The Dispatch.

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PITTSBURG, TUESDAY, DEC. 3, 1889.

A CHANCE FOR REFORM.

Congress opened its session yesterday in the usual stereotyped manner. The proceedings consisted wholly of the work of organizing, and there were no contests. Yet the whole day was taken up with the work, and the President's message did not reach that body.

This is the usual style of doing business in Congress at present. Yet the nation would have been glad to perceive some indication of vigor and promptness in the opening of the present body. For two years the Congressional vice, apart from the inevitable and omnipresent partisan fight, has been dawdling. With important legislation pressing it has simply fooled away time and left the business undone. If the opening of the new Congress could have shown a disposition to get to work more promptly it would have given hopes for an improvement on the public usefulness of Congress.

The burden, in this Congress, is upon the Republicans; and they should understand that if they do not establish a prompt improvement in the matter of attending to business, it will be concluded by the people that the vice of legislative dawdling is as bad in one party as in another.

PARTIES AND PRAYER.

The inability of politicians to see beyond the partisan rule of distributing the patronage of their friends was rather unpleasantly illustrated by the action of the House Republican caucus with regard to the selection of a chaplain. Although one of the most radical Republicans in the House, pleaded for leaving the chaplaincy out of the list of partisan patronage, in order that Rev. W. H. Millburn, the blind clergyman, might be undisturbed, the Republicans insisted on making the business of praying for the House a partisan matter. Supposing this action to be based on the usual spoils argument, that a party cannot be expected to succeed unless the administration of the offices is in the hands of its friends, it reveals a theory of prayer to the effect that if a Democrat should be permitted to discharge the duty, he might bring the Republicans to disaster. That view presents a remarkable degree of faith in prayer, although not a very clear understanding of its merits.

FREE BRIDGES AND THE COUNTY.

The proposition to call upon the county to furnish free bridges over the rivers within the city limits is reported to be meeting with a good deal of favor among the farmers who live to the north and south of Pittsburg, and who have to pay tolls in order to get to the city. To this class the saving in tolls would more than balance the increase in taxation. The non-bridge-crossing agriculturists to the east of the city have not yet been heard from; but may probably make their opinions known when the proposition for the county purchase of the bridges takes definite shape.

There is a good deal of force in the argument that as the two cities have paid the greater part of the taxation required to keep up the bridges in the rural districts, the county expenditure should be extended to the bridges in the cities. It is not meant by this argument that the cities gained no advantage by the building of rural bridges; but, on the other hand it is equally true that the rural districts will share in the gain from free bridges over the rivers. It is true, also, that an annual expenditure of $50,000 for rural bridges is a very different thing from an expenditure of six to ten times the amount for city bridges; but when we remember that the greater part of the increased expenditure will be borne by the city taxpayers, the account between city and country is left about even.

Whatever plan is finally adopted, the discussion of the subject is steadily opening the way to the adoption of a settled policy which will eventually secure the abolition of toll bridges.

EASTERN FARMS AND HENRY GEORGE.

We observe in an esteemed cotemporary the statement that within four miles of a Connecticut town, there are twenty-seven farms that can be bought for "half the value of the land with the buildings thrown in," which is alleged to be destructive of the Henry George theory. The statement of the value is redolent of a Hibernian origin, as the value of land, like that of other things, is generally what it will bring. But the fact that farms throughout the East are being deserted, certainly weakens the force of Mr. George's argument that the evils of the day are founded upon an alleged monopoly of lands. That the present state of affairs indicates something altogether wrong is clear enough; but if the phenomena are properly studied they will be likely to show that they rise from abuses of transportation, and are not to be remedied by piling more taxes on the land that is being abandoned.

A NATIONAL PROJECT.

The advocacy of the project of irrigation to reclaim the arid lands of the West at the expense of the general Government, which has been undertaken by Mr. Joseph Nimmo, evokes from the Philadelphia *Times* a rather ill-tempered characterization of Mr. Nimmo as "another surplus spender."

If Mr. Nimmo never commits himself to anything worse than the expenditure of public money to turn a vast and useless territory into actual wealth, he will have a very good record. Of course a wholesale spending of national funds for irrigating all the arid land at once, is not to be approved; but there could hardly be a wiser use of the public funds than experiments on a sufficiently large scale to determine exactly what may be done by irrigation. If the experiments prove that irrigation can convert a desert nearly twice as large as the original thirteen States into a fertile territory, it would be hard to find a better investment for a liberal share of the surplus than to secure that enlargement of the national wealth.

The objection to the proposition advanced by the *Times* is that perhaps some of the booming new States will be willing to irrigate their arid land for themselves. But a State that is made up of arid land can hardly be expected to boom, and the amount of money which can be raised by taxation on such land could not be expected to yield very much for improvements of that character, even if the coyotes and Digger Indians who make up the population of these territories, were willing to vote the appropriations.

