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AMUSEMENTS THIS EVENING.

- FIFTH AVENUE THEATRE, Twenty-fourth street—A Bold Stroke for a Husband. WALLACE'S THEATRE, Broadway and Thirteenth street—OUR AMERICAN COUSIN. THEATRE COMIQUE, 514 Broadway—AFRICA; OR, LIVINGSTON AND STANLEY. BOOTH'S THEATRE, Twenty-third street, corner Sixth avenue—THE LILY OF FRANCE. OLYMPIC THEATRE, Broadway, between Houston and Bleecker streets—LA BELLE HELLENE. GERMANIA THEATRE, Fourteenth street, near Third ave.—DES NACONNENTS HAUBRAUC, &c. BOWERY THEATRE, Bowery—MARRIAGE—MA. AND MRS. PETER WHITE. WOODS MUSEUM, Broadway, corner Thirtieth st.—BASES IN THE WOOD, Afternoon and Evening. GRAND OPERA HOUSE, Twenty-third and Eighth ave.—ROUND THE CLOCK. NIBLO'S GARDEN, Broadway, between Prince and Houston streets—LEO AND LOREO. UNION SQUARE THEATRE, Broadway, between Thirtieth and Fourteenth streets—AGNES. MRS. F. B. CONWAY'S BROOKLYN THEATRE.—THE DEER'S MOTTO. BRYANT'S OPERA HOUSE, Twenty-third st., corner 5th ave.—NIGRO MISTRETT, SOCRATICUS, &c. ATENIUM, No. 355 Broadway.—SPLENDID VARIETY OF NOVELTIES. CANTERBURY VARIETY THEATRE, Broadway, between Bleecker and Houston.—VARIETY ENTERTAINMENT. TONY PASTOR'S OPERA HOUSE, No. 231 Bowery.—GRAND VARIETY ENTERTAINMENT, &c. Matinee at 2. SAN FRANCISCO MINSTRELS, corner 23d st. and Broadway.—ETIOPIAN MINSTRELS, &c. STEINWAY HALL, Fourteenth street.—LECTURE, "LIMOS HOPES FOR." BARNUM'S MUSEUM, MANAGERIE AND CIRCUS.—FOURTEENTH STREET, near Broadway.—Day and Evening. NEW YORK MUSEUM OF ANATOMY, 513 Broadway.—SCIENCE AND ART.

TRIPLE SHEET.

New York, Tuesday, Dec. 17, 1872.

THE NEWS OF YESTERDAY.

To-Day's Contents of the Herald.

"CIVIL SERVICE REFORM: THE OPINIONS OF THE NESTOR OF OUR NORTHERN POLITICIANS"—LEADING EDITORIAL SUBJECT—SIXTH PAGE. DIBB WITH THE KNIFE! Z. E. SIMMONS BUTCHERS N. W. DURYEA, A RIVAL POLICY DEALER, IN LIBERTY STREET—SEVENTH PAGE. THE FRENCH PRESIDENT BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE: THE BOURSE EXCITED; MARKED DECLINE IN RENT—SEVENTH PAGE. THE NEW ORLEANS SCRAMBLE: THE ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT; THE ACTION OF THE SUPREME COURT AND OF CONGRESS—THIRD PAGE. FEDERAL CAPITAL NEWS: A BUDGET OF BILLS FOR THE HOUSE; SNUBBING SUMNER; THE TEXAS FRONTIER—THIRD PAGE. EUROPEAN CABLE NEWS—PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS—AMUSEMENTS—SEVENTH PAGE. A RUMPUSS OVER THE BALLOT BOXES IN MEXICO—BRAZIL—THE EMIGRANT PASSENGERS BY THE FRANKLIN RESCUED—NEWS FROM JAPAN—SEVENTH PAGE. POISONING EDWARD O. ANDERSON: CLOSE OF