

brought under some kind of official supervision.

The examiner reports a gratifying growth in the legitimate business of the savings institutions, although their number has been reduced to six, while only one is operating under the most excellent law of 1879. It is greatly to be desired that all these institutions should conform to the requirements of this law, affording as it does ample protection to the earnings of the frugal, and justice to all concerned.

The third division of this report exhibits in detail the transactions of the several county treasurers, indicating the source of receipts and the purposes of disbursements, and showing at a single glance the financial situation of the counties in their relation to the State. The summary of these exhibits shows \$5,859,711.68 as the total sum handled by the county treasurers during the year ending September 30, 1880, of which \$2,506,911 was received for taxes of the preceding year.

The examiner's first report two years ago showed that only thirty-two of the 140 official bonds of county officers proved to be legally and technically correct. He is now enabled to announce that all these bonds have been filed, and will probably withstand any practical test of validity, while the penal sums named have, in most cases where needed, been increased to over the highest balances liable to be held by the obligors.

By persistent efforts he has almost entirely broken up the pernicious habit of depositing public funds in the private names of officers, which precluded the balancing of public accounts, and notwithstanding that fewer funds were deposited in some of the wealthy counties, the examiner has so far succeeded in enforcing the law providing for obtaining interest on deposits that the increased sum derived from this source alone will go far toward defraying the annual expenses of this office.

The provision of the law requiring the unnotified visits of the examiner, coupled with the timely warning afforded by the few delinquents deposed from office, has had a salutary effect, while the educating influence of the admirable circulars of instruction issued by the examiner have so greatly improved the management of county finances that in two-thirds of the counties the system of accounting affords definite results that will now admit of concise, clear exhibits of the state of county finances at any time required. I hazard little in saying that no single act of legislation in this State has ever been productive of more good in purifying the public service and avoiding the scandals and public immoralities incident to malfeasance in office than the creation of this office of public examiner. It is but just to say that this result is largely due to the methods pursued by the incumbent of the office, which have won the commendation of the highest official and financial authorities in other States.

In view of the results already achieved and the promise of future usefulness, I cannot doubt that you will aid in such needed improvements as will insure greater efficiency of the law.

STATE DEPARTMENTS.

The transactions of the several departments of the State government not specifically mentioned in this message will be made known by their respective reports, which I commend to your consideration. It affords me pleasure to testify to the industry and fidelity with which the heads and assistants in all the offices have performed their respective duties, and I bespeak your kind attention to the various statements and suggestions they will lay before you.

IMMIGRATION.

The report of the board of immigration shows that 123,000 of the pamphlets prepared by its secretary have been printed in the several languages, of which 123,940 have been distributed, in addition to which letters descriptive of the resources, progress, and attractions of the State have been published in some of the leading newspapers of this country and of Great Britain. The financial statement shows receipts from railroad companies amounting to \$2,135, which added to the legislative appropriation of \$6,000 gave a total fund of \$8,135.

The total expenses for all purposes to December 1, 1880, were \$7,188.12, leaving a balance of \$946.88. The importance of providing adequate means for the encouragement of immigration has been heretofore repeatedly set forth.

While attempts to attract people of all conditions to the State indiscriminately by extravagant statements should not be countenanced, it is of the first importance that we should not be deprived of legitimate and valuable contributions to our population and resulting prosperity by failure to employ the means successfully resorted to by our enterprising neighbors.

From the misrepresentations which are constantly being made regarding our climate and resources, not only by States located in more central and southern latitudes, but by powerful railroad combinations, large numbers of the best class of immigrants have been diverted from Minnesota. For this reason we should make greater, rather than less exertion, in order to obtain a reasonable share of desirable immigrants, who annually seek homes in the West. The apprehension formerly expressed, that in consequence of our lack of enterprise, and especially of our culpable failure to exhibit our advantages at the centennial exposition, we should fall to maintain our relative attitude among progressive States, is more than justified by the results of the national census of 1880. Kansas, a younger State, and until 1876 behind us in population, has so far outstripped Minnesota in honorable emulation, that she will be entitled to at least one and possibly two more members of Congress than will be awarded this State by the new apportionment. This result is more due to the world-wide advertisement of the centennial exhibit made by that enlightened State, than to any other cause.

