# THE MORNING CALL

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F. K. MISCH, Manager.

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THE CALL cannot return rejected manuscripts, nor will the editor enter into correspondence regarding them.


WEATHER PREDICTIONS.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WEATHER BUREAU, SAN FRANCISCO, December 25, 1892.

Official Forecast for Twenty-four Hours Ending Midnight, Monday.

Northern California—Threatening weather and rain; slight changes in temperature; southerly winds, fresh to brisk on the coast.

Southern California — Occasional rain; slightly cooler; south to west winds.

Arizona—Fair weather; cooler.

Nevada—Threatening weather, with rain; snow in the mountain districts; cooler in the western portion.

Utah—Rain or snow; cooler.

San Francisco and vicinity—Threatening weather, with rain; slight changes in temperature; southerly winds, fresh to brisk.

F. T. JENKINS, Local Forecast Official.

THE CALL CALENDAR.
DECEMBER, 1892.

| Su. | M. | Tu. | W. | Th. | Fr. | S. | Moon's Phases. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 December 2d. Full Moon. |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 10 December 9th. Last Quarter. |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 11 December 18th. New Moon. |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 12 December 25th. First Quarter. |

The Morning Call.

MONDAY.....DECEMBER 26, 1892

NOTICE!

*Any of our patrons who fail to find THE MORNING CALL for sale by train-boys will confer a favor by notifying this office of the fact, naming the date and train.*

AMUSEMENTS THIS EVENING.

STOCKWELL'S THEATER, Powell street, near Market.—"The New Jolly Surprise" and curtain-raiser "The Fifth Button."

TIVOLI OPERA HOUSE Eddy street, off Market. Opera—"Trip to the Moon."

GROVE-STREET THEATER, Grove street, above Polk.—"Cinderella, or The Little Glass Slipper."

GRAND OPERA-HOUSE, Mission street, nr. Third "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves."

WOWAN THEATER, corner Stockton and Geary streets.—"Pirates of Penzance."

CALIFORNIA THEATER, Bush street, above Kearny. —"Incog."

BUSH-STREET THEATER, Bush street, between Kearny and Montgomery—"U and I."

## ARE MORE JUDGES NEEDED?

We are evidently a very litigious people, when, in a city of 300,000 inhabitants, we have a dozen Superior Court Judges, besides a number of other holders of the judicial office with a lower jurisdiction. Notwithstanding this large supply of legal talent, business is greatly in arrears in some of the courts, and attorneys are clamoring for the appointment of three or four more Judges. Some of them themselves indeed. There is always a disposition to lay a heavy hand on the taxpayers' money, and an agitation of this kind ought to be resisted until it is proved that the bench is deficient in strength. A rearrangement of business, and rigorous insistence upon cases being proceeded with, would probably mend matters considerably. At present the Judges are too apt to listen to excuses. One attorney is absent, and his brother attorney mentions the fact, and the proceedings are delayed. A lax system has grown up, which encourages adjournments of cases, and even of the court itself, upon very slight grounds. It is regrettable that there is so little finality in decisions. Appeals are carried from court to court on very frivolous grounds, that strong Judges would frown upon. Should the system of taking a verdict by a two-thirds vote of the jury obtain in criminal as in civil cases litigation would be expedited in a remarkable degree. Our present jury system is on its trial. Before enlarging the judiciary of a city already so well equipped it would be well to study the situation thoroughly and find out how time is frittered away. It may almost be questioned whether the practice of the Judges relying so much upon shorthand transcripts of evidence and arguments is a good one. A sound Judge who has had his attention fixed earnestly on a case from the beginning should be able to give judgment on the spot without hesitation.

## THE EXPERT'S DEPARTURE.

Colonel Morgan, whom the Railroad Commissioners selected as an expert to report on the fares and rates of the Southern Pacific, has wound up his business in California and is on his way home. The report with which he endeavored to edify the public, as well as the Railroad Commissioners, might just as well never have been written. No more useless or fallacious document was ever laid before a public body professing to be desirous of information. It was evidently drawn up with a studied design of assuring the public that they have no grievance against the railroad; that the company treats its customers fairly and might justly increase its rates, and that the Commissioners are quite right in drawing their salaries and doing nothing. An expert who takes this view of the railroad situation in California merely converts himself into a special pleading lawyer for the company, and he does not deserve to be paid a dollar by the State for his services. The railroad company should pay him, not the people, and it may be hoped that the Board of Examiners will have the courage to resist any raid upon the treasury.

