

Evening Telegraph

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AT THE EVENING TELEGRAPH BUILDING, NO. 108 S. THIRD STREET.

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1868.

The contents of to-day's issue, presenting a rare Christmas treat, are as follows:—Page 1 (Supplement).—An original Christmas article, descriptive, discursive, and historical.

Page 2 (Supplement).—Conclusion of Christmas article.

Page 5.—The latest news by telegraph and mail; legal, financial, commercial, and shipping intelligence.

Page 6.—Editorials on the leading questions of the hour.

Page 7.—Proceedings of City Councils yesterday; General Spinner's letter on the finances; general news summary, local, domestic, and foreign.

Page 10.—A new Christmas poem entitled "The Mistletoe Kiss"; a new Christmas story entitled "Laying the Ghost."

Page 11.—Editorial selections from the leading journals of the country.

Page 12.—City Intelligence; afternoon telegrams.

In common with the rest of mankind, we desire to eat our Christmas turkey in peace to-morrow. For that reason, and in accordance with our general custom, there will be no issue of THE EVENING TELEGRAPH to-morrow afternoon.

Christmas.

It is a pleasant thought for members of one family to know that, although separated by distance, they are all rejoicing together in spirit over a common cause of thanksgiving. When a nation composed of millions of people rejoices at the same time over an event in which all take an interest, it is a grand thought. But it is sublime when we know, over all the world, wherever the faith of Christianity has a follower, there are songs of praise going up to Heaven for "peace on earth and good-will towards men." Such will be the sight presented to-morrow. Millions upon millions of human hearts are happy over this commemoration of the foundation of our faith, and we can only wish that each of our readers may be amongst those to whom unalloyed pleasure comes at this, our Christmas season.

As an evidence of the joyous feeling so prevalent, gifts are interchanged in commemoration of the occasion. Families, relatives, and friends interchange these souvenirs, and even municipalities have their Christmas presents. The city of Philadelphia yesterday was the recipient of a testimonial from the Misses George which is worthy of the magnificence of Philadelphia and the generosity of the donors. These ladies gave the city eighty-three acres adjoining Fairmount Park, known as "George's Hill." When all, even corporations without souls, are thus receiving testimonials, it seems natural to wish all a "Merry Christmas."

A Uniform Minor Coinage.

SOME months since we directed the attention of our readers to a bill introduced into Congress, having for its object the homogeneity and general improvement of the character of our token coins. Since then Judge Kelley, as Chairman of the Committee on Coinage, has amended and perfected, with much care, the bill, so that we have no doubt it will meet the approval of Congress and the country. A hasty examination into the subject of our token coins presents the very remarkable fact that within the past twelve years the Mint has issued by authority of law no less than three varieties of one-cent pieces, composed respectively of pure copper—88 per cent. copper and 12 per cent. nickel—and the present issue, composed of copper, zinc, and tin. Of the various devices that have distinguished these coins of various alloys, weights, and diameters, all representing one cent, we will attempt no statement, for fear we might be charged with exaggeration. The issue of the two-cent bronze piece always appeared to us as an anomaly. So far as our observation goes, it is of about as much practical use in a system of minor coins as was the philosopher's "small hole" in his barn for the small cat, after having cut a large hole for the large cat."

Our token coinage at present in circulation presents as complete a medley as can readily be imagined. Were it not for the devices upon them, one might be easily led to suppose they were issued by different countries, having no commercial relation with each other. No attempt at uniformity in alloy or proportion in weight or diameter seems to have been contemplated by those having the matter in hand at various times. It may, with some justice, be urged that those having charge of this important subject ten years since had no well-established experiments in the matter of nickel-copper alloy by which to be enlightened as to its superior advantages over all other alloys for a minor coinage, and, in truth, it may be said that within the last

ten years the improvements in the manufacture of nickel have gone a great way towards making it available for a coinage of rich nickel alloy, such as is now proposed.

Yet after admitting all this, it does not, in our judgment, form a sufficient excuse for those latter issues of the one and two-cent bronze pieces which introduced a new alloy into our minor coins, and assailed very materially to produce the present deplorable confusion. All that we have said in condemnation of the want of character in the token coins now in circulation is fully admitted on all sides, but some of our contemporaries, whilst admitting it, have asked, "Will not the proposed new coinage only increase the confusion?"

We think a careful scrutiny of the law will convince to the contrary.