Fortunately an opportunity to partially repair the mistakes of the past will be presented by the national exposition in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the treaty of peace, to be held in the city of New York in 1883, which has been authorized and provided for by Congress. I trust that Minnesota will make adequate provisions for the exhibit of our products and industries on that occasion.

STATISTICS.

The returns made to the commissioner of statistics with careful estimates for a few unreported counties, show the total tilled area to have reached 4,043,074 acres, of which 2,762,527 acres were devoted to wheat, producing that year a total of \$1,218,634 bushels. The total tilled area for 1880 was 4,538,716 acres, and the wheat allotment 2,963,325, showing that about two-thirds of all the cultivated land in the State continues to be devoted to wheat-raising. The growing seasons of the two years past were not unlike in weather characteristics, except that 1880 afforded a much more favorable seed time and a somewhat improved yield of our great staple, the total product of which is variously estimated at 40,000,000 to 45,000,960 bushels for 1880, while the aggregate yield of the four principal cereals, it is believed, will approximate 85,000,000 bushels. The report shows an increased culture of the early amber cane, of which 7,317 acres were grown the past year, while the approved appliances for parrying and granulating the syrups encourage the hope that the heavy expenditures made by our people for sweetening materials may in time be largely retained within the State.

The report shows that 25,831 acres are now planted to trees, besides 329,809 rods along public highways and the boundaries of farms. The experiences of the present rigorous winter enforce anew the importance of tree growing by all reasonable incentives.

There are indications of growing interest in

flax growing and other branches of diversified husbandry.

The returns of vital statistics for 1879 show a total of 23,474 births and 8,777 deaths, being a less favorable exhibit of fecundity and healthfulness than that of preceding years, which afforded a ratio of more than three births to one death.

The report of the railroad commissioner shows that 536 miles of additional railroad were constructed during the two years, making a total of 3,110 miles of completed railroad at the close of 1880. The gross earnings for the year ending June 30, 1879, were \$8,047,824, and for 1880 to same date \$10,774,826, while the net earnings for the latter year show an increase of \$1,088,888 over those of 1879. The State revenue received from railroad companies in 1879 was \$209,464, and for 1880, \$284,824. The tons of grain carried in 1879 numbered 536,466, and in 1880, 1,055,870, while the tons of freight of all kinds in the latter year numbered 3,834,989 against 2,836,940 in 1879.

The sales of land by the State, United States land offices and the railroad companies reach an aggregate for the two years of about 3,600,000 acres.

The last report of the insurance commissioner shows that fire and inland risks were written for 1879 covering \$80,997,596, for which premiums were paid amounting to \$1,020,931, and taxes and fees paid into the State treasury aggregating \$28,415 36.

The report of the fish commissioner shows that in the past two years 1,288,704 of the several varieties of fish have been distributed for propagation in the lakes and streams of Minnesota.

The report of the adjutant general shows that under the State claim agency there were filed between January 1, 1875, and November 30, 1880, a total of 8,477 soldiers' claims, of which 4,784 were allowed, covering the total sum of \$657,557.67, which was collected and distributed to the claimants free of charge.

APPORTIONMENT.

Among the first duties which should demand your prompt performance is a new apportionment of legislative districts upon the basis of the late federal census of the State. The failure to perform this duty in 1875 withheld from the growing frontier counties the increased representation to which they were justly entitled, and the wrong thus inflicted upon them has since become so serious that in some instances the same population which in the old counties sends four representatives to the legislature, in these new counties sends but one. Such obvious injustice I trust will not be allowed to continue. The census of the State has not been officially reported, but its numerical results are sufficiently known for the practical purpose required. The Congressional apportionment of the State must, of course, await the action of Congress, which if taken at the present session may possibly be in time to enable you to form our Congressional districts before adjournment. To this end it might be well to pass a resolution urging an early official report of the census to be sent us from Washington.