THE PROSECUTION IN THE IRISH TRIAL; "IRISH-TOWN" DESPERADOES: THE COMING FIGHT—FIFTH PAGE. BURLESQUE ARRAIGNMENT OF EX-BOSS TWED! READING THE MAMMOTH INDICTMENT TO HIM: A PLEA OF "NOT GUILTY!" THE DAY FOR TRIAL—FIFTH PAGE. BOSTON'S "COMBINATION" AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT TREASURY: ACTUAL RESULTS AND WHAT IS SOUGHT TO BE ACCOMPLISHED—FOURTH PAGE. MEXICO'S NEW ERA: THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT LERIO DE TEJADA: RECEPTION AND DEPARTURE OF GENERAL DIAZ—EIGHTH PAGE. CONGRESSIONAL PROCEEDINGS: MR. CAMERON ADVOCATING THE FRENCH SPOLIATION CLAIMS: THE HOUSE SUSTAINS THE PRESIDENT ON THE LOUISIANA QUESTION—FOURTH PAGE. THE FEATURES IN THE OPERATIONS ON 'CHANGE' FURTHER ISSUE OF ADVANCEMENT IN ROCK ISLAND: FREE BANKING AND SPECIE PAYMENTS—NINTH PAGE. PROCEEDINGS IN THE LEGAL TRIBUNALS—TROTTING IN A SNOW STORM—MUNICIPAL—FIFTH PAGE. NON-ABANDONMENT OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD—REAL ESTATE—GAMBLING IN CUBA—NINTH PAGE. "T. W." ON CIVIL SERVICE REFORM—INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS—LITERATURE—SEATING AND THE STORM—FOURTH PAGE. TWO CATHOLIC CHILDREN ABDUCTED BY A UNITARIAN MINISTER'S DAUGHTER: THEIR RESCUE: MORE THAN ORPHANED—EIGHTH PAGE. REVELATIONS OF A DYING KU KLUX—THE HORROR—EX-CONSUL BUTLER'S DEPENDENCE—CHILD LIFE—EIGHTH PAGE. MORE ITALIANS—BRET HARTE ON THE ARGONAUTS OF EL DORADO—STREET SWEEPING—MARINE NEWS—TENTH PAGE. HOLIDAY CHARITY: THE FAIRS FOR THE RELIEF OF THE DISTRESSED: WHAT OUR CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPISTS ARE DOING—TENTH PAGE. A FATHER ROASTS HIS SON—ELEVENTH PAGE. ANOTHER HORRIBLE CRIME STAINS THE ANNALS OF THE METROPOLIS, another wealthy assassin will have luxurious lodgings in the Tombs, and the community is doubtless doomed to witness the face of one more murder trial, beginning in heat and ending in nothing. The account of this awful tragedy, which we present in another part of this issue, will be read with feelings of indignation and genuine alarm. That one ruffian should slay another is perhaps not so much a matter for deep grief on the part of law-abiding citizens; but it is a cause of indignation and alarm that the murderer should have no fear of punishment before his eyes. If the butchery of Nicholas W. Duryea by his partner in crime, Zachariah E. Simmons, should result in awakening the citizens to a realization of the weakness of our laws for the punishment of crime and stimulating them to demand a remedy, the sickening tragedy of last night will have had its use.

