WASHINGTON GOSSIP.

THE PROPERTY OF PUBLIC MEN.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY—SOME POLITICAL ITEMS.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22, 1887.—Despite the bad adjustment of the affairs of the District of Columbia by the present Commissioners, or a majority of them, men who have money to invest in real estate continue to flock into this city in Washington. The truth is that the future of the National Capital now seems to be so well assured that frequent mistakes or occasional errors of judgment by a District official have ceased to be regarded as matters which may exercise, permanently, an outward influence on its prospects. The change in the fortunes of the present Administration was marked by the formation of a rather amusing ring of real estate speculators to control prices and the expenditure of money appropriated for city and suburban improvements. The members of the ring received so much encouragement of one sort and another in official quarters, including the White House, that they took a pretty high tone and made some rather strong statements about what they proposed to do. I do not hear so much of that kind of talk now, and it is to be inferred that the questionable plans had and expenditures made in excess or violation of law have not turned out to be as profitable as was expected by the proposed beneficiaries. It is fortunate that Congress can control the appropriations and expenditures, but at the same time it is not so fortunate that the Engineer Commissioner, who has had to do with the latter, has succeeded in making himself so supremely ridiculous and so generally disliked that most of the taxpayers as well as the committees of Congress are unfavorably impressed with his recommendations and those of his other Commissioner associates. For that reason the District may fail to receive as liberal treatment as it actually deserves at the hands of Congress.

The truth is that when certain of the District officials undertook to make the suburban wilderness blossom as the rose for the benefit of speculators, official and unofficial, they reckoned without their host. They forgot or ignored the important fact that some two score Senators and Representatives in Congress had invested in Washington property, not for the sake of making private gain at the public expense, but for homes or for such legitimate profits as would flow from the increase of population and the natural growth of the capital city of sixty millions of people. These investors did not expect to become millionaires during the accidental Administration of Grover Cleveland; they did feel a degree of pride in having the National Capital well and decently governed and kept reasonably clean. When they saw the performances which took place and witnessed the not innocuous desuetude into which the necessary ordinances of safe and decent municipal government had fallen, they became indignant as well as disgusted. As a consequence the District has suffered.

I said that some forty Senators and Representatives are owners of Washington houses and lands, and I believe the figures are far within the mark; certainly they are if one takes into account the number of men who were in public life within a brief period, and who retain their property interests here. The complete list would be too long to print. When Levi P. Morton came to Congress he bought the big square house opposite Wormley's, in which Samuel Hoarer, of Massachusetts, gave such good dinners during the many years that he served in the House. The old house is coming down now, and, with the one which adjoined it and in which Chief Justice Carter lived, will soon be only a reminiscence. On the site Mr. Morton is to build a great apartment house, measuring 125 feet on each of two streets and ninety feet from the pavement to the roof. The site is a commanding one in the centre of the town. The new building will be fireproof and will cost more than a quarter of a million dollars. A few hundred yards north of it the fine mansion of Senator Palmer, of Michigan, is receiving the finishing touches. People say that the Senator did not count the cost very carefully before he began to build, but his bank account is large enough so that a little indiscretion of that sort will not affect him. His new house, like himself, is solid and substantial. Two or three squares distant stands the house of another Western Senator, who, like Palmer, made his fortune in lumber. It is a big house built thirty years ago or more and occupied, I believe, by Jefferson Davis before the war. For two or three years after the war it was the headquarters of General Howard and the Freedmen's Bureau. By a coincidence perhaps worth mentioning "Jeff" Davis's house and plantation in Mississippi were the seat of a flourishing freedmen's school and colony at the same time, and I have since heard that one of the former slaves of the late "Joe" Davis, a brother of Jefferson Davis, has become the owner of the old plantation. After the Freedmen's Bureau was removed from the old Davis house here it was repaired and modernized and for some time was occupied by a member of President Grant's Cabinet. Alexander Ramsey lived in it while he was Secretary of War in President Hayes's Administration, after which it passed into the hands of its present owner, Senator Sawyer, of Wisconsin. When the house was built it stood in the ultra-fashionable neighborhood of Washington, but times have changed and one has to travel some distance toward the northwest and across the "odd-numbers" of a quarter of a century ago before he reaches the fine mansions built by James G. Blaine, Senator Edmunds and Senator Stewart, of Nevada, all of which face the line of Massachusetts-ave. Stewart was a "bonanza king" as everybody supposed when he built his famous "castle" and furnished it in splendid style. I am glad to hear that he has repaired his broken fortunes to some extent, so that when he takes his seat in the Senate again next December he may reoccupy his "castle" if he chooses to do so. Senator Morrill owns and lives in a more modest but withal extremely comfortable house facing Massachusetts-ave. and the statue of General Thomas. Senator "Don" Cameron, who likes "to turn his money over," as often as he can, did not wait long after selling his spacious and costly house, facing the statue of Scott, before he bought the historic Taylor house, which fronts Lafayette Square—"the finest bit of park in the United States." I have not been able to learn why it is called Lafayette Square, when its sole artificial feature aside from the high fence which surrounds it and which Mr. Corcoran refuses to have removed—is Mills's equestrian statue of Jackson, which stands in full view of Mr. Cleveland's bedroom window as a perpetual reminder that the good statesman, like Gorman, alone is truly great.

