they prove to be guilty of peculation, of insubordination, of incivility toward the public, if they are guilty of inattention to duty or of incompetency, if in any manner they are guilty of conduct unbecoming officers or gentlemen, then off with their heads. Understand me when I use the word life-tenure: it simply means tenure during good behavior, nothing more. The cry of 'rotation in office' is merely a campaign song, or to speak more plainly, it is the howl of the famished wolves who, having fasted a long time, are now clamoring for the sacrifice of the lambs who are pasturing in places beyond their reach. Did you ever hear of one of those wolves demanding that an Army officer should resign, during a time of war, and let him have his place merely because it was a life-tenure? Did you ever hear of his 'rotating' him out of office, in order to occupy it himself on the eve of a battle? Oh, no, he doesn't bother himself about the soldier's aristocracy when there is fighting ahead. He is very willing to acknowledge them and there that, having no experience in soldiery, he does not consider himself competent to the task of setting a squadron in the field. Of course he doesn't plead cowardice, but only lack of experience. Well, then, let us apply the same rule to the Civil Service. When these politicians come to demand the places of old veterans, let us turn their own guns upon them and plead their want of experience in conducting the affairs of the Government."

"In your opinion, then, there is no danger of an aristocracy gradually crystallizing around a life tenure?"

"Only such an one as I have already mentioned, an aristocracy of poor devils. If anybody is anxious for that distinction and wants my place, let him come and take it. I tell you, sir, we are all poor devils; and the sooner we recognize this fact and begin to live in this faith, the better it will be for us all."

I then inquired what class of employes he would make subject to the life tenure during good behavior.

"Some Civil Service reformers," replied the examiner, "go so far as to say that the rule should apply to all Federal office-holders; but, for my own part, I think its general application is impracticable, at least at the present time. It is asking the people to surrender all their principles, or prejudices at once, and this they will not do. In all efforts at reform, we should adopt Thad. Stevens's motto: 'If we can't get what we want, we must take what we can get.' But that branch of the public service, where I think it both practicable and necessary, is in the executive departments, here at Washington, and for various reasons. In the first place, this is the seat of Government. From this point, the very heart, as it were, of the whole civil, military, and naval service of the United States, flows the current which electrifies and gives vitality to the remotest member of the body politic. Here issues the power that sets the whole machinery of the Government in motion. Here the laws are made, here interpreted; and by those laws and interpretations the country is governed. There, for instance, stands the Treasury, the great counting-house of the nation. All the financial operations of the Government are there regulated. There are kept the vast ledgers upon which the people may see the amount of their revenues and expenditures. Not a single dollar of their money is expended for any purpose whatever, but what is to be accounted for in the debit and credit columns of these great journals. Now is it not reasonable to suppose that the Government should have a body of experienced, well-trained experts on hand to attend to these vast details? But if the administration were to change every four years, and the rank and file of its employes were liable to be turned out, of course there could be no such a thing as a trained body of public servants, because four years are not enough to make an expert in any calling, not even excepting that of a member of Congress.

"Now, if Congress," continued the examiner, "would enact a law making the tenure to hold during good behavior, and the appointment thereto dependent upon the result of open competitive examination, both, or rather all political parties would stand an equal chance of being represented, and those men who are the most competent would be found in them in the flesh of our law-makers would be removed from the employ of the people. Why cannot both parties decide that this to be neutral ground? Why not halt in their political warfare and stack arms, while the gladiators from both armies shall enter the lists and contend for the prizes of mastery in the intellectual combats of the competitive examination? Let the war of factions rage all around, if it must, but let this ground, like the home of Washington during the Civil War, be exempt from the strife."

"Suppose this plan should be found to work to the entire satisfaction of the American people, would you, in that event, recommend its universal adoption?"

"Oh, let the people decide that for themselves. It doesn't take the American people long to find out which side of their bread is buttered. If it pays they will hee-haw time in adopting it, I assure you."

"What do you mean by 'if it pays?' Do you mean it in a financial or in a moral sense?"