Civil Service Reform—The Opinions of the Nestor of Our Northern Politicians. "T. W." who may be styled the Nestor of our Northern political philosophers, from his active participation and rich experience in all the vicissitudes of our administrations and parties through the long and eventful period of half a century, has furnished us the compact and plausible argument, which will be found on another page of this paper, against the prevailing theory of civil service reform. He says that this invention originated with Senators in Congress, who, by their diligent efforts in procuring appointments for relatives and friends, generally in utter disregard of fitness, did much to make civil service reform necessary and popular; that the din raised upon the subject by liberal republicans and democrats in the late Presidential canvass constrained the republican party to accept it as an issue; but, now that the theory is going to be tested, it will be found utterly impracticable or productive of far greater abuses than any we have hitherto experienced. In support of this emphatic and unqualified condemnation of the reform in question "T. W." says that the system exists only in despotic or monarchical governments; that in England it enables the ruling aristocracy to fasten their dependants upon the government in snug positions; that it is repugnant to a republican system; that the attempt to build up an aristocracy of office-holders will fail; that as an institution for the education of a privileged class the West Point Military Academy itself was obnoxious to the public sentiment until experience had proved its value; that a special education, indispensable to the army and navy, is not needed in the civil service; that a college training is not wanted for this service; that if all the people have not a right to compete for these offices our republican institutions are a sham and a fraud; that this new theory here converts the departments at Washington, our Custom Houses and Post Offices into close corporations; that it would root out most of our crippled Union soldiers; that the late Philadelphia case, as settled by General Grant, proves nothing; that the idea of binding the President in the choice of his Cabinet to these new rules for the civil service is preposterous; that rotation in office is the proper rule; that Jefferson's qualifications, "Is he honest, is he capable, is he faithful to the constitution?" are all sufficient; and that it will not be long before these are the prevailing opinions of the country. Such is the essence of the argument of our venerable contemporary in politics and journalism, "T. W." against this new theory of civil service reform—"this great panacea for all our existing political abuses." Mr. Snapp, of Illinois, the other day, in Congress, delivered himself of a snappish speech, covering much of the same ground, from which it appears that the administration is not going much further in this civil service reform experiment without opposition from the party camp. Believing, however, that, upon the general theory upon which he is venturing, the President is right and that our venerable political historian, "T. W.," is wrong, we undertake, on a leading point or two, briefly to answer him. And, as we can judge of nothing for the future but from experience in the past, let us first turn for a moment to the experience of the government in this matter of the civil service. From the first inauguration of Washington as President to the retirement of John Quincy Adams from the White House it may be said that the Jeffersonian test of honesty, capability and fidelity to the constitution was the paramount law of appointments in the civil service. But there was also another law of appointments, first broadly promulgated by Jefferson, which even in support of this new idea of special qualifications we do not propose to abandon. In consequence of the tie in the electoral vote—73 to 73—between Jefferson and Burr for President in 1800 the election was thrown into the House of Representatives, and in that body the members from Maryland, Delaware and Vermont agreed to settle the contest in favor of Jefferson, with his agreement to certain reasonable conditions which they proposed. From the affidavit of the representative, James A. Bayard, of Delaware, on the subject, among these conditions was this: "that subordinate public officers, employed only in the execution of details established by law, shall not be removed from office on the ground of their political character, nor without complaint against their conduct;" and with his acceptance of this with the other conditions offered Jefferson was elected President by the balance of power in the House, which had been held in reserve by Maryland, Delaware and Vermont. This is the rule, the benefits of which we would still give the President in this civil service reform. Nor do we suppose that any idea is entertained by General Grant of extending the new rules as the law of the civil service upon which he has entered so as to make them applicable to the Cabinet, the foreign missions, the important Custom Houses or Post Offices. On the contrary, as the heads of the departments are but the secretaries of the President, he, of course, will continue to exercise the right of appointing them upon the good old rule of harmony between himself and them—upon the political principles and administrative policy which he represents by the will of the people. So, too, a large margin of discretion will be retained by the Executive in reference to all other appointments materially involving the success or failure of his administrative measures at home or abroad. Having thus disclosed "T. W." from his premises on this branch of his argument, his objections touching the absurdity of a Cabinet appointment by a committee of editors and schoolmasters may be dismissed. In the next place, may a merciful Providence save us from an aristocracy or privileged class of office-holders. We have heard that President Buchanan, towards the close of his melancholy administration, bewailed his chief duty in the White House as the dispenser of alms to hungry office-seekers, and that President Pierce compassionated the average federal office-holder, with his beggarly salary and uncertain tenure of office, as among the most unfortunate of men. And yet "T. W." is apprehensive that this civil service reform will give us an aristocracy of office-holders—an aristocracy of poor clerks, living from hand to mouth. Practically, from Washington to John Quincy Adams, inclusive, we repeat, our civil service was in accordance with this new system