The true criticism to pass upon this report is that it ignores the net cost for which every mile of railroad in this State could be paralleled. If this could be done at one-third of the assumed cost of the Southern Pacific, which has its stock very copiously watered, then fair rates would mean a return upon the smaller amount of capital. It is preposterous to mention that because a railroad has diluted its capital two or three times over the public are to be squeezed out of all the traffic will bear to support this jugglery. The Southern Pacific contends that it cannot lower the rates, but it will probably change its plans when the Panama Railroad steamers are running in opposition to the Pacific Mail, thus giving our merchants the benefits of genuine competition. It will be no surprise to find the Southern Pacific reducing its rates by 50 per cent. From the Railroad Commissioners no help is to be expected. The transportation problem can only be cleared up by vigorous competitive action, giving San Francisco all the benefits of its magnificent harbor.

By following this policy San Francisco will maintain its ascendency as a distributing center, and the Southern Pacific will be brought to terms in its relations with the whole State.

## DRASTIC MEASURES.

From time to time the American people are encouraged by the announcement of a purpose on the part of the Government to withdraw from Canadian railroads privileges that conflict with the principles of our navigation laws. It is now said that the discovery that the Canadian Pacific Railroad has charged a duty of 10 per cent on tea and coffee coming in from the United States, while admitting these articles free when coming from other countries, is the last straw that breaks the camel's back. The effect of such discrimination is to divert the traffic from American ports to the route which the discrimination makes the cheapest. It is now said that "drastic measures" will be adopted with a view to bring to the attention of Congress the whole question arising from liberal constructions of laws and treaties concerning the admission of freight from Canada under bond. It is not probable, however, that a serious discussion with a foreign power will be commenced in the last months of an administration.

## PACIFIC MAIL WINS.

Judge Ingraham of New York has the reputation of being a sound lawyer, but if his decision in the Panama case is good law, laymen know less of the general principles of trade than they supposed. The facts are very simple.

Twenty years ago the Panama Railroad Company ran a line of steamers to and from its terminals on the two oceans to adjacent ports. Desiring to secure a monopoly of that traffic, the Pacific Mail Company bought the steamers owned by the railroad company, and, with them, the good will of the latter in the coastwise trade from and to Colon and Panama. Under this arrangement the Pacific Mail enjoyed a monopoly of that trade; the railroad refused to make with other steamship lines terms which would have enabled them to compete. This arrangemet lasted for twenty years, and under it the grip which the Pacific Mail Company got on the isthmus traffic enabled it to enter the transcontinental pool and gain a subsidy from the railroads which fell but little short of a million a year. Some months ago the members of the transcontinental pool, in consequence of the new competition created by the traffic association, concluded that they would not continue to pay the subsidy. Not long afterward the Panama Railroad board of directors announced that they would run a line of steamers of their own in opposition to the Pacific Mail, which had so long diverted trade from this city. They went further, and notified the latter that they would not recognize its through way bills after a certain date. To this challenge the Pacific Mail retorted by applying to a New York court for an injunction forbidding the Panama company from departing from the terms of the bargain it is alleged to have made in 1872. It is that injunction which Judge Ingraham has decided to sustain, pendente lite.

The mercantile community will regard the decision as upholding this doctrine that a bargain made in restraint of trade and in support of a monopoly may be valid in law. This appears to be contrary to the fundamental principles of the common law, and in flat contradiction of the spirit of the interstate commerce act. If a railroad can discriminate between two maritime carriers, and transport goods for one at lower rates than it charges the other, so that the latter is driven out of business, a direct attack is made upon the freedom of maritime trade.

Judge Ingraham says that the Pacific Mail Company bought "the good will" of the Panama Company in coastwise traffic from and to Colon and Panama. But had the railroad any good will to sell? It certainly did not own the Atlantic or Pacific oceans. It owned nothing but a line of communication between the two oceans. Had it a right to say that, in consideration of a sum of money, it would give to one maritime carrier an exclusive right of using its road to the exclusion of all other maritime carriers? If it had, the public are grossly ignorant of the general principles which govern channels of communication and transportation.

A hundred years ago the law recognized monopolies and exclusive rights. Great Britain limited the foreign ports with which the colonies could trade. Spain forbade Mexico and her other American colonies from buying goods from any European country, except Spain herself. But it has been generally supposed that these laws rested on doctrines which have become obsolete, and that no nation at the present day can claim a monopoly of any general avenue of commerce to the exclusion of all others. It cannot currently be done by a corporation which is a creature of national legislation.

The text of Judge Ingraham's decision has not come to hand. It will be interesting to note the reasoning by which it is sustained. The public at large are clear that no interoceanic railroad or canal ought to be conceded the actual ownership of its works in such a sense that it can grant the use of them to one carrier and deny it to others. If under the present laws such ownership is justified, it is the law, as well as the Panama Company's contracts, which requires revision.