BIENNIAL SESSIONS—SPECIAL LEGISLATION.

It will devolve upon the legislature at this session to adjust the laws respecting reports of the several departments and State institutions to the constitutional requirement of biennial, in lieu of annual sessions. Under the laws now in force such reports are required to be made annually. This should be dispensed with and only biennial reports required to correspond with the alternate years when the session is held, thereby lessening the expense of publication. All questions as to the proper mode of canvassing the votes for district judges, and also respecting the time for the canvass of votes for State officers as now required by the constitution, should be set at rest, in order to avoid the possibility of future complications resulting from lack of express provision upon the subject. The adoption of biennial in lieu of annual sessions of the legislature, promises to be more salutary in its results than was expected by those who favored the change. It is not probable that any public interest has thus far suffered from lack of legislation, while it is certain that much less ill-advised action will now need to be undone, and it is believed that there will be less, rather than more, legislation required at this session in consequence of the omitted session of last winter.

Laws which would then have been deemed defective, are found upon further trial to need no amendment, the changing act and its repeal being thus both avoided, while the amendments that are actually needed are better ascertained and considered upon two years trial than one.

In all respects biennial sessions will prove beneficial, the saving of expense alone being so considerable that a decrease of taxation will probably be practicable, at least in alternate years. The change is being steadily adopted by the different States, two-thirds of which now hold biennial sessions, while I know of no instance of a return to annual sessions where the biennial plan has been once adopted.

If to the step thus wisely taken in the direction of reform there could be added this prohibition or curtailment of the growing evil of special legislation, another fruitful source of expense and abuse of power would be removed. It is well known to all persons familiar with this subject that at least two-thirds of the time, labor and expense required of the average session are consumed in the passage and printing of acts of a purely private, special or local nature, which are properly matters to be considered by the courts or local authorities, or which could be more promptly and justly treated under general laws of uniform application, with benefit to all parties concerned. This evil is receiving serious consideration in other States, from whose experience, both of the evil and of the attempted correction, valuable information can be derived. I commend the matter to your candid consideration, and suggest the passage of a measure for submitting to the people a constitutional amendment forbidding or greatly restricting special legislation.

MILITIA.

I invite your attention to the necessity for a thorough revision of the militia laws of this State. Minnesota has experienced her full share of those sudden emergencies to which frontier communities are peculiarly liable, wherein are demanded the prompt services of citizen soldiers; and I have had more than one occasion to commend not only the cheerful promptitude with which volunteer organizations have responded to my summons, but the surprising completeness of equipments which has enabled them to avoid delay. This is at once a matter of commendation and of surprise in view of the sacrifices required of the members of military organizations and the lack of support afforded them by our laws.

At a convention of delegates representing the several militia companies of the State held at Faribault in March last, an organization known as the "Minnesota National Guard Association" was perfected and a committee appointed to draft a well considered bill to regulate the formation and conduct of State military organizations. The bill thus prepared will be presented at the proper time, and I solicit your careful attention to its several provisions.

The formation and maintenance of a uniform efficient militia would doubtless be promoted by granting companies the power to enforce the attendance of members by the exaction of fines, by exemption from jury duty after honorable discharge as well as during service, and by other favorable provisions such as have proved beneficial in other States. As it is, the time and means demanded for the creditable maintenance of these organiza-

tions is so great that unless aid and encouragement be afforded by the State there is danger that they will be compelled to disband. The matter is commended to your favorable action.

VAGRANTS.

I invite you to enquire whether it would not be wise to pass a law to prevent the annoyances and depredations inflicted by tramps and vagrants, by whom our State is liable to be annually overrun. While in the older States, in times of depression, laws of this character may sometimes work injustice upon a class of unfortunate operatives whose idleness is enforced because work cannot be obtained, no such plea can be urged in behalf of these classes in a new and growing State, where there is no lack of employment for all who are willing to labor.