It is difficult to imagine any expenditure of more national character than the reclamation of a territory big enough to cut up into half a dozen States. It is certainly clear that such work is much more likely to yield broad national results than the expenditure of millions to dig up an inconvenient island in the harbor of Philadelphia.

PUBLIC SPIRIT IN PITTSBURG.

The prosperity and growth of the State of Allegheny, and of the two great cities within it, are manifesting themselves in the cry which comes from all sides for many reforms and improvements. Wonderful changes for the better in the matter of rapid transit have been made.

Within little more than a year the two principal lines of street cars have exchanged horses for cables as motive power, a third important line is shortly to follow suit; and there is still a constant demand for the enlargement of these privileges. Allegheny, which has too long been held away from Pittsburg by inadequate means of transit and bridges of obsolete fashion, is determined to suffer no longer. The electric street railroad, well under way, a cable line or electric road in place of the horses which stroll between Manchester and Pittsburg, and two or three new bridges of the best modern type will much improve that lack. The suburbs of Allegheny, following that city's example, are agitating in dead earnest for new avenues and rapid means of inter-communication, and already the electric road which is to bring Bellevue, by means of the new California avenue, within easy reach of Allegheny is assured. In other directions the same desire for the conveniences of travel which modern science has put within our reach is being manifested in a very practical way. A great many of these improvements were due years ago, but it is satisfactory to know that they are to be had for certain now.

Another symptom of the same awakening is to be found on the Southside. They have discovered there that it is time to compel the railroads to give human beings, great and small, a chance of using their own streets without incurring peril to life and limb every hundred yards or so. And the necessity of making passage from one part of the city to the other free has also been brought into such prominence as will make any further postponement of this important question very difficult.

It is a general liveliness of the public spirit which is being manifested all over the community. Already it has accomplished much. The beautiful Schenley Park is one result. Who knows but that the Federal property in Lawrenceville may not, as suggested once more by Mr. E. M. Bigelow in THE DISPATCH on Sunday, be procured from Congress as another breathing place.

When the great body of a city's inhabitants work together for the public good there is no telling how beneficent and grand the results may be.

THE GROWTH OF EXPENDITURES.

The increase of appropriations for the next fiscal year, as foreshadowed by Secretary Windom's estimates, indicates the steady tendency toward enlargement of Government expenditure that has been going on for some years.

Seventeen million dollars may not be a very large increase for a great and wealthy nation like this. But when it is remembered that the appropriations on which this increase is based were the largest on record except for war expenditures, and showed an increase of about $100,000,000 over the appropriations four years previous, it is a pertinent question whether the tendency toward increased expenditure has not gone far enough.

The United States has no necessity for meanness in its expenditures; but at the same time extravagance with the public money is a vice against which there is the greater need to guard.

CIVILIZATION AND SAVAGERY.

A remarkably frank statement of what is after all a rather widely held view by a certain part of civilization is made by the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, to the effect that the only hope of redeeming Central Africa from barbarism "lies in a process of gradual extermination. There is no room to hope for the civilization of such a people, and it is useless to expend time and money in efforts to bring about such a result."

This is a practical assertion of the principle that the mission of civilization is to kill off the savage owners of otherwise unoccupied territory and then to enter in and take their possessions. According to that view the civilized world should support the Arab slave traders, for they are depopulating Africa about as steadily as can be done. Perhaps the great work of civilization might be done more scientifically. An international congress might offer a prize for the discovery of some method of quietly killing off the Africans, as it was proposed to kill off the Australian rabbits. When this great scientific operation had been completed, the Christianity of the land could move in and occupy the wilds of Africa until some more advanced and scientific race was able to come and kill them off.

This may be civilization; but after looking it all over, it would be interesting to have the esteemed *Globe-Democrat* inform us in what respect it is better than savagery.

IT is gratifying to see that the disastrous succession of fires elsewhere has stirred up the Pittsburg authorities to extraordinary measures for the prevention of similar destruction in this town. If the insurance companies will now back this up by a rigid inspection of insured premises and insistence upon the owners clearing away all dangerous rubbish, the apprehensions will be measurably dispelled. The price of safety for insured property and of profits for the insurers is eternal vigilance.

A NEW charge to the grand jury instructs its members as to the duties of that body and it is left for the new grand jury to show whether it can prove any superiority to its predecessors by paying attention to the charge.

THE case of the ice-man who has been elected to Congress from New York, is held up as an example of the rewards which are reserved for the ice-man who gives full weight to his customers in hot weather. If this ice-man really has that proud record, and remains true to it, by giving the public full weight of statesmanship in his Congressional career, he will be as remarkable a figure among Congressmen as among ice-men.

THE reduction of passenger rates to Washington by the Baltimore and Ohio furnishes another proof that the era of trunk line associations has not prevented the force of competition from doing its work.