## AN AMERICAN LADY IN PARIS.

The Chicago *Tribune* draws attention to the fact that the wife of the new French Premier, M. Ribot, is the daughter of an American lady upon whom at one time all eyes were centered. Some forty years ago one of the finest houses in Michigan avenue was occupied by a banker named Burch. He was a member of the Presbyterian faith and cherished extreme views regarding the proprieties in social life. A few years before he had married a niece and ward of Erastus Corning of Albany, a bright, merry girl, who had been encouraged by her uncle to take all the fun out of life she could. She was devoted to society; her husband deemed dancing sinful. She was a fount of bubbling laughter; he thought that smiles were unbecoming levity. So ill-assorted a couple naturally got on badly, and no one was surprised when it was one day announced that Banker Burch had instituted proceedings against his pretty wife for a divorce on the ground of alleged infidelity to the marriage vow.

But those who knew Erastus Corning were very much surprised that the disciple of Calvin had dared to challenge him to warfare. For Corning, though he was small and lame, was a fighting man by instinct, and when he fought, he fought for a funeral. He adored his niece, and to impugn her character was to rouse the combative instinct in the old man, till he roared like a lion. He filled a special car with lawyers, shipped them to Chicago and supplied them with unlimited funds to procure evidence. Burch found that his record from his youth up was being ferreted out, and that every enemy he had ever made—and there were a good many of them—had been taken into the Corning camp. Every shipper who had dealings with the New York Central, of which Corning was president, was enlisted in the fight.

The co-respondent in the case was David Stuart, a lawyer, who afterward led a regiment to the war and was killed, leaving a memory of a gallant, chivalrous gentleman. When he was asked the usual questions on the stand he swore that he had never said a word to Mrs. Burch which he might not have uttered in her mother's presence, that his acquaintance with her was slight and merely formal. When he began his answers the audience were so astonished that they listened open-mouthed, for the scandal had been town talk; but as he went on his drift became obvious, and each reply from the witness led to a burst of applause which the Judge had some difficulty in suppressing, and which furnished Corning's lawyers opportunities for ad captandum bursts of oratory. The case ended as every one expected. Burch was defeated.

But the vindictive passion of old man Corning was not appeased. He made a little deal in money at Chicago and drove Burch's bank into suspension. It went into liquidation, and Burch, satisfied that his enemy would never let up on him while he was within his reach, left the country. He had two children, both girls. By private agreement one of them accompanied her mother to Detroit; the other went with her father to Paris, where he died. It is this girl who is now Mme. Ribot.

So, in the hurly-burly of French politics, we run across Americans at every turn. Clemenceau, who spared Deroulede's life the other day, when he might have shot him in any part of the body he had chosen to select, was for many years a practicing physician of Connecticut, and there imbibed the sound republican doctrines which he has put in practice in France. Half a dozen of the leading men in the highest social circles in Paris are married to Americans, and it is odds that the wives may figure in French politics as Lady Churchill has figured as the leader of the Primrose League in England. Mme. Ribot was so young when she left this country and has lived so long in France that she has probably forgotten that she ever was an American.

## BAD POLITICS.

Concerning the selection of a Tammany leader for Senator the New York *Herald* says:

It is very bad politics, because, however strong and well intrenched Tammany may think itself, it can't oppose public opinion with impunity. A day of reckoning comes "like a thief in the night," and Tammany is just as dependent on the confidence and votes of our citizens as any other political organization. It can't afford to play the despot in a matter of this kind. If it persists in its present obstinate course it does so at its own peril.

The *Herald* is giving Tammany good advice. No political organization is so strong that it can command the support of the public much longer than it deserves such support. Murphy, the Tammany candidate for Senator, is known mainly as one of Senator Hill's able assistants. He is a past master in modern politics. The *Herald*, which by the way is friendly to Tammany, has discovered a current of public opinion against the selection of another Tammany chief for Senator. Probably it would be hard to find another 200,000 voters in the United States so easily controlled as the followers of Tammany. Most of them obey orders somewhat as soldiers do. Still, Tammany is not above the necessity of shaping its course somewhat in deference to public opinion.

The Christian world celebrated Christmas yesterday, and the usual aspiration for peace and good will was uttered and listened to in all the churches fervently and imploringly. But the signs of contentment and universal brotherhood are perhaps more remote than ever they have been. Conflict and convulsion may occur at any moment. That is the situation in Europe, and a very extreme situation it is. South America is also in a critical volcanic or bellicose condition. Alone among the great nations, the United States is in a position of tranquillity. The breaking up of our repose does not appear to be in sight from any quarter from wich the wind bloweth. We are happily free from the complications which perplex Europe, and we do not require the United States nation to be in arms in order to maintain peace. But in Europe 12,000,000 men are prepared to settle disputes by an appeal to arms, and whole populations are ground down by taxes to maintain this fighting multitude of idlers. The millennium has not yet arrived. Force is still the final arbitrament.