"Both. It will pay morally, because the *personnel* of the Civil Service will become improved in tone and character. It will pay in a financial sense, because a well-trained officer can despatch the work of two ordinary men. I used to hear an old bureau officer say that it cost the Government two thousand dollars to make a clerk—that it took a new hand two years at least to acquire any sort of familiarity with the duties of his desk. I can say for myself that I can to-day despatch three times the amount of work that I could during the first two or three years of my apprenticeship. All this knowledge of details, all this facility in handling them to the best advantage, has been gained step by step, and through long years of study, application, and attention to duty. It is not a gift but an acquisition. But if a position is to be vacated every four years, or even oftener, what chance is there for efficiency?"

"Now, permit me to ask one more question, which you may regard as personal to yourself, but which I ask in no unkind spirit. You are willing to admit, I think, that the instinct of self-preservation is the prevailing passion after all. If you understand anything of human nature you must know that this feeling sometimes warps our judgments, sometimes clouds our understandings, sometimes throws a film across our eyes and prevents our seeing a question on all sides and in all its bearings. To be short, is it not a little bit of innocent instinct of self-preservation that leads you to combat so hastily the present system of arbitrary dismissals, and to advocate so heartily the system of life-tenure?"

This caused the old examiner to clear his throat, for it was evidently unexpected. But he proved himself equal to the occasion.

"Well," said he, "to tell the truth, I don't understand human nature well enough to answer that question. But if you will give twelve as good reasons against the reform as I can for it, I will agree to call it the instinct of self-preservation, or anything you please. I am in favor of a radical Civil Service reform within these departments founded upon the principles of life tenure and open, competitive examinations—

"Because it will secure the services of a better class of employes by encouraging men of education and culture, who will not hesitate to enlist in the service of the Government when once assured of permanent and reasonably remunerative positions.

"Because worthy men of all political creeds will have the privilege of engaging in the Civil Service of their country, thereby removing one source of discontent on account of long exclusion from office.

"Because it will give stability and respectability to the positions themselves and to the character of the employes, by removing the impression which too often attaches to them of being mere adventurers and persons without character.

"Because it will make men more honest, as it assures them they will always have a competent living during good behavior, and removing the temptations to peculation and dishonest gain which are so apt to grow out of short and uncertain tenures.

"Because it will train up a class of experts, wise as serpents in the administration of public affairs, who will make, as they make in the English service, the administration of the Government a science and a study.

"Because appointments under this system would at once withdraw the incumbents from the field of active politics by removing the pressure which the present system of tenures is apt to exercise upon them.

"Because it would abolish the levying of political assessments, a practice at once oppressive to the incumbents and unfair to one-half the tax-payers of the country.

"Because it will put a stop to the depredations of adventurers, professional office-seekers, and hangers-on, who infest the Capital in myriads, at all times of the year, to the great detriment of their personal friends, and the unspeakable sorrow of hotel and boarding-house keepers.

"Because it will relieve members of Congress, Senators, Judges of the Supreme Court, influential men everywhere, in place and out of place, from persistent dogging for the exercise of their influence to secure positions for needy and often incompetent people.

"Because it will relieve them, also, from the periodical importunities of men in place to assist them in securing promotions in offices where their merits and their services alone should be the only recommendations for their advancement.

"Because the life tenure will encourage incumbents to arrange some plan for their future, and enable them to make some provision for their families when they become old and infirm, or in case of their death.

"Because it will be for the glory of the Capital to have a permanent, reliable, and accumulating class, whose interest in its growth and prosperity will be equal to that of its best citizens.

"These be twelve," continued the examiner, "and I could give you fifty, yea, a hundred reasons, solid, substantial, incontrovertible, in favor of the life-tenure system, and will do so ere we close these conversations."

BUREAU GOSSIP.

Evening Mail: "Civil service reform is recognized in the inaugural with as much distinctness as terseness."

Public Printer Defrees asked Congress for a deficiency of $650,000, but was only granted $400,000. This will undoubtedly necessitate a large furlough between now and July 1.