Senator Cameron recently bought a quantity of land by the acre in a suburb of Washington which I suspect he intends to subdivide and sell by the foot, but it was noticeable that he did not choose a place on the line over which the star of the real estate ring shines with ever lessening brilliancy.

One man who has shown a good deal of faith in the growth of the National Capital is William Walter Phelps. Several years ago he bought a very valuable and desirable piece of property at the head of Connecticut-ave., and I have heard recently that he thinks seriously of building a good house there. His possessions in that quarter are rather extensive and are increasing in value every day. Mr. Phelps and Representative Hitt, of Illinois, who is also the owner of some fine property here, not long ago made considerable investments near the Capitol and the new building for the Library of Congress which is now under way. Mr. Holland, the real estate agent who has charge of the new purchases, informed me that their attention was drawn to that quarter while in the performance of an act of kindness to a fellow Congressman—a colleague of Mr. Hitt—who, by the way, is an extreme partisan of the Democratic persuasion. He had bought a wide lot and built a house on one half of it, expecting to make a pretty penny out of the remainder. But times were hard with him and he was in danger of losing home and all. In his strait he appealed to these two Republican Samaritans, who promptly relieved his distress. In doing so they were struck with the advantages offered and their day's work resulted in the purchase of several other valuable pieces of property in that neighborhood.

One of Mr. Phelp's acquisitions is the house in which "Thad" Stevens lived for so many years and in which he died. I visited it this week. It is an old-fashioned brick house, facing the Capitol grounds from the south, and is two stories in height, with an attic lighted by dormer windows. On the front door hangs a big iron knocker, and the lock is turned by a big rusty key, once plated with brass and nearly six inches long. The room in which Mr. Stevens died and through the windows of which he could gaze on the dome of the Capitol from his dying bed is a big one, some twenty feet square, on the second floor. The high mantel is of Italian marble, carved and polished; but that and the mantel in the parlor below are the only signs of "style" in the roomy old house. During the last months of his life—while the impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson was in progress—Stevens was so feeble that he had to be carried daily to the Capitol in a big chair by two stout attendants, one of whom is still an officer of the House. One day when he was near his end he looked up at them and said: "Who will be so good to me and take me up in their strong arms when you two mighty men are gone?" It was not long afterward that John Hickman entered Stevens's room where he lay awaiting the grim messenger. Hickman remarked that the sick man was looking "pretty well," when the latter whispered with a twinkle in his eye: "It's not my appearance but my disappearance that troubles me." The last time that I saw Thaddeus Stevens alive was after the testimony was all in and the arguments had begun in the impeachment trial. He tried to address the Senate, but his strength gave way and he handed his manuscript to General Butler, who read it in a hoarse, discordant tone, but with considerable effect.