Although not exhausting its strength in the waste of bloated armaments the United States does well to look after its navy. Thus far we are nearly abreast of our requirements, and may soon have all the ships and coast fortifications we want. A new quick-firing gun of 7-inch caliber will, if successful in its tests, prove a terror to the invader. It is designed to deliver on rapid time like a repeating rifle shells weighing 200 pounds, about one-third of the charge consisting of dynamite or some other high explosive. Such a shell striking a ship with terrific impact, added to the force of the local explosion, would blow its side in and sink it in all probability on short notice. A rain of such shells could certainly not be resisted. The advantage a ship has is in shifting its position. But this is discounted at the entrance to harbors by observation stations, which can compute the position accurately, and give the requisite elevation and direction to a battery. The next naval war will be a frightful crash.

In the new Mannlicher rifle the Austrians have a weapon perhaps superior to any in Europe. It is well calculated to make an impression on the line of an enemy advancing. The sights are adjusted up to a range of a mile and a half, and the point blank discharge covers 500 yards. There is no dispute about the high penetrating power of the bullets. At an extreme range they may perforate two or three men. The rapidity of fire at discretion is something appalling. Two bullets a second or over a hundred bullets a minute give a deadly hail that would empty every saddle in a charge of cavalry, and the mortality of infantry, however widely separated, would be horrible. As the march of improvement goes on, it may be found certain that war is too deadly to be possible. The Mannlicher rifle is also available on ships of war to sweep the decks or to repel torpedo attacks.

Our old friend the Sacramento politics to test the wits of competitors has been caught in a legal trap and will have to give up the business. A sentence is written and a word or phrase is purposely omitted. The public are asked to guess what the word or phrase is, and each guesser sends in a shilling, which goes into a pool for the benefit of the successful. In a recent competition about $120,000 was accumulated in the pool and would have formed a fine haul for the lucky. The fairness of the chances of participants was undisputed, but the courts hold that word-guessing is only a new form of lottery mischief and is illegal. The odd part of the denouement is that the contributors cannot be identified and cannot have their shillings returned, so that the whole pool has been confiscated by the Judges for the benefit of the bar at large, and so far as it goes it will reduce taxation. The does not appear to be much poverty in England after all.

As the ballots are not allowed to be produced in court except in the event of a recount, a serious stumbling block has been put in the way of convicting any of the clerks who, during the recent election in San Francisco, perpetrated frauds by calling off wrong names or giving wrong votes on the tally list. It is held that the law is explicit upon the subject, and if the people of the State desire it to be otherwise they must, by their votes, amend the law. But it is a pity that the sanctity of ballots should also give sanctity to rogues, of whom there are many at every election.

A short time ago a case of witchcraft disturbed a superstitious community of whites in North Carolina. Lynching was in the air to settle the trouble. It is not very surprising that a tribe of Indians in New Mexico has been agitated over a similar superstition. The Indians tortured two witches to death, and their sufferings extended over three days. Had they been genuine witches they would probably have blown away somewhere on a broomstick after the usual manner of the uncanny old women during the middle ages. Uncle Sam is bent upon bringing the perpetrators of the outrage to some species of justice, but there is likely to be warm fighting over the matter, for the Indians are brushing up their weapons in a determined manner. It is always dangerous to interfere with a people's religious beliefs.

## PEOPLE TALKED ABOUT.

The richest man in Kansas is J. B. Watson, who is worth over $3,000,000.

Bishop Spalding of Peoria, does not wish to be transferred to St. Louis.

But for his delicate health Ruskin would have been elected president of the Society of Authors to succeed Tennyson.

Tiburzi, an uncaptured Italian bandit, died of old age recently. He had been sentenced to death thirty-seven times.

Professor McFarlane of the Texas University does not take much stock in General Dyrenforth's experiments. "Noise doesn't bring rain," is his opinion.

Miss May Jackson of New London, Conn., has learned as much Greek in one year's hard study at Smith College as most students accomplish there in three years.

Miss Mary Garrett of Baltimore bought two old paintings while abroad recently and has just imported them as "antiquities." As such they would come in free of duty.

Mrs. Dougherty, widow of the late Daniel Dougherty, has leased her Philadelphia residence and with her family will shortly leave for Mexico, where they will pass the winter.

Secretary Tracy is reported to have said that should the law fail him after his return to private life he will write for the horse papers. General Tracy has always been a horse fancier.

Counting up his salary and all his allowances for expenses, President Harrison will have received from the Government exactly $376,800 when he shall have retired from the White House on March 4 next.

Virginia has had only three representatives in the Cabinet since 1849—W. B. Preston, Secretary of the Navy by appointment of President Taylor; A. H. H. Stuart, Secretary of the Interior under Mr. Fillmore, and John B. Floyd, Secretary of War under Mr. Buchanan.