A stringent law providing for due discrimination as to the persons properly subject to its operations would doubtless have a salutary effect both upon those liable to its penalties and the communities suffering from their practices.

BOILER INSPECTORS.

The repeated explosions of the boilers of steamboats on Lake Minnetonka, resulting in shocking loss of life, and the liability to further disasters from the same cause on that and other lakes in this State, demand the intervention of law for the protection of the public. The supervision of the United States inspector of boilers extends only to the navigable rivers of the State, and hence our lakes and insulated bodies of water are without protection from the securities leading to such accidents. The importance of the subject impels me to recommend that you provide for the appointment of a competent State inspector of steamboat boilers, and clothe him with ample power to condemn or alter unsafe boilers, and otherwise provide for the safety of passengers upon steamboats in all waters not subject to inspection by authority of the United States.

RIVER COMMISSIONERS.

The hopes and labors which have long pointed to the Mississippi river as the natural outlet for our multiplying products and our defense against railroad extortion at length give promise of practical results.

The conventions which have been held in various cities in the great valley have compelled attention to the vast community of interests which give continual importance to this natural highway of commerce. Among other measures proposed to induce the requisite aid from Congress, was the formation of a permanent commission of delegates, to be appointed by the governors of the several States bordering on the river, for the purpose of collecting and disseminating information regarding the obstacles to navigation and the means for its improvement. I at first hesitated to appoint commissioners from this State, because I feared the purpose contemplated might not be confined strictly to the improvement of navigation as the common end sought. But becoming satisfied on further inquiry that my distrust was groundless, I appointed the commissioners as desired to represent the State.

The united commissioners of the several States have held several sessions, and I am persuaded have contributed invaluable aid to the influences which have secured more generous expenditures from Congress toward the general end in view. Prominent among the means recommended and relied upon is the reservoir system, involving extensive work and expenditures within our own State. The committee has issued an address embodying recommendations for legislative action, which will be duly laid before you, and to which your favorable consideration is solicited. I recommend that a small appropriation be made to defray the personal expenses incurred in the discharge of the duties.

LAND MATTERS.

Under the provisions of the act of March 1, 1877, appointments were made at various places convenient to settlers in order to adjust conflicting land claims along the line of the St. Vincent branch of the late St. Paul & Pacific railroad. Testimony was taken in 235 cases and claims allowed in 88, covering 12,000 acres, which were duly relinquished to the United States to the end contemplated by the act referred to.

Under the act of Congress of March 3, 1879, granting twenty-four sections to this State in lieu of certain salt spring lands originally granted but never received by the State, I appointed an agent to make selections of the re-granted lands and sent their descriptions to the several land offices for entry, but this was refused by the commissioner of the general land office on the alleged ground of lack of evidence that the State has failed to receive the lands originally granted. After some delay the selections were allowed to be made with certain conditions which have now been complied with and which will result in the speedy adjustment of the matter.

Under an act of Congress approved April 1, 1880, restoring to the public domain the Fort Ripley military reservation, certain lands included therein which had been inadvertently certified to this State for railroad purposes, were required to be reconveyed to the United States, the same never having been disposed of or claimed by the State or railroad company. A deed of relinquishment was accordingly executed of the lands designated, but upon the advice of the Attorney General, who questions the right of the executive to make such conveyance without legislative authority therefor, the delivery of the deed has been deferred until such authority shall be granted. Your action enabling the consummation of the conveyance is therefore respectfully requested at an early day.

Under the provisions of an act for the relief of homestead and timber culture claimants on lands claimed by the States as swamp lands approved March 10, 1876, lists were procured from the general land office aggregating over 17,000 acres and for the relief of over 300 claimants.

A proper deed of relinquishment is being prepared and will be transmitted to the department at an early day.