I saw Congressman Bayne, of Pennsylvania, in town this week. He also is a property-owner in Washington and has just completed a fine house in Massachusetts-ave. which he will occupy during the coming session. Colonel Bayne is not only a Congressman and a lawyer with a good practice, but he is the owner of a prosperous evening newspaper—"The Penny Press"—in Pittsburg, to which he devotes a share of his attention. He said: "I wrote an editorial article just before I left home on the political outlook for the Republicans in 1888. Of course I have been an active Blaine man as you know and I would support him again with great pleasure. But I know that he will not be a candidate if he believes that his nomination will hazard the success of the party. Now, I said that if it should happen that Blaine would not be a candidate and if New-York should go to the convention and present one of her citizens and say that he could carry that state, nothing would prevent his nomination. My impression is strong that Hiscock is the coming man if Blaine steps out of the way."

Another Pennsylvania Congressman who has been in town recently is Mr. Randall. He returned from Atlanta overflowing with good humor. Every time the plans of the free-traders were alluded to in his presence Mr. Randall's firm jaws set themselves a little more firmly, but his eyes twinkled with amusement. He declined to talk about the organization of the House or the two leading committees, but I have heard some mysterious intimations within the past week to the effect that it will be better for the party not to receive Mr. Carlisle to the Speakership, at least before his title to a seat in the House shall have been tried and determined. It is suggested that his influence in the formation of the committees would be quite as noted if he were behind the throne instead of being seated upon it, and also that as chairman of the Ways and Means committee he might be able to bring in a tariff bill which would command the support of his party. But nobody who is well acquainted with Mr. Carlisle will expect to see him retire from the Speakership contest voluntarily or without a hard struggle. He is not that kind of a man. I do not believe there has been a man in the Speaker's chair in thirty years, with perhaps a single exception, who loved power more dearly for its own sake than does John G. Carlisle.

The local Democrats are making some preliminary efforts to bring the National Convention of their party to Washington next year. The attempt is not likely to be crowned with success, but the mere making of it reveals a curious tendency in the local Democratic mind toward "centralization" in a most objectionable form. Among the Democratic nonofficial population of Washington Mr. Cleveland probably is quite as unpopular as he is in Buffalo—for somehow he does not improve on closer acquaintance and yet the movement to bring the convention here where the Administration and its army of retainers could manipulate its proceedings and probably control its action is mainly pushed by men who are bitterly hostile to Mr. Cleveland's renomination. Most of them were prominent in the recent ovation to Shepherd, and yet the effort begun some days ago to prepare a genuine welcome for the President on his return to Washington was received with almost Siberian coldness and "died a borning," in the phrase heretofore familiar.

Some curious methods appear to prevail in the Indian Bureau. When Congress created the office of Superintendent of Indian Schools several years ago, with a salary of $3,000 per year, it was expected that that officer would perform the duties which usually devolve upon a school superintendent. After this Administration came in and began to "reform things," Bishop Oberly was appointed superintendent. I think he made a few journeys of "official inspection," but he very soon discovered that he would not be expected to make any recommendations concerning the selection or employment of teachers, etc., and so he resigned. In his place Mr. J. B. Riley was appointed. Mr. Riley hails from Plattsburg, and so light are his duties under the reform regime of Atkins and Pelsna that I am informed he has been kindly made to understand that he may as well enjoy the bracing air and salubrious climate of the Lake Champlain region as to remain in Washington or devote himself to traveling in the wild West where most of the Indian schools are situated and where the conveniences and refinements of modern civilization do not exist everywhere abound. I hear that Riley does not enjoy his official life very well and that he has made known his discontent in certain influential quarters. Recently a gentleman who visited the Indian office to see Mr. Riley on official business was informed that the superintendent had gone to Pittsburg to spend a month and was referred to Acting Commissioner Upshaw for an answer to his inquiry. It is whispered in minor official circles that Riley's presence in Washington or among the Indian schools might seriously interfere with the administration of the Indian service "by the South and for the South."

From all accounts General Sparks does not appear to cultivate the polite amenities of official life to any alarming extent. Henry Beard, of this city, is a courteous gentleman who has grown gray in the practice of the law, and whose principal business is before the General Land Office. Some time ago, I am told, Sparks picked up a bulky mass of papers which was laid upon his desk by Mr. Beard and threw them violently into that gentleman's lap, exclaiming in a loud voice and brutal tone:

"Another of those railroad arguments, eh! I've no time to read the ——stuff."