In the first place, the proposed law prevents the further coinage of the three-cent and five-cent silver coins and the one and two-cent bronze pieces, and authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury, under such regulations as he may establish, to withdraw from circulation all token coins heretofore issued. The law also repeals the authority for the issue of the ten-cent note, which is one step toward specie payments. It also contains a provision for the redemption of the new coins in United States notes, thus presenting a guarantee against a redundant issue. We therefore start out in the work of presenting a "uniform token coinage," with the coast, if not entirely clear, at least in the way of being so very shortly. Authority being granted for the withdrawal of the old issues and the substitution of a convenient, simple, and beautiful coinage to take its place, it will not be very long before the coinage now in use will have passed as completely out of circulation as have the Spanish fractions of the dollar under the act of February, 1857, or the old copper cent under the same law. The first step taken by Judge Kelley in the proposed change of our token coinage exhibits those practical qualities of mind that so eminently distinguish him as a legislator. He starts out by establishing a system, very simple, yet complete, the want of which was the great evil in our past legislation on this subject. The first proposition laid down is that there must be uniformity of material. Secondly, as near a proportion in weight and diameter as may be practically possible. It is scarcely necessary to discuss the very evident advantages resulting from the adoption of these two propositions. As to the first, not only will all admit that a uniformity of alloy is very desirable as a public convenience, but, aside from this, the Mint experience has demonstrated the almost numberless embarrassments that arise from the use of two different alloys in our base coinage; while as to the second, there is not only an evident theoretical propriety in having our minor coins observe—just as our precious coins invariably do—a proportion of weights corresponding as nearly as possible to the denominational values, but the beauty of the series and the convenience of the people alike render this essentially requisite. These requirements are fully met by the series of coins under consideration.

We are enabled to say this after having carefully examined a set handed us by the politeness of an officer of the Mint, electrotyped impressions of which will be found in our money article of to-day. No difficulty can arise in distinguishing the denomination of the pieces. Even in the dark no confusion could arise, for they can be readily identified by the touch. In point of design and execution these coins are exceedingly creditable, far excelling in beauty those of Belgium, of the same alloy. And here we may observe that the experience of our own and other countries has, within the past eight or ten years, established the undoubted superiority of nickel-copper alloy over all others for a subsidiary coinage. When nickel is combined with copper in the proportion of 1 to 3, as in the proposed coinage it presents a beautiful alloy, that preserves its color, and has never yet been successfully counterfeited, which is a quality not lightly to be esteemed. For the information of those of our readers who may not have read our former remarks upon this subject, we would state that the weight of the new coins will be respectively, viz.:—Five-cent piece, 5 grams, or about 77 grains; the three-cent piece, 3 grams, or about 46 grains; the one-cent piece, 1.7 grams, or about 23 grains. In diameter the five-cent piece will be 22 millimetres, the three-cent piece 19 millimetres, and the one-cent piece 16 millimetres.

The proportion in weight is departed from in the one-cent coin, as a 1 gram piece would have presented difficulties in coinage that it was deemed best to avoid by increasing the weight to 1.7 grams.

From whatever point of view this proposed new coinage is considered, we think it will be found to be alike creditable to the Chairman of the Committee on Coinage and to the Mint authorities; and we have no hesitation in saying, in conclusion, that when the people come to handle it in their everyday business they will pronounce it the most convenient, as it will undoubtedly be the most beautiful, series of token coins ever issued by the authority of our own or any other government.

League Island, Alaska, and the Lobby Business.

THE old and well-known firm of Weed, Seward & Co. still remains intact, despite all the vicissitudes of the political business, although the public are just at present laboring under an uncertainty as to whether A. Johnson, or R. Johnson, or some other "party by the name of Johnson," constitutes the "Co." part of the concern. We are glad to learn, however, that Mr. Weed, better known perhaps as "T. W.," has been permitted by the state of his health to resume his place as the active head of the firm. This he does in a short, sharp, and sarcastic paragraph, in which he begs certain

Republican papers "not to make themselves any more ridiculous than they can help" by occasionally referring to Mr. Seward's famous purchase of \$7,200,000 worth of "icebergs, polar bears, and sterile mountains." "T. W." regards this course on the part of certain Republican papers as eminently ridiculous, for the reason that a Republican Senate ratified the purchase, and a Republican House of Representatives appropriated the money required to consummate it.

