The Dispatch.

ESTABLISHED FEBRUARY 8, 1846.

Vol. 44, No. 297.—Entered at Pittsburg Postoffice, November 30, 1887, as second-class matter.

Business Office--97 and 99 Fifth Avenue.
News Rooms and Publishing House--75, 77 and 79 Diamond Street.
Eastern Advertising Office, Room 48, Tribune Building, New York.

TERMS OF THE DISPATCH.

POSTAGE FREE IN THE UNITED STATES.

DAILY DISPATCH, One Year	$8 00
DAILY DISPATCH, Per Quarter	2 00
DAILY DISPATCH, One Month	70
DAILY DISPATCH, including Sunday, 1 year	10 00
DAILY DISPATCH, including Sunday, 3 m'ths	2 50
DAILY DISPATCH, including Sunday, 1 month	90
SUNDAY DISPATCH, One Year	2 50
WEEKLY DISPATCH, One Year	1 25

THE DAILY DISPATCH is delivered by carriers at 15 cents per week, or including Sunday edition, at 20 cents per week.

This issue of THE DISPATCH contains 20 pages, made up of THREE PARTS. Failure on the part of Carriers, Agents, Newsdealers or Newsboys to supply patrons with a Complete Number should be promptly reported to this office.

Voluntary contributors should keep copies of articles. If compensation is desired the price expected must be named. The courtesy of returning rejected manuscripts will be extended when stamps for that purpose are enclosed, but the Editor of THE DISPATCH will under no circumstances be responsible for the care of unsolicited manuscripts.

POSTAGE—All persons who mail the Sunday issue of The Dispatch to friends should bear in mind the fact that the postage thereon is Two (2) Cents. All double and triple number copies of The Dispatch require a 2-cent stamp to insure prompt delivery.

PITTSBURG, SUNDAY, DEC. 1, 1889.

THE REAL TEST COMING.

There has been a good deal of bitter feeling over the Republican nomination for Speaker which was made yesterday, as well as the contest for minor offices at Washington. Pennsylvania Representatives were placed in a rather awkward position with Reed and McKinley, both strong tariff men, pitted against each other. In one sense McKinley, being a neighbor and a brilliant man to boot, might reasonably be supposed to have the first claim to Pennsylvania votes; but of Reed, it is not doubted that he is equally strong for protection. As no one worked harder for him than Senator Quay and Congressmen Bayne and Dalzell, the conclusion is certain that they knew beforehand his course in the Speaker's chair would be favorable to the protective interests which all three are supposed to have at heart in common, however they may differ about anything else under the sun.

It will be a relief to the country when Congress takes up matters of legislation, and when the struggle for precedence and leadership, for patronage, for personal preferences and resentments, is relegated to the background.

Now is to begin the real test of the administration and of the party which is responsible for it. There are questions of the gravest importance to the business interests of the country booked for consideration this winter. It is by their utterances and by their actions upon these that the public will gauge the statesmen, not by their bickerings over personal honors and preferments.

THE EXPOSITION AND THE MERCHANTS.

The proposition to extend the season for holding the Exposition has been mooted, and is received with general favor. Merchants clearly recognize that their business was enhanced by the Exposition and naturally they come to the conclusion that the longer the Exposition is kept open the more trade they will get. The ease with which that logic can be carried too far, would be plain to all if some one would propose to hold the Exposition all the year round. While a moderate extension of the time might attract more people here, the conclusion is legitimate that most people who wish to come will get to the Exposition in the usual period that it is kept open. The desire to have the time of exhibition extended is valuable, however, as showing the appreciation of the Exposition among business men, and as indicating their readiness to join in all measures to increase its attractions and extend its fame.

PROSPERITY OF THE IRON TRADE.

All the reports concerning the condition of the iron trade unite in demonstrating that the improvement is based on the most healthy conditions of legitimate demands. One of the strongest features is presented by the development of new uses for iron. A few years ago it was thought that Bessemer steel would drive a great share of the iron industry out of existence. But while steel has taken the place of iron in some departments of manufacture, the loss has been more than made up by the increased use of the latter in architecture and in minor forms.

The growth in the use of iron has, of course, been stimulated by the cheap prices of the past few years, and is also susceptible of being checked by an undue advance. But the most decided element of stability in the trade is furnished by the indisposition to advance prices beyond the reasonable level that will encourage consumption. That element in this market cotemporaneously with the boom in Great Britain produced the phenomena of actual exportations of American iron to England. Some of our cotemporaries are disposed to make a good deal of two sales of that character. But as they were due to an excessive and inflated advance of English prices which has since reacted, it is not really of as much importance to the future stability and prosperity of our iron interests as the strong and legitimate home demand, and the conservative policy which has so far prevented the advance of prices to a level that might affect the demand unfavorably.

While these influences prevail, the iron trade may, notwithstanding momentary lulls, be expected to remain active and prosperous; and the preservation of that state of affairs should, therefore, be the prime effort of the entire trade.