The magnitude of the interests of the State derived from the various land grants received from Congress, and the complications growing out of conflicting decisions and legal constructions pertaining thereto convinced me of the necessity of appointing a competent and experienced agent to investigate and adjust the interest of the State in all the various grants under the several acts of Congress. The continued wrongs suffered by innocent settlers who were permitted to file upon State lands required that the causes of their continuance should be ascertained and arrested. For these several purposes Mr. W. P. Jewett, a gentleman of ample experience and capacity, was vested with authority to investigate all matters relating to our landed interest, and his labors have led to the correction of the wrongs to settlers from causes stated as well as to a more prompt receipt of the patents of the grants inuring to the State, and they give promise of further good results.

NATIONAL.

The present position of our common country among the nations of the world should swell the heart of every patriot and believer in the cause of human rights. It has happily passed the experimental phase of its existence. It has withstood every strain by which national stability may be tested, and its weakness has proved its strength. Whether for the benefit of labor or the opportunity of capital—whether for the security of person or the amelioration of society—for all the ends of legitimate government, that system is shown to be best which most honors the merit of the individ-

ual and makes the equality of its people the first condition of its existence.

The result of the recent election for a national chief magistrate exhibits that ready acquiescence of all contestants in the solemn will of the people which is the boast of self government. It moreover reiterates the popular demand that the ideas and forces which saved the nation shall continue to govern it. It means that the costly fabric of popular government, which has been carefully reared upon this continent, shall stand as the refuge and hope of liberty for all nations, and be transmitted as the pledge of that equality of right and opportunity which should be the common heritage of mankind. To this proud end I am glad to discover indications that our Southern fellow citizens will at last take fraternal part. Behind the sullen front of malcontent a young South is beginning to assert itself. The vigor of a new civilization is quickening the torpid past. Let us hope that it may step into the arena of the present, and be willing to exchange the grim spectre of a lost cause for the winning substance of a regained country.

DISHONORED BONDS.

In the discharge of a final duty I should deem myself recreant to the high trusts confided to my care should I fail to embrace this occasion to make a last appeal for the performance of a simple act of justice toward those who have so long and fruitlessly held the solemn obligations of the State. I can but express my regret that in the performance of so clear a duty I incur the displeasure of many citizens entertaining different views for whose candor and judgment I cherish a high regard. In my former message, as well as those of my predecessors in office, the circumstances attending the issue of the so-called Minnesota State railroad bonds, and the urgent importance of providing for their settlement, have been set forth.

The fact that the principal of these bonds will become due so soon after the next regular session that too little time thereafter will be left to provide for meeting them, invests the subject at this time with new importance, and renders the prompt and final adjustment of this long standing indebtedness a matter of solemn and imperative duty. However good citizens may honestly differ as to the nature and force of the obligation represented by these bonds, the absolute necessity that some kind of disposition should be made of outstanding paper bearing the sovereign pledge and attestation of our State, will be conceded by all. Without questioning the sincerity of those who oppose the full payment of the debt, it is difficult to see why there should be serious differences among honorable parties where the essential conditions of the contract are undeniable.

That the original proposition was amply discussed, deliberately adopted, and overwhelmingly endorsed by the people, is a matter of record. That the railroad companies faithfully performed their part of the contract so far as to entitle them to the bonds conditioned upon such performance, is attested by the sworn statements of official inspectors as well as by the high character of the executive by whom full compliance was exacted. That the taking possession of the property and franchises of the companies obliges the State to pay the bonds is beyond question, since she acquired such property and franchises upon the sole condition while the sole justification and purpose of such acquisition was reimbursement to the State, for payment by the State. These, it seems clear to me, include all the considerations that need be embraced for an honorable settlement upon the legal aspects of the question. When to these is added the unquestionable fact that our magnificent railroad system of to-day is largely due to the early labor performed upon the trunk lines for which these bonds were issued, there can be little need of more words to establish the justice of this claim upon the State.

