

# The Lenoir Topic.

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## OUR NEW YORK LETTER.

**Metropolitan Newspaper Changes.**—John Kelly's name to go up as Editor of the Star.—A new Publisher for the World.—The true reason for Mr. Conner's retirement from the management of the Herald.—Mr. Bennett's Cable Scheme.—Profits of the Liquor trade.—A handsome Christmas present.—Oscar Wilde's departure.—Souvenirs of America.

New York Jan. 6, 1882.

Correspondence of The Topic.

With the first of the year there will be some important changes in the management of several leading metropolitan journals. First of all Mr. John Kelly's name will be printed on the editorial page of the Star as editor. Mr. Kelly will not write much. He is more of a man of action than words, but he believes that the value of the property of the paper, of which he is the principal owner will be enhanced. At the same time he will be able to direct all the machinery of his party as vigorously as before, and should he fall out with the Governor or with the Mayor, he will be able to criticize and attack them from behind the shield of his paper, and while able to inflict serious wounds remain invulnerable under the concealing aid of the editorial "we." Anybody who believes that Mr. Kelly is losing his grip on affairs, and that Tammany Hall has seen its best days, will find himself sadly mistaken. His hand has not yet lost its cunning nor his arm its strength.

Young Mr. England, I am informed is to retire from the business management and publishership of the World on the 1st proximo. Mr. Speed the present managing editor of the paper, is to take hold of the fortunes of the paper besides retaining his present position. The World has been making frantic efforts right along to "boom itself up," but somehow its efforts do not seem to be productive of the desired results. It panders to the society world but only amuses by its erudite profundity on matters of etiquette and its intimate familiarity with the family tree of every visiting foreign nobleman. Its turf department however is admirably managed by a man of great experience and knowledge of that important branch of sporting literature. The World in summer is the vade mecum of every racing man.

Considerable interest has been aroused not alone in journalistic but in wider circles by the announcement that Mr. Conner had resigned the managing editorship of the Herald, on account of ill health, and that Mr. Flynn, the managing editor of Mr. Bennett's evening paper, the Telegram had succeeded him. Mr. Flynn is a good news man. He is not strictly speaking a cultured person as Mr. Conner is. The refinements of thought, manner and action are wanting in him. He came into the Herald establishment as an office boy and worked his way up. His mind however is vigorous, active and enterprising, and although he has the reputation of being excitable and rather a strong master of strong language, yet he is very popular among the journalistic fraternity at large, and that after all is one of the main necessities for a man in his position, since it reduces the danger of being "beaten" on an important piece of news, almost to a minimum. I am informed however by some one in a position to know that Mr. Conner's retirement means no more than a six month's leave of absence. As everybody knows Mr. Bennett is actively engaged in the formation of a new cable line, to break up the monopoly of the Western Union. Now Mr. Bennett has for years rarely taken any new step without consulting Mr. Conner, and in this cable scheme, which is the most gigantic undertaking he has as yet started on he means to have Mr. Conner's assistance. Mr. Conner goes to Europe shortly and then will start on his new field of labor.

The amount of money spent at drinking bars in this city is simply enormous, and I will give you an instance which will give you an idea as to its extent. The proprietor of two of the richest bar rooms down town, places which do simply a day trade and cater only to the custom of business men, has been in the

habit for some years of distributing the entire gross receipts on the day before Christmas to his employees. There are thirty two of them. He commenced in 1878 when the receipts footed up \$1,183.99. The next year they rose to \$2,562.60. In 1880 they amounted to \$3,375.15. Last year they jumped up to \$5,163.39, and this year they reached the snug sum of \$5,850.87. These amounts include the proceeds of sales of cigars, drinks and liquor by the bottle, which is always heavy, immediately before the holiday. When one thinks that the bulk of this amount comes in in the shape of sums ranging from fifteen to forty cents for drinks, an idea of the enormous amount of tipping can be formed.