But the very fact that a Republican House of Representatives did make the appropriation is one of the chief causes of complaint of certain Republican journals. Not that we were opposed to the appropriation of the \$7,200,000 by the House, for, as we have repeatedly argued, there was no alternative after the Senate had once determined to set Mr. Seward up in the ice business. But during the past month the telegraph wires leading from Washington have been loaded with certain ugly-looking rumors as to the manner in which the House was persuaded to make the appropriation in question. Mr. Seward has declared that, for himself, he knows nothing about the truth or falsity of these rumors, and we are bound to believe him, for we cannot be convinced that a statesman who devotes a whole volume of diplomatic bombast to the statement of a fact which could be readily embraced in half a dozen lines, would waste enough of his invaluable time to give currency to anything that verged upon falsehood. Yet Mr. Seward took the initiative step which led to our acquisition of the icebergs and polar bears and to all the ugly rumors about the manner in which they were acquired, and this fact can not but recall to our minds the circumstances that the investment was about as unprofitable as was that of the man who took a chance in an Oriental lottery and drew a white elephant as a prize. Indeed, the family resemblance between the white elephant and the polar bear is so striking that we are inclined to get at loggerheads with the naturalists by regarding them as merely different species of the same genus of quadrupeds. Therefore we greatly fear that the head of the firm of Weed, Seward & Co. will have his egotism disturbed by these ridiculous Republican journals, whenever the icebergs and the polar bears creep into print on any pretense whatsoever.

But we wish more especially to note, in this connection, the circumstances that, in the same number of Mr. Weed's paper, the New York Commercial Advertiser, in starting the Philadelphia Lobby" paraded in grand headlines, in conjunction with "The League Island Project." The special Washington despatch over which these clap-trap lines are displayed merely refers to the visit of Mayor McMichael and a delegation of the City Council of Philadelphia to Washington for the purpose of presenting the title-deeds to League Island to the Government. The intimation that the gift of League Island to the United States by the city of Philadelphia was a "lobby" project is about as reckless an insinuation as could be made. Believing that the site was, in all respects, the most desirable on the Atlantic coast for the purposes of a great iron-clad naval station, the city of Philadelphia procured a clear and unimpaired title to the island and its surroundings, at an enormous expense, and offered it to the Government as a free gift. The Government hesitated long before accepting the proffer. All the competing sites were examined by disinterested commissions appointed by the Navy Department for the purpose, and so overwhelming was the evidence in favor of the eligibility and economy of League Island, that Secretary Welles, a Connecticut man, who is naturally supposed to favor, to a reasonable extent at least, the interests of his own State, was forced to throw his influence into the scale in favor of its selection, as opposed to the New London site, and all the other projected sites. In this view of the case, the lobby insinuation appears extremely weak; and when it is remembered that the favorable action of the Senate in the matter was notoriously the result of the advocacy of Senators Grimes of Iowa and Hendricks of Indiana, it grows almost too weak for notice at our hands.

Both League Island and Alaska are the property of the United States, and she must make the best of her bargains in both cases. To what earthly use the latter can be put we cannot imagine, unless it may be made to serve as a summer resort for Mr. Seward, Mr. Robert J. Walker, or Mr. D. C. Forney. Happily there can be raised no such perplexing question about League Island. It is the duty of Congress to provide at once the money necessary for commencing the improvements which will be required to render its great natural advantages available. This outlay, or at least the greater portion of it, will not be a permanent one; for, as soon as the improvements are fairly under way, the old Navy Yard can be dismantled and abandoned, and the site and buildings disposed of by the Government for a handsome consideration. And the sooner the permanent improvements upon League Island are commenced by the General Government, the sooner will its outlay be refunded by the sale of the old Navy Yard and all its useless appurtenances.

A Few Hints to Actors.

IT is certain that the drama has a firmer hold on the popular taste than any other form of amusement, and that this taste, so far from dying out, is increasing every year. Many of the old-fashioned abuses, such as profanity and indecent language, which many actors of it a great many years ago were in the habit of indulging, have been pretty generally reformed, and the result is that the prejudices entertained against the theatres have been to a great extent overcome, and the theatrical audiences of to-day represent as much refinement and culture as those of any other style of entertainment. It is a standing complaint, however, with the most intelligent theatre-goers, that show pieces and so-called "sensational" dramas, which depend for their success, in a great measure, on scenic and mechanical effects, have driven the legitimate drama—by which we

mean that class of plays which require skillful, intelligent, and artistic acting—into the background. The managers reply that when they present good pieces nobody goes to see them, and that they have to rely upon sensational efforts to fill their houses and to keep the treasury in a flourishing condition. There is something to be said on both sides of the question, but we sincerely think that the main difficulty is with the management and actors.