CONFUSED CONCLUSIONS.

It is one of the unique features of the relations between great corporations and the legislature that is presented by the Senate Committee's report on the Pacific railroads. It is worth while to remember that the occupation of looking after the Pacific railroads has been a perennial one for a long time. It affords an excuse for a trip to the Pacific coast at the Government's expense and otherwise rarely amounts to much else.

The Government has been represented by Government directors and commissioners who have been noted for the industry with which they omitted to look after the Government interests; and Congressional Committees without number have taken the overland trip with great pleasure to themselves. The Pacific Railroad Commission of two years ago made the trip amount to something; and the striking facts brought forth in its report have evidently made it necessary for the Senate Committee to do something. After enjoying the hospitality of the Pacific railroads under the guardianship of Senator Stanford, the Senatorial investigators inform the public that the security of the Government is ample, and therefore the debt should be extended for fifty years.

This conclusion is the more remarkable because it is just the opposite of the representation made by the representatives of the Central Pacific Railroad at the last session. By these worthies it was argued that their property was not worth the debt, and therefore that the debt should be extended one hundred and fifty years. The process of arguing from diametrically opposite premises to the same conclusion may strengthen the latter, but the public will be prone to think that there is something wrong about the decided disagreement of the agreeing parties.

In the hope that Senator Frye's facts are indisputable, we will suggest the obvious conclusion. The security which the Pacific railroads have to offer being indisputable, let the corporations negotiate them in the markets of the world and pay the Government its debt without further monkeying.

REFUSING TO ANSWER.

Mr. Philip Armour, of Chicago, has concluded that the United States Senate is worthy of a little of his attention. He appears at Washington, therefore, and goes through the motions of telling the Senate Committee what he knows about the dressed beef and hog packing business.

It is noticeable that Mr. Armour's testimony bears a strong family resemblance to the similar appearances of the Standard Oil and Sugar Trust magnates before investigating committees. On the surface there is an apparent willingness to tell the representatives of the people about those great business transactions by which a few men have become fabulously rich and their rivals have been wiped out; but the moment the questions touch upon the subject of combinations and railway favoritism, they run up against a refusal to answer "by advice of my attorney."

The public will judge of Mr. Armour's testimony less by what he says than by what he refuses to testify to, as soon as the inquiry reaches the vital points of the subject, in a public point of view.

THE PROBLEM OF FIRE INSURANCE.

Nobody will feel surprised that the first impulse of the insurance companies which lost so heavily last week by the fires at Lynn and Boston is a general increase of the rates. There is also some talk of engaging the most competent experts who can be found to visit the different cities of the land and agitate for further efficiency among the fire departments.

But while the arbitrary course of putting up insurance rates may seem to the companies the easiest way of recouping for the losses at Lynn and Boston, it will strike the general public—most particularly the insured—as neither a logical nor lasting remedy. There are districts in which the losses of the year have been relatively light. There are cities where, by close attention to discipline and liberal expenditure of money raised by taxes, the fire departments are splendidly efficient and all that could be desired. It would be decidedly rough if the property owners who contribute to these satisfactory results should have to meet increased rates because at Lynn, Boston, or elsewhere there were destructive conflagrations—and these, perhaps, in part, resulting from a different condition of things.

Insurance against fires has for about seven years past been, on the whole, anything but a profitable business. The sum of losses has puzzled the most experienced underwriters. A number of the smaller companies have been obliged to quit the business, and many of the larger ones have fared scarcely, if at all, better. But if anything is demonstrated it is that the mere increase of rates does not meet the difficulty. The most thoughtful men in the business are beginning to see that the real problem of fire insurance is to be solved by securing a better construction of buildings and greater watchfulness in caring for them. More is to be had by encouraging owners who notably adopt these precautions, by giving them light and easy rates, than by a general increase. It is doubtful if this policy has been sufficiently tried. There are also preventive measures which are not enforced with the vigilance which the interests at stake demand. Thus though the city of Pittsburg, thanks to the general carefulness of its people, and to its undoubtedly excellent fire department, has been fortunate in escaping large losses, it is still a fact that in the very heart of this city wooden buildings have, within a few years, been permitted to be erected, without effective protest, or so far as is known even notice, from the local insurance interests.

No destruction of property is so absolute or embarrassing as that by fire. Insurance is a wise provision; it is a necessary business; but if it is to be profitable to the companies engaged in it, and a real protection to the community, persistent vigilance in preventive measures is the one thing needed. It is more important and it will pay better in the long run than the delusive process of attempting a temporary swelling of the receipts by enforcing increased premiums.

RIVER COAL TROUBLES.