adopted by General Grant. Good men holding places requiring special accomplishments and experience were retained from administration to administration till they died or failed in the harness. Under Washington's administration—eight years—there were nine removals from office, and one of these was a defaulter. Under John Adams—four years—there were ten removals, and one was a defaulter. Under Jefferson—eight years, new party in power—there were thirty-nine removals. Under Madison—eight years—there were five removals, three of them defaulters. Under Monroe—eight years—there were nine removals, six for cause. Under John Quincy Adams—four years—there were two removals, both for cause. And this administration of the younger Adams, from the record, is now universally recognized as, in every respect, one of the very best in the whole history of the general government. Rotation in office, nevertheless, is one of the strong points of "T. W." against the present administrative policy of civil service reform. The proclamation of this doctrine by General Jackson was the opening of Pandora's box upon the country, the ending of the old régime of honesty and capability and the beginning of a new epoch—this still unexpired epoch of spoils, plunder and corruption, which General Grant has undertaken to bring to a close. General Jackson opened his administration by clearing out the office-holders of the administration displaced, to the cry of "Rotation in office!" Marcy subsequently proclaimed it in the plainer English that "To the victors belong the spoils;" and the demoralizing example thus introduced has, from that day to this, been fruitful only of corruptions, spoliations and public scandals and crimes of every description. Back to this dark fountain we may trace the whole poisonous stream of our party politics as it lies before us. The frightful scramble for the spoils, "rotation in office," inaugurated by Jackson, has, with the incoming of every new President since that disastrous beginning, been a disgrace to the country. It cast out Van Buren, it killed Harrison and Taylor, it demoralized Tyler and Johnson, and disgusted even Buchanan; but it has made slaves of them all, more or less, to their party mendicants, not excepting General Grant. Desirous of conducting his administration not only honestly and faithfully, but in every sense with a becoming regard for public decorum, can we wonder that he has entered upon this new departure of civil service reform? He seeks to lessen the tortures and annoyances he has suffered and still suffers, from this endless procession of office beggars; he wants a little time for the consideration of public affairs; he wants competent men and stability in the executive departments; he thinks he has found the key to these treasures in this scheme of civil service reform. The country has approved the undertaking. Let it have at least a fair trial, and then let us judge the tree by its fruit. The Boston Office-Grabbing and Treasury Rings. Our Washington correspondence, published in another part of the paper, lets some light upon the combination, operations and influence of the Massachusetts ring of politicians who have controlled the Treasury Department and other departments of the government, and who are plotting to control them still. This powerful clique is called in Washington the "Boston Ring." It has now the Secretary of the Treasury, and is working to get Mr. Boutwell into the Senate and to be Chairman of the Committee on Finance, and then to put Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Richardson at the head of the Treasury Department in place of Mr. Boutwell. It had recently, or has now, the Attorney General, the Minister to England, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Lands (Mr. Pomeroy being a Boston man and belonging to the clique), Chairman of the House Committee of Ways and Means, Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the House Committee on Banking and Currency, and a number of other important positions and offices. Besides these it has the Vice Presidency. The great object, however, is to hold control of the Treasury and the financial legislation of the country, for these Massachusetts men always look to the main chance. The whole government might as well be turned over to this Boston combination and the seat of government removed to Boston. THE LOUISIANA CASE AND THE SUPREME COURT.—The Supreme Court at Washington has decided that an appeal from Judge Durell's action in the New Orleans troubles will lie as soon as a final decision is reached in the case now before that Judge, but that the Court has no jurisdiction to issue a writ of prohibition until an appeal is taken. As the republican papers have already predicted, no decision will ever be reached, and so the State of Louisiana will be handed over to a revolutionary cabal, supported by federal bayonets, until the time shall arrive for another expression of popular feeling. Then, probably, the decision will be so emphatic as to prevent any further outrage upon the freedom of the State. MEXICAN MUNICIPAL TROUBLES.—By telegram from Matamoros we are informed that the work of counting the vote which was cast at the recent municipal election culminated in a quarrel among the scrutineers, and that the agitation became so serious that troops were called to the scene? Two delegates who disappeared suddenly were supposed to have been kidnapped, but whether the event of their absence will affect the constitution of the Republic in any way is not stated. The new customs tariff will go into operation on New Year's Day. The members of the Frontier Commission are engaged busily at work—an important fact and of considerable interest to the American people. FURTHER ASSAULTS UPON WOMEN must be frightfully common in Leeds, England, as in his charge to the Grand Jury at the recent opening of the Assizes there, Mr. Baron Figgitt observed that that crime constituted a large portion of the cases before the Court. Could not some of our women's suffrage agitators help Leeds to improve its manners by making that city the scene of their labors? We could spare them.