It may not be generally known that Queen Victoria once had poetic aspirations and carried them so far as to write a book of verses. She sent this to a publisher under a nom de plume and had the pleasure, well known to some humbler folk, of having it promptly "returned with thanks."

### Aluminium Horseshoes.

St. Louis Republic.

Captain E. Lambart, in writing on the subject of the recent experiments with aluminium horseshoes in the Finland Dragoons, says that at the end of six weeks it was found that the aluminium shoes lasted better and preserved the foot more thoroughly than the iron ones. The former are only one-third to one-fourth the weight of the latter. Their cost is certainly greater, but this is to some extent compensated for by the facts that very little charcoal is required in shoeing, that there is no loss in weight, and that the value of the old material is the same as that of the new. In making the shoes some skill is required, as the forging must be done at a low but exactly regulated temperature. Taking into consideration the importance of light shoes, especially for horses doing fast work, and the advantage of being able to carry a larger number of spare shoes on a campaign without increasing the load of the wagon, and, lastly, the probability of a fall in the price of aluminium, Captain Lambart thinks it safe to predict the general introduction of aluminium for the shoes of cavalry and artillery horses in the near future.

## NOTES FROM NILES.

### Importance of the Prune Industry. Celebration of Forefathers' Day.

Correspondence of THE MORNING CALL.

The fact that a fruit must be well known to command a market is exemplified in the dried prune. Twenty years ago there was a steady demand for all imported prunes in eastern markets, and even in our own markets, but as our crops have been harvested they have driven all imported prunes from our own markets and are fast taking precedence over the imported fruit in eastern cities. Not a single pound yet grown in California has had to go a-begging. In 1885 1,500,000 pounds were grown, in 1890 14,500,000 pounds. That means a quarter of a pounds a year for the 60,000,000 people we have. It is safe to say that in another five years the product will be doubled, and yet in all probability the demand will remain as great. It is easily transported and is most palatable as well as nutritious and medicinal and is almost a staple winter conserve on the tables of the middle class in certain sections. It is to California what the dried apple is to Easterners—a staple fruit for market.

As for the grower, he finds the prune one one of the easiest fruits to grow and handle and one yielding the largest returns per acre.

An acre of prunes four years old will yield never less than five tons of fresh fruit, and often the crop is twice that. Five tons will produce one and a half tons of dried, which at 9 cents (last season's price) would make $270, one acre's returns. The cost of harvesting and cultivation is $35, which leaves a profit of $235 an acre.

A farmer with ten acres of prunes has the best paying crop it is possible to have in a fruit line. No pests have as yet attacked the prune. It needs very little pruning after the first year or so. It begins to bear at three years and at four has a full crop, and the crops are a good average year in and year out.

These reports are from actual figures, not for an exceptional season, but are the lowest figures for a term of years from an orchard near Niles; and what can be done here can be done in almost any fruit section in California.

Last Sunday being Forefathers' day an interesting service was given in the First Congregational Church. A portion of the programme was as follows: "How the Pilgrims Sailed From Delft Haven," an extract from E. Winslow, read by Oliver Ellsworth; "The Mayflower," by E. Everett, read by Miss Ida Curtis; "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers," by Mrs. Hemans, recited by Florence Mayhew; vocal solo, "The Pilgrim Fathers," by Mrs. Thane; an extract from R. C. Winthrop, "The Great Procession of American History," by James Clarke; and an original poem to "The Children of the Pilgrim Fathers," by Melicent Shinn, read by Mrs. Maar. The exercises as a whole were especially noteworthy, as most of those taking part, and indeed, more than a dozen in the audience, were lineal descendants of the sturdy Pilgrim fathers.

A Sunday-school praise service will be given New Year's day at 11 o'clock A. M. A Te Deum will be sung by the Choral Society. The regular quarterly praise services are becoming quite a feature in the Niles Sunday-school work.

The Tuesday Evening Circle met as usual last Monday evening. The circle does not hesitate to handle in debate some pretty heavy subjects. The subject last evening was: "Has the purchase of Alaska been justified by the financial income so far?"

The Tuesday Evening Whist Club met last week, with Mrs. F. B. Sharpe. The interest in the club meetings does not abate.

The body of the Alameda stream has swung ever toward the north bank, and the old bed has filled up very much. Another storm is in progress, and people living along the banks are preparing for a flood. The land is full of water and all that falls will doubtless flow down stream.

A very merry Christmas to all my readers.

MRS. L. E. THANE.

Niles, December 24, 1892.

## LADIES OF THE RETREAT.

### They Have Established a Branch of Their Order in New York.

New York Sun.

