

or for any others through them; that he had not sought the nomination, which, on the contrary, had sought him; that he considered the success of the ticket in New York a matter of much more importance to them than to him; that he repelled the idea that his Democracy was questionable by them or doubtful by any one; that they knew he was aware who had been his friends before nomination and would know who had and who had not been his friends after election; that he would have no friends to reward on account of friendship, and no former opponents to punish on account of former opposition; that he would go to election or defeat equally free and absolutely uncommitted; but that, if the Democratic people and ticket were beaten in that state by the Democratic machine, another Democratic organization was ready to take its place at once, and that, in such case, the youngest man present would not live years enough to see that machine sufficiently strong to win or betray a cause thereafter, or one of their number ever sitting in a state or national convention again.

"This," says the *Boston Herald* (Independent), "is exactly the Grover Cleveland whom we have known." It is certainly more like the ideal which the majority of the people hereabout who have not met him have created; and having refused to engage himself in entangling alliances with any combination or individual, it was thereafter wholly unnecessary (even if such a thing is ever necessary) to use explosive language characteristic of the saloon-lounger and corner loafer. It is entirely likely that that report is but the forerunner of many other similar ones; Mr. Cleveland is understood to have a very inattentive ear and a remarkably cold shoulder for the genus office-seeker, and these will be likely to exercise their capability in the matter of invention to the utmost. Those who are deceived thereby are not wise.

### THE STAR CHAMBER.

"Star chamber" proceedings are sometimes indulged in by our high-priced local government, as when the Mayor investigates an official against whom charges have been lodged and excludes reporters and spectators from the proceedings; also when the City Council gets in a mood showing lack of confidence in the public and shuts itself up behind locked doors. Everybody doesn't know the origin of the term at the beginning of this article, but as they are likely to become quite familiar with the practice itself—if they are not already—it can do no harm to supply the information. The court of star chamber is presumed to have derived its name from the room it occupied in the old council chamber of Westminster, England, the roof of which was covered with bright stars.

It has been discovered, however, that there are other derivations, the most plausible seeming to be the one given by Blackstone. Before the banishment of the Jews under Edward I their contracts and obligations were denominated in the ancient records *starrs* or *stars*, from a corruption of the Hebrew word *shetar*, a covenant. These *starrs*, by an ordinance of Rich-

ard I, were commanded to be deposited under three keys in certain places, one and the most considerable of which was in the king's exchequer at Westminster. The room at the exchequer where the chest containing these *starrs* was kept was probably called the *starr* chamber, and, when the Jews were expelled the kingdom, was applied to the use of the king's council, sitting in their judicial capacity.

Star chamber proceedings mean, in a general sense, any secret doings of a public body, but particularly where charges are disposed of.

### JUDGE FIELD TO RETIRE.

Associate Justice Field, of the United States Supreme court, is about to retire from that body, though political considerations may induce him to withhold his resignation until after President Cleveland is inaugurated. Mr. Field is a Democrat, and as there are but two others out of the nine members, it may be deemed only fair that one of that political persuasion succeed him, though such influences are not presumed to weigh with the "grave and reverend seigniors." Mr. Field enjoys the distinction of being the only surviving member of that bench who was appointed by President Lincoln; he has served with four Chief Justices—Taney, Chase, Waite and Fuller—his period of service being thirty years nearly, prior to which he was on the bench for five years in California. But six American jurists have a record equal to his—Chief Justice Marshall, thirty-four years; Justice Washington, thirty-one; Justice Johnson, thirty; Justices Story and Wayne, thirty-three each; and Justice McLean, thirty-two.

### THE SHORT-WEIGHT DEALERS.

A coal dealer of this city has had displayed in front of his place of business a placard reading—"1800 pounds of screened coal and 2000 pounds of unscreened coal for a ton." Anti-silvermen in the East declare that the government has issued an 83-cent silver dollar to keep company with the fuel measure or 100-cent gold dollar, and some even go so far—or so short—as to put it down to 69 cents, thus pointing out what an utter fraud it is to fast upon the people anything in the name of a dollar that does not answer the dictionary requirement of containing 100 cents. And so it would be a fraud if it were true, but the government has done nothing of the kind; it has declared, as it has the authority to do, how much gold and how much silver the dollar shall contain, and if one is a fraudulent measure, the other by parity of reasoning can also be so called with just as much propriety. But it was of coal we began speaking.

A ton, as the term is used in this country, is 2000 pounds of anything. More than that is more than a ton and less is but a fraction of a ton. If a man sells a ton of coal or anything else and gives but 1800 pounds, his measure is 200 pounds short, and, unless he reduces his prices to correspond with the shortness, he simply robs his customer out of so

much money as is represented by the shortage, that is, one-tenth of the whole sum paid. That is a trifling matter, some one may say; fifty cents or even seventy-five in a deal is not worth haggling over. Is it not? If not worth consideration, if not of sufficient importance to figure on, why does the dealer take it? He evidently thinks otherwise, or he would not commit the sin (to put it very mildly) of selling a man one thing and giving him another of less value. "Oh, but that is different," the superlatively charitable and excessively careless may say; "it amounts to something to the dealer, because small amounts in the way of profits are the same to him as to a storekeeper; aggregated they make his living." Just so; the small profits are what all our enterprises, great and otherwise, depend upon. But whenever we find one depending upon its small *thefts* for a living, it is time to jump on it with both feet and the hardest kind of shoes. Going out, the dishonesty spoken of does not seem to figure so highly, because it is distributed throughout the community and the amount which each has to pay is not so great as to incite to serious trouble; but coming in, it represents in the aggregate large sums every day, being just so much added illegitimately to a business that has not even the poor excuse of doing badly in a financial way to offer in justification.

It will probably be claimed that the new arrangement (1800 pounds for a ton), being duly advertised, the customer is not taken advantage of in any way, since he is made fully aware, before purchasing, of just what he is getting, and if he takes the goods at the figures demanded he impliedly if not actually consents to the deal and thus does as much toward making the bargain on the terms proposed as does the one from whom he buys. This would be an excellent argument for the defense in a criminal action founded upon such a case as is spoken of if the circumstances all around were normal; but they are not. Those who engage in the business of retailing coal in this city have a monopoly compared with which we have to go back to the days when there was but one telegraph wire, or later, one railway line across the continent and we could patronize it or any other method we chose. It will be observed that we thus had our choice even then. The coal men not being on a footing with other merchants because of the railroads being willing to haul goods for the latter on competitive terms, have the game entirely in their own hands. If one dealer's terms do not suit you, you can go to another; any of them will tell you that. But why waste time in going there only to be confronted by the other Dromio—to receive the same greeting, same terms, same treatment? You *must* have the coal, and so far as the outcome generally is concerned, might as well close a transaction with the first one you come to as the last. Certainly, the fact that the terms upon which you deal with the seller were imparted to you beforehand disarms any charge of unfairness you might be disposed to make and having assented you have no right to complain! Is this not logical, reasonable, comforting and conclusive?