PIANO PLAYING.

A Railroad Man Describes the Music of the Future.

New Orleans Times-Democrat.

"I was loafing round the streets last night," said Jim Nelson, one of the oldest engineers running into New Orleans, "and as I had nothing to do, I dropped into a concert and heard a slick looking Frenchman play the piano in a way that made me feel all over in spots. As soon as he sat down on the stool I knew by the way he handled himself that he understood the machine he was running.

"He tapped the keys away up in one end as if they were guages, and he wanted to see if he had water enough, and then he looked up, as if he wanted to see how much steam he was carrying, and the next moment he pulled open the throttle and sailed out on the main line as if he were a half of an hour too late.

"You could hear her thunder over the culverts and bridges, and getting faster and faster, until the fellow rocked about in his seat like a cradle. Somehow I thought it was old 36 pulling a passenger train and getting out of the way of a 'special. The fellow worked the keys on the middle like lightning, and then he flew along to the north end of the line until the drivers went around like a buzz-saw, and I got excited.

"About the time I was fixing to tell him to cut off a little, he kicked the dampers under the machine wide open, pulled the throttle away back into the tender, and Jerusalem jumpers! how he did run! I could't stand it any longer, and I yelled to him that she was pounding on the left side, and if he wasn't careful he'd drop his ash pan.

"But he did not hear me. No one heard me. Everything was flying and whizzing. Telegraph poles one side of the track looked like a row of corn stalks, the trees appeared to be a mud bank, and all the time the exhaust of the old machine sounded like the hum of a bumble bee.

"I tried to yell out, but my tongue would not move. He went around curves like a bullet, slipped an eccentric blew out his soft plug, went down grades fifty feet to the mile, and not a confounded brake set.

"She went by the meeting point at a mile and a half a minute, and calling for more steam. Mv hair stood up like a cat's tail, for I knew the game was up.

"Sure enough, dead ahead of us was the headlight of the 'special'. In a daze I heard the crash as they struck, and I saw cars shivered into atoms, people mashed and mangled and bleeding, and gasping for water.

"I heard another crash as the French professor struck the keys away down in the lower end of the southern division, and then I came to my senses. There he was at a dead standstill, with the door of the fire-box of the machine open, wiping the perspiration off his face, and bowing at the people before him. If I live to be a thousand years old I'll never forget the ride that Frenchman gave me on the piano.

He Was in the Army.

Brooklyn Eagle.

A distinguished company f lawyers sat in the Supreme Court-room, talking of old times. Among them was Col Charles S. Spencer. He was in his usual happy vein and told a new story.

"I was retained," said he, " by an ex-soldier of the war to sue for the recovery of some $1,800 which he had loaned to a friend. The late Edwin James was counsel for the defendant. I went to work zealously for my client. James cross-examined the plaintiff in his usual forcible way.

"You loaned him $1,800?" Mr. James asked.

"I did sir," was the reply.

"It was your own money?" continued Mr. James.

"It was, sir," my client responded.

"When did you lend him the money?" was the next question'

"In July, 1866," was the answer.

"Where did you get that money?" Mr. James demanded sternly.

"I earned it sir." The words were said in a meek tone.

"You earned it eh? When did you earn it?"

"During the war, sir," was the reply still in a very humble tone.

"You earned it during the war. Boy, what was your occupation during the war?" Mr James inquired.

"Fighting, sir," the man replied, modestly.

"Oh, fighting," Mr. James said, somewhat taken down and instantly changing his manner.

"I smiled triumphantly and even snickered a little. James was half mad. Well, we went to the jury, and I of course, had the last say. I sailed up to glory. I spoke of the war; of the lives and treasures it cost us; of the awful battles which decided the fate of the Union; of the self-denial and the bravery of our men who left home, and wife and children and father and mother and everything that was dear to them, and went forth to fight for Hesides, freedom, and the salvation of the nation. I pointed to the plaintiff as he sat there, still in the same air of humility and even sadness, and said that was the sort of men who had fought our battles, and saved our flag, and shed his life-blood that we and our children might enjoy uncurtailed the blessings of freedom wrenched from the hands of despots by our sires. I worked up that jury, I can tell you, and the plaintiff himself drew forth an unpretentious handkerchief and wiped away a tear. I got a verdict for the full amount, of course.

"As we were quiting the court-room, James said, "Spencer, your war speech gained you the verdict. If you had not discovered through my cross-examination that the man had fought in the war, you would have been beaten."

"My friend," I replied, "if you had only asked the man on which side he fought, you might be going home with a verdict. My client was a rebel."

Keeping Warm in the North.