The New Iron Building on Nassau Street—The Improvements Round the New Post Office. The progress and prosperity of the city of New York within the last decade have been marked as significantly by the improvements in the business localities below Canal street as by the settlement of the upper part of the island and the stretching out of the population into Westchester county. Without enumerating the many splendid blocks that have sprung up between Chambers and Canal streets on Broadway and back to and upon Church street, we find Stewart's building on Chambers street, the new Staats Zeitung establishment, the graceful Times Building, the Herald Building and the Park Bank adjoining, the Equitable Insurance Building, the Drexel Building, besides many others, and lastly the new building on the site of the old Herald office, on Nassau, Fulton and Ann streets, standing as landmarks to point out the new era of architecture which is fast pushing aside the combustible piles of the old city and filling their places with erections wholly or in part proof against fire. We are still, however, only entering on the threshold of the revolution which must before long sweep over the great business centre of the metropolis. The completion of the new Post Office building will make the locality of Park row, Ann, Nassau, Fulton, Spruce and the adjacent streets the most valuable property, not in New York alone, but in any city in the world. Yet all this neighborhood is more or less crowded with wretched, insecure, worthless buildings. Here and there the front streets present a fine appearance, with their substantial buildings, such as those we have named; but, like a goodly apple rotten at the core, the rear streets are choked up with rookeries which occupy ground as precious as virgin gold, and are a disgrace as well as a danger to the city. The new iron fireproof building on Nassau street, running from Fulton to Ann street, we claim to be the pioneer in the new movement of downtown improvements, invited by the near completion of the Post Office. It has swept away one of the objectionable piles at a single swoop, and has given an increased width to that important section of Nassau street. Its erection will compel the widening of Ann street, at least from the corner of Park row to Nassau street, thus relieving the overcrowded space between the Park and Fulton street on Broadway by opening a channel down Ann street, Nassau and Fulton to the ferry. The Herald and Park Bank buildings were erected independently of the Post Office; but the new Nassau street building marks the commencement of improvements clustering about the Post Office, and with its completion it will be impossible to keep Ann street long in its present condition. If the owners of the property on the north side of that street have not the spirit to avail themselves of the splendid opportunity before them, they should sell out to those who are willing to keep pace with the progress of the city. Park row, from Beekman street to Ann, both sides of Ann street and Nassau street, from the Park to the old Post Office, should be covered with buildings equal to the new iron structure on Nassau street, and it is to be hoped that the fine design of the architect, Mr. Arthur Gilman, may be accepted as the model for all the new buildings in that locality. We shall then have an important business district, not only presenting the handsomest buildings in any city in the world, but entirely secure against fire. The design of Homer Morgan, the agent for the new building, is to confine the tenancy to banks, insurance offices and law offices, all of which will naturally cluster around the new Post Office. The advantages of this centralizing particular classes of business are unquestionable, and with that idea in view Mr. Morgan has refused admirable offers for some of the best offices in the building for other purposes. He has already made leases for some of the highest offices to prominent legal firms, and it is evident from the demand that many similar buildings would find no difficulty in filling up with the same class of tenants. The new improvements in elevators and other accommodations make the upper floors almost as accessible as the