The dispute over wages in the river mines has crystallized into an announcement that the operators will mine no more coal at the 2½-cent rate of wages. The declaration as to the inability of the market to pay that rate might be more effective if it were not somewhat stereotyped in connection with wage disputes. A year ago it was announced that the mines would all shut down for three months, but subsequent events showed that there was no trouble in starting up again and finding a market when the miners were brought to accepting the wages that the other side considered right. We are not undertaking to settle the rights and wrongs of the present dispute; but the familiarity of these statements about the overstocked condition of the markets rather damages their value; while both the present situation and past experience demonstrate the futility of trying to reach a reasonable settlement of wage disputes by the brute trials of strength known as strikes.

THE CUT ON LIVER PILLS.

The leading features of combinations, and the cutthroat rivalries which they produce when their existence is jeopardized, have broken out in a new trade. All the country knows that a combination among druggists generally maintains the prices of patent medicines at three or four times their first cost; but as the calm consideration of the matter induces the reflection that the man who buys patent medicines deserves to be mulcted, no one has ever dreamed it worth while to make a fuss about it.

But the combination of druggists in Atlanta, Ga., is fractured and the consequence is the usual rate war. One druggist asserted his right to sell goods as cheaply as he wished, and as this is an assault on the very citadel of combination prices, the other druggists responded by cutting prices lower than he did. This policy of slaughtering prices to maintain the combination, has been kept up until the combiners have reached the point of giving away liver pills and nerve and bone liniment and selling Pears' soap at 39 cents per box.

The dissipations which this outbreak of cut prices has opened up for the Atlanta people are almost unrivaled. It is a little singular that the Southern druggists should make the pills and liniment free of cost while still charging the public a price, of some sort or other, for soap. But the general cheapening of these agencies of civilization disarms criticism. The Atlanta people will have a revel of cleanliness and leave themselves no livers worth mentioning before the druggists restore their combination and the practice of charging 75 cents for a bottle of patent medicine that costs 3¾ cents to put up.

In the meantime it is worth noticing that the recalcitrant druggist knows how to meet the combination tactics of cutting prices to a losing basis. He says that if his rivals wish to sell drugs for nothing, they can do so. After they have got tired of losing all the money he will keep in the business under legitimate competition.

AN Eastern cotemporary remarks that "it is quite natural that the movement for the amelioration of the condition of political prisoners in Siberia should be received with indifference and doubt by the many," explaining it by the fact that new reforms are received in that way. Perhaps a more cogent explanation of the doubt might be proffered by the inquiry how a movement in the United States is expected to ameliorate the condition of the prisoners in Siberia. Is the United States Government to send its new navy up the Lena delta?

DOM PEDRO delared when last in Portugal that he was an American and a Republican. Under those circumstances it seems rather unjust that he should not have been allowed to stay in the new Republic and grow up with the Government.

THE movement in Massachusetts, to send men who get drunk to the workhouse for six months, is disapproved by the New York *Herald* as "a narrow-minded movement." It will doubtless appear so to the gentry who require a broad-gauge roadway to navigate in; but the sober part of the public may conclude that a change in the policy of prosecuting people who sell liquors, and treating those who buy it, as innocent lambs, will not be without its salutary effects.

THE outflow of oratory for the prosecution in the Cronin trial leaves the defendants apparently in a bad condition; but it remains to be seen what the attorneys for the defense can do in the line of oratory, apart from raising objections.

IT is asserted that the beavers have joined the ranks of the cold-winter prophets and are building their structure a story and a half deeper than usual. The opinion of the beavers is worthy of all respect, but in this case they discredit themselves by joining the side of Hicks, of St. Louis. A St. Louis weather prophet is enough to ruin the business reputation of any prophetic beaver.

ALASKA is asking for a territorial Government. It might be pleasant for the settlers and the native Alaskans to have a Legislature of their own; but it remains to be seen whether the Alaska Seal Company will permit them to have it.

THE fact that steel rails are reported to be selling at the same price in London as in Pittsburg is more of an indication of the boom in England than of the low price of rails here. Nevertheless, our free trade brethren keep on telling of the way in which the price of rails is increased by the tariff.

MR. HARRISON the day before Thanksgiving stated: "There are many personal reasons why I should feel thankful." Yes; and prominent among them might stand the fact that the Presidental election did not fall in 1889.

IF the Allegheny Traction road causes a new and improved bridge over the Allegheny at Sixth street, it will be recognized as an additional advantage. The present bridge was a noted improvement in its day; but it has been left far in the rear by the advance in the art of bridge architecture.

THE talk of protecting German interests in Brazil probably grows out of a hope that German interests may be most efficiently protected by gobbling a slice of the new Republic's immense domains.

THE doubt as to what flag the vessel is sailing under that carries Dom Pedro to Portugal must be confusing to the rest of the world and painfully suggestive to the distinguished passenger, of the period when it was doubtful what Government ruled Brazil.

OIL CITY discovers that nitro-glycerine, like steam and fire, is a good servant, but a bad master; and is, moreover, very likely to try to get the mastery.

THE statement of the firm of Long & Co. is a good deal more prompt in making its appearance than the statement of the Lawrence Bank. If the latter can make affairs look more hopeful for creditors, however, the delay in its appearance may be forgiven.

