The Weekly Star.

A CHRISTMAS ELEGY.

The holidays advance with measured tread,
The snow-clouds drift athwart the sombre skies,
The average youngster early goes to bed
To dream of Santa Claus and mincemeat pies.

The baker kneads his dough with swifter case,
And moulds his wares in figures rare and quaint;
The kind confectioner, in hope to please,
Tips off his candies with fresh coats of paint.

Full many a colic-cramp and mortal throe
The dark, unfathomed depths of mince-meat bear.
Full many a soul the candy, white as snow,
Has hastened heavenward up the golden stair.

Now laughs the genial doctor all the while,
And orders in "a column well displayed."
The undertaker wears a hopeful smile
O'er prospects of soon reviving trade.

The Agricultural Department.

From an Article by the Commissioner in Monthly Bulletin.

The conditions of agriculture tend to separate those engaged in its pursuit. The farmer is seated on his own land, and the nature of his avocations engross all of his time. His business begins with the dawn and ends with the dusk. His opportunities of communication with others are necessarily very limited. The elections and the courts are the only occasions which bring them together in any considerable number, and then the exciting topics growing out of such occasions exclude all others. One of the objects contemplated at the time when this provision of the constitution was carried into effect was to provide a medium of communication between all those engaged in this pursuit. It was established mainly to meet the wants of the agriculturist, and to be subservient to his interest. It was intended to supply information not only as to the culture of all existing staples, but as to new industries and the best methods of prosecuting them. The aim was to make any fortunate discoveries which might be made in agriculture at once known to all who had an interest in them—to make the knowledge possessed by a few advanced men the common property of all. It was thought that a new spirit would be thus infused into the farming community and the standard of agriculture be advanced throughout the State. Experience has demonstrated that the principle of voluntary association cannot be relied on to accomplish these objects. Without the Department of Agriculture the farmers of the State would be without any common and constant medium of communication. Except as a part of the State organization it may be regarded as proven that none such can exist. That it has fulfilled all the expectations which have been entertained of it cannot be affirmed. For any disappointment that may have been felt good reasons may be assigned: First, the two sanguine expectations then entertained—expectations which no institution could have realized; secondly, the necessity of time to perfect arrangements which are to operate throughout a large State, and upon hundreds of thousands of people. A comparison between the condition of the State at the time of the establishment of the Department and its condition each year since, or a reference to the statistics of each year, will show that a great impetus has been given to agriculture here. It is believed that by a prudent avoidance of mistakes inevitable under a new system, by a wise application of improved methods which experience has taught, by a more intimate correspondence on the part of agriculturists with the Department, which is earnestly invited, its scope of usefulness can be indefinitely extended.

Jefferson Davis Hopeful of the Future of the South.

A. K. McClure in Philadelphia Times.

Mr. Davis discussed the present attitude and future prospects of the South with manifest interest and great candor. While he is not and cannot be a factor in attaining any desired political results for the South, he shares the hopes expressed by the great mass of the more intelligent Southern people, that all the difficult problems will yet be wisely solved by gradual advancement and final harmony of races and sections. He was unreserved in expressing the belief that a civil service in the South that would insure fidelity to government and people, could not fail to end partisan or sectional issues between the South and the Garfield administration, and unite both North and South in the promotion of the material interests of the whole country. His discussion of the relations of the two sections under the present political aspect, was thoroughly philosophical and statesmanlike, and while he will remain the one adjudged stranger to the Republic, he hopes yet to see the South prosperous in common with a prosperous North, and the scars of war and the bitterness of sectional dispute healed forever. Next to a Southern Slave Confederacy, he believes a free Union the best government for the Republic.

PERSONAL.

— Mrs. Nellie Grant Sartoris has three children, one boy and two girls.

— Several hundred students of the Moscow University were arrested last week for Nihilistic plottings.

— Mr. Gladstone has been visiting the Prince of Wales at Sandringham, and, by the Prince's especial desire, read the lessons at morning prayers.

— Jay Gould has given Siemens Bros., the London manufacturers, an order for two Atlantic cables with quite as little ado about it as though he were buying a spool of thread or a ball of twine.

RELIGIOUS NOTES.