Of course the proprietor of this place does not take in nearly \$6,000 every day. It is safe to take off 60 per cent for the extra trade brought by people anxious to swell the receipts of the employees. But even at this the average receipts at each place are \$1,000 a day, which is not a bad business. Besides this there are at least a score of drinking places in town where the daily receipts vary from \$400 to \$1,000 a day. Delmonico's down town establishment on some days takes in as much as \$1,500 over the bar. This place is a perfect thermometer of the state of the money market. When times are dull, the brokers are dull and poor and have little money to spend. But, when they are excited, and "the boys" make money nothing is too good for them, and Delmonico invariably gets the cream of their good fortune. The Astor House averages \$700 a day year in and year out and does the best bar trade of any hotel in the city.

At last he has left us, the apostle of aestheticism. Oscar Wilde came like a lion and went like a lamb, but he carried away with him to his home across the Atlantic, enough pleasant reminiscences of his sojourn in this country in the shape of American dollars. His year's visit cost this benighted country about \$40,000.

## AGRICULTURAL CLUBS.

Southern World.

We know that there is a deep seated prejudice against "book-farming" as it is called, and yet we would call the special attention of our agricultural readers to the succinct report of the Central Farmers' Club of DeKalb county, Georgia. The members are all farmers and discuss matters in a friendly and colloquial way, each giving his views freely and fully for the benefit of all. It is not "book farming" in the slightest degree. It is the result of the brain and brawn of farmers: the result of their experience told by themselves in a plain unvarnished way.

That these clubs are beneficial can not be doubted. Look at the practical results in DeKalb county as evidenced by well authenticated reports. What has been done in that county can be done in every county in the South. Let our farmers then form Agricultural Clubs in every county, have meetings regularly, discuss questions of practical interest, bring out the experience of members and the results achieved by them. An agricultural journal is valuable as it is suggestive; it furnishes the precept, the farmers supply the example. Farmers should not hide their light under a bushel but should have their county club where they can meet together and exchange views and compare notes as to the success of experiments and improved methods. What we need are the views and experiences of practical farmers and not mere theory; fact and not fancy.

## VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS.

Mr. Wm. Crankshaw, who has had large experience in cotton milling in England and in India, in a letter to the Raleigh Observer makes some suggestions which are worthy the consideration of any one contemplating embarking in cotton manufacturing in the South. Mr. Crankshaw is satisfied England has nothing to fear from New England competition in cotton manufacture, but he is confident that she will have more to fear from the Southern States if they will in future build better mills than have hitherto been built in North Carolina. He says the machinery should be such as will turn off the greatest quantity of work at the least cost. The advantages of having

looms in a one story mill, Mr. Crankshaw says, are well known to all practical men. A really successful cotton mill is based upon the following conditions, viz: First, cheap labor which does not mean low-priced labor but labor which "results in cheapness." Secondly, having the mill so planned as to admit of machinery being so arranged as to secure the maximum of labor saving and the minimum of expense in working. Thirdly, in the general arrangements of the mill, its hours of working and its general economy. Lastly, in efficient, "practical management, not merely superintended by one who may have a knowledge of machinery, or by one who has the theory of spinning and weaving, but neither of whom know anything of the innumerable details of the business. Mills of 15,000 or 20,000 spindles are more economical. Worked than mills of 5,000 spindles, the latter, to use a sporting phrase, being heavily handicapped with president, superintendent, carder, spinner, machinist, clerks, &c.

## BEATING THE STANDARD OIL COMPANY.

Cincinnati Enquirer.

The Standard Oil Company has lately been beaten by Mike Keating, 16 years old, a messenger boy of the Western Union Telegraph Company at Oil City. Mike has been in the employ of the telegraph company since he was old enough to carry despatches, and nearly all of this time he has been in the Oil Exchange at Oil City, carrying messages to and from the brokers. The large operators in petroleum send their despatches in cipher. The boy had carried so many messages sent by the Standard from its headquarters at Cleveland that he had unravelled the mystic characters, and could read them like a printed page. Just prior to the recent extraordinary advance in the petroleum market, when the price jumped in a few days from fifty cents to \$1.35, Keating carried a number of telegrams to the standard's brokers ordering them to buy large blocks of oil. The monopoly had laid its plans to boom the market, and the Oil City brokers were ordered to buy everything. "Buy half a million barrels," "Buy a million barrels," "Buy two million barrels," were the way these orders came in. They were riddles to all but the brokers who received them, and Mike Keating who delivered them.