PEOPLE OF PROMINENCE.

JAY GOULD'S recent retirement from business netted him several million dollars.

THE Rev. H. D. Ward and Mrs. Ward (nee Elizabeth Stuart Phelps) have taken a house at Washington for the winter.

PROF. CHARLES S. LITTLE, of Syracuse University, will give a course of six lectures at Lasell Seminary, Auburndale, Mass., during the months of December and February on "The Founders and Reformers of the Christian Church."

WILKIE COLLINS directed in his will that he should be buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, at a cost not exceeding $125, that no scarfs or hatbands should be used, and that a plain stone cross to be placed over his grave should bear only the inscription which he had prepared.

THE Empress of Austria has been yachting in the Mediterranean for some months. She has transferred her fondness for horseback riding to sailing o'er the sea. Being an invalid, she is unable to take equestrian exercise, and, having a love of adventure, found yachting the most available substitute for her former fad.

QUEEN VICTORIA, it is said, has a number of unpublished manuscripts in her possession which may see print after her death. Their nature is not known, but it is understood that poems and short stories form the bulk of the collection. Victoria's books of travel do not indicate that her posthumous publications will be of great literary value.

THIRTY years ago W. H. H. Miller, present Attorney General of the United States, was a successful lawyer in Keokuk, Iowa. One day an awkward, ill-dressed youth called at the office and asked for work. Miller liked the young man's appearance, and finally won his partner over to employing the youth. That ill-dressed young man prospered in the law, served his district in Congress several terms, was Secretary of War in President Hayes' Cabinet, was a United States Circuit Judge in Iowa, and resigned that office to become chief counsel of the Santa Fe Company at a salary of $25,000 per annum. His name? George W. McCrary.

A Dim Temperance Light.

From the New York World.]

The talk about ex-Senator Riddleberger's intention to start out as a temperance lecturer is probably all moonshine.

THE TOPICAL TALKER.

A Bit of Southside Reminiscence—The Valor of Cooney Scharff—A Smile—Two Tooth Pills and a Ballade on a Brace of Proverbs.

IT is a pity that some local Thackeray has not sketched for us a half-dozen characters who flourished in this burg during the war times and for a dozen years later. I made their acquaintance the other day at second-hand through a well-known Pittsburger, who has that delightful faculty of mimicry which is an endowment to a *raconteur*. If the pictures of a little coterie which used to meet on the Southside at the time I speak of, which my informant drew for me, could be transferred to type, they would be appreciated no doubt. An idea of one of the figures is all that I shall attempt to give.

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THERE must be a good many people on the Southside who remember Cooney Scharff, and more who will identify him as the father of Billy Scharff, the oarsman. Cooney served in the Union army during the war, and he was very fond after his return from the field of talking about his military exploits. The fact that he drove a wagon in the commissariat department did not prevent him from claiming a big share in the glory that crowned the Union armies. When he had had a glass or two of beer, and a set of agreeable cronies had gathered about him, nothing pleased him better than to launch into a harangue after this fashion: "When dot war was going on where was I? To der front, of course. I was always to der front. When dot great General Banks was retreating up der valley of Virginny, where was I den? I was to der front, gentlemen. And yit when I come home I saw in der noosepapers and everywhere stories and pictures about Banks and dem oder fellers, and not a word about Cooney! Dat was der way of it always."

Then some one would pop in with a query about the battle of Antietam and Cooney would say: "Was I at Antietam? Well, I should say I was. I was at dot battle, and when I come back I saw dot *Harper's Weekly*. And dere was der battle just like it was—and the soldiers fightin', and right in front of der picture was a man standin' on the roof of the house behind a chimney. And I say to mine boy: 'Billy, come here, see dose battles your farder was in.' And dot boy he climb on his farder's knee and I show him the picture of Antietam, and I say to him: 'Billy, snow me your farder.' And Billy he point to the man behind the chimney—and I say: 'Billy, you know your farder yit?'"

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A SMILE.

A novel nowadays is naught,
Unless its pulse be
With deep didactic matter fraught,
And flavor "Elsmerey."
But set such volumes on the shelf;
I'll never touch the pile.
Let Howells preach—but for myself,
Well, I prefer to smile.

The ribbon blue is to the fore,
And with a solemn pledge
Good people swear to drink no more
A potent beverage.
But when the wind blows bitter cold,
I like, in modest style,
With friends and wine—both good and old—
Well, just to take a smile.

Some croakers tell us every day
We're going to the dogs;
But, happily, for all they say,
Along the country jogs.
With fortune's favors on her breast,
Her heart all free from guile,
The friend of peoples still oppressed,
Columbia may smile!

A toast to you, O, loving wife!
I drink it with a will—
Who lighteneth the road of life,
As doth a laughing rill,
That ripples tinkling by the way
For many a weary mile!—
Who turneth sorrow to a night to day
With but a gentle smile.

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WHEN one is in affliction it is a rare pleasure to turn it to some use.