A feature of Roman Catholicism familiar to Europeans, but a novelty here, has just begun its establishment in New York. Four of Les Dames de la Retraite have taken a house at 235 West 125th street, and begun the work of their order. Les Dames de la Retraite—the Ladies of the Retreat—are an old and recognized order founded in the early part of the century. "Retreat" is the name of a Roman Catholic custom, meaning retreat from the world into temporary religious retirement, and is principally practiced for the week or two before Easter, though it may be entered into at any time. The houses maintained by the order of the Ladies of the Retreat are occupied by the persons wishing to "make a retreat," as it is called, during the period of retirement.

Regular board is paid according to the arrangement made upon entering, and religious services are conducted under the same roof.

In Europe the use of the houses of retreat is extended to the accommodation of ladies who are traveling alone, who, if spending some time in a city, go to them as safer, quieter and pleasanter than a hotel. Under such circumstances some agreed time for being within doors in the evening is the only restriction.

The branch of the order just started in New York is at present on a small scale. The four ladies have rented a pretty residence, named it St. Regis, as a plate on the door informs the visitor, and adapted it to their present requirements, reception room, chapel and so forth.

The order of the Ladies of the Retreat is said to be recruited from the best born of France, and the representatives at St. Regis are what Americans like to fancy all aristocracy—courteous, frank and kind. They expect to instruct converts and children in the uncanny old women during the middle ages. Uncle Sam is bent upon bringing the perpetrators of the outrage to some species of justice, but there is likely to be warm fighting over the matter, for the Indians are brushing up their weapons in a determined manner. It is always dangerous to interfere with a people's religious beliefs.

## PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

### The Cost Always Exceeds the Contract Price, With Rare Exceptions.

Harrisburg Star-Independent.

Philadelphia is having an experience in building a city hall such as New York went through nearly twenty-five years ago. Now Philadelphia discovers that a hall which was estimated to cost not over $10,000,000, will need $20,000,000 before it can be completed, and that much of the work already done is so imperfect that it has to be gone over for alteration and perfection that will cost as much as was originally paid for it. Why is it that in the erection of public buildings for States, counties, cities and boroughs the cost always exceeds the contract price, and the material used is found to be large defective in quality or inadequate in quantity? We doubt if there ever was a public building erected for any purpose in the United States which came up to its specifications, its contract price and its architectural requirements.

In all these particulars all public building erection fails in integrity of compliance and perfection of performance because there are those who profit in such matters illegally, disreputably and dishonestly, amounting to criminality, but they are adroit men, bold and determined in their purposes, and therefore able to delude the people whom they rob. Philadelphia seems to be in the grasp of such a combination of men, who are reaping rich incomes in managing the erection of its public buildings. The only instance we know of in which a public building was erected and finished within the appropriation made for it is that of the city hall built several years ago in Baltimore, for which $500,000 was appropriated. The building and ground only cost $480,000, leaving $20,000 of a surplus, which the Commissioners covered back into the city treasury.

### Not Good For Every One.

New York Tribune.

"Too many oranges are not wholesome for any one who has a tendency to gastric trouble," says a well-known physician. "It is generally supposed that oranges are particularly healthy; and in many families they are the regular concomitants of a breakfast table, parents thinking that they must necessarily be wholesome, whereas in some cases they are positively injurious. One of my patients, a boy 12 or thereabouts, has had a severe attack of stomach trouble every winter for several succeeding years—attacks for which I could find no apparent cause, until I happened to find out by accident that every year, about that time, the family received a barrel of oranges from Florida, upon which the children were allowed to regale themselves freely. This was the whole trouble: oranges did not agree with the child, and when he ate them freely he was ill. I stopped his eating them, and he has never had a recurrence of the trouble."

## BIRD HOMES.

### The Nests of Kingfishers, Woodpeckers and Other Varieties.

Maurice Thompson in Golden Rule.

Birds' nests have attracted the attention of inquisitive genius from the days of Aristotle down to the present time. This is not wonderful, because the nests are invariably curious and often beautiful, besides offering a cradle, as it were, for a host of romantic speculations and poetical theories. Imagination has taken hold of birds and their nests with singular affection, drawing forth, meantime, some beautiful legends to enrich romance withal and to add to the sum of what is most persistent in the song of mankind.

The ancients told that the halcyon, a beautiful aquatic bird, had its nest on the sea's breast, a little floating palace, around which the water was always calm and sweet. Halcyon, or alcyon, was the kingfisher, it is supposed, but we now know every species of this bird and none of them builds its nest to drift about on the sea. Indeed, as if to make the contrast of fact with fancy as great as possible, most of the kingfishers dig deep holes in the ground for their homes. Our American belted alcyon, or common kingfisher, is an expert holeborer. There is scarcely a clayey bank along the streams of our Middle and Southern States but has its face cut by the doors of one of these gloomy-looking houses.