ground floor, and the height brings the valuable advantages of good light and pure air. When to these benefits are added perfect security against fire it is not surprising that the demand for accommodation in the new Nassau street iron building should exceed the expectations of the agent, and afford a strong argument in favor of a multiplication of such buildings in the same locality as a profitable investment for capitalists. THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE JESUITS IN ROME. Since the occupation of Rome by the Italian troops, and particularly since the ancient city of the Caesars became the capital of the new Italian kingdom, a fight has been going on between the religious orders and the government. The government at Turin had already abolished the religious houses throughout the entire kingdom, and it was well known that, so soon as Rome became part of the Kingdom of Italy, the same policy would be pursued towards the religious houses hitherto sheltered in the Pope's dominions and under the shadow of the Vatican. The final action of the government has been long delayed. Many and serious difficulties lay in the way. Much of the religious property was owned by foreigners and was really under the protection of foreign governments. These property difficulties have, it seems, so far at least, been got over, and the long-deferred action of the government is about to be made. A committee of the Chamber of Deputies on Saturday last adopted a resolution "declaring that the suppression of the Society of Jesus, including the chief establishment of the Order in Rome, is imperatively demanded by the interests of the nation." The announcement, we are told, was received by the liberal Deputies with enthusiastic applause. We have no reason to doubt that the report of the committee will be adopted by the Chambers and endorsed by the King, and that the suppression of the Jesuits in Rome will become a fact. It is a curious fact that the Jesuits are as little in favor in Roman Catholic Italy as they are in Protestant Germany. It is gratifying to know that, whatever may become of the various religious houses, the property will not be diverted from its original purposes of charity. The arrangements were

on the whole satisfactory, although it is not conceivable that the suppressed orders will be at all pleased with the change. It is certainly a hard time for the Jesuits. Congress Yesterday. The pathetic revival of the ancient French spoliation claims by the venerable Simon Cameron, as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, in the Senate yesterday, was the most important feature of the day in that body. As a stalking horse for the introduction of historical recollections of the aged Senator's youth they may serve a recalcitrant and, possibly, a useful purpose; but as a standing annoyance they are unavailing. They have been for nearly three-quarters of a century a subject always in reserve, and have been brought forward until the French spoliation has become a byword. It has been as steady a friend to dull times as the Prince of Darkness is to a country parson. Of the rightfulness of the claims there is, unfortunately, no question. Everybody admits that they are just and should be paid. The "average American" would laugh to scorn the idea of our inability to meet them. Why not, then, pay them and get them out of the way? It is understood that most of these claims are in the hands of speculators, and, perhaps, that may account for the deaf ear Congress has turned to the cry of those who, the aged Simon informs us, "stalk through the land testifying against this glaring outrage." Cannot Congress once for all settle the little bill and stop this stalking and talking? In the House Mr. Hale, of Maine, was chosen for the task of "heading off" the resolution offered in the Senate by Mr. Sumner for the blotting out of the names of the battles of the rebellion from the army registers and peeling them off the regimental flags. The House, in passing the resolution, which was, of course, the exact reverse of Mr. Sumner's, indicates what will be the fate of the latter when it is reached. "There a consummation devoutly to be wished" if all these battles could be