Between the acts in the dentist's chair the other day the gentle operator with the forceps in his hand said to me: "Did you ever hear what a smart student told a professor in dentistry about man's endowment with teeth? The professor who was examining the class said: 'How many sets of teeth does a man get in his lifetime, and how are they distinguished?'

"'Three sets,' replied the student, 'temporary, permanent and artificial!'"

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"THOSE whiskers are enough to make anyone's face ache," remarked a sympathetic young woman to an unfortunate man who was suffering from a new beard and toothache at the same time.

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A BALLADE OF TWO PROVERBS.

When the books are open for all life's bills,
The record of all you may buy and sell,
You must see that this truth a front seat fills:
That the money you save will serve you well.
There's another truth yet the wise men tell,
And it's tied to the first with golden strings,
And to treasure it, too, is just as well:
That next year's money no interest brings.

When your hopes are many, and high as hills,
Fair Truth, from the depths of her crystal well,
No pleasanter essence for man distills
Than "The money you save will serve you well."
But never confide to the luring spell,
Too often a syren sweetly sings
Of to-morrow's earnings—'tis labor's knell!
For next year's money no interest brings.

When the days are rainy and winter shrills,
When creditors come in a rush pell mell,
You needn't be scared or white at the gills,
For the money you've saved will serve you well.
But the same blow crushes the flimsy shell,
And the Sheriff loud at the door bell rings,
And the spendthrift finds in his prison cell
That next year's money no interest brings.

ENVOY.

It's a truth that rings like a silver bell:
The money you save will serve you well.
And from another adage springs:
That next year's money no interest brings!

HEPBURN JOHNS.

STANLEY'S RECORDS IMPROVING.

The Copyright of His Book Said to Have Been Sold for £40,000.

[BY CABLE TO THE DISPATCH.]

LONDON, November 30.—Stanley's records grow better as they proceed. There has been much dull reading in the letters, so far as the adventure-loving public is concerned, but some of the latter letters, including those last notes of poor Lupton Bey, who was done to death and wanted his friends to know that he died game, form a touching chapter in the latest history of African exploration. The call of Omar Sales to Emin to embrace Mohammedanism is another interesting incident. "Only believe," says he, "in effect, and you will be saved. Refuse to believe and you will be hacked to pieces in this world and damned in the next."

It is said that Stanley sold the copyright of his forthcoming work on the Emin Relief Adventures for £40,000, but this is probably an exaggeration. The present desire of the publishers is to call the book: "How I Relieved Emin." There is almost as great a desire to get hold of Emin's adventures as there is of Stanley's, but his records will probably be published by a German house. The German newspapers are complaining that too much importance is attached to Stanley's participation in the relief of Emin Bey, and that the doctor gets too little credit for his devotion and heroism.

A Certain Cure.

From the Detroit Free Press.]

A French physician recommends as a sure cure for dyspepsia that patients hold their breath as long as possible several time per day. This may help, but a sure cure would be to hold your breath all day long.

It's a Chestnut.

From the Philadelphia Press.]

It is announced with something like official authority that Mr. Cleveland really wants the Democratic nomination for President in 1892. This, however, is hardly in the nature of news.

DEATHS OF A DAY.

James Taylor.

James Taylor, father of Mr. Charles Taylor, of the *Presbyterian Banner*, and Robert Taylor, of the firm of Hilliard Sterrett & Co., died yesterday afternoon at his home on Conservatory Hill, Allegheny. He was in the 79th year of his age, and was one of the oldest and most respected citizens of Allegheny. Funeral from Christ Episcopal Church, Union avenue, Allegheny, to-morrow afternoon at 1:30 o'clock.

Mrs. Wood.

Word was received in this city yesterday that Mrs. Ann H. Wood, the venerable mother of Mr. W. Dewees Wood, the well-known McKeesport manufacturer, had died in that city Friday at the extreme age of four score and four years. She was an estimable Christian lady. Mr. Wood has the sincere condolence of a wide circle in his hour of sorrow.

GUESSES ON THE GOVERNORSHIP.

No Lack of Candidates for the Republican Nomination.

[SPECIAL TELEGRAM TO THE DISPATCH.]

PHILADELPHIA, November 30.—That United States Senator Quay will favor the nomination of Senator George Wallace Delamater, of Crawford county, is the general opinion expressed among the politicians. They argue that the junior United States Senator and the Senator from Crawford have been working in unison for some time past, and that the friends of Senator Quay throughout the State are aware of his preferences for the Republican nomination.

Senator Delamater's most formidable opponent is at this time Adjutant General Daniel H. Hastings, of Center county. General Hastings has been traveling through the State and leaving no stone unturned to secure the friendship of those leaders in the several counties who are said to be able to deliver delegates, but the shrewd politicians hesitate to make any declaration until they can find out which of the candidates it will best serve their interests to support.