Mr. Alfred Horton was last week promoted from first to second-class clerk in the office of the Second Auditor of the Treasury.

Mr. W. W. Safford, of the Railway Mail Service, Richmond, Va., has been transferred to the same branch in the Post Office Department.

It is estimated that between 18,000 and 20,000 persons visited the Bureau of Engraving and Printing during the past two weeks. Capt. Dailey's ingenuity and patience has been taxed to its utmost during that time to supply guides to accommodate them all. Every available person about the Bureau was pressed into service to explain the mysteries of greenback and revenue stamp making to the inquiring stranger. In some instances so great was the rush that the main entrance had to be closed and only a certain number at a time admitted. The highest number registered in one day was 1,495.

Mr. J. W. E. Thomas, of Illinois, has received an appointment as first-class clerk in the Treasury Department.

Miss Mary A. Wilson has been promoted to principal expert and superintendent of the Numbering Division in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, vice Miss Maria Nash, who resigned several weeks ago.

A number of employes have been furloughed from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing on account of the limited appropriation.

Mr. James C. McCabe was yesterday appointed a first-class clerk in the office of the Second Assistant Postmaster General.

Mr. D. K. McKamy, who was removed from the Post Office Department because a relative of his helped to defeat ex-Postmaster General Maynard in the race for the Tennessee Senatorship, has been appointed to a position in the Census Bureau.

Miss E. V. Pendleton was last week transferred from the office of the Comptroller of the Currency to the Loan Division, vice Miss Kathleen Irvine, promoted and transferred to the office of the Fourth Auditor.

Miss Clara G. Quint, of New Hampshire, has been appointed to a clerkship in the Internal Revenue Bureau. She is the daughter of a prominent Congregational minister, and is the author of several interesting literary productions.

Capt. C. E. Joyce, of the Post Office Department, has been confined to his house during the past week, suffering from a pulmonary affection, to which he is subject, caused by gunshot wounds he received in the late Rebellion.

Miss Mamie Wilson, of this city, has been appointed to a position in the War Records Office, to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of her mother. Miss Wilson's host of friends will be glad to learn of her recovery from her long illness.

Mrs. Norvel, Miss Abbot, and Miss Schell, of the National Bank Redemption Agency, were last week detailed for special duty in the Loan Division of the Treasurer's Office, to assist in preparing and mailing the checks for the payment of the interest upon the four per cent. registered bonds, which falls due on the first day of January, April, July, and October.

Chief Clerk Nichols can be Commissioner of the Land Office if he wants to, but his ambition does not seem to run in that direction. So says a personal friend.

Miss Fannie Lyles, of Mississippi, has been appointed to a clerkship in the War Department. It will be remembered she resigned a position in the Treasury Department about a month ago.

Mr. Jay Stone, secretary and stenographer to Maj. Barr, military secretary to the Secretary of War, so well and favorably known to those who have occasion to visit the War Department, will accompany Maj. Barr to the military headquarters of Gen. Sherman, Department Missouri. Mr. Stone was chief clerk of the law division of Gen. Terry's headquarters for eight years, and since May last has been on duty in the private office of the Secretary of War. He will also stenographically report the Modoc commission in 1877, and accompanied the commission to Fort Wallaboo, in the British possessions. During the time he was with Gen. Terry, at St. Paul, Minn., he reported all the important proceedings before courts-martial for the trial of commissioned officers in the Department of Dakota, notably the celebrated Reno trial. He is a rapid and accurate stenographer. Although quite a young man, he is well informed on both military and civil law. By his courteous manners and pleasant address he has a host of friends, who wish him success in whichever direction his path of duty lies.

Jerome G. Kiah, Esq., Superintendent Tenth Life-Saving District, embracing Lakes Huron and Superior, has been in the city a few days on business. Superintendent Kiah succeeded Mr. Joseph Sawyer, who lost his life by drowning in October last, while in the discharge of his duties. Mr. Kiah was awarded a gold medal for his heroic attempt to rescue the crew of the schooner J. H. Magrader, on Lake Huron, November 23, 1880, upon which occasion the entire crew of the life-boat, save Kiah, were drowned.