Whereupon Mr. Beard withdrew in dignified silence. To make the matter worse this coarse and ungraciable insult was offered to the gentleman named in the presence of clerks and others who were in the room at the time. This may be in the line of Jeffersonian simplicity, but perhaps the celebrated order of Mr. Cleveland, which sets forth that Government officials "are the servants of the people and not its masters," is designed to be considered in a Pickwickian sense. It goes without saying that Mr. Beard is not only an older but a much smaller man than Sparks.

THREE THOUSAND FARMERS IN PERIL.

From The St. Paul Pioneer Press.

It will be rather strange if President Cleveland escapes out of the Northwest without being waited upon by a deputation of anxious Minnesota and Dakota farmers, with a petition for the suspension of Secretary Lamar's indemnity land order of last month, so far as it affects the rights of individual settlers. The case of many of these settlers is grievous. The Northern Pacific Railroad has sold some 100,000 acres of its land grant within the limits of the two indemnity belts, in Minnesota and Dacota, and most of these passed into the hands of actual agricultural settlers in tracts of from 160 to 320 acres. The company gave warranty deeds to these lands, basing their title upon their charter and the certificates of the General Land Office, which were regarded as a guarantee for a patent until Mr. Sparks made himself a power above the law.

Relying upon these deeds settlers have erected buildings, made improvements, given mortgages for loans upon their property, and exercised all the usual rights of ownership. The order of Secretary Lamar, arbitrarily restoring all lands within these indemnity tracts to the public domain, sweeps away all rights of company and settlers together, until they can be re-established by a costly and tedious process of litigation. When that order goes into effect, October 21, these 400,000 acres, with the rest of the indemnity lands, whether selected by and certified to the railroad company or not, will become technically open to entry under the homestead and preemption law. The first comer may build a claim shanty under the eaves of every farmer's house, and assert a prima facie right to the whole tract of 160 acres, with perhaps thousands of dollars of buildings and improvements.

Of course in the long run the courts will maintain the rights of settlers who have bought their land in good faith and defeat the contrivers of bogus contests. But in the meantime the titles to thousands of farms will be clouded, necessary loans made impracticable and costly litigation entailed upon innocent persons. That this dreaded evil is not imaginary appears from frequent reports that Northwestern land offices are thronged with persons waiting for the fatal 21st to make bogus filings and begin fraudulent contests, under the protection and with the encouragement of the Secretary of the Interior. The same swarm of harpies infested the Northern Wisconsin land offices just before the opening of the disputed land grants in that locality, but they were defeated by the law of last winter permitting purchasers in good faith from the railway to obtain title from the Government on the payment of the pre-emption price.

But it is questioned whether that law protects purchasers of indemnity lands. Few of them can protect themselves by homestead or pre-emption entry since they have exhausted their rights in other States, or they need not have become purchasers of the railroad company. Their only escape from an awkward situation is in a suspension of the Lamar order so far as it affects them. An appeal should be made to the President for such a suspension, and it should not be made in vain. So far as the Northern Pacific Company is concerned it can take care of itself. It is strong enough to fight injustice, and can afford to wait for justice. It is already laying the foundation for a vigorous contest of the Lamar order, and is content to let its case go to the courts and wait the result. But the two or three thousand farmers in Minnesota and Dacota whose homes are imperilled by this order need speedier relief.

They need it before October 21, and Grover Cleveland is the only man who can give it to them. His presence here next week is the settlers' opportunity.

THE COLT LIKED FRUIT.

From The Hartford Courant.

A gentleman who keeps a two-year-old colt in a lot where there is fruit has been particular of late to have all the fruit that fell during the night gathered before the colt was turned out in the morning, thinking the fellow would get all that his system required if he ate what fell during the day. Yesterday afternoon one of the family heard a pear tree rattle, and slipping to the window to see if the tree was being molested, she saw the colt rubbing against it. Directly a pear was started and the colt at once made for it. Then he repeated the rubbing operation till another fell, which he secured and ate. He had been seen rubbing against the tree before, but his movements were not watched, and his owner has no doubt but that he has secured his share of the fruit and didn't take up windfalls either.

