

WASHINGTON NOTES.

The following spicy notes of men and things in Washington and Congress are culled from the Washington Capital of Dec. 7—

SENATE OPENING.

The Fog-bank gathered with its usual dignity. The Vice-President, who shows no trace of his late serious illness, took the seat made sacred by the late Christian statesman, and rapped the senators into prayer. The pious orator delivered himself of the usual formula, when the Almighty is called on to take part in the proceedings of these senatorial solons. And we, seated in the gallery, took our usual note of the degeneracy of the times, remarking that the present Senate is more remarkable for what it has not than what it has. The senatorial paralysis and the senatorial palsy were carried to their places, and the heads of same, being all that is left, deposited at their desks. It is somewhat odd that the two men so sadly afflicted are the most noted men of the day for their indomitable will and high courage.

We must not forget to record the fact that the Rt. Rev. Maj. General John P. Newman resigned his position as the Lord's stump orator of the Senate.

THE HOUSE.

Looked at from the reporter's gallery, the floor of the House, when covered with members, resembles a huge convocation of beetles with bald heads. The semi-civilized costume, made of dark cloth, gives a somber appearance to any assembly when one gets far enough above to take in at a glance the entire crowd. The present Congress resembles every other, only it is a little more so. By this last popular phrase we mean that as it is a democratic or representative body, it approaches year by year the element it represents. This is that imaginary quantity called the people by the politicians and the press.

We saw at a glance that the Christian element had been considerably eliminated. The smooth-faced, oily men who were wont to rise in their places and say, "Mr. Speaker, in the name of God, amen! let's rob somebody," are few and far between. We are now to have rogues without hypocrisy, which is a gain.

ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS.

This gentleman had centered upon him the eyes of the multitude bunched up in the galleries above. He sat on one of the front seats near the Speaker, with a slouched hat over his sesh countenance, and the hat seemed a huge extinguisher on a very slender, limp candle. It was odd to see one of the great leaders of the late Confederacy occupying a place under the flag of our Union in the Cave of the Winds. Jeff. Davis' re-appearance in the Senate would not create a more profound sensation. And such a slender, ghostly looking man. He seemed the ghost of the South returning to haunt the place where so lately it lorded over all. Our mind went back to the day when this man, with his shrill voice, was master, and every word he uttered carried with it a volume of fear. The master then is the ghost of the now.

He was kindly helped to his seat among scalawags, carpet-baggers and negroes, and his present associates not only thronged about him to secure the honor of a recognition, but by vote unanimously permitted him to select his seat without being subject to the uncertainty of the lottery.

MR. SPEAKER BLAINE.

This gentleman, now one of the most conspicuous figures on the political stage, came to the footlights, as it were, with his quick, nervous manner, to deliver a little address and take the oath of office that the artful dodger, Dawes, administered. Mr. Speaker Blaine retains his youthful vigor in all save the get-up of his parliamentary head. Within the last six years, Time, while whitening his hair and whiskers, has written strange characters upon his expressive face.

Blaine is a thorough man of the world. Quick, bold, decisive, and decidedly fascinating, he has won his way more through force of character than through force of intellect. He seems to carry with him an atmosphere of his own, in which his worst enemy, if the Speaker wills, is more or less won over to a liking. He is a better sort of poli-

tician, by which we mean a gentleman, without possessing claims to statesmanship. Quick to learn, he is no student, and a superb manager of a political organization would be as helpless without a party as a first-class locomotive in a corn field. He is regarded as the best speaker called to preside since Mr. Speaker Banks controlled a tumultuous body made up of enemies.

HON. G. Q. CANNON.

The next object of interest was the polygamous representative of the polygamous Mormons, a stout, rather good-looking man, with a face that indicates more culture and sense than the average congressman. When he stepped forward to take the oath one of the few remaining christian statesmen moved that Mr. Cannon be not sworn in because of certain illegal practices of which he, the delegate, had been guilty. This was understood to mean that he, said delegate had united himself in the holy bonds of matrimony to four wives. The consternation that spread over the House at this announcement was ludicrous to contemplate. If a member was to be excluded for possessing four wives what would become of the gentlemen of one wife each and no end of concubines? The belligerent Ben. Butler, quite regardless of his attempt once to create a precedent in the case of our little Conner, when he took the ground that "a moral monster" might be excluded, rolled to his slender pins and snorted his protest. His old enemy, Hoar of Massachusetts, came to his aid, while right and left started up and denounced this motion with such vigor that it went out with great puffs of wind, and the rotund representative of the saints came to the front and took his swear at the Constitution. The ladies craned their fair necks to get a better view of the member who found women willing to take a part of him—quarter him as it were—and quite a ripple of light laughter ran along the galleries as he swore to sustain the Constitution, his own being so sorely tried.