Mr. D. P. Dobbins, Superintendent of the Ninth Life-Saving District, who has been in Washington on business connected with his district, (which embraces the coasts of Lakes Ontario and Erie,) has returned to his home, Buffalo.

Mr. E. W. Creecy, the well-known stenographer, is as happy as a lard. It is a boy, and kicked the beam at nine pounds. Ned says it has not been to sleep for five days, and neither has anybody else at his house.

Cadet Midshipman William R. Shoemaker, son of First Lieut. C. F. Shoemaker, U. S. R. M., has returned to the Naval Academy from a brief visit to Washington. Young Mr. Shoemaker stands well to the front in his class.

Capt. C. A. Abbey, has been spending several days in the city. He is now in command of the cutter Stevens, stationed at New Berne, N. C. This vessel was formerly the submerging battery Naugatuck, which was in the engagement with the Merrimac. Captain Abbey knows how the service is one of its most accomplished officers, and to his friends as a genial, whole-souled gentleman.

The Woman's National Relief Association has established an auxiliary in the District of Columbia. This association is for the purpose of providing clothing and other necessaries for shipwrecked persons. Its executive managers are Mrs. Justice Miller, Mrs. Thomas Wilson, Mrs. Senator Sherridge, Mrs. J. E. Edwards, and other prominent ladies. The association has the further object of organizing national benevolence establishments, that in times of great calamity like yellow fever, the obstruction of mining disasters, etc., instant aid may be afforded. The insignia of the association is a blue anchor on a white field, encircled by a blue cable.

The following order was issued by Mr. George N. Lamphere, appointment clerk of the Treasury Department, to the heads of the various divisions last Friday: "Hereafter no loose receipts will be approved for payment during the month, except in case of leave of absence, or on account of sickness. A semi-monthly pay-roll will be made in the Appointment Division, and you are requested to send in, by the 15th of each month, a list of the names of the clerks and employes in your division who desire to draw on their salary and the amount in each case."

The following promotions were made in the Census Office last week, to date from March 1: James H. Beeling, Charles B. R. College, James F. Thompson, and James G. Eastwood, to $1,200 class; Charles B. Hertzel, Henry C. Lipeiman, Louis Walsh, Mrs. Anna D. Kearfott, Zachary T. Brown, Mrs. Emily V. D. Miller, George S. Emery, Miss Alice Halsey, Sanford S. Alden, Wilbur W. Alden, John Mawdsley, Charles W. Zeiber, Jared C. Nichols, Charles E. Hiester, Thomas D. Harmon, J. D. Smith, Jr., Charles H. Ishman, Miss Bessie Cox, and Andrew Soehngen, to $1,000 class; George W. Miller, Harvey S. Burnall, Mrs. Ella B. Carr, Samuel E. Arnold, A. W. Hill, Miss Lucy A. Myatt, Miss Mary E. Ilsley, Mrs. Cordelia L. O'Reilley, Miss S. R. Cliff, Miss Clara P. Hoover, George W. Bonnell, Charles H. Bug, Franklin Burlingame, Mrs. Nellie M. Crouch, David Brown, Mrs. Jennie S. Tall, Miss Louisa Breeden, Miss Addie M. Hamilton, Charles G. Leonard, William Miller, Jr., Miss Eudalie M. Colcord, Henry J. Nevitt, Miss Fannie Tucker, Miss Mary E. Cummings, Mrs. Laura M. Hopkins, and Cornelius C. Willett, to $900 class; Rudolph Kaufman, William M. Graydon, Miss Edith Kachmeyer, Adam B. Crapper, Mrs. Nellie S. Stowell, Miss Sallie L. Hill, William D. Buchanan, Jacob J. Elias, Thomas C. Kean, J. Melvin Lamb, J. L. Neagle, Mrs. Lelia A. Rose, Albert W. Bagnan, Miss Mary A. Smith, J. Frank Lewis, Samuel N. Garwood, John E. Graham, and George B. Coupland, to $840 class.