THE statement comes that Maggie Fox, who sometime ago confessed to having practiced frauds in the production of spiritualist phenomena, now retracts the confession. She states that she had not control of herself when she made the confession. This will enable the general public to regard the confession as a case of involuntary and accidental truth-telling.

FROM the way in which the Pennsylvania Railroad is picking up property above Smithfield street, between Sixth and Seventh avenues, there is ground for suspecting that something is going to turn up.

AN epidemic of influenza which is prevailing in St. Petersburg, counts among its victims the Czar, his Empress and two of their children. The greatest potentates must bow before the inflictions of a cold in the head, and lay aside imperial dignity while using up the stock of handkerchiefs.

THE Mexican public on Saturday got mad because the bulls provided for the national amusement would not fight, so it proceeded to show that it was not as wise as the bulls by getting up a riot of its own.

MR. DAVID T. LITTLER announces that he "has no use for President Harrison." As it has taken Mr. Littler just nine months to produce this conclusion, the inference is possible that it has a certain degree of connection with the apparent fact that President Harrison has no use for Littler.

SO FAR the Fifty-first Congress has shown itself equal to the most striking achievements of its predecessor in the line of doing a large amount of nothing at all.

IT IS natural to suppose that the farmers out in Kansas who have been burning corn for fuel because it was worth less there than coal, are now going around kicking themselves because they did not ship the corn in time to catch that 60 cent market at Chicago last Saturday.

GOVERNOR HOEY's idea that no one is loyal who does not support a service pension enriches the list of definitions of loyalty with a new and novel meaning.

THE allegation that one of the constables, who yesterday returned a report of no speak-easies in his bailiwick, is in the speak-easy business himself, illustrates the lack of confidence which exists concerning the strict disinterestedness of the local Dogberries.

THAT Portuguese resolution does not seem to have much more foundation than the latest reports of big real estate deals in Pittsburg.

THE formation of a combination which is to consolidate all the factories making cotton duck, and control the prices of that fabric, will, if realized, make a decidedly active market for the employment of capital in building new cotton-duck factories.

THE roast-chestnut season is supposed to commence at Halloween; but now that Congress has got into session, we shall know better.

THE tinder-box building came to the front at Philadelphia yesterday and demonstrated its ability to cremate human beings in competition with the modern fire-proof structure.

PEOPLE OF PROMINENCE.

JAMES H. BLODGETT, of Rockford, Ill., has been appointed a special agent to collect statistics of education in the United States for the eleventh census.

THE Secretary of the Treasury has received the resignation of Joseph A. Neill as examiner of national banks in Pennsylvania, to take effect December 1.

PROF. R. R. RICHARDSON, of the Lawrence Chair of Greek Language and Literature at Dartmouth College, has been granted leave of absence for one year to enable him to accept the place of Director of the American School at Athens.

THE United States steamer Enterprise, now in English waters and under orders to come home, has been ordered by the Navy Department to proceed to Antwerp to receive the remains of ex-Minister Pendleton and to convey them to the United States for burial.

A SCOTCH society in London professes to have found a treasure in a portrait of Robert Burns, painted by the famous Sir Henry Reyburn, which was unearthed somewhere in an old picture shop and is supposed to have been lost for 90 years. An artist is restoring it with a view to exhibition in Edinburgh and ultimate sale to some rich American.

CAPTAIN SETEMBRINI, who represents the Italian navy at the Maritime Conference in Washington, owns the most complete collection of nautical works in the world. The library consists of over 12,000 volumes, and is very valuable. Captain Setembrini speaks English fluently, with a slight foreign accent. He once commanded the famous ironclad Duilo.

PRESIDENT CHARLOTTE SMITH, of the Women's National Industrial League, has addressed a memorial to Congress, in view of the World's Fair of 1892, asking for an appropriation to erect a monument at Washington to Queen Isabella I. of Spain, who was the friend and patron of Columbus. The petition suggests that the monument in question should be the work of a Spanish or American woman sculptor, and states that it is destined to commemorate the services rendered by a representative woman in connection with the discovery of America.

TRI-STATE TRIFLES.

A MISGUIDED robin began building a nest in an elm tree near Parkersburg in November. The late cold snap forced her to suspend operations and seek a sunnier clime.

WHEN Farmer John Robbins, of Belmont county, O., opened his barn door the other morning he was surprised to see a large gray animal scud hastily up a post into the hayloft. He went after the intruder with a pitchfork, and succeeded in killing a big fat raccoon.

AN Ohio tramp stopped a runaway team, thus saving the lives of a woman and her two daughters. The grateful owner of the rig presented the man a gold watch.