— Miss Belle T. Michie, principal of the New Market, Va., Female Seminary, has received and accepted an appointment to Japan as a missionary.

— It is whispered in Vatican circles that Leo XIII. intends to resume quietly and by degrees the State ceremonies of the Pontifical Court as they were celebrated eleven years ago, even to going down into St. Peter's and reviving the splendid ceremonies in that famous basilica.

— Mr. Leslie Stephen thus defines (in *North American Review*) the "Religion for all sensible men." "A religion," he tells us, "is the synthesis of a philosophy and a poetry. It is the product of a theory of the universe working in the imagination of a people, until it projects itself into vivid concrete symbolism." Just so; we all understand it now—"vivid concrete."

— Apropos of the new revision of the New Testament, now on the eve of publication in this country and in Europe, *Scribner's Monthly* will contain three articles: one of these by Rev. Charles S. Robinson, D. D., on "The Bible Society and the New Revision," in which the record of the society on this whole subject is traced with care; the second by Professor George P. Fisher, of Yale College, showing "How the New Testament Has Come Down to Us," and the third a review of the revision itself, in which the excellence and thoroughness of the work of the American scholars will be pointed out. The first appears in the January number.

SOUTHERN ITEMS.

— The venerable widow of ex-President James K Polk has been quite ill at her home at Nashville, Tenn., for several weeks, and her recovery is deemed doubtful.

— The Little Rock *Gazette* pronounces the report that it is to lose its talented humorist, Opie Read—the Cleveland *Plaindealer* having offered him a larger salary and a wider field—a mistake.

— The prospectus is out for a new paper to be called the *Crusader*, and to be edited and published by Rev. Dr. W. W. Bennett, of Ashland, Va. The paper is to be devoted to the temperance cause.

— Mrs. Susan Jackson, the widow of Jackson, who shot Col. Ellsworth at the Marshall House, Alexandria, Va., at the beginning of the war, died several days since at her residence at Langley, Fairfax county, Va.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

MILITARY PREPARATIONS IN IRELAND
CRITICISM OF JOHN BRIGHT AND HIS COURSE—ARREST OF HOME RULERS—ENGLISH TROOPS DEFEATED BY THE BOERS—THE BOYCOTT RELIEF FUND—EMIGRATION OF JEWS FROM GERMANY.

[By Cable to the Morning Star.]

LONDON, December 24.—The correspondent of the *Times* at Dublin says that the movement of troops has excited a very uneasy feeling. It is generally believed that the Government possesses information warranting an apprehension of danger. The Government has made very complete preparations for any emergency. Immense supplies of provisions, tents and other campaigning requisites have been stored in central depots. It is stated that all these preparations point to the conclusion that the Government believes that far greater danger than is seen lurks behind.

A storeship has arrived from Woolwich with 20,000 rounds of buckshot and a large quantity of ball, cartridges and entrenching tools. Another vessel is shipping similar cargoes at Woolwich for new stations at Bruff, Mohill, Carrick-on-Shannon and Bally-Shannon, which will be occupied by troops. These positions are well chosen, being centres of the disturbed districts, from which troops could operate in various directions. At all stations where cavalry are quartered without infantry the supply of ammunition will be increased to fifty rounds per man.

LONDON, December 24.—The Earl of Carnavaron publishes an open letter to John Bright, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, protesting against the latter's speech at Birmingham on the 16th of November last, in which he condemned the land laws of Ireland and attributed the state of affairs in that country to the rejection of the compensation for disturbance bill by the House of Lords. The Earl of Carnavaron declares that holding sentiments so avowedly republican and hostile to the crown and the House of Lords, Mr. Bright ought to be able conscientiously to remain a member of the Cabinet for a single day. He contrasts Mr. Bright's mild censure of lawlessness and crime in Ireland with his scathing rebuke of those guilty of owning land.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* this evening says it understands that the friends of Mrs. Cross (George Eliot), are considering a suggestion that Dean Stanley be asked to permit the interment of the remains of the dead authoress in Westminster Abbey.

The police of Portadown, Ulster, to-day arrested a Home Ruler named Boyle, and a number of documents relating to secret societies found upon him have been remitted to Dublin.