Capt. Enno F. Wenckebach last week resigned his first-class clerkship in the Revenue Marine Division to accept an appointment as second lieutenant of the Sixth Infantry. He was a captain in the volunteer service during the late Rebellion, and served for a time on Gen. Hancock's staff.

Mr. W. R. Bates was last week appointed a special agent of the Treasury Department in place of Hon. O. L. Spaulding, elected to Congress. He will probably be stationed in Philadelphia, and will leave for that point to-morrow.

Mr. John W. Rawlings, the courteous and efficient appointment clerk of the Census Bureau, has been confined to his residence, No. 1134 Sixth street northwest, with an attack of lung fever, contracted while superintending the decoration of the Census Building for the inauguration. So serious was his sickness, that for a time his friends were greatly apprehended, as his condition was greatly improved last evening. During his absence the duties of his office are ably performed by Mr. James H. Clear, one of his assistants.

Among the heads of divisions in the Secretary's Office, Treasury Department, likely to retain their positions, in spite of the numerous applicants for office, is Mr. William F. MacLennan, chief of the Division of Warrants, Estimates, and Appropriations. Mr. MacLennan entered this division a number of years ago as a clerk of the first class, and by industry and efficiency he has risen through the various grades until he was promoted to his present position on the elevation of Maj. James D. Power to the chief clerkship of the Department. Mr. MacLennan is well known by both President Garfield and Secretary Windom, with whom he has had frequent dealings while they were members of the Appropriations Committees of Congress.

Mr. Pierre Louis Jouy, of the Agricultural Department, will leave to-day to join the steamer Palos, of the Asiatic Squadron, now at Yokohama, as a representative of the Institution. He will go overland to California and embark there for his destination.

Mr. James Madison Wells—not he of the Louisiana Returning Board, but of Michigan—is a prominent applicant for a clerkship in the Treasury Department.

The recent action of the Secretary of the Treasury in refusing to allow the National Banks to withdraw the legal tenders deposited by them will necessitate the printing of a large number of National Bank notes. This will be good news to the employes of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and will dispense with the furlough system for a time.

CLARA BELLE'S CHAT.

Newest Style of Waltzing—Uses of the Jersey—The Handsomest Woman—Latest Points on Dress.

"Clara Belle's" latest letter to the Cincinnati *Enquirer* says:

A reaction in dancing has set in at the close of the season. The racquet waltz and its many grotesque modifications are seen so rarely that those who indulge in them are very conspicuous in their antics. The old, easy, unlemonstrative waltz, with not too frequent reversals, is the style of round dancing now most in vogue in polite society.

A new use for the Jersey is coming into fashion. This clinging yet easy garment is wholly out of favor for public wear, but for the house it is to some extent taking the place of the wrapper. It forms a bodice at once perfect in fit, easily adjusted, yielding to the movements of the body, and readily adaptable to various skirts. Thin women can wear it presentably with no corset underneath, and a fichu of some sort crossed over the bosom relieves the plainness sufficiently, if the wearer's modesty is shocked by the close molding. Thus employed, the Jersey is a decidedly bewitching article for a well-shaped woman to put on. It is ready for wear when bought, but a velvet pelerine and cuffs, or a hood lined with some bright color, will greatly enhance its style. A kilted skirt with scarf overdrapery is the ordinary adjunct.

The handsomest woman is advertised for. I see, by a circus proprietor, who proposes to pay her $10,000 to appear in his procession next season. Whoever may be chosen, half the public is bound to be disappointed when they see her, so different are the estimates of beauty. There is a common opinion that Pauline Markham, at her best, was the handsomest actress ever seen in this country. Personally, I am inclined to award the palm to Alice Dunning Lingard, for she was rich in her beauty as well as sweet. It is strange but true that there is not a single notable beauty among the notable and pretentious families of the Metropolis. Pretty girls and women may be found, but not one answers all the requirements of literal loveliness. Many and many a public assemblage in the fashionable world can be searched without finding one that would do for this circus man's purpose.