E. A. Montooth, of Allegheny county, who came within a vote of being nominated for Lieutenant Governor on the ticket with James A. Beaver, in 1886, declared at once after the adjournment of the State Convention that he was a candidate for the nomination for Governor in 1890. Major Montooth has been frequently dubbed as the candidate of Christopher L. Magee, who is one of Senator Quay's most pronounced opponents, but when last in this city the major gave it out positively that he was no man's candidate, but the candidate of Allegheny county. He declares that his home delegation will support his candidacy, without regard to factional differences, and that he will also secure the votes of a number of delegates from the western part of the State.

The present Lieutenant Governor, Charles W. Stone, of Warren county, is regarded as the first choice of Governor Beaver, and is looked upon as a strong dark horse. His candidacy will receive the support of a number of counties adjoining his own. Lieutenant Governor Stone has not been idle. On the contrary, he has been as busy as his fellows. His methods are of the still-hunt order, and he flits from one section of the State to another, without his presence being more than ordinarily observed. He is regarded as a shrewd, quiet worker, and his friends claim that the first ballot of the convention will show a strong following for Warren county's candidate. He was here to-day for a few hours.

The guessers predict that Senator Delamater will win the nomination. In addition to the support of Senator Quay, the general belief among those who are supposed to know is that Senator Cameron will be found among friends of Senator Delamater, and that an agreement will be reached whereby the nomination of Delamater and the re-election of Cameron may be made without any great friction.

Mayor Edwin H. Fitler has declared for Hastings, but it is believed that this action on the part of Philadelphia's Mayor has done General Hastings more harm than good. It is said that some feeling on the part of Mayor Fitler against Senator Quay, because the latter did not look with favor on His Honor's Presidential aspirations, has been the real cause of his announcement in favor of Hastings. The other city leaders have so far declared no preferences.

EX-SPEAKERS OF THE HOUSE.

Only Eight of Those Who Held the Office Now Living.

Frank A. Burr in Philadelphia Times.]

There are only eight men who have held the Speakership of the House of Representatives still living. Robert C. Winthrop, of Massachusetts, is the oldest, both in years and date of service. He was Speaker one term, from December 6, 1847, and succeeded Daniel Webster in the Senate in 1850. He is still living in Boston, enjoying his wealth and his books. Nathaniel P. Banks was elected Speaker in December of 1855, and his snow-white hair and mustache will again be seen in the Fifty-first Congress, but this time he will be a member on the floor. He had a hard struggle to pull himself once again into the stream of public affairs, for he had been left high and dry on the banks years ago. Still he succeeded in the last Congressional election and will probably retain his seat until he dies.

Galusha A. Grow, of Pennsylvania, is alive and still ambitious to be heard again in Congress. He has made two or three campaigns for the United States Senatorship, but has always failed. He is full of vigor and sturdy manhood yet, although he has reached his 66th year.

J. Warren Keifer is another forgotten Statesman who once wielded the Speaker's gavel, and then retired to comparative obscurity. He lives in Springfield, O.

Another relic of the Speakership, and next to Mr. Winthrop in age, is R. M. T. Hunter, of Virginia, who was Speaker in 1839, and Secretary of State of the Confederacy during the War. He is now quietly waiting the final call in Virginia. The other three men now living who have been Speaker of the House owe little of their prominence or their success in their public careers to any help derived from the Speakership. They would have made their names known anywhere and at any time. They are James G. Blaine, Samuel J. Randall and John G. Carlisle. I wonder if the man chosen for the Fifty-first Congress will do as well as they.

BIG SALE OF AUTOGRAPHS.

Some Interesting Lots to be Brought Across the Atlantic by Americans.

[BY CABLE TO THE DISPATCH.]

LONDON, November 30.—There has been a big sale of autographs in London this week, and there were a large number of American commissions for the more important lots. The Americans, however, underestimated the probable prices, and their agents in nearly every instance had to stop short long before the fall of the auctioneer's hammer.

Some interesting lots will, however, cross the Atlantic, including a collection of letters from Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and other American celebrities, and a letter from Shelley to his father-in-law, complaining that he had not been treated fairly by his family. Mr. Sabin gave £20 for the poet's letter.

NEW YORK NEWS NOTES.

Arrested for Passing Bogus Checks.

[NEW YORK BUREAU SPECIALS.]

NEW YORK, November 30.—The Rev. Stephen Merritt, undertaker, related in a police court to-day how Leonard E. St. Clair had passed a worthless check for $50 on him two days ago. Mr. St. Clair introduced himself to the undertaker as a philanthropist who wished to pay the bill against the widow of a poor laborer recently buried by the Rev. Merritt. The bill was for $32. St. Clair handed the Rev. Merritt the $50 check on the Second National Bank. Just then a tramp entered the shop. St. Clair delivered a little homily on the beauties of charity, and had the Rev. Merritt give the tramp $1 out of the face value of the check. Then he pocketed his $17 change and left. Two hours later the check was dishonored, and the Rev. Merritt put the police on St. Clair's track. The cashier of the Second National Bank testified that St. Clair had been passing bogus checks on that bank for the last three months. Often two or three had been presented in one day by small tradesmen whom he had induced to advance money on them. St. Clair was remanded.