LONDON, December 24.—Soldiers who are home on leave have been ordered to return to Ireland. They state that the feeling among the lower order of the people is very strong against the military, even in Dublin, and that it is a common practice to shoulder soldiers off from the footpath to provoke a quarrel.

The following telegram has been received at the War Office from Durban: Two hundred and fifty men of the 94th regiment, marching from Lidenburg to Pretoria, have been attacked and overpowered by the Boers, 120 being killed and wounded and the rest taken prisoners. The colors were saved. This is probably the same fight which was reported in a dispatch as having taken place at Middleburg. It will alter the situation, on account of the encouragement it will give the Boers. The officer commanding at Durban, who sent the above telegram, adds: "I will be glad to have a regiment of cavalry quickly."

The Boycott relief fund now amounts to $1,000.

The Inspector General of the Irish Constabulary has issued a circular warning the police against attempts to decoy them from their barracks and reminding them of the precautions necessary to insure the safety of the barracks and arms.

BERLIN, December 24.—Many Jews residing in Berlin avoid appearing in public localities, and many Jewish families are preparing to emigrate to Belgium and France.

KENTUCKY.

[By Telegraph to the Morning Star.]

HORSE CAVE, December 24.—Yesterday morning about 5 o'clock J. L. Gardner, a prominent citizen of Hart county, was called by a negro boy named Campbell to come to his stable, saying that one of his cows was sick. Upon entering the stable Gardner was knocked down with a stick of wood and robbed of $130. Campbell told Mrs. Gardner what had happened and helped to carry Gardner into the house. Nevertheless suspicion fell upon Campbell and his brother, and when arrested and searched $132 were found in their possession. They were taken to Murfordsville jail and at midnight were taken from the jail by one hundred men and hanged to a tree. One of them confessed the crime Gardner is in a critical condition.

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

BY REV. CLEMENT C. MOORE

VISIT OF ST. NICHOLAS.

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her kerchief and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap—
When out on the lawn there rose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter;
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash,
The moon, on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave a lustre of midday to objects below;
When, what to my wandering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and ten tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called some by name—
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On! Comet, on! Cupid, on! Dunder and Blitzen,
To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall!
Now, dash away, dash away, dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky.
So, up to the house top the coursers they flew,
With a sleigh full of toys—and St. Nicholas too.
And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof;
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack;
His eyes, how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry—
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow!
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed like a bowl full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump—a right jolly old elf;
And I laughed when I saw him in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle;
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night."

POLITICAL POINTS.

— It is fortunate that Congress will not be in session this summer. It would be appalling to have Weaver with the thermometer at 98 degrees in the shade. —*Phil. Times, Ind.*

— The House, instead of censuring its blackguard member, Weaver, yesterday, accepted his apology for his beastly conduct of the day before. In this the House did itself foul wrong.—*Wash. Post, Dem.*

— The position Grant really wants is General of the Army, with a salary equal to the Presidency, which will be given him the moment the Republican party obtains control, which will conclude his political aspirations.—*Pittsburg Post.*

— The Democratic Congresses of the last five years have made a splendid record in the matter of annihilating jobs and the lobby. We trust the record will be continued until March. Jobbery and lobbyry flourish only under Republican Congresses.—*Louisville Courier Journal.*

— The Rev. Theodore Irving, a nephew of Washington Irving, died on Monday at his residence in New York. He was pastor of different Episcopal churches on Staten Island, and assistant rector of the Holy Trinity Church in New York. He was the author of several devotional works.

25¢. Reader! Have you caught a cold? Are you unable to raise the phlegm? Have you an oppression on the lungs with short breath? Do you have a fit of coughing on lying down? A sharp pain now and then in the region of the heart and shoulders? A chilly sensation down the back? If so, **delay is dangerous.** "Slight colds," if neglected, often result in consumption, when the remedy, if applied promptly, would have averted all danger. **For twenty-five cents** you can get the remedy which the test of twenty years has proved to be **the most valuable Lung Balsam** ever discovered.

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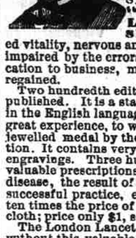

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