It is a beautiful woman, indeed, who can let nature take the place of art to any great extent in her fashionable make-up. A belle with any pretension to perfection cannot be too particular as to the garments worn under evening toilets since the fit and effect of a dress greatly depend on them. In a model outfit of the present season the drawers are of white cambric or white Nansook trimmed with insertions and Valenciennes lace ruffles. The under-petticoat falls a little below the knee. White surah is used for white dresses, and the skirt is plaited, and the edges are bordered with plaited flounces. The size and number of the skirts worn depend greatly on the figure of the woman inside. The white trimmed petticoat is worn fastened to a metal eyelet sewed to the edge of the corset. Whether the dress be long or short, the percale skirt must be cut exactly like it. Another skirt is a redundancy. The corset covers with eyelets, while down the side of the dress are small, fine but strong threads, which are drawn through the eyelets of the petticoat, fastening the two trains together. In this way, the dress will not stand alone but have its trousers bound in that way to his shirt? Oh, no; his clothes mind be easy. Under evening dresses a model flannel shirt is worn. The bed shirts have very soft, close bosoms in the back, but none in the front. The foundation may consist of two or three coarse muslin flounces, covered with a Nansook flounce, and with trimmed lace ruffles. In all these concealed garments shape is more important than quality.

The hair is now an object of fashionable solicitude. The high style of dressing is now five years ago is struggling to displace the low style which has of late been general. It is against good taste for women to let fashion control the arrangement of their hair, since what may become one lady may not become another, but usage is law in this matter, and hence a change is of great consequence, one way or the other, to every female head. In the present style the front hair ought to be the sensible compromise that each shall adopt the coiffure best suited to her features. There have been some attempts to introduce the Oriental comb, but the general sentiment is set against it. Over the high Spanish comb, but it is not particularly effective without the characteristic mantilla, of which it is properly an accessory. The most fashionable comb is called the Marie Antoinette, and is about three inches high, fantastic in shape, and made of gold, silver, or shell. An almost equally popular comb, called the Coquette, is worn with the hair dressed high up on the head. The top is of the finest cut steel, and open work pattern is shaped to sit side-wise among the towering locks, giving a jaunty air. Bangs are giving way to soft, low-growing fringes that cover the forehead. The Japanese style of coiffure is sometimes seen, though there are very few women to whom it is becoming. It consists of a knot of hair held by enormous gold pins and odd ornaments, and requires a great quantity of false hair to form a gigantic chignon. The long discarded bunch of curls is again seen at the back of the head, but it is to have daily said, the tendency is to pile up the hair atop of the head, and to return to Pompadour rolls.

COULISSE CHAT.

Joseph Hatton writing from London says: "Mr. Forbes Robertson, the actor-painter, is to write a sketch of Mme. Modjeska's life to accompany the picture in the April *Scribner*. The Polish American actress is quite one of the popular lions of London, know' in Mayfair. She is the pet of æsthetic society and is seen everywhere. Her portraits are in all the shop-windows, and sketches of her appear in the illustrated journals."

Deadwood's night-gown, as worn by Miss Effie Wilton, of the Salvini company, is described as white that would be quite appropriate in the ballroom scene of "Othello," in that it is not a thing that would pass as well for a wrapper. It is unmistakably a night-gown—a long, loose garment, gathered in at the neck, and hanging in ample folds. The only departure from realism is in the material, which is of fine wool, instead of linen or cotton.

The curtains of a box in a Hartford variety theatre are drawn close together at the beginning of the performance each evening. Laughter and other noises from the box are heard, and the manager, stepping to the footlights, warns the occupants that they must be quiet or quit. After an interval of silence the manager is again called upon to throw out a woman shrieks, and the form of a man is thrown out on the stage; but it is only a man of straw, as the excited audience discovers.

Pauline Markham's star seems to be coming up again. She has just appeared as *Stalacta* in the "Black Crook" at Niblo's, and the *Sun* says: "She plays the part with more life than the performances of the 'Black Crook.' That was many years ago, but she is now as graceful and supple and her voice is as flexible as then." The Albany *Express* prints a long interview with her which the *Mail* copies, in which Miss Markham says that the "many years ago" was 1870, when she was twenty year old. She has not appeared in Albany since the *Mail* was her infant. That her husband became so dissipated that he might have stood for *Caspar* in Tolu's *Nana*, and that he squandered his own fortune and all her earnings.