Dying for a Westside Belle.

James Hedderman, a longshoreman, 22 years old, is dying at the New York Hospital, of injuries inflicted by Charles Sands night before last. Sands was arraigned in court this morning, and was denied bail in consequence of a certificate from the hospital surgeon that Hedderman could not live 48 hours longer. Nellie Devlin, the 18-year-old belle of "The Gap," the dirty Westside neighborhood where the fatal row occurred, was the cause of the trouble. She is Sands' sister-in-law, and together with Hedderman and three other men, attended a little Thanksgiving jollification at Sands' rooms in "The Gap." Everyone got pretty full. At midnight Nellie went downstairs to work the growler. While returning she was intercepted in the corridor by Hedderman, who tried to kiss her. Sands heard the struggle, ran downstairs, snatched up a brick and beat Hedderman insensible with it. This morning Hedderman was found, still unconscious, in his blood in the hallway. He was taken to the New York Hospital, and Sands and Nellie were locked up.

Broke up Everything in the House.

George Fleck, a Brooklyn carpenter, 60 years old, has been trying for two months to drown in whisky his sorrow over the disappearance of his wife. Yesterday his excessive drinking resulted in mental derangement. He locked and barricaded all doors to the house in which he lived alone, and began to smash things with an ax. He began at the attic. At midnight he had cleaned out everything down to the ground floor. The crashing of china and furniture attracted the attention of neighbors, who summoned the police. Two officers broke in simultaneously two doors of the house, and after considerable fenging knocked Fleck senseless to the floor. During the struggle Fleck struck at them repeatedly with his ax, but succeeded only in cutting the padding from the shoulder of one of them. The only whole thing in the house was a bird cage. Fleck was locked up.

POSITIONS WORTH HAVING.

The Speaker a Greater Man Than the President—Where His Power Lies—Well-Paid Sinecures in Congress—Morton as Presiding Officer of the Senate.

[CORRESPONDENCE OF THE DISPATCH.]

WASHINGTON, D. C., November 28.—Before these words reach the printer the autocrat of the House of Representatives, otherwise known as the Speaker, will have been selected by that other autocrat, known as the caucus, and the lively contest for the chief office of the House, and almost the chief office of the Government, will be at an end. While there has been a very warm contest, and the arguments used in the interests of this or that candidate were not always fair and manly, in the main the candidates and their supporters have been generous and courteous to each other. The contest has been waged mainly on the basis of the fitness of the individual. While the silver question, the tariff question and the question of corporative influence have been used to some extent, they have had little effect, mainly because all of the candidates were of that order of politician who is constantly dominated by the professional principles of his party, and therefore that which could be laid honestly at the door of one could be charged to all of the others with equal truth. No one is better than his party, or has shown any desire to be so, and upon those questions on which there is some measure of disagreement within the party ranks, these candidates have pursued so diplomatic a course that no one could be said to go farther than or fall short of the specifications or generalizations of the party platform.

The memorable contest in 1883, between Carlisle and Randall, was fought on the issue of the tariff. It was a square contest between the protection and free trade factions of the Democratic party, and upon that Carlisle won by a great majority. No feeling of that kind, nor any sincere feeling in regard to any great question, entered into the present contest, and if, as is now the prospect, Reed, of Maine, be selected by the caucus to-morrow, it will be because of his acknowledged experience, his known fitness for the place, and the fact that he has been the nominee of the party for Speaker when the nomination was but an empty honor; while his opponents are without experience, though they are all acknowledged to be gentlemen of fine abilities.

A Bigger Man Than the President.

In many ways the Speaker of the House is more powerful than even the President of the United States. The President can veto legislation; but that is a serious matter, to refuse to sanction a law which has been enacted by the exercise of the wisdom of 325 members of the House and 78 members of the Senate. It is an assumption of superior sagacity for which a President rarely cares to take the responsibility, and when he does it is almost invariably at the request of a large proportion of the members of Congress, just as the Queen of Great Britain dare not exercise the veto power except by the request of Parliament. But the Speaker of the House may block legislation in a thousand ways, and to a great extent he can make or mar the influence and prominence of any member of the House. He is practically the creator of the rules of the House. His construction of the rules can only be vitiated by the vote of a majority of the House, and upon those of his own party who do not vote to sustain him he can quietly but successfully visit the full extent of his displeasures. Even the most prominent and brilliant may be snuffed out, and the Speaker may not discover to any except those who are exceedingly keen observers the fact that he is deliberately ignoring the person who has aroused his dislike. And as to legislation, a Speaker who has thorough command of himself and of the rules can absolutely defeat the enactment of any law which does not suit him, and that almost without exposing the fact to any one that he is set against it.