AMONG SHIFTING GROUPS.

BRIEF TALKS WITH PUBLIC MEN ABOUT PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

The manner in which public men are often paraded before the people, as advocates of any special theory or movement, without their consent, was illustrated in a chat with Colonel Ingersoll a day or two after the recent Women's Suffrage meeting at Irving Hall. His name had been printed in many papers in the list of prominent persons present at that meeting. He said that he had not only not been present, but that he had no interest in the matter one way or the other. He added: "My name often appears in the list of people present at gatherings of various kinds when, as a fact, I am not present and am sometimes hundreds of miles away. I cannot understand how such errors are made unless by the deliberate purpose of the managers of such meetings. I am beginning to distrust almost everything I see in the newspapers not but what a great deal that they print is perfectly true, but because so much that is printed is untrue, that unless a fellow knows that what he is reading is true he cannot put his faith to it. It is the fault of persons who give information to them carelessly, in part. Why, I saw the other day in the newspapers a glowing description of a gorgeous cloak that Mrs. Mackay was having made in Paris, from the feathers of rare South American birds. It was to be a cloak such as no other woman ever wore, and its cost was to be something fabulous. Well, only yesterday I was made aware of the fact that Mrs. Mackay is a prominent member of a society in London whose object is to encourage women not to wear feathers at all, because of the needless slaughter of life that is entailed by that fashion. Of course, if Mrs. Mackay was wearing such a magnificent cloak as that described she could not be a member of this society, and vice versa."

Some time ago I had occasion to call attention to the shady business transactions of a number of syndicates of sharpers, whose plan of operations has been to secure franchises for public improvements from interior towns and cities, which they have hawked about in New-York City and sold to syndicates. These syndicates would proceed to build richety street-car lines or faulty water-works systems, with the sole object in view of selling the stock and bonds of the companies. The towns and cities which have granted such franchises without thorough investigation of the credit of persons applying for them have almost invariably been supplied with faulty systems of public improvements. This sort of thing has been carried on to such an extent as to produce a reaction, and now encouragement has been given to solid investors to enter upon solid lines of work. James Gamble, an extensive contractor for the construction of water works, remarked: "A great deal of solid investment is taking place in the improvement of towns and cities over the country, where within a few years it has been the custom to make such improvements merely for the sake of stock and bonds. The day for that kind of wildcat work has gone by. Men with money have discovered that in the construction of solid and substantial public improvement in growing places there is ample remuneration in a legitimate way. Recently I have constructed a number of water-works systems for syndicates of capitalists, who have put their money in these systems for permanent investment, and could not be induced to sell a dollar of the stock or bonds. In doing work for this class of investors I have found that they are satisfied with nothing but the best, indicating therein their purpose to make long investments. In some instances these syndicates have gone into towns and cities where faulty public improvements existed, have bought up the stock of the old concerns, reorganized the companies, and then reconstructed everything. This is good work for the entire country."

A. M. Garland, of Illinois, who was formerly a member of the Tariff Commission, but is now living in New-York, is a quiet and reserved but energetic man of perhaps forty-five years of age. He is the assistant general secretary of the American Protective Tariff League, in which he has demonstrated much capacity for organization. Mr. Garland began life as a printer's boy in the office of the old *Illinois State Register* in Springfield. It was in that day the organ of the Democratic party of the State. There he served through all the branches of the printer's art and became foreman of the office. A year later his eyesight gave way and he was obliged to go into some business which would relieve the tension upon his eyes. He became interested in stock raising and had his attention thus drawn to the tariff upon wool, when he became an ardent advocate of the protective tariff, and has gradually become known as a prominent defender of that American principle of government.

Congressman Samuel J. Randall, of Pennsylvania, who was at the New-York Hotel a day or two ago, drifted uptown and met Sheridan Shook, with whom he discussed politics for over two hours under the shadow of Republican State Headquarters. It was a sight worth seeing. Mr. Shook tendered Mr. Randall an urgent and generous invitation to leave the Democratic party and join the Republican ranks, where he would be welcomed for his Protective Tariff views. Mr. Randall politely intimated that his Democracy was rock-ribbed and moss-backed as the hills, and insisted that the Republican party was divided on the tariff question as well as the Democratic party.