Adelina Patti spends her money freely, and delights in hard bargains with managers. But she is charitable, and she helps many a broken-down artist with a quiet munificence of which the world never hears. Her kitchen costs her comparatively little, for masters her own table, and when she does not feel like to sing, Patti dines about her, the meal being an extremely light one. A long nap follows, and she is fresh for the evening work. Her infection in the interpretation of various lines in the part of a savage, now a glass of lemonade. She has even been known to take a cup of tea. After the play she loitters the life of a supper party. Though lacking the gift of wit, she enjoys it keenly in others, and has a lively sense of humor. The secret of her charm lies in her animal spirits. She is gay, and makes others gay.

There are so many different opinions as to who should be the first rank among living actresses that the opinion of an expert in the art of Mme. Bonicault possesses special interest. It will be seen that this opinion is expressed in unmistakable terms in the letter which she addressed to Miss Ada Rehan Morris on February 23: "DEAR CLARA: I occupy this the first moment I have free since I witnessed your performance to tell you very sincerely I acknowledge the presence of the greatest artist in the modern tragic drama that has existed during my career. I am no enthusiast, and you know am not complimentary (nobody is generally do not require the affiatus of praise), but I would do myself injustice if I failed to express the opinion of an old judge. Heaven grant you health and life—it has granted you everything else. I am so glad you told Thorne that he 'ran you hard' in the fourth act, and that is saying very much, more than any other living actor could do. You are now at your zenith; you never acted so well as you do now. I have a great respect for your predecessors in the part of *Camille*—I mean Duche, Matilda Heron, Modjeska, and Sarah B.—but you combine all that was admirable in each. I have done. Receive what I have said as a hearty tribute from an old actor to a young actress—but not too old in heart to be insensible to such emotions as you can arouse, nor to the fresh breaths you are weaving for our art. Ever sincerely yours,

"DION BOUCICAULT."

The London *World*, Edmund Yates's paper, says: "Mr. Booth's success as *Lear* has been almost unqualified. The performance is remarkable for its intellectual refinement, and entirely free from force, passion, and tenderness. But Mr. Booth's voice has suffered, either from the influence of the weather or from the strain of his nightly exertions, the symptoms of over-fatigue are too evident: his grand tones do not always come when he calls for them, his declamation has lost resonance, and his special gifts as an actor do not appear to have any hold on him as usual. Mr. Booth has thus been unable to render full justice to himself and his intentions. He has powerfully affected his audience, however, by the picturesqueness, the artistic symmetry and consistency, the absolute abandonment of his representation of the character. Few actors can have rendered at once so forcibly, and yet with such minute finish—the regard being had, of course, to the requirements of histrionic effect—the physical and mental infirmities of *Lear*, his senile peevishness and peremptoriness, his ungovernable wrath, his vengeful frenzy, his terrible despair and most pathetic death." Mr. Joseph Knight, the *Athenæum* critic, is quite angry in his allusion to the reception of Booth's *Lear* in the opening scene; but he closes his notice with a tribute of admiration that was evidently wrung from him by the actor's force and originality. The lines are worth quoting: "Anything less like the *Lear* we see in Shakespeare than Mr. Booth when he first appears cannot easily be imagined." This is the view taken right up to the end of the third act. "From the moment, however," says the critic, "when, in the fourth act, *Lear* with his crown of straw, appears upon the scene, to that in which at the conclusion of the play, he falls back in the arms of his attendants, Mr. Booth's performance was excellent. In the manner of wearing his emblems of mock royalty, in the fashion in which he played with his straw sceptre or imitated the action of the marksman, and most of all in the kind of reason in madness which he revealed, the performance was admirable. During the last two acts the hold upon the audience was maintained. Each succeeding change brought forth new beauties, and the latter portion of the performance may count among the most distinct triumphs of art the present generation has had the opportunity to contemplate. Quite enough to stamp a reputation and to justify the pride which Americans feel in Mr. Booth is this representation of the weary and dying King."