Keating knew something extraordinary was soon to happen. The market, which had been like a stagnant pool for a year, was already creeping up the scale. Orders for immense blocks of oil were still coming from the Standard's headquarters. There was no time to lose. But what could a boy do without a dollar in his pocket? Keating went to one of the largest operators on the floor of the Exchange, outside of the Standard's agents, and told him he had a "point-er." The broker laughed at him. The boy's earnestness finally commanded attention, and the broker agreed to his proposition, which was that the broker should furnish money for a "deal," if he was satisfied with the information, and divide the profits equally. Then the messenger told the broker what he had, and of the telegrams he had been carrying from the Standard's Cleveland office. The next message that fell into the boy's hands was carried secretly to the broker and translated. It was an order to buy everything that was offered. The broker probably swallowed to keep his heart down. Any way, he went back to the Exchange and began to buy. He saw the standard's agents buying right and left, and was satisfied a big deal was in progress. He took everything he could get until he had a round million barrels. The market was already jumping fast, and his million barrels had been secured at an average cost of seventy two cents. He was loaded to the guards. Orders to buy and orders to sell were pouring in from every quarter, and the excitement was becoming intense. The market was still bounding upward, with the usual fluctuations. Every time the price advanced a cent or declined a cent the broker saw a profit or a loss of \$10,000. He kept his head, however, and when the market scored above 80 cents he began to unload. The Standard men were on hand to take everything, and he got rid of all his oil at an average price of 80 cents a barrel. He had "bought" at 72, and his profits were

therefore eight cents a barrel or \$80,000 in all. He divided equally with Mike Keating, the messenger boy who had unravelled the Standard's cipher according to agreement. It is well enough to remember that oil touched \$1.35 during this ten days' spurt, and if the broker had held on until the top was reached the profits of the two would have been \$630,000.

It goes without saying that the Standard Oil Company has a new cipher and a messenger boy is out of a job.

## Ben Butler's Rivals.

San Francisco Post.

The just achieved triumph of Ben Butler, and the clever devices with which he neutralized the effects of the splits in his own ranks, recall an incident of the general's early career, and which is interesting as showing that even in his youth Ben displayed those strategic abilities which have since done so much for his military and political career. It appears that young Butler was much enamored of a pretty girl who lived on a farm about six miles from that of the Butler family, in the western part of Massachusetts. The country beauty was a coquette, however, and kept quite a large train of admirers in suspense, each rival doing his best to gain the advantage of the others. At last matters were brought to a climax, and the damsel appointed a certain night when she would render her final decision as to which suitor she preferred. It goes without saying that they were all better looking than Ben, but the latter determined the inside of his head against the outside of his opponents. The nearest way to the fair girl's house and the one taken by all her eager suitors, was over a bridge formed by a single and somewhat slippery log placed across a deep brook in the rear of the house. Young Butler repaired to this bridge an hour earlier than the accustomed "courtin' time," carrying a pale of lard, with which he carefully anointed the log by the mellow moonlight, backing himself across it astraddle. As he afterward sat with his sweet heart waiting for the other suitors to appear, a loud splash came from the direction of the brook. Ben's game eye twinkled, and in imagination he could see one of his gaudily gotten-up fellow-candidates climbing up the opposite bank with his teeth chattering and heading for home across lads, but the conspirator looked as innocent as a cat in the dairy and said nothing. Pretty soon there came another splash and after awhile still another. The beauty began to show signs of pique at the negligence of her other admirers, a circumstance that Ben did not fail to turn to his own profit. Pretty soon came a tremendous double splash. "Dear me," said he, "how the fish are jumping to-night!" The splash of it was that when the future governor rose to go the slightest beauty gave him her hand. Sealing the bargain with an old fashioned husky bee kiss, Butler left his prize in such a state of exaltation that he forgot all about the greased log, and the first thing he knew both his heels hit him in the back of the head and he took a header down below just as his victims had done.

He climbed up the already well clawed bank, and made the six miles home uttering Kerneyisms at every step. He was taken with chills and fever as a consequence, and when he got well he found his fiancée had eloped with a hired man. Ben tells this as the narrowest escape of his life.