The Governor of the Mexican State of Sonora, Senor Torres, has been a guest at the Fifth Avenue Hotel for ten days. He is a Spaniard, of swarthy complexion, Castilian features, and both American and European education. He is anxious to encourage Americans seeking business investments or connections in Mexico, and has devoted much of his time while here to the promotion of American trade with Sonora. An obstacle which he finds prominent is the desire of Americans to build up their own Territories. He admitted this in a chat yesterday, but continued: "It is not always to be so. There is a fine field on our side of the border, for capital to seek remunerative investment, and your Territories will some day be filled up and fully developed. Sonora is largely a mining state. The business of mining is excellent when it is pursued as a legitimate enterprise. It fails only when the attempt is made to force it for speculation. Cattle raising is also a large industry with us, and we grow quantities of wheat and barley. The mining industry gives promise of being especially active in the immediate future."

When S. B. Elkins comes about political headquarters he is immediately surrounded by groups of workers anxious to obtain his views and advice. He has been here for a week and has dropped in daily on the State Committee at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, always with the same result. Mr. Elkins has come back from Deer Park for the winter. Mrs. Elkins is with him, but the children will not return for another week. Mr. Elkins has been a busy man during the summer, tramping over West Virginia hills, laying out railroad routes, superintending railroad construction and otherwise promoting the development of the resources of that State, a labor in which he is engaged with his father-in-law, ex-Senator Henry G. Davis. They had a struggle some time ago with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which was the only outlet of their road, the West Virginia Central. They cut the difficulty by constructing a branch from Piedmont to Cumberland, through which they formed a connection with the Pennsylvania road, which gives them competition with the Baltimore and Ohio and enables them to command the situation. Senator Davis made extensive investments in West Virginia land and property at a time when it was undeveloped and worth scarcely a song.

Ex-Senator George S. Boutwell, of Massachusetts, who was Secretary of the Treasury under General Grant, has been in New-York during the week. He goes back and forth between his home and Washington every two or three weeks. He has an extensive legal practice that requires his frequent presence in the National Capital. I think he rather likes to get over there into the atmosphere that was once redolent with power to himself and his associates. There is a peculiar air in Washington that, once breathed, is always tempting to men. Mr. Boutwell wears a high, wide-spreading shirt collar that projects fully an inch out of his coat collar, and comes up so high around his chin that he seems to have no neck at all. It is an old-fashioned collar, and for that matter it is an old-fashioned face that it frames—a grim and sober face, with strongly defined lines, a prominent nose, deep sunken eyes and grizzled stubbly beard. Senator Boutwell talked a little on politics while in New-York. He predicted a Republican victory in Massachusetts, where the Mugwump vote will be cast for that ticket, and he also predicted a Republican victory in the Presidential contest in 1888, because he believes that the country is naturally Republican. When it came to a discussion of names he said in substance: "Any prominent Republican can lead us to victory next year, whether it shall be Mr. Blaine, or Senator John Sherman, or Senator Allison, or General Hawley, or General Phil Sheridan. Whoever is nominated will be elected. I can see that clearly, although I am not studying the political situation very closely."

Wealthy New-York Democrats have had a chance within the last three or four days to contribute for the Democratic campaign in Virginia. Ex-Congressman John S. Barbour has been here on "the quiet." He is chairman of the Democratic Committee of Virginia, and the prospective candidate of his party for United States Senator to succeed Senator Riddleberger. Mr. Barbour represents the old Bourbon Democracy of the State. It was owing to his political management of the party that the Democrats succeeded in wresting the power from Senator Mahone. When the Legislature met which was to select Mr. Mahone's successor Mr. Barbour was a prominent candidate. The younger element of the party supported John S. Daniel, a fiery and eloquent young orator, and to the disgust of Barbour and his friends he was elected. Mr. Barbour went to Europe last summer, and the Democratic campaign went by default, large Republican gains being made. He has been induced to take up the burden of political leadership by the promise that if he succeeds he shall have the coveted Senatorship. In conversation with his political friends here he has indicated to them that the party in Virginia is so distracted that it is by no means certain that the Democratic party can carry the day. This coincides with the information that comes from the friends of Senator Mahone, who declare that there are bright prospects of a Republican success in the State.