That the scheme was premature and unwise for so young and feeble a commonwealth was not the fault of the holders of the bonds; nor are they blameworthy because the railroad property recovered upon foreclosure was not applied to the liquidation of the debt. The bondholders, or those they represented, performed the labor contracted for, so far as construction went. That they did not go farther was not their choice or desire. They were in no wise responsible for the abandonment of enterprise. For the services so performed they received promise of payment from a sovereign commonwealth, and they have been waiting twenty-two years for the fulfillment of that promise from a State which boasts of its progress and prosperity.

The State having chosen foreclosure as her remedy, and disposed of the property thus acquired unconditionally as her own, the conclusion seems to me irresistible that she assumed the payment of the debt resting upon such property by every principle of law and equity. The liability having been voluntarily incurred, whether it was wisely created or not is foreign to the present question. It is certain that the obligations were fairly given, for which consideration was fairly received.

This debt was incurred in the darkest period of our existence. It was in the struggling hour of birth, when we had little population or wealth; when without agriculture, manufacture or railroads, and were rich only in youth and hope. Congress had just made us a munificent land grant in aid of a comprehensive railroad system, but before it could be made available the financial crash of 1857 wiped out private fortunes, overthrew public credit, paralyzed industry and swept the country with financial ruin. Capital which had eagerly sought investment with little temptation could scarcely now be lured by any offer from its safe retreat. Our landed endowment promised to be but a barren gift, for without capital it was wholly useless as an incentive or practical means for the construction of the contemplated railroads. In this crisis, when stagnation and despair threatened a total wreck of all our interests, men were found who reposed faith both in our resources and in our honor. They proved their faith by their works. Should such men be rewarded by reproach and betrayal, or by justice and gratitude from the State they served?

The circumstances were not unlike those under which the national bonds were issued which saved our country from destruction. In both cases the emergency summoned men of faith and courage to the rescue; in both the vital necessity was prompt and ample funds at a time when capital was most alarmed and least obtainable; in both the credit of the borrowers was bitterly assailed and depreciated by enemies in the trying hour; in both the actual amount realized upon the bonds when at their lowest value was but a fraction of the nominal sum for which they were issued; in both the great end contemplated was nevertheless materially subserved by the obligations issued, and in my candid judgment the argument in both is of equal force for shameless repudiation or honorable payment. The brightest jewel in the national crown of honor shines with lustre of the faith kept with those who trusted the nation in her hour of need. Shall our State wear the black stigma of broken promises to those who served her in extremity?

At a time when the financial credit classifies anew the roll of honorable debtors, and exalts our country among the nations of the earth, shall our State skulk behind her defense of sovereignty, and defy the rule of right because simply she has the might? Shall Minnesota herd with the repudiating States of the South and bear aloft the crown of shame as the only dishonored State of the North? Nay, I would not wrong the suffering South, for while there may be possibly some palliation for default by States crippled with internal disorders, and scourged by war, there is none for a State fattened by prosperity and blest by fortune. The

discharge of this debt is demanded as a simple act of justice, which would be none the less imperative were it to involve serious sacrifices; but these are not required; the task is plain and easy, and level to the simplest comprehension. The half million acres of land, which cost us nothing, and came opportunely to hand, as if Fortune would lure us from dishonor, can be so advantageously employed in this direction that scarcely an appreciable increase of taxation would be required to liquidate the debt. There would thus seem to be every incentive to favorable action, and none for shrinking from a duty so clear and imperative. Progress and prosperity and all the institutions and achievements of which we are justly proud, are as nothing compared with the maintenance of a spotless name.

Personal debtors give securities, by which justice may be compelled. A sovereign State gives only her honor as the priceless pledge of payment.

Fellow citizens, let that be preserved though all else perish. This subject has been presented in all its aspects; the legal obligation of this State has been affirmed by high judicial authority. The equities, the moral requirements and matters involving simple business pertaining to it have been conclusively shown. But in order to remove all possible doubt from the legal basis upon which the whole claim rests, it would be well as a first step toward settlement to obtain from a competent source such an authoritative verdict as shall forever set the question at rest.