SEAT-DRAWING.

And then there was enacted the little comedy of seat-drawing. This is always a pleasant affair, and the Cave, that is ever the mart for cheap jokes, finds no end of amusement in locating its members. The House is an unwieldy body, now more so than ever, and as each member has to have room enough for an office to transact the private business of his constituents, the law-makers are necessarily spread over an acre; and the outlying provinces might as well be the rotunda so far as the eye of the Speaker is concerned.

A CONTRAST.

It is not comforting to one's patriotism to be called upon to contrast so immediately as we did the English House of Commons or the National Assembly of France with our own lower House. We miss the thoughtful look of educated men who, feeling their heavy responsibility, go to their work with composure, dignity and ease. A member of Parliament would as soon open a newspaper in church as to be caught reading one in his place in the House. Below, as soon as seats were secured, we saw our representatives busily preparing their desks with stationery to make the hall a common office in which to write and answer letters and read the papers. To these we add a senseless gabble that so confuses all proceedings that it is utterly impossible for members to understand what business is legitimately before them.

BACK PAY.

The great principle upon which this Congress is called together, that of back pay, manifests itself continually. Of the two hundred and two members, there are just two hundred and one, each with a bill prepared for the repeal of the obnoxious act; and each one is struggling for the floor, so as to be the first in the affections of his countrymen. The odd man, who has no bill ready, is a colored representative who cannot write. But he has Ordway getting up one that Spencer of the commercial college is to copy. Poor devil, he won't be anywhere with all that preparation.

The embodiment of this principle is the Hon. William Lawrence, of Ohio. William would like to cut the pay down to six cents a day and fetch on from Logan county a hollow oak stump to live in on one of

the government reservations. He could levy contributions on the poor clerks he got into office here for his food, while he could practice law for his wearing apparel.

BILLS.

We had the usual supply of bills. The chief end of man when he gets into Congress is to prepare and present bills. As everything on the earth, above the earth and under the earth has to be legislated for by Congress, that erudite body has no time to lose. An average congressman, when he is not running through the departments to solicit offices for his constituents, or writing letters, or reading the papers, is engaged in preparing bills. He prepares a few bills before breakfast. Then he has a lot before lunch. He gets up a quantity for dinner, and at night he has one at least, if not three young men he had placed in office, who work for the Government during the day, hard at labor until midnight. The average congressman considers it his duty to regulate the bowels of the American people, to provide for a better supply of sunshine, to purify cow's milk, and look to the control of a taste for stimulating drink—in a word to do everything by law. He acts on this, does all that he can, introduces a bill and the bill is referred to a committee, which means a chairman, clerk and door-keeper, who have a room between them in which to keep their whisky, steal their stationery and black their boots, and in the reference the bill untimely dies—which is well.

DIGNITY AFTER POLYGAMY.

That solemn emanation of Jersey law and theology, the gentleman known as Senator Frelinghuysen, who dares not snore at night lest he jeopard his senatorial dignity, introduced a bill for the better regulation of Utah. There was a time when that element known as the christian statesman was in power that such bills had force. But that day has passed, and the Hon. Dignity Doughhead will find it as difficult to control polygamy in Utah as the social evil in the District.

HALE AND STEPHENS.

Now that the one has just been buried, and the other, after a long absence, has been returned to Congress, the following will be *apropos*: John P. Hale, a large, corpulent man, one day said to Alexander H. Stephens, a small, lean man, both members of the United States Senate: "Why Stephens, if you don't look out I will swallow you." "If you do," said Stephens, "you will have to have more brains in your belly than your head ever contained."

BY TELEGRAPH.

CONGRESSIONAL.

SENATE.