SOCIETY CHAT.

The dress-uniform reception tendered to the members of the National Rifles and their lady friends last Tuesday evening by First Lieut. N. W. Fitzgerald and his wife, at No. 1315 K street, was a most pleasant event. The guests were received by the host and hostess, after which they were allowed the freedom of the entire house. Rooms on the second and third floors were set apart for dancing, and an orchestra was stationed at the head of the stairs so that the music could be distinctly heard on either floor. The parlor and hall were reserved for promenading. About 11 o'clock supper was served in the dining-room. Lieut. Fitzgerald and his wife were the recipients of many compliments for the hospitable manner in which they entertained their visitors. Many regrets were expressed at the absence of Col. J. G. P. Burnside, commander of the corps, who was detained at home on account of ill-health. Among those present were Hon. R. B. Pierce and Stanton J. Peele, of Indiana; Maj. Lacey, Lieut. Stewart, Eleventh Pennsylvania National Guards; Representative Townsend, Mr. B. H. Warner, of Ohio; Lieut. Jessie Bassett, Sergeant Thornett, Miss Belle Fitzgerald, Misses Boyd, of Philadelphia; Miss Cadlip, Miss Finnie Gross, Miss Alice Johnson, of New York; Miss Louie Yale, Miss Carrie Goff, Miss Nannie Lincoln, Miss Kate Harkness, Misses Mollie and Belle Oyster, Mrs. J. H. Clear, Misses Mamie and Linnie Rife, of Philadelphia; Miss Belle Brown, Miss Josie Skerret, of Philadelphia; Harry Stewart, Miss Leisheer, Miss Minnie Shafer, Miss Pauline Staut, of Baltimore; Miss Marie Taylor, Miss Belle Ratenbury, Miss Emily Thorne, Miss Julia Murray, Miss Peter, of Buffalo, N. Y.; Mrs. Mills, of Cincinnati; Misses Gilbey, Miss Gosline, Mrs. W. H. Rupp, Miss Stohl, Miss Travis, of Brooklyn; Misses Gegling, Miss Andrews, Mrs. Charles, Miss Richards, of N. Y.; and Messrs. W. H. Kemster, C. A. Whittersteen, James Lake, Wm. Roteler, J. A. Sample, C. A. Smith, W. H. Rupp, J. O. Manson, W. C. Keech, W. R. Magruder, Charles Atkinson, C. W. Evans, J. P. Smart, Fred Barrow, Clarence Barrett, W. P. Yale, Sid. Neatey, George Oldham, C. B. Youds, J. H. Clear, C. H. Laird, S. C. Elliott, A. G. Burbridge, J. H. Moore, C. H. Stoty, J. Z. Leisheer, F. M. Barns, P. J. Lauritzen, J. C. Addison, Maj. Lacey, W. Taylor, Tom Beavens, and Mr. Washburne, of Indiana.

In the death of Miss Daisy Britton, daughter of our esteemed citizen, Mr. A. T. Britton, our city loses one of its most promising as well as brightest members of society. Miss Britton died on Thursday last from heart disease, a sickness of only a short duration, but which the young sufferer bore with heroic fortitude. Miss Britton was the second of a family of four children, and was but little over 16 years of age. Her loveliness of character, and goodness of heart, Miss Britton had just reached the age when she was a most markably pretty and cultivated young lady. Mr. Britton has the sympathy of the community at his great loss. The funeral takes place this afternoon, at 2 o'clock, from his residence, on F street.

The entertainment given to Miss Hassler last Friday evening, at the residence of Professor Newcomb, was highly enjoyed by all present. Miss Hassler is a niece of Professor Newcomb and is a guest of his daughter, Anita. The Misses Newcomb delighted the company by several recitations that they displayed much talent in rendering. Noticeable among the ladies present were Mrs. Admiral Pynn, a Japanese