

however not to be too sure about this, as these are the same people who said before the bill was passed by the Senate that a vote would not be reached on it before the fourth of March. It is human nature to see future happenings as you wish them.

Lack of time may prevent the House committee that is investigating the expenditures of the Panama canal company in the United States getting to the bottom of things. It is already clear that an enormous amount of money was spent in this country, some think as much as \$25,000,000, and that much of it was spent for the purpose of influencing public opinion; which was at one time inclined to be very unfavorable to the canal, but the receivers of the money are yet to be uncovered. No credence is given here to the rumor that members of the committee were purposely killing time so that nothing would be found out.

The House appropriation committee has agreed to amendments to the pension appropriation bill providing for a transfer of the pension office to the war department and the detail of army officers to manage it; also for the suspension of all pensions paid to men having an annual income of \$600 or more, to widows who married since April, 1870, and, except for total disabilities, to non-resident aliens. Chairman Holman voted with the Republicans against these amendments.

No disputes of any kind occurred Wednesday when the Senate and House held a joint session and counted the electoral votes. The official announcement of the result was rather too cheastnutty to create anything like a sensation.

The quarantine bill is now in the hands of President Harrison, and will probably be a law by the time this is printed. It passed the House without serious opposition just as it originally passed the Senate. The country may now rest assured that if the cholera gets into the United States this year it will not be for lack of legal authority to take the necessary precautions to prevent it. This bill furnishes another example of the fact, sometimes forgotten, that the will of the people, when expressed, is always stronger than the will of politicians.

If the Democrats in Congress who are generally credited with enjoying Mr. Cleveland's confidence know what they are talking about an early extra session of the Fifty-third Congress is now a certainty. There are, however, still some doubters. Representative Abbot, of Texas, is one of them. He says: "There is no danger of an extra session for Mr. Cleveland has too much sagacity to call Congress together to try to accomplish the repeal of the silver law, with all the chances against such a repeal." But Mr. Abbot is in the minority.

Negotiations for the annexation of Hawaii are going on, but the result is not yet in sight.

Which party represents free trade, and which the Republican members of the House committee on ways and means vote in favor of a bill to put all works of art on the free list, and with two exceptions all of the Democratic members against it.

CUPID'S CARNIVAL.

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Everybody knows that St. Valentine's day falls on February 14th, but probably very few can give an accurate and intelligent account of its origin, or are aware of the fact that the good St. Valentine, for whom it is named, never either directly or indirectly bore any relation whatever to its observances. When Christianity began to shed its first luminous rays over the hearts of Pagan Rome, one of the chief difficulties encountered in the conversion of those old heathens was their deep-rooted attachment to the many festivals and customs which they had so long observed in honor of their duties. The early fathers of the church found it impossible to detach them from those ceremonies. Despairing at length of being able to do so, they sought to so modify the form of these heathen observances as to give them a religious character, thereby transmogrifying them into Christian ceremonies held upon the same dates.

For many centuries before Christ the Romans had been accustomed to hold great feasts in honor of Pan and Juno during February, from which month the latter deity derived her additional names of Februata, Februaria and Februa. These festivities were known as the Lupercalia, and during their continuance, among a great many other ceremonies, small tablets bearing the names of young women were placed in a box and drawn out by the young men after the manner of a lottery. Each person drawing was in honor bound to be the faithful attendant of her who had fallen to his lot from that time until twelve months had rolled around and brought another Lupercalia and a new drawing, though it not unfrequently happened that long before that time the constant association thus engendered had caused this sham engagement to terminate in a real one.

For those heathen festivities of the Lupercalia the early fathers substituted those of St. Valentine's day, thus retaining the date of the ancient festival. It has been stated that it was from the fact that St. Valentine was renowned for his universal love and charity that the custom of choosing love-partners upon his birthday and calling them by his name took its rise, but the iconoclasts who have long since deprived Columbus of the honor of having discovered America, who have taken away Washington's little hatchet and who have overthrown and destroyed countless other long-worshipped idols of our firesides and market-places, have fully demonstrated the fallacy of this idea. The only reason why the christianized Lupercalia was observed on St. Valentine's day was simply to have it fall upon a sacred occasion of approximate date and to connect it with Christianity through a great saint who suffered martyrdom in the third century, being first beaten with clubs and then beheaded, while a priest at Rome, where his remains now rest in the church of St. Praxodes, and where a gate—now known as the Porta del Popolo—was formerly called in his honor the Porta Valente.

The good churchman modified the

form of the matrimonial lottery of the Lupercalia by substituting the names of particular Saints to be drawn as valentines instead of the names of men and women. From this ancient usage is derived the custom, still occasionally observed in some Catholic countries, of selecting on St. Valentine Day for the ensuing year a patron saint who is called a valentine. But the young men and maidens, finding little amusement in drawing out the names of dead and gone saints, soon relapsed into their old custom of drawing each other, and even at the present time in many of the rural districts of England and Scotland it is customary on the eve of St. Valentine's Day, for the young people of both sexes to draw lots for a valentine, as the men draw from a bag containing the names of the maids, while the latter draw from one containing the names of the men, it generally happens that each person has two valentines, but the young men regard themselves much more strongly bound to the valentine they have drawn than to the one who has drawn them. If, as sometimes happens, a young man and woman should each chance to draw the other, it is regarded as absolutely certain that they are destined to wed, and must not, under any circumstances, permit their attention or affection to center elsewhere.

The custom of exchanging amatory addresses in poetry or prose between lovers on St. Valentine's Day is a very old one, dating back to the old Roman Lupercalia, when instead of a sheet of elegant note paper, a gold pen and violet ink, the gallant young citizens of Rome indited their valentines by means of waxen tablets and a stylus. Some of the early English poets devoted much attention to the composition of these love sonnets appropriate to St. Valentine's Day and owed their reputation largely to such works. Prominent among such was Charles, Duke of Orleans, who was taken prisoner at the battle of Agincourt, and Drayton, a poet of Shakespeare's time, whose now almost forgotten works abound in passages of rare beauty.

But written valentines long since ceased to be the fashion. The printed and painted productions of the stationers' shops supplanted them years ago, and the latter continue to grow more and more elaborate, artistic and expensive as time rolls on. An excellent description of such a valentine is given by Dickens in his "Pickwick Papers," where he tells how Sam Weller, on gazing into a stationer's window on St. Valentine's Eve, beheld a "highly colored representation of a couple of human hearts skewered together by an arrow, cooking before a cheerful fire, while a male and female cannibal in modest attire, the gentleman being clad in a blue coat and white trousers, and the lady in a deep red pelisse, with a parasol of the same—were approaching the meal with hungry eyes up a serpentine gravel path leading thereunto. A decidedly indelicate young gentleman, in a pair of wings and nothing else, was depicted as superintending the cooking. A representation of the spire of the church in Langham place appeared in the distance, and the whole formed a valentine."

The application of the term "valen-