## Last Year's Railway Construction.

The Railway Age publishes a table showing that the number of miles of main track laid during the year 1882 was 10,821, on 316 lines, in forty-four States and Territories. Full returns will probably make the grand total 11,000 miles, which is 1,500 miles more than was constructed in 1881—the banner railroad building year up to that time. The number of miles constructed in the States mentioned below is as follows: Iowa, 958; Texas, 817; New York, 752; Ohio, 555; Arkansas, 529; Indiana, 520; Colorado, 500; Dakota Territory, 480; Pennsylvania, 464; and Minnesota, 444. Of the 316 roads noted, 140 are still incomplete. The capital invested during the year is estimated at \$270,000,000, exclusive of the amounts expended in the preparation of the roadbeds on which tracks are not yet laid.

## OLD HICKORY'S CHALLENGE.

Chicago Eye.

A curious relic of Andrew Jackson has just found its way into print through the New York Ledger, to which paper it was sent by a granddaughter of Jackson's antagonist. It is related in Parton's Life of Jackson that when Old Hickory was Young Hickory, just twenty one years of age, he fought the first duel of his life with Col. Waightstill Avery, a distinguished member of the bar of North Carolina. Young Jackson had a criminal case before the court at Jonesboro, in which he was deeply interested, Colonel Avery being counsel on the other side. In the course of the trial Avery was severe in his comments upon some of the legal positions taken by the younger lawyer, and used language which he afterwards admitted was too personal and sarcastic.

On the second morning of the trial, Jackson, acutely mortified by the repetition of the offense, tore a blank leaf from a law book, wrote a challenge upon it and gave it to his antagonist with his own hands. This challenge, now before us, yellow with its ninety four years, is the relic to which we allude. We copy from the original:

"August 12, 1788.

"Sir: When a mans feelings & character are injured he ought to seek speedy redress. You rec'd a few lines from me yesterday, & undoubtedly you understand me. My character you have injured; and further you have insulted me in the presence of a court and a large audience I therefore call upon you as a gentleman to give me satisfaction for the same; and I further call upon you to give me an answer immediately without equivocation and I hope you can do without dinner until the business is done; for it is consistent with the character of a gentleman when he injures a man to make immediate reparation; therefore I hope you will not fail in meeting me this day from yr. Hbl. st.

Andw. Jackson.

"Coll. Avery: "P. S. This evening after court is adjourned."

The duel was not fought before dinner as the impetuous young advocate desired since Colonel Avery could not immediately "find a friend." It occurred just after sunset. Fortunately neither of the combatants was hit, and they left the ground very good friends.

## Wanted Him to Take More Exercise.

New York Sun.

Scene: Office of a pompous doctor who knows it all. Enter a tired man who drops into a seat and says that he wants treatment. The doctor puts on his eye-glasses, looks at his tongue feels of his pulse, sounds his chest, and then draws up to his full height, and says:

"Name old story, my friend. Men can't live without fresh air. No use trying it. I could make myself a corpse, like you are doing by degrees, if I sat down in my office and didn't stir. You must have fresh air; you must take long walks, and brace up by staying out doors. Now, I could make a drug store out of you, and you would think I was a smart man but my advice to you is to walk, walk, walk."

Patient—But, Doctor— Doctor—That's right. Argue the question. That's my reward. Of course you know all about my business. Now, will you take my advice? Take long walks every day, several times a day, and get your blood in circulation.

Patient—I do walk, Doctor. I— Doctor—Of course you do walk. I know that; but walk more. Walk ten times as much as you do now. That will cure you.

Patient—But my business— Doctor—Of course, your business prevents it. Change your business, so that you will have to walk more. What is your business? Patient—I am a letter carrier. Doctor (paralyzed)—My friend permit me to once more examine your tongue.

HOW SHE SAVED HER DARLING.—"I shall not feel so nervous again about baby's teething," writes a grateful mother. "We almost lost our darling from cholera infantum, but happily heard of Parker's Ginger-Tonic in time. A few spoonfuls soon cured baby, and an occasional dose keeps us in good health."—Brooklyn Mother.

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**THE BIG CIRCUS OF THE TIMBS**  
—AND THE ONLY ONE—  
**SUITABLE TO THE SEASON!**  
**EXHIBITION FREE!**  
—OLD FOLKS, WHO LOVE FUN,  
Come along and help the little ones enjoy the sport.  
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