An odd-looking Virginian who accompanied Senator Barbour to New-York is L. Q. Washington. He is a spare-built Southerner, with stooping shoulders and shambling gait. He wears a long black frock coat that reaches almost to his heels, and a broad-brimmed, low-crowned felt hat, which gives him the quaint appearance of a Georgia "cracker." He is a newspaper writer of considerable reputation throughout the South, having devoted a number of years to description of the various pleasure resorts of Virginia, North Carolina and Florida, and spends his winters in Washington as a political correspondent.

The silk manufacturing industry, which has been languishing in France, has been growing up in this country with vigor. It has been encouraged under the protection afforded by the tariff. A number of French manufacturers have branch mills in America. One of these French gentlemen who is at the head of a large silk manufacturing establishment in New-Jersey, remarked: "The tariff question is an old one with us in France. We have been through a great many contests there which are beginning to engage the attention of Americans. I was born in Lyons, and I have seen many exciting occurrences among the silk weavers of that city. I say to you in regard to the subject of protection that any change in the present system of tariff looking toward free trade and the reduction of wages will be resisted to the bitter end by the laboring classes of the country. They have been used to good wages and comfortable living, and if you deprive them of their present advantages we shall have trouble. If you reduce their wages to the pauper standard of Europe they will have back their present wages by force, if they cannot secure them otherwise. It will be dangerous to trifle with the American laborer."

There has been for years a suspicion amounting to conviction that English manufacturers spend large sums of money annually in the endeavor to induce the people of this country to adopt free trade. A Wall Street banker and broker, who is a protective tariff man, said yesterday on that point: "The British manufacturers spend millions of dollars in efforts to further free trade. The Administration, too, is helping the Free Traders. And what is the result? Look at the balance of trade, or the difference in the totals of our exports and imports for the last three years. In 1885 the difference was $149,000,000 in our favor. In 1886 it was $41,000,000, and in 1887 it had become reduced to $24,000,000. The gold is going out of the country every year in larger volume, and yet the British Free Traders in this city demand the distribution of the surplus, and the breaking down of the tariff system. What will be the result of such action, if consummated? Only to send more gold out of the country, and soon the Government will need to negotiate a loan in Europe to pay its ordinary expenses, as was done under James Buchanan."

BEDLOW'S ISLAND NOT A PRESERVE.

GOOD SENSE OF THE CANVASBACKS.

REFUSING TO DASH THEIR BRAINS AGAINST THE LIBERTY TORCH TO PLEASE A NATION.

There has been a run on the Bedlow's Island boat ever since the story got around that brant and geese and canvasbacks were beating their brains out every night against the torch of the Goddess of Liberty, and falling at the foot of the pedestal in heaps big enough to make the head of a Washington Market dealer swim. With ducks $1 a pair and prices shifting many rusty looking sportsmen from the lower wards stole down to the Island fitted out with hunting baskets and big inside coat pockets.

Other adventurous epicures whose nearest sight of live wild ducks had been the red cuts that Delmonico furnishes, hurried over to bag a few real specimens and collect material for hunting stories to swap with newly returned deer-slayers from the Adirondacks. But both the rusty-looking hunters from the market district and the silver-plated uptown sportsmen have come back empty-handed. And the chief reason for their ill-success has been that the picture of the Goddess as a ready-made, self-acting fowling piece was the fancy chiefly of an illustrated weekly man.

Bedlow's Island in fact isn't much of a paradise for sportsmen or epicures and there is no danger of the Madison Square preserves being abandoned yet. Lots of tails, sparrows, wrens, catbirds, orioles and woodpeckers have been killed by flying against the Goddess's torch at night. But such small fry are scarcely worth picking. So far not a single duck, goose, partridge, snipe, or reed bird has been found on the Island dead or alive.