The holders of the bonds are content to rest their case upon a court of our own choosing. They have declared their willingness to abide the award found by a commission wholly of our own citizens. I therefore recommend that the question be brought in some proper manner before the supreme court of this State for adjudication or other decisive determination with ample opportunity for the hearing of all parties concerned.

Minnesota has in most respects a proud place among the States of the Union. She has evinced her patriotism in war and her wisdom in peace. She has shown more financial sagacity and concern for the national credit than older and wealthier States, of which more was expected. She has been permitted to grow in prosperity and power. There is everywhere within our broad limits progress, order, thrift and contentment, all industries prosper and all interests point to a glorious future. Only this dishonored debt dims the bright promise of a vigorous career; but it meets her at every turn. In every civilized community her citizens are shamed with the taunting cry of repudiation. One day Minnesota will have a history, but whether it shall be a history of honor or dishonor, her people must soon determine.

By the simplest rule of fair dealing—as the nearest question of policy in the name of law, justice and honor, as the last public utterance I may make to you, I implore the people of Minnesota, and you, gentlemen, their honorable representatives, to seize this last opportunity, before it is too late, to wipe this only blot from the fair name of our beloved State.

JOHN S. PILLSBURY.

Executive Chamber, St. Paul, Jan. 6, 1881.

Bookbinding.

The bookbinders' craft was at its zenith just before the invention of printing; it has waned since, because nobody would care nowadays to give such prices as were cheerfully paid for books in the days when it took twenty-five months of a patient scribe's work to produce one copy of the Bible. The bindings of such costly books were works of art. Milan first, we are told, acquired a reputation for its bindings of Spanish leather, arabesque and gilt, which superseded the old-fashioned bindings of wood, metal, or ivory; but until the close of the fifteenth century the bindings of presentation volumes and of church books used on the high altars of cathedrals were mostly of solid gold or silver. Bruges produced some beautiful works of this description, likewise bindings in cloth of gold wrought with silk of many colors. At Ypres, the great cloth mart of North Europe, were first made plain bindings of cloth, embroidered more or less; but these were used only for small volumes of jests and ballads, and for the horn books out of which the children in noble families learned their letters. Venice had a name for its bindings in ivory and woods from the East; Florence, like Ghent in Flanders, abounded in brass artificers, and produced brazen bindings gilt or silvered, each one the work of a master craftsman, for none ventured to make book-covers who were not skilled with their tools; but the most gorgeous bindings of all that were made before the invention of printing came from Rome. Here the guild of Italian goldsmiths had its chief hall; and there was always a sure sale for rich bindings of wrought gold, seeing that the Kings and potentates who came to visit the Papal See invariably gave and received presents of splendid books.

Varnish on the Church Pews.

The seats had been newly varnished, and, somehow, the varnish was not right, as it was terrible sticky. You know when you pull anything off of sticky varnish it cracks. Well, the audience had all got seated, when the minister got up to give out the hymn, and as the basement of his trousers let loose the varnish of his chair there was a noise like killing a fly on the wall with a palm-leaf fan. The minister looked around at the chair to see if he was all present, and that no guilty man's pants had escaped, and read the hymn. The choir rose with a sound of revelry, and after the tenor had swallowed a lozenge, and the bass had coughed up a piece of frog, and the alto had hemmed and the soprano had shook out her polonaise to see if the varnish showed on the south side, the audience began to rise.

One or two deacons got up first, with sounds like picket firing in the distance on the eve of battle, and then a few more got up, and the rattling of the unyielding varnish sounded as though the fight was becoming more animated, and then the whole audience got on its feet at once with a sound of rattling musketry. The choir sang "Hold the Fort." When the choir had concluded the people sat down gingerly, the services were short, and all went home praying for the man that painted the seats.—Peck's Sun.

Two bells found by a diver between Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie, taken from the wreck of a vessel of about 350 tons burden, bear the date 1374, and must have been cast two centuries before the discovery of America.