washed from the nation's memory as well as from their flags; but, until they have become of as little party meaning as nowadays Bannockburn or Marston Moor is in England, it is almost hopeless to begin obliteration with musty papers and regimental standards. Over the trifles and inanimate relics of the war it is useless to raise what may be called battle cries of peace. In the bringing together of the sections so sadly sundered for a time these things will not stand in the way if those in whose power the question now is will only throw no obstacles in the way. A resolution was passed asking information from the President on the extent of the federal interference in Louisiana, and one directing the Judiciary Committee to inform the House what legislation was needed to ward off the threatening dangers to liberty and peace in Louisiana, Alabama and Arkansas. THE CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATING FARGE.—The Oakes Ames investigating committee—it ought to be written Hoax Ames—continues to be the subject of speculation among the Washington politicians and letter writers. We are promised day after day "startling disclosures," and are favored with dark hints as to the parties implicated in the bribery and corruption notorious in all this Pacific Railroad business from beginning to end. As, however, the honorable Congressmen are investigating themselves, and very wisely do so in the dark, we have no expectation that the Blaines smelling committee will nose out anything more than is usually discovered by such bodies, and so we may as well make up our mind to a verdict declaring Oakes an injured innocent and all the suspected Congressmen the victims of misconception. THE FRENCH SITUATION IS UNCHANGED.—After the petition debate of Saturday public attention has been turned to the work of the Committee of Thirty. M. Thiers appeared yesterday before them and argued for the creation of a second Chamber. The defeat of the radicals, implying a large majority pledged against dissolution, will probably embolden the monarchists of the committee to continue their work so as to keep out the republican tide as long as their pitchfork will fill the gap. The advantage which M. Thiers possesses he thus makes the committee share with him. He is always willing to profess acquiescence in anything beforehand, but he somehow manages to have it so happen that when the time comes he acquiesces only in what he wants. It is curious also that his opponents as well as his supporters generally come out pleased with the result. IMPORTANT TO THE MONEY SHAGGERS.—The Court of Appeals has decided that the usury laws of the State of New York apply to the transactions of national banks on contracts made in this State, and that a violation of such laws subjects the offending bank to the penalty they impose. The decision hinged upon the case of the First National Bank of Whitehall against James Lamb and others, the defendants pleading usury to resist payment of a promissory note. The Judge at Circuit gave a verdict for the plaintiff, holding that the State laws against usury did not apply to national banks. This decision the Court of Appeals sets aside, declaring the defence of usury available, and orders a new trial. Judge Rapallo pronounced the decision, Chief Justice Church and Judges Allen, Peckham, Folger and Grover concurring. Judge Andrews was absent. PLAIN AND FANCY SKATING.—There is quite a tempest in a teapot among the numerous devotees of skating. It is a rather unseasonable subject to get excited over, considering the present condition of the season. The "fancy fellows," as those who have attained high proficiency in the noble art are irreverently termed, wish to keep the profanum vulgus at a distance, and therefore petition the Park Commissioners to reserve a portion of the lake in Central Park for their exclusive use. The profanum vulgus naturally become indignant, and consign the "fancy few" to one of the duck ponds. The clerk of the weather stopped in last evening and kindly relieved both parties of the necessity of further discussion. When the season comes it is likely that the Commissioners will reserve the lake for the use of the public in the broadest sense of the word.