I reached home on the 13th, the coldest weather I experienced on the trip being on the 13th, when about two hours before sunrise, the thermometer indicated fifty-three degrees below zero. That day I made a journey of twenty-five miles, riding most of the way on the sledge, and at no time during that day did I feel uncomfortable, the highest the thermometer reached being fifty degrees, and I might here say that I really enjoyed the whole trip. I attribute this wholly to the Esquimau reindeer clothing and constantly living in a snow igloo like the natives, where the temperature is never above freezing and generally ten to fifteen degrees below that point. I do not believe—and my belief is confirmed by the written account of others—that any Arctic voyagers, housed in warm ships as their base and clad in the usual suits of Arctic explorers, could stand such a journey without more or less material discomfit. Only once did I learn the lesson of caution. I took off my right mitten in attempting to get a shot at a passing reindeer, the wind blowing stiffly in my face and the thermometer thirty seven degrees below zero, when the persistent refusal of the frozen gun-lock to work kept my hand exposed much longer than I had intended. When I attempted to use it again it seemed paralyzed, and looking at it I noticed the skin looked as white as marble. Tooloah, who was beside me, noticed it at the same time, and with an Innuit exclamation of surprise hastily doffing his mittens, grasped it between his two warm hands, and held them against his warmer body under his coo-le-tah, or Esquimau coat. It soon resumed its functions, and although I felt for some time as if I were holding on to a hornet's nest, I experienced no more serious results than a couple of ugly looking blisters where the iron had come in contact with the bare hand. The reindeer escaped. As the reindeer clothing is the warmest in the Arctic, so it makes the warmest bedding, two long skins made into a coffin-like bag or sack, the hair side in, being a sufficient protection in coldest weather when in a properly constructed igloo. When the first severe cold came to North Hudson Bay I was sleeping in a blanket and two fine buffalo robes, which I found, as the thermometer sank thirty to forty degrees below zero, Fahrenheit, to be inadequate to secure comfort, until I secured a reindeer sleeping bag, weighing not half as much, after which cold nights were no longer dreaded. The robe of the American bison seems to become damp under the least provocation and then freezes as stiff as a piece of sole-leather. Once spoiled in this manner, it is difficult to restore it to its former pliability in the low temperature of an igloo. The furs of the musk-rat I found to be equally unsuitable to our mode of life, and I believe all other furs of the temperate zone would share the same opinion if tested in the same practical way.—*Lieut. Schwatka.*

Ostrich Farming.

A tract of six hundred and forty acres of land has been secured at Anaheim, Cal., for the purpose of breeding ostriches. These ungainly birds are valuable for the feathers they produce, and it is supposed that the new industry will be a very profitable one. Some twenty ostriches have been brought from Southern Africa, and have so far taken kindly to "the glorious climate of California." The females have commenced laying eggs. These last are formidable in size, for they measure four inches and a half in lateral diameter, and seven inches in longitudinal diameter. They weigh three and a half pounds. A new egg is laid every alternate day, till ninety eggs are collected. It is believed that in time these birds will be quite common in a wild state in southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, and western Texas. Ostrich hunting is said to be capital sport, but the great value of the animal exists in its feathers, which furnish plumes for female headgear.—*Demorest's Monthly fo May.*

A Brooklyn church has offered a preacher a salary of $10,000 and two months' vacation every year. He regards it as a "call to preach the Gospel." Most any one else would accept such an offer, but would call it by its right name, "a soft snap."

The Coming Wild Man.

A rehearsal of a fellow who was to make his debut as the wild man of a side show, and who had heightened his natural ugliness by letting his hair and nails and beards grow very long was witnessed by a Chicago *Herald* correspondent. He has become proficient in uttering an unintelligible jargon, and in posing and gesticulating like a monkey. But on being subjected to critical examination by a showman it was found that he lacked one desirable accomplishment. "A wild man ought not to be able to eat in a civllized manner,' said this expert. "You say that you are going to show yourself in a cage, pawing and growling around like a brute. Very well. Now, what is it in a menagerie that catches the crowd more than anything else? The feeding of the animals, ain't it? When you sling a chunk of fresh meat at a lion and he fiercely devours it, the spectators just shudder, shrink back and enjoy themselves. Now there's the hint for your racket. You must devour raw meat." "Darned ef I can do that," said the wild man from Kentucky. "I have lived on fried bacon and hominy too long to eat raw meat. I swear I couldn't swaller it." "But it need not be raw for a fact," said the showman, it can be cooked beef faked up to look raw." This counsel was heeded, and the wild man in the rehearsal, tore a beef that was blood red but not really raw, with fingers and teeth in quite a fiercely ravenous way. "The performance was crude," says the narrator, "but will doubtless become startlingly effective when perfected by repetition."

A Necessity of the Day.

Few minor inventions have been so readily appreciated and come so quickly into general use as the stylographic pen. None who have used one will ever be contented with any less convenient apparatus for writing, and in a short time there will be a few who have occasion to write at all who have not adopted it. The general principle of the stylographic pen is so familiar as to require no explanation. We have made trial of various kinds, but have found none to equal the improved Livermore Stylographic Pen, which combines all the advantages of other makes. It is convenient to use, writes with any kind of gook ink, and is practicably indestructible. Sold at first for $3 each, the price has recently been reduced to $2 for plain pens, with fifty cents extra for gold mounted. By sending that amount to Louis E. Dunlap, Manager Stylographic Pen Company, 290 Washington Street, Boston, a pen, together with a package of superior ink, will be sent by return mail, and the money will be at once refunded if they do not prove to be perfect in every respect.—*Morning Mail, Lowell, Mass.*

The taxes in the form of stamps have been abolished by the new tariff on the following articles: Bank checks, patent medicines, perfumeries, and cosmetics, playing cards, cigar lights and tapers, matches, and the tax on bank deposits and bank capital. It also reduces some taxes as follows: On cigars from $6 per 1,000 to $3; on ciga-r ettes from $1.75 to 50 per 1,000; tobacco and snuff, from 15 cents per pound to 8 cents per pound; the special tax on retail dealer in leaf tobacco, from $25 per year to $12 per year; manufacturers of cigars, from $10 to $9 per year; manufacturers of tobacco, from $10 to $6 per year; dealers in manufactured tobacco, from $5 per year to $2.40; and peddlers of the first class, from $50 to $30; of the second class, from $25 to $15; of the third class, from $15 to $7.20; and of the fourth class, from $10 to $3.50. The aggregate reduction of taxes thus effected is estimated at $40,000,000 per year.

—A Dallas jury awarded $4,000 damages for the loss of H. Rider's arm by carelessness of the Houston and Texas Central railway.

Hens, they say, can only lay eggs in daytime because at night they are roosters.

—All the military telegraph lines in Texas are to be discontinued.