The Speaker gets $8,000 a year, the same salary as the Vice President of the United States, who is also, by virtue of his office, the presiding officer of the Senate. He is allowed a private Secretary at a salary of a little more than $2,000, and a similar salary is paid to a special clerk for the "Speaker's table."

Some Profitable Positions.

The Clerk of the House receives the highest salary of any of the officers of that body—$4,000 a year. He has considerable patronage, and command of quite a large corps of clerks. The Chief Clerk, Journal Clerk and two Reading Clerks each get $3,600 a year, the Tally Clerk $3,000, the Printing and Bill Clerk and the Disbursing Clerk $2,500 each, and a number of others from $1,400 to $2,000 each.

The Sergeant-at-Arms is, after the Clerk, the officer drawing the highest salary. He has $4,000 a year, a good deal of patronage and some perquisites. He is not only the chief of police of the House, but is also the head banker. His deputy sergeant receives $2,000 a year and the cashier of his bank $3,000. The doorkeeper has the largest patronage of any of the officers of the House, and very nice perquisites. He receives a salary of $3,000 a year, and may legitimately swell that sum by several thousands. He can be of much service to members and all who have business with the House, and he can quietly cause a deal of annoyance to such people if he has a mind to do so. One of his perquisites is the privilege to sell the waste paper of the House with all its committee and document rooms, and this amounts to a nice sum in the course of the year; and it is whispered that at night paper and documents creep into the dust pile that could hardly properly be classed as "waste," but this may be one of the slanders that are always circulated in regard to places that are thought to furnish opportunity for gathering gleanings. No member of Congress has at his command the appointment of so large a number of officials and employes as the doorkeeper of the House, with his retinue of clerks, watchmen, doorkeepers, pages and laborers, and this, and the salary and perquisites, make it an office much sought.

The postmaster's is also an elective office, and the postmaster receives a salary of $2,500 a year. He is not really a postmaster, but is a clerk who receives and distributes and gives out the mails of the members and officials. He has an assistant, who gets $2,000 a year.

Nice Little Sinecures.

Outside of these offices, those having the highest salary attached are the clerkships of committees, the pay for which is from $2,000 to $2,500 a year. The clerk of a committee is also in some sense the private secretary of the Chairman of the committee, and, though some of them are worked hard enough, the majority have an easy time of it, and the office is considered one of the most desirable within the gift of the House. These clerks are chosen by the committees, and are not elected, as most of the high salaried officials are. In the Senate a private secretary is allowed each Senator, except the Chairman of a committee, who is expected to utilize the clerk of the committee. A number of the clerks of Senate committees are sons or other relatives of Senators, and in such cases the work of that clerk usually devolves on other employes, while the clerk draws and spends his $2,000 or more per year.

While the offices of the Senate may be reorganized to some extent, it is not likely that General Anson G. McCook will be ousted from his position as Secretary of the Senate, in which he receives a larger salary than a Senator, getting no less than $6,096 per year. The Chief Clerk and Financial Clerk get $3,000 a year each, and several others $2,500 each. The best paid office of a Senate committee is he of the Committee of Appropriations, who gets $3,000 a year. The Sergeant-at-Arms receives $4,920 a year, and has a number of assistants at about $2,000 a year. Isaac Bassett, nominally the assistant doorkeeper, who was appointed a page by Daniel Webster, and has served about 55 years in the Senate, gets $2,520 a year for rising occasionally and announcing, "A message from the President of the United States," or, "A message from the House of Representatives." When he became too old for active work an "active assistant" was appointed to relieve him, and he is now virtually pensioned at his comfortable salary.

For the first time since 1880 the Senate will now have as their presiding officer regularly the Vice President of the United States. By the death of President Garfield, Mr. Arthur was made President, and the Senate was presided over constantly by the president pro tempore. Soon after his election in 1884 Vice President Hendricks died and again left the Senate for four years under the guidance of a president pro tem. Mr. Morton will now preside. His short trial of the office last spring was not particularly impressive, as he showed extreme timidity, but he will probably improve with age. E. W. L.

Carleton's Lecture.

Will Carleton, author of the celebrated poems "Betsey and I Are Out," "Over the Hills to the Poor House," etc., who is to lecture at Old City Hall Tuesday evening next, is one of the most brilliant orators now on the platform. He is in his prime, and brings with him the experience of 15 years in public speaking. He has made home and home affections sweeter to hundreds of thousands. "Gone with a Han'some Man" is the poem that Wilson Barrett, the great actor, has used in adding to his reputation that of a brilliant after-dinner reciter. He gives it the supreme actor's compliment when he says, "There is material enough in that short poem for a play."

Going to McKeesport.

The Levy Concert Company will give an entertainment to-morrow evening at McKeesport, appearing in the Y. M. C. A. course.

A TALKER WITH A GRIEVANCE.

He Wants to Know Why so Many Stoppers Are Placed Upon Conversation—A Vigorous Protest Against Several Glaring Examples.

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

Are we to become a nation of quietists, and this grand aggregation of States to merge into nothing better than a gigantic speak-