If one of Shakespeare's plays is performed nowadays, the attraction is in a popular star who takes the leading role, while the balance are filled by men and women who evidently have no appreciation of acting as a fine art, who stumble through the scenes with the aid of the prompter, and who have no intelligent ideas about the characters they undertake to represent. Actors, too, are jealous and opinionated, and in making up the cast of a play they interfere with the stage manager in making the most effective distribution, by refusing to do anything out of the regular line of business for which they are engaged, and particularly to take any less important characters than they think their merits entitle them to. Unfortunately, the actor and the public are not always in accordance in their estimate of abilities, and the important point is lost sight of that it is better to play a small part well than a great one ill. If every actor would determine to appear to the best advantage, even if he were entrusted with no more important part than that of a lackey, to go on and make the announcement "My lord, the carriage waits," we would soon be able to see an improvement. We do occasionally see actors of cast who do such trifling roles who seem to do them as if they had original ideas, and were trying to leave a favorable impression on the minds of the audience, notwithstanding their very brief appearances on the scene. We have ever found audiences appreciative on such occasions, and we think that the performer is as much entitled to commendation as if he had the whole burden of the play on his shoulders. Unfortunately, however, such examples are comparatively rare.

In the vast majority of cases, the completeness and finish of the performance, as a whole, is a matter of the first importance; and we believe that every theatre-goer who has intelligence enough to form an opinion on the subject would rather see a play moderately well represented in all its parts, than to see one characterized in the best style and the best acted. Think, for instance, what a treat it would be to see Hamlet produced with a "ghost" who did not excite derisive laughter as soon as he appeared upon the scene, and with competent actors to fill such parts as "Rosencrantz" and "Guildenstern," not to speak of "Claudius," the "Queen," "Horatio," and others; or to have the noble Romans in Julius Cæsar, Coriolanus, Virginia, and other plays, with some faint idea about the proper manner of wearing classic robes. As we have remarked again and again, one great reason of the success of Offenbach's burlesque operas was the complete manner in which they were put upon the stage, and particularly the good taste rather than the carelessness of the dresses, accessories, etc., together with the able manner in which all the parts were sustained.

What is wanted to make the legitimate drama pay is good taste on the part of managers, good discipline behind the scenes, which will require every member of the company to take whatever part may be assigned him or her, and for the actors to "do their level best" under every circumstance. By so doing they will not only surely advance their own reputation, for real talent cannot be hid from view by casting it in minor roles, if the actor is resolutely determined to show what there is in him, and if he looks upon acting as an art, and respects himself as an artist, and always does justice to himself and his audience.

Not wishing to obtain the reputation of a scold, we frequently pass over in silence some of the more confined and apparently needless specimens of inefficiency who strut and stride upon the stages of our theatres; but we throw out these general remarks with the hope that they may be sadly needed, with the hope that they may chance to lead to an improvement, especially with regard to the acting of standard dramas.

THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

Twas the day before Christmas, when all through the town
Folks were hurrying up and hurrying down:
The ladies were airing their elegant faces,
And purchasing bonnets and ribbons and laces;
The silks and the satins which trailed at their feet
Were sweeping the snow and the mire of the street;

The children were asking their mothers to stop
And purchase confections at each candy shop.
A beautiful woman and excellent mother
Was trudging along in the crowd and the bother,
And wondering where upon earth she should go
For suitable presents for Sammy and Joe;
Sammy wants this, and Joe wants that—
Here's a wooden hobby-horse, there's a woolly cat,
Here's a wagon and harness—a speckled horse—
When Sammy and Joe both want, of course,
"Ah! me!"
Says she,
"What shall I buy? Where shall I go?
For these lively critters, Sammy and Joe,
Will presently smash these gimcrack toys,
Just like other destructive boys!

I want to buy
Something that I
Can give to the boys with the hope that I'll
last—
That won't smash up so awfully fast,
Oh! Ho!
I think I'll go
And get 'em some clothes,
Such as those
That ROCKHILL & WILSON so much enjoy
Selling so cheap for each good boy.
Come, Sammy and Joe!
And don't be slow!

The clothes are so nice,
And reduced in price:
Jackets and pants and vest in a suit,
And an elegant overcoat to boot!"

Presents for the Boys!
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Elegant "Robes de chambre" and
Smoking Jackets for Presents
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Monstrous inducements!!
Come and see how shocking low the
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Cloths, in rich designs, 2 1/2, 3 1/2, 4, and 4 1/2 yards long,
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Beautiful Damask Towels, 3, 3 1/2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and up.
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Splendid Damask Napkins, only \$1 00 per dozen.
HDKFS. HDKFS. HDKFS.
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Ladies' and Gents' Remstitched HDKFS, bargains.
Faint Embroidered Colored and Mourning Border
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in any other establishment.
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Handsomely bound, containing 50 PIECES OF NEW
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A choice assortment of
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