THE Miners' Examining Board of the Second Anthracite District, Pa., have completed the record of registrations under the new Gallagher law. In the district 4,884 miners have registered. In nationality they are distributed as follows: Irish, 1,166; Welsh, 575; English, 756; Americans, 888; Hungarian, 336; German, 138; Polish, 211; Scotch, 256; Swedish, 39; Prussian, 26; Russian, 18; British American, 21; Danish, 4; Switzer, 12; French, 11; Italian, 44, and Australian 1. The oldest miner in the district is George Brisco, an Englishman. He is 73 years of age, and has worked at coal mining in England and here for a full half century.

ADAM P. HOPKINS, of West Bridgewater, Pa., has filed a caveat upon an "improvement" in the form of posts and railroad ties made of burnt fire clay. The posts will be burnt very hard, and will have the railing secured by means of nails driven into holes made in the posts when soft, at an angle that will bring the heads together and hold the railing firmly in place. Holes through the ties upon either side of the rail will admit bolts, the upper ends of which will have washers and nuts bearing upon the rail and holding it firmly in position.

A GENTLEMAN who purchased a skeleton ticket from an Oil City ticket agent about a year ago, called at the office of the same agent a day or two ago and wanted a ticket "just like the other." It seems that he had ridden around on the ticket indiscriminately for an entire year. Each conductor to whom it was presented scrutinized it closely, at arm's length and with spectacles on, and in every other way, punching and handing it back. The owner or anybody else couldn't read it, but it appeared to be good. It had been so thoroughly punched that it fell to pieces, and no wonder the gentleman wanted another "just like it."

A MEADVILLE young lady has a peculiar craving for matches, which she nibbles with as much gusto as some girls display in masticating caramels. Saturday she masticated several red-headed lucifers, and, very naturally, was taken violently ill but recovered.

THE TOPICAL TALKER.

What a Single Energetic Spinster Did for a Nearby Town—She Built a Church and Collected Tin Cans for the Bell—That Bell's Awful Tone.

ONE energetic woman can accomplish a good deal, but I never heard of one lone spinster in moderate circumstances building a church, almost with her own hands and entirely by her own endeavors. Yet that is exactly what occurred in a little town that may almost be called a suburb of Pittsburg not more than five years ago.

It was the upshot of a church quarrel, I believe, this church building. The energetic spinster I've spoken of left the church she had belonged to for years and started out to build another one for herself and her friends in the controversy to worship in. Leaving her sister to look after the house—they were two spinsters living alone—she went out to raise money for her new church. She obtained a start from the church erection fund of the Presbyterian church, and she followed this up by getting donations from all the churches of that sect in Pittsburg and its neighborhood. She made a house to house canvass in many places, often obtaining goods and building material of one sort and another where she could not get money. For instance, she actually carried home as many boards as her arms would hold from a sawmill one day, and she was known in those days to pick up a loose brick wherever she saw it. What help she had from those who sympathized with her cause did not amount to much. A not over-friendly observer of her labor tells me that there is no doubt but that that church rose under the impulse of one woman's indomitable will, courage and devotion.

It is a structure of a modest sort, and you can see it for yourself any day you choose. Any doubting Thomas who refuses to credit the story can have the name of the woman and the town where the church stands of me for the asking.

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BUT when the church was completed, the roof on, and a minister more or less regularly engaged to preach from its unostentatious pulpit—was the founder, the builder, the inspiring spirit of the sanctuary satisfied? Not she. She wanted a bell; a bell to summon the little flock to their spiritual fold. All the money she had raised was gone. Not a cent was in the young church's treasury. She was not to be daunted or discouraged. She went to a bell foundry in Pittsburg and told someone there of the plight she was in. Whether for a joke or because he thought it a handy way to get rid of an importunate woman, the founder told her that if she would collect a goodly number of tin cans he would cast them into a bell for the church's belfry for nothing.

She took the proposal seriously and again started out to raise a fund of tin cans. She scoured the whole county for tin cans. In many a neighborhood the goats had to starve while this wonderful woman was collecting the material for her bell. Finally she had the required number of tomato, sardine and other tin cans, and true to his word the Pittsburg founder made them into a bell.

They say the tone of the bell was indescribable. It created a great sensation, and it must be said a good deal of godless murmuring. After it had clanged for a Sunday or two, a bold, bad man climbed into the belfry and cut the rope off close to the bell. Since then it has not been rung regularly.

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THEY tell another story about the bell. One day a Pittsburger went down to the town in question to see the energetic spinster on some matter of business. She was not at home, and, after searching high and low for her, the Pittsburger was about to go home when a church member advised him to clamber up into the belfry of the church and ring the bell.

"That'll fetch the old lady, sure," the deacon said.

After hesitating awhile the Pittsburger followed the deacon's directions, and, with some difficulty, reached the bell. He swung the clapper to and fro once or twice, and came near fainting at the excruciating sound it emitted. But before he had reached the ground the woman he had searched in vain for was inquiring in sharp tones who was tampering with the bell.