WASHINGTON, 10.—Davis, of West Virginia, introduced a bill, which was referred, making newspaper exchanges, and weekly papers in the county where they are published, free of postage.

WASHINGTON, 11.—The Senate met at noon. V. P. Wilson being absent Anthony moved that Matthew H. Carpenter be elected president pro-tem of the Senate. Stevenson nominated Allen G. Thurman. Allen and Stevenson were appointed tellers. The votes were by ballot, and resulted in Carpenter 32, Thurman 16, blank 2. The whole number of votes cast was 48, necessary to choice 25. Carpenter was escorted to the chair by Thurman, and before taking his seat he said, "Senators, please accept my grateful thanks."

Dawes offered a resolution, directing the Secretary of the Senate to furnish a history of all the back pay laws ever passed by Congress, including details of the amounts paid under them, &c.

Gordon offered a series of resolutions, prefixed by a long preamble, reciting, in substance, that the abolition of the franking privilege had deprived agricultural tourists of many valuable seeds and much interesting reading, for which deprivations there should be an important reduction of expenditures, and requesting the Postmaster General to report, in detail, what reduction of expenses, if any, said abolition had resulted in.

Howe introduced a bill providing for the appointment by the President, with the consent of the Senate, of five commissioners to in-

vestigate the alcoholic liquor traffic in its economic, criminal, moral, and scientific aspects, in connection with pauperism, crime, vice, public health and the general welfare of the people. The commissioners should also inquire and take testimony as to the practice and results of licensing, and of restrictive and prohibitory legislation for the prevention of intemperance in the several States of the Union. The commissioners are to be appointed from civil life, irrespective of political or partisan consideration, to hold office one year, and to serve without pay, except for incidental expenses.

HOUSE.

Beck offered a resolution directing the Postmaster-General to report how many employees of all grades it will require to carry on a postal savings institution, as recommended by him, and that he furnish the like information as to the postal telegraph system, when the same is in full operation. Adopted.

Hoar reported a bill to establish an educational fund, and to apply the proceeds of the sale of public lands to the education of the people. It enacts that the net proceeds of the sales of public lands shall be forever consecrated and set apart for the education of the people, provided the act shall not repeal, impair or suspend any law authorizing pre-emption or homestead entries, nor abridge the power of Congress over the public domain, nor interfere with the granting of bounty lands to the soldiers and sailors of the late war. Without discussion the bill went over till Tuesday next, and the House resumed the consideration of the bill in relation to salaries.

Poland favored his amendment, offered some days ago, to make the compensation of Congressmen five thousand a year, and said it was amply sufficient for him to live upon.

At 4 p.m. Hale moved the previous question on the third reading of the bill, but the friends of the minority bill and all favoring a more sweeping measure, and all its opponents combined to defeat the motion. The vote was taken standing, and resulted in yeas 100, nays 145.

Orth then proposed to recommit the bill to a select committee, with instructions to report a bill repealing the whole salary act of last Congress as far as could be done under the constitution, and to ascertain the average amount of salary, mileage and all other expenses, exclusive of any estimate for the franking privilege, that was paid to Senators, representatives and delegates in the 41st Congress, and to report a bill to-morrow, fixing the compensation at the amount thus ascertained as nearly as practicable, with the necessary travelling expenses, and restoring all other salaries as they were before the passage of the act.

The House then resumed the consideration of the salaries bill, and finally the bill, reported by the majority, was re-committed, with the instructions offered by Orth last evening.

EASTERN.

CINCINNATI, O., 11.—The Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad, today, discharged fifteen telegraphers, twenty-five brakemen, five conductors, and a large number of other employees.

At its next executive session, the Senate committee on the judiciary will make a favorable report on the nomination of Geo. H. Williams to be Chief Justice.

It is reported to-night that the President has decided to appoint Robert W. Hughes, late republican candidate for Governor of Virginia, to be U. S. judge for the Virginia district, *vice* Judge Underwood, deceased.

The leading lines have decided that on and after Dec. 15, liquor in wood, not otherwise specified, shall be rated as first class freight, and liquor in wood valued at one dollar per gallon, when so stated on the shipping receipt by shippers, as third class.