The hole is usually quite round and goes directly into the bank, with a slight upward slant, to a distance of from 2 to 4 feet, where it turns nearly at right angles to one side or the other, ending in a large jug-shaped pocket, where the eggs are laid. The kingfisher is my most cheerful companion when I am out for a day's or a week's angling. It is an ever-fresh delight to watch him swooping down into the clear brook water with a melodious plunge and coming forth sparkling like a flake from a blue sea wave or a fragment of turquoise. He rarely fails to catch the minnow he strikes at, but his appetite is unremitting and insatiable. He eats from morning till night.

The woodpecker's home is very like the kingfisher's, but it is dug in rotten wood instead of hard earth, in a bank of earth. From the great ivory-billed species down to the little downy fellow of our orchards, the woodpeckers build their nests, or, rather excavate them, on the same general plan. The hole at first goes straight into the wood, then turns downward, widening as it descends, until it gives room for the home. If you will go into any bit of unshorn woodland during early spring, and will keep your eyes open, you will see a bright red head thrust out of a round window in some decaying trunk or bough, and the woodpecker will sing out, "Peer! peer!" which always seems to mean that his or her home is a most comfortable and enjoyable place.

The bank swallow is another bird whose nest is a hole excavated in the earth along the bluffs of streams. I have seen a high bank of the Ohio River made to look like a huge honeycomb by thousands of these holes, and the air was swarming with the birds that lived in them. It was, indeed, a city of sand swallows, a metropolis where perfect equality prevailed in the architecture, the internal finish and the furniture of the homes. The houses were as much alike as the birds themselves.

A considerable number of birds may be classed as "cave dwellers." They make their homes in clefts of the rocks, natural cavities in trees, stumps and logs, and in birds whose tastes they can find an unoccupied hole, even if it be the abandoned home of a woodpecker.

## ENDING LETTERS.

### Curiosities in the Correspondence of Notable Men.

Yankee Blade.

Any one in the habit of perusing old letters is struck with the tone of great humility and deference which pervades the correspondence of our ancestors. A few specimens of the style of beginning and ending letters may prove interesting as in striking contrast to the laconic "yours obediently," "faithfully" or "truly" of the present day. It would certainly be difficult to match the following subscription of a letter from the Duke of Shrewsbury to Sir Thomas Hammer, dated September, 1713: "I desire you will believe that wherever I am I shall always earnestly endeavor to deserve, and very much value, your friendship, being with a sincere esteem, sir, your most faithful and obedient servant—Shrewsbury."

Frequently one meets with bellicose subscriptions, as in the case of the Earl of Huntly and Errol, who, in 1584, threatened Aberdeen, unless they released certain gentlemen imprisoned in their city, and subscribed, "Yours as ye will, either present peac or weir."

The notorious Simon, Lord Lovat, who lost his head on Tower Hill for treason, was the most courtly of correspondents. Upon April 8, 1716, he concludes a letter to the Jacobite Countess of Seaforth thus: "I am, with true friendship and a great respect, madam, your ladyship's most obedient and most humble servant—Lovat."

General Cadogan, the officer in command against the rebels in 1716, writes to the same countess, threatening her tenants with military execution unless they deliver up their arms, and concludes: "I have the honor to be with the greatest respect and consideration, madam, your ladyship's most obedient and most obliged humble servant—William Cadogan."

Yet, notwithstanding his servility, he does not hesitate when writing to the Secretary of State upon the same day, to characterize the countess as a "veritable she devil, who would get the better of Satin himself."

### The Weapon of the Mafiaites.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

"Speaking of the Mafia," said A. L. Rogers of New Orleans, who is at the Southern, "there is a general belief that their so-called favorite weapon, the stiletto, is a very dangerous kind of knife. The true Italian and Corsican stiletto is probably the most ineffective penetrating weapon in the world. It has a long blade, but there is no edge at all, the steel being round, and terminating in a fine point. The blade can be compared to a very large needle.

The fact that it has no edge renders it impossible to inflict cuts with it and it can only be used for thrusting. It is also very difficult to inflict deep wounds, for the blade cannot cut a passage for itself, but must be forced through the tissues by main strength. It is not too much to say that a thrust delivered by any other kind of knife, the force of the blows being equal, would be more dangerous than a stiletto wound. The Italians have at last recognized this fact, and a stiletto is a rare weapon among them. They use a knife that has a long, thin blade, but is a dagger and not a stiletto. In effectiveness it is not for an instant to be compared with the American bowie. Its one advantage is that a great degree of penetration can be secured by a weak blow, and as few of the Italian roughs are athletes, this probably is the reason why the long, narrow-bladed knife is used."

### A Confusing Mistake.

From Fliegende Blaetter.