FAIR PLAY FOR ALL.

The Object of the Civil Service Law, as Expounded by the Commission—The System Good, But Not Yet Perfect—Honesty Versus Favoritism.

WASHINGTON, December 2.—The sixth report of the Civil Service Commission—Charles Lyman, Theodore Roosevelt and Hugh H. Thompson—was sent to the President to-night. The report is simply a general review of the work done during the past year. Special attention is called to the need of adequate means to carry on the work. During the last fiscal year the number of applicants examined was about 20,000, as against 11,000 the preceding year; thus very nearly doubling the work accomplished while the working force remained exactly the same. The commission asks for an appropriation of $53,000 this year. The report, after reviewing the changes and improvements in the system, continues:

The merit system of making appointments to minor Governmental positions, as contrasted with the patronage system, whereby these appointments were made as the rewards of personal or political service, is no longer in the merely experimental stage. It is not on probation. It has been given full trial; and wherever this trial has been fair the system has worked admirably.

Perfection Not Yet Reached.

It is not contended that the system is ideally perfect—no Governmental methods are. From time to time there have been shown certain defects in the working of the civil service law and rules, though most of these defects already have been, and it is believed that the majority of the remainder soon will be, remedied. But it is most emphatically contended that the merit system shows to a very great advantage when compared with any other, whether actual or proposed; and this is especially the case when the comparison is made with the patronage system, which it is now slowly but surely supplanting.

The fundamental proposition of the new system is that every American citizen has a right to serve the public—provided that his services are needed—if on his merits he is able to show that he is the man most capable of filling the position he seeks, and all he is required to do is to show this superior capacity in fair competition with other American citizens. In other words, the system is one of common honesty and of fair play for all, and therefore, it is essentially American and essentially democratic.

The Theory of the Spoilsman.

The object of the law is to give to the average American citizen what it takes away from the professional politician. How little this object is understood by some men in public life may be gathered from recent proposals to parcel out all the offices among the different Congressional districts according to the political faith of the Congressman representing them. This would, of course, simply mean a revival of the patronage system, with an added touch of chaos.

It is apparently brought forward in the simple faith that all that is needed is to divide the offices among the politicians of both parties, instead of among those of only one, and ignores the very common-sense view, which insists that the offices are not the property of the politicians at all, whether of one party or of the other, or of both; but, on the contrary, that they belong to the people, and should be filled only with reference to the needs of the public service.

A ROW AMONG THE FAITHFUL.

Bedford County Democracy all Torn up Over the Chairmanship Question.

[SPECIAL TELEGRAM TO THE DISPATCH.]

BEDFORD, December 2.—The outlook for a Democratic row was never more promising than at present. The election of a county chairman takes place early in January. The working element of the party claim that they are tired of the way the present chairman, Hon. John M. Reynolds, and his friends have been conducting things for the past three years and are kicking hard for a new man. Mr. Reynolds has his eye on the judgeship and his friends claim that to dethrone him from the chairmanship is a scheme to throw the Democratic nomination to a Somerset county man. This is denied by the other side, who say that Reynolds has been permitting the interests of the party to go by default and that he has driven the whisky element from the party, owing to his being chairman for the Prohibitionists during the amendment campaign.

Just who will be the man to down Reynolds has not been decided. The only names so far mentioned are E. F. Kerr and Frank Fletcher, esquires. Kerr would be the means of stirring up the old fight between the Reynolds and Kerr factions, which, for the past three years has been quiet, so Fletcher will likely be decided upon as the one who will please the boys and get the Bedford County Democracy together.

AT THE THEATERS.

"Bluebeard, Jr.," at the Grand, "Later On" at the Bijou.

The Ideal Extravaganza Company appeared last evening at the Opera House in the spectacular extravaganza of "Bluebeard, Jr., or Fatima and the Fairy." The motive of an extravaganza is to display pretty girls, handsome costumes and gorgeous scenery, and "Bluebeard" more than fulfills its mission. The company is very large, and embraces a number of shapely women and several good comedians. Edwin Fay, as *O'MaNdi Bensini*, Arthur Dunn as *Mufti* and Miss Esther Williams as *Ayesha* caught the audience in a topical trio, and each did excellent individual work. Frank B. Blair was a good, or rather, in keeping with the character, a bad *Bluebeard*, Miss Edith Murilla was a sprightly *Fatima*, and Miss Alice Johnston, as *Selmi*, contributed a good voice and pleasing presence. The ballets are numerous and very novel, and the costumes are really gorgeous. The scenery is from the hands of Albert, Voegtlri and Fox, and is remarkable in its splendor. It is claimed that this spectacular is the handsomest that has ever been placed on the road, and there is considerable foundation for the assertion. Several of the tableaux are dazzling with their combination of rival colors and animated femininity. In the midst of all this loveliness it was sad to see that the ballet master in his selection of local talent had obtained anything but a fair example of the beauty for which Pittsburg has so long been famous. A large audience witnessed the performance.