HARTFORD, Conn., 11.—At the contest for oratorical prizes which took place at Trinity College this evening, the gold medal was awarded to Wm. J. Roberts, Detroit, Mich., and the silver medal to Jos. Buffingham, of Kittahing, Pa.

BOSTON, 11.—The recovery of Prof. Agassiz is considered probable.

DETROIT, 11.—The arrest of Jno. Whitney, at Salt Lake City, and

Joab Lawrence, at N. Y., were made upon complaint of E. B. Ward, of Detroit. It is claimed that about a year ago Whitney and Lawrence induced Ward to invest two hundred thousand dollars in the stock of the Eureka Silver Mine of Utah, that the mine was salted for the purpose of swindling Ward. It is understood that nearly \$100,000 of Eureka stock is owned by parties here, who have also been victimized.

MILWAUKEE, 11.—A carefully compiled statement of the marine losses on the lakes, prepared by Louis Bleyer, marine editor of the *Daily Wisconsin*, gives the total damage for 1873 at \$3,973,000, or nearly a million dollars more than in 1872. The vessels of all kinds lost or damaged in 1873, numbered 1,318, in 1872, 745.

CINCINNATI, 12.—Gen. W. W. Belknap, Secretary of War, was married at Harrodsburg, Ky., yesterday, to Mrs. H. F. Bowers, daughter of Dr. John A. Tomalinson; the ceremony, owing to recent affliction in the family of the bride, was wholly private.

BALTIMORE, 12.—A fire in the Old Museum Building this morning burned out the American Theatre Comique Company, and caused considerable damage to other occupants; loss \$50,000, insured for \$15,000.

WASHINGTON, 12.—The Secretary of the Treasury has written to the chairman of the ways and means committee recommending additional taxation that the revenues may meet the expenses, and enclosing a bill for that purpose restoring the duty on tea and coffee, which will yield about twenty million dollars per annum. The Secretary also enclosed a letter from Commissioner Douglass recommending an increase of ten cents a gallon on the tax on distilled spirits, which would yield seven million dollars annually, four cents additional per pound on tobacco, which would yield four millions, and various other matters.

HALIFAX, 12.—A steamer from Sable Island states that the schooner *Sephry*, of St. Pierre Miquelon, loaded with fish, had drifted ashore there, and that four bodies, in a state of decomposition, were found on board. Her masts and rigging were gone, and the hull was covered with sea weed. From the date of the papers in the cabin, the schooner is supposed to have been dismantled last July, and been drifting ever since.

NEW YORK, 12.—A great mass meeting was held at the Cooper Institute to-night, to protest, in the name of humanity and justice, against the barbarities perpetrated by the Spaniards in Cuba. The meeting was headed by large posters, headed "No more war upon women and children," and calling for the accordance of belligerent rights to Cuba. Every seat was filled. Hon. Horace Barnard presided. Letters were read from S. S. Cox, Lieut. Gov. Robinson and Alex. Stephens, expressing sympathy with the object of the meeting, and regretting their inability to be present. Letters were also read from Gov. Dix, in which he said that his views in regard to those atrocities were clearly set forth at the public meeting on the 17th ult. in Steinway Hall, and having entire confidence that the government will do all that is necessary to vindicate the honor of the country, he preferred not to take part in another public demonstration on this subject. The first speaker was Rev. G. H. G. Hepworth. He said America made a demand, after the late news from Cuba, which looked, under the circumstances, like an apology; the next message ought to be in the shape of a bombshell. A preamble and resolution were adopted, rehearsing the stories of the cruelties practised by the Spaniards in Cuba upon men, women and children, and praying Congress to adopt measures to prevent their recurrence, and asking belligerent rights to be accorded to the Cuban revolutionists. Addresses were then delivered by Gen. Cochrane Moritzlinger, Gen. Milen, Henry Stanbery, Rev. John Parker, and Major Haggerty. The proceedings closed with a resolution calling on Hon. Alex. Stephens and Hon. S. S. Cox to present the memorial and resolution to Congress.

BOSTON, 12.—The Massachusetts Dental Society has resolved that the use of chloroform in dental operations is not advisable. Fears are now entertained that Professor Agassiz may linger for a considerable time in a paralytic state, his recovery is considered improbable.