There was to be a grand display of rich toilets at the forthcoming ball in a provincial town. The wife of a wealthy banker wanted to outshine all the other ladies who had invitations. She accordingly ordered a dress from Paris that should exceed by its splendor the wildest expectations. Exulting in the proud conviction of her surpassing magnificence, she entered the ballroom. Here her experienced eye took stock of the ladies present—a scream of horror—and she lay fainting in her husband's arms, to the no small consternation of the company, which, however, is increased twofold when another lady in the room is discovered to be fainting. Our fair readers will agree that both sufferers deserve our deepest sympathy, for their dresses were precisely similar in style and material.

### Incomes in Prussia.

New York Sun.

Out of a population of 30,000,000 in Prussia only 2,435,858 persons possess an income of over 900 marks a year, which is equal to about $225. This fact is shown by the first year's results of the new income tax in Prussia. Two million one hundred and eighteen thousand nine hundred and sixty-nine pay income tax on the lowest scale—that is, on incomes of between 900 and 3000 marks. Only 10,698 persons have incomes of over 30,000 marks, or about $7000 a year. The highest income declared is 6,760,000 marks, and from the locality where it was registered the person is supposed to be Krupp, the gunmaker of Essen.

PLAIN popcorn, 3c quart. Townsend's. *

CHRISTMAS broken candy 10c lb. cream mixed 25c lb. Mercer's, 518 Kearny and 1306 Market.*

SUGARED popcorn, 5c quart. Townsend's. *

CHRISTMAS and wedding cakes at Swain's Bakery, 636 Market street. *

TWO pounds cream mixed candy in Japanese baskets for 50 cts. Townsend's. Palace Hotel. *

ONLY 50c for three pounds of famous broken candy in extra large Japanese lunch basket. Townsend's, 627 Market street. *

ABSENT friends would enjoy California Glace Fruits for Xmas, only 50c a pound in Japanese baskets, express rates reduced. Order early. Townsend's, 627 Market street, Palace Hotel. *

J.F.CUTTER'SOLD BOURBON.—This celebrated whisky is for sale by all first-class druggists and grocers. Trademark—star within a shield. *

MR. HENRY EDDY, watchmaker, Norwich, N. Y., was in a very weak condition after the Grip. Death seemed near, but Hood's Sarsaparilla overcame all the bad effects and restored health.

"Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" Has been used over fifty years by millions of mothers for their children while teething, with perfect success. It soothes the child, softens the gums, allays pain, cures wind colic, regulates the bowels and is the best remedy for diarrhœa whether arising from teething or other causes. For sale by druggists in every part of the world. Be sure and ask for Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup. Twenty-five cents a bottle.

'A Wholesome Paper.

Boys will find thrilling stories somewhere; The Youth's Companion meets this natural craving by providing adventure tales which present only the highest ideals of manhood and duty. Its Home, School and Folk-lore stories hold the first rank as specimens of chaste fiction.

EXTRA Mince Pies. SWAIN'S, 213 Sutter street.

### NOTICE OF MEETINGS.

Funeral Notice — California Commandery No. 1, K. T.—Officers and members are hereby notified to assemble in the Asylum on MONDAY, December 26, at 1 o'clock P. M., for the purpose of attending the funeral of our deceased frater and Past Commander, SIR WASHINGTON G. WINTER. By order of
SIR EUGENE N. DEUPREY, Commander.
SIR HIRAM T. GRAVES, Rec. de25 2t

Grand Consistory of California, A. and A. S. Rite—Officers and members are requested to attend the funeral of their late brother WASHINGTON G. WINTER, at the Masonic Temple, on MONDAY, December 26, at 1 o'clock P. M.
de25 2t GEO. J. HOBE, Grand Registrar.

Past Masters' Association of California—The officers and members are requested to meet at the Masonic Temple this day, MONDAY, December 26, 1892, at 1 o'clock P. M., to attend funeral services of Past Master WASHINGTON G. WINTER. By order of the President. [1] L. SCHUMACHER, Sec.

Golden Gate Commandery No. 16—California Commandery No. 1 requests the attendance of Golden Gate at the funeral services of Past Commander W. G. WINTER, which will take place at the Masonic Temple TO-DAY, at 1:30 P. M. Members of Golden Gate will therefore report at the asylum at 12:30 o'clock and all are specially requested to be present. [1] C. L. FIELD, Commander.

Excelsior Lodge No. 166, F. and A. M.—A special meeting of Excelsior Lodge No. 166, F. and A. M., will be held in Masonic Temple, MONDAY, December 26, at 1 o'clock P. M., for the purpose of conducting the funeral of our deceased brother and W. M., WASHINGTON GENERAL WINTER. Visiting brethren and friends are respectfully invited to attend. By order of the S. W.
de25 2t THEO. E. SMITH, Secretary.

Officers and Members of