Bijou Theater.

Of "Later On," at the Bijou, one may say that it is excellent in its way. For an acknowledged farce-comedy this is surely high praise. Messrs. Hallen and Hart succeed in making everybody laugh, and the proverbially shrewd Yorkshiremen tell us, that "a good laugh is worth all you pay for it." Last night the whole Bijou audience laughed with a vengeance, and it was not the fault of the "Later On" company if a good many ribs did not ache consumedly after the performance. A good many new songs and dances have been introduced since "Later On" amused Pittsburg crowds last year, and now and then one is actually surprised by new jokes—a really remarkable thing in these dull days. Mr. Hallen, as *Plunger*, is a typical young American, and makes love just as his critic remembers to have done in his dear old days. His manner of laying siege to a kiss is really natural. It is to be feared that Mr. Joe Hart, who played *Todd*, the bookmaker, is an irishman. His rollicking fun and decidedly amatory tendencies can be explained in no other manner. "Place aux Dames" is an excellent motto; but in these notes it could not be followed. The lady portion of the company presented so many features worthy of being dwelt upon that the critic, in despair, left them to the last. Now he is forced to give up the attempt at description in despair.

Suffice it that Miss Annie Lewis, Miss Mollie Fuller, and Miss Carrie E. Perkins, were admirable in their various parts, and everybody envied their respective lovers, of the other ladies, and the remainder of the company, there was not one who did not add to the excellence of "Later On" in a marked degree.

Harry Williams' Academy.

The Sheffer & Blakely Specialty Company opened at the above theater last evening to the usual crowded house for this place. There is a great deal of variety in the bill, which is furnished by the following artists: Lester Howard and Miss Emma Howard, in a melange of new absurdities; Master Belzac, in wonderful wire-walking and musket drill; Miss Mabel Francis, recitations; Williams and Brennan, break-neck business; the Robinsons, in songs and duets, with high jumping; John W. Ransone, the well-known comedian, in one of his best specialties; M'lle Catharine Nelson, in astonishing transformations and a unique act; George A. Booker and Maude Leigh's sketch, "Assurance;" Sheffer and Blakely, the negro dialecticians; the sisters Ouri, marvelous juggler and tumblers, the whole concluding with "A Red Hot Stove," Lester Howard's latest farce comedy.

Harris' Theater.

Notwithstanding the fact that "Beacon Lights" was presented at this house late last season, it drew two large audiences yesterday. The play, which is full of interesting situations, is in the hands of a competent company in some respects, though not as strong as it was when seen here before. Harry G. Sinclair does the best he can as *Colonel Clay Calhoun*, but is not an improvement on his predecessor, and Miss Kitty See, as *Julia Hadley*, also suffers in a like comparison. Fanny Cohen is a sprightly *Carrie*, and Percy Plunkett a real villain. The other characters are well sustained, the Mexican costumes are bright and new and the scenery plenty and very good. A big week's business is assured.

The Museums.

The "Ginger Snap" Comedy Company and the interesting collection of curiosities attracted the attention of large crowds at the World's Museum yesterday. The principals and suspects in the Cronin trial are shown in wax, in very lifelike figures. Dr. Chittenden's collection of relics also contains much that is worth looking at, while a very funny farce comedy is presented on the stage.

A large number of freaks and curiosities are shown at the Casino Museum this week. Harry Hartman is truly a wonder, and Miss Lizzie Sturgeon, who plays the piano with her feet, is another. Then there are the clever tricks of the boy magician and the flame king, besides the clever artists on the stage, to amuse and please.

Nye and Riley Booming.

Tickets for Nye and Riley's entertainment at Lafayette Hall on Thursday evening next have been placed on sale at Klebers' music store, on Wood street. The sale opened yesterday, and already a large number of the choicest seats have been taken. The humorists bid fair to eclipse their former engagement in this city, when many people were turned away unable to gain admission. The entertainment is under the auspices of the Press Club.

Will Carleton To-Night.

Will Carleton, the poet, will to-night lecture in Old City Hall, on "The Science of Home." On the same subject he delighted a large Beaver Falls' audience last evening. His characteristic runs of rhetoric from the humorous to the pathetic, embracing many of his famous "Farm Ballad" scenes and incidents in word pictures, are irresistible. He will be introduced by Erasmus Wilson. A great audience is expected.

A LOST SATCHEL TURNS UP.

Singular Recovery of Some United States Bonds and Other Valuables.

[SPECIAL TELEGRAM TO THE DISPATCH.]