The Late French Inundations—The Prevailance of Cataclysms. The tidings of the great inundations in France can hardly convey an adequate idea of the havoc they have precipitated over her beautiful and populous plains. The recent great storm and aerial waves of the Atlantic, bearing the evaporation of an ocean, have penetrated the elevated watersheds of Southern and Southwestern France and poured down their accumulated torrents. The Pyrenean chain of mountains is continued from the Spanish frontier by minor chains and table lands far to the northward and reappear in the Cevennes, the Montagnes Noires and the great plateau of Auvergne, which act as condensers for the moist and vapor-laden winds which come from the warm, tropical Atlantic, and dash against these now chilly and icy summits. These cataclysms which have desolated the fair Valley of the Loire have probably descended, with varying force, through most of the valleys which trend westward and discharge their waters into the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay. Like the similar visitations which have this year marked the watercourses of the Po, spreading ruin over Lombardy, they have so far defied the power of scientific prevision of forecasting. It is not impossible, but highly probable, that the recurrence of great inundations is ascribable to the abnormal or cyclical activity of the solar radiation, evaporating unusual and enormous quantities of tropical ocean water, which, in the course of a few weeks after their formation, are borne to the great Continent by the upper currents of the atmosphere. The past year, according to the observations of the Italian scientists, has been distinguished by an extraordinary emission of dark solar radiations and by remarkably high temperatures. That such periodic returns of copious and torrential rains are referable to some natural law within the power of science to discover and define can hardly be doubted. It is also highly probable that the late floods of Italy and France are manifestations of "the great atmospheric wave," which, as our weather office has recently shown, is a continuous hiemal phenomenon. The inundations of the Nile have for ages been so punctual that they are reckoned upon with perfect certainty, and computed, both as to their beginning and end, to within a day. In the year 1237 so high a flood existed in England that Westminster Hall was filled with boats; and the same visitation occurred in England in 1256 and 1287, in nearly eleven-year or sun-spot periods. The greatest flood of the Middle Ages was that which overflowed the banks of the Severn in October, 1483, and brought with it "the sweating sickness." The classic Tiber comes in for its share of historic floods, as that which immediately preceded the death of Cæsar, in the year 44. The Seine deluged Paris in 1689, and, according to the testimony of the Emperor Julian, more than fifteen hundred years ago, it then showed a difference between high and low water levels—which it still maintains—of about thirty-three feet. The Garonne, one of the French systems of rivers now devastated by the foaming torrent, in April, 1770, attained the enormous flood level of forty-two and a half feet above low water mark, and almost buried the town of Castels. It is certainly a subject worthy of accurate scientific investigation to determine, if possible, the years and times of the year in which these dreadful destructions may be looked for. The great strides of modern physical research inspire the hope that such inquiry may not be without its reward. A Singular Feature in Our Cuban Policy. The interesting correspondence from Peru, published in the Herald yesterday, contains one singular piece of information. We have been accustomed to hear much praise of our government for its friendly interposition between Spain and the governments of Chile, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, and for its arrangement of a treaty of peace between them. The part taken by the administration at Washington has been generally regarded as in the interests of republicanism, and there has been an impression that we have acted the part of a powerful protector of the rights and liberties of the peoples. Spain has been supposed to have held her hand from hostile acts against the South American Republics in consequence of the friendly but resolute and earnest position of the United States. It is not gratifying to our national pride and self-esteem to be undecided on these points and to receive the impression that our government has all the time been acting as the ally of Spain in her efforts to crush the independence of Cuba and in relieving her of the dangerous interference of States which sympathized with the cause of the struggling Cubans. It appears that the treaty arranged by our government between the contending parties contains a clause which binds the South American Republics not to assist Cuba in any way—without men, materials of war or any active aid—during her attempts for freedom, unless they shall have previously obtained the sanction of the United States for such acts. This, of course, would tie the hands of all the sympathizers with Cuba in the South American States, and would compel the governments of those Republics to exercise as sharp a vigilance in the interests of Spain as is practiced by our Washington authorities. Peru indignantly rejects such a proposition. Her people detest Spanish tyranny and will not be made its agents. They sympathize with Cuba and care little for Spain or her trade, which, after all, is of little value. Peru therefore withholds her ratification of the treaty, and the efforts of our Secretary of State to do a friendly act towards Spain at the expense of Cuban freedom, by shackling the hands of the South American Republics, will prove abortive. Impersonal Journalism. The Buffalo Courier, in an editorial upon "Journalism and Its Recognition," remarks that "journalism is becoming more and more impersonal. In the past individuals necessarily became identified with their papers in building them up. Many of them made the paper a sort of tender to their personal ambitions and personal intrigues, like Weed, Raymond, Forney and others; but it was always done to the detriment of true journalism." The Courier is right. Whatever may be said to the contrary, it is nevertheless a fact that the old system of considering the editor of a paper the embodiment of its opinions and suggestions is giving way to a