HAVERHILL, MASS., December 2.—On July 9 a Mrs. Moran, living in Kingston, N. H., left on a seat in the Boston and Maine depot here a satchel containing two $500 United States bonds, two bank books representing $1,000, and other articles, and on returning for them they were gone. About a week ago a young girl from a neighboring New Hampshire town came into the office of a lawyer and told this story: On July 9 she and her mother were standing on the depot platform, when a lady dressed in black handed her the satchel, with a request to hold it while she got a ticket. The lady in black failed to return, and the girl took the satchel to their New Hampshire home. There they looked at the contents, seemingly only some cotton batting and other things.

The satchel was laid aside until a few days ago, when, having need of some cotton, she went to get it, and discovered the treasure. The next day she came to the lawyer's office with the satchel.

Putting on Airs.

From the Chicago News.]

The picture of the Philadelphia schoolma'am which adorns the big cartwheel dollar which you borrowed yesterday of a friend and intend to pay back next week wears a haughty look since the silver convention at St. Louis paid its addresses to her in such an impassioned manner.

DEATHS OF A DAY.

Major John D. Rogers.

LEXINGTON, VA., December 2.—Major John D. Rogers, Solicitor of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, son of General Asa Rogers, ex-Auditor of Virginia, relative of General R. E. Lee, Chief Quartermaster of General D. H. Hill's division of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, died Sunday from injuries received in a railroad collision at Scottsville, on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in August last.

Rev. John J. Pomeroy.

Rev. John J. Pomeroy died yesterday at Chambersburg. Mr. Pomeroy is a brother of Mrs. S. D. Herron and a relative of Dr. D. N. Rankin and A. J. Rankin, of Allegheny. He was very well known in Pittsburg.

Newton Packard.

GREENVILLE, December 2.—Newton Packard, for many years proprietor of the Packard House, and one of the best known men in the State, is dead, aged 60 years.

Isaac L. Milliken.

CHICAGO, December 2.—Isaac L. Milliken, ex-Mayor of Chicago, died to-day. He was 76 years old.

FLOWER PRICES.

A Spicy Letter From a Retailer—A 50 Per Cent Raise Generates a Howl—Something of Flowers and Vagaries of Wearers.

"The bill for flowers, received this morning, simply takes our breath away. How you have the nerve to jump the prices on us 50 per cent from Saturday we can't imagine.

"And how you expect to have the gall to raise the price proportionately on our customers we can't understand. Now, any reasonable increase at this time of the year is all right, but to knock the breath out of us like that—well, we can't stand it; that is all there is about it. You must remember we have a great many home productions to compete against, and while we admit the blossoms are often inferior to those you send us, yet the difference in prices is quite an item.

"This letter is to see if you have any conscience. Will await your reply before taking chances on bankruptcy by sending in further orders."

The damp, cloudy weather of the past few weeks has in a great measure retarded the growth of the florists' beauties, and as the society season is just opening and the demand constantly increasing, the wholesalers are taking advantage of the combination of circumstances. That their action met with a "kick" from one firm the above letter, copied before the ink was dry, proves conclusively. Whether or no it will be an effective remonstrance remains to be seen.

Mr. Dell, with J. R. & A. Murdoch, when asked how he felt regarding the radical increase in the price of flowers, said:

"Well, we don't like it, but we can't help ourselves, for the New York florists control the market, and we can't depend on home productions, for our trade is too large, and the native grown flowers are not nearly so large or luxuriant as the eastern flowers."

He furthermore said: "We expect the winter prices to dawn upon us about this time usually, but they are making them pretty steep this year on account of the weather we have been enjoying (?) for the past month, which has been demoralizing to the local growth of flowers."

At A. M. & J. B. Murdoch's they were inclined to take an optimistic view, and said it was just what they had been expecting. That summer prices had reigned up to last Saturday, and they could not expect them to continue all winter. People would have the flowers anyway, and the profit was just about the same. Various conditions of resignation and rebellion were found among the other florists, and some interesting little bits of information regarding different varieties of flowers gleaned from each.

Decline of Chrysanthemums.

The above lovely flowers are losing ground, not through lack of appreciation, for never have they had such a successful season as the one just passed, but they are practically out of the market now. The chrysanthemum is a flower that has grown wonderfully in popularity within the past few years, and has received a great deal of attention from the growers of fine flowers relative to increasing its beauties. The rage for them has been national, and chrysanthemum weddings, receptions and teas have abounded from New York to San Francisco. In color their range is bewildering, and there is an expert florist experimenting now with a view to rendering the flower odorless. If he is successful a Vanderbiltian fortune will be his.

With the chrysanthemum's departure, the harrisii lillies, beautiful in their transparent whiteness, and the sweet Roman hyacintha, receive a warm welcome from their many admirers.

Long-stemed carnations in all their varied and beautiful colors and delightful fragrance, always have and always will be favorites, it is safe to predict.

The pretty modest little violet is loved by many, and will, so it is said, be a favorite decoration for the Oolong wave or afternoon tea that is threatening to make Japanese of all the society ladies just at present, and what is sweeter or daintier than a cluster of these delicate little blue flowers?

Roses—what memories and visions that word recalls. Doubtless, it is one of the most suggestive words in the English language. How often do people grow sick at heart, and the pallor of death spread over their faces at a passing whiff of a tube rose? The odor penetrating and peculiar, sweet to a sickening degree, recalls involuntarily to almost every one's mind the sad obsequy rites of some dear one. It is unusual to see them used in any other capacity.

Occasionally, however, a cluster will decorate the lapel of some young gentleman's coat or be tucked in a fair maiden's belt. Such always convinces the observer that the grim reaper has not called for any of the loved ones of the wearer.

Fragrant Memories.

The refreshing fragrance of the lovely la France calls up brighter, happier remembrances. Perhaps, to the young girl, the evening of her debut, or, indulging in a little more sentiment, the first basket of flowers received from the accepted lover, may be recalled by a sight or a whiff of the deep pink flower. The creamy white bride rose, the delicate pink Catherine Mermet, the brilliant red Bennett, the pink-edged Madam Wattville, the pure white nephetos, with leaves like silk, the yellow pearl and the queenly American beauty all revive memories pleasing and sacred, joyous and happy. How often, many years after the event, a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked matron will, by the sight or smell of a rose, become again by mental process the radiant bride standing at the altar, or in dress of simple white, with valedictory in hand, renew the triumphs of a graduation day.

Roses, in fact all flowers, are credited with inspiring the better part of human nature to more activity and often with awakening dormant virtues, but sometimes they have the opposite result. An instance in mind is of a lady who herself is responsible for the statement that whenever placed in a conservatory, or hothouse, amid beautiful flowers an almost insane desire to steal some would possess her. Even in the most sacred places she was not exempt from this impulse; walking through a cemetery where beautiful flowers abounded she would control her desires by the exercise of her will power solely. And never, under any other circumstances, did such a thought obtrude itself.

Very amusing scenes are witnessed in the florists' stores, and they say that it is absolutely necessary for them to have the heaviest French plate glass mirrors to withstand the strain that is constantly put upon them.

An example of the vanity of man was witnessed yesterday, when a reputed Count entered a well-known establishment for the purpose of purchasing a bouquet for a lady. After giving his order and awaiting its preparation, he took up a position in front of the mirror, and apparently oblivious of everything but his own dear little self he posed and primped. Yes, and primped and posed, arranged his coatcollar, curled his mustache, adjusted his handkerchief so the corner would peek out coquettishly, twisted his head to the verge of dislocating his neck to see how he appeared in the rear, and when he concluded to wear a scarlet carnation after deciding that that was the proper color to contrast with his necktie, spent five minutes in obtaining just the proper degree of slant in the button hole. He is a regular customer.

Another one, a lady, whose only weaknesses are chewing gum and wearing flowers, so she asserts, is very particular about where and how she affects each. In the latter a sad tax is she to the florist, for she insists upon his pinning the blossoms in place, and the entire extent of her upper anatomy is canvassed with the cluster often before the proper longitude and latitude is obtained. In this case, also, the mirror is subjected to severe and long-continued use. But all who indulge these "whims" are good advertisements for the florist, and he bottles up his wrath and assumes a patient, perpetual smile when he sees them entering his store. THORNE BRANCH.

The Lafayette's Reception.

From present indications there will be a select crowd at the opening reception of the Lafayette Club, to be held at New Turner Hall, Forbes street, to-morrow evening. Gernert & Guenther's full orchestra will be in attendance. The hall will be tastefully decorated with plants for the occasion by Murdoch.

Social Chatter.

MRS. JOHN WALKER, of Western avenue, who has just returned from New York, will receive her friends at her lovely home on Western avenue, Allegheny, Wednesday, from 3 to 6 P. M.

THE first large ball of the season comes off this evening at the Pittsburg Club Theater. It is given by Mrs. Joshua Rhodes, and at it her charming daughter, Miss Annie, will make her debut.

THE Mother Goose Committee of the coming entertainment for the benefit of the Newsboys' Home, met at Mrs. C. L. Magee's apartments in the Duquesne yesterday afternoon.

MR. AND MRS. J. M. COURTNEY celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary yesterday at their charming home in Emsworth by a reception from 5 to 10 o'clock.

THE P. F. Donahoe Club gave their second annual reception at Imperial Hall, on Grant street, last evening. An enjoyable time was the verdict of all present.

THE Woman's Club discuss the time-worn topic "Is Marriage a Failure?" at their meeting this afternoon.

WILL CARLETON will lecture on the "Science of Home" at Old City Hall this evening.

THE Women's Exchange Committee held their regular meeting yesterday afternoon.

THE GOSSIP OF G