The records kept from day to day in the guard house just behind old Fort Wood, show that the killing of the birds against the statue's torch is largely a matter of chance and weather. The light has been burning now for nearly a year, yet it is only since September that dead birds have been picked up in any quantities on the topmost balcony or at the foot of the pedestal. No count had been kept of the tiny victims of curiosity before the first of October.

A report that 1,100 dead birds were picked up one morning in September came to the ears of Colonel Tassin, the post commandant, not long ago. He had been away from the Island at the time and no trace of the dead bodies could be found on his return. The lighthouse keepers said at first that they had been buried. Colonel Tassin was about to have the alleged trench in which they had been dumped dug up, when the lighthouse men recollected that the birds had not been buried, but thrown into the bay. It is improbable that more than two or three hundred had really dashed against the torch on the night in question. Most of them, perhaps, are now doing duty on bonnets in some of the Broadway millinery shops.

From October 1, at any rate, some accurate record has been kept of the number and kinds of birds killed against the light. One hundred and seventy-five wrens were found on October 12. Fifty rails, eleven wrens, two cat-birds and one whippoorwill were picked up on October 1. On the last four or five days no birds at all have been found, and the total for the month so far is only 432. Cloudy nights generally bring more victims than clear ones, but there are some curious exceptions. The night of October 1, when sixty-five were killed, was rainy and windy. But the night of October 10, when 175 were killed, was perfectly clear.

No seabirds have been picked up yet, which points plainly to the migration of the colonies of small fry from North to South each fall as the chief cause of the havoc. The birds flying across the Bay at night are first drawn toward the big electric torch by its brilliancy and then are blinded by its rays at close quarters. They dash against the glass plates in the flambeau just as they would against a house window and either knock their brains out outright or are stunned and killed by the fall.

Birds are picked up dead, in fact, at all the lighthouses along the coast and the Board at Washington has sent out standing orders to all lighthouse keepers to preserve all the bodies and forward them to the Smithsonian Institute at Washington. Many rare and valuable specimens are obtained in this way for the National museum. No sane lighthouse keeper is going to send a tender wild goose or a juicy canvasback to Washington, and the keepers in the more lonely districts stuff even the small birds for home consumption. Colonel Tassin is proof against red-head and all other ducks, however, and under his direction every bird, large or small, that butts its head against the Goddess's torch will be put on ice and expressed by batches of 100 to the Capital.

So far the Colonel has captured only seven species, wrens, Baltimore orioles, rails, sparrows, catbirds, woodpeckers, and whippoorwills. The director of the Smithsonian Institute is grateful even for this small help, for he can trade these popular American species with foreign museums for species from other continents. Colonel Tassin has furnished so far only two or three hundred specimens and his industry is not likely to depopulate the harbor. His consolatory is that few birds are likely to be killed against the torch except in the migratory season or during the blinding storms of winter. But the migratory season is early over, and there are few birds about the harbor in winter. If the Colonel could only bag a dozen canvasbacks he would close his campaign for the year with great satisfaction.

A MINING EXPERT'S STORY.

From The St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

A Cornishman is usually content to let some one else discover the mine, own and operate it, he being satisfied with the wages he can get for sinking the shaft or following the knife blade vein. Their judgment on ore or quartz is nearly invariably correct, and the mine owner seldom continues to persevere after receiving a suggestion from them that it is of no use.

The only deviation from these characteristics that Mr. Best could recall was in the case of three young men from Cornwall who came out several years ago with ambition and energy enough to make several fortunes. They prospected considerably in various portions of the State without success, and finally went to work for Mr. Best in one of his Gilpin County mines. Like all Cornishmen they were good miners, worked hard and saved money. After a little while, however, they quit working in the mines and went to prospecting again. The life of a prospector is not a very encouraging one, but the three brothers seemed never to grow weary of it, keeping up their spirits with the hope of some time finding a fortune. They would bring in samples occasionally that would assay well, but nothing more would be heard of the discovery. One day they came in after a couple of weeks' absence and made inquiries about the ownership of an abandoned shaft three miles northwest of Central City. They found the owner, and he was willing to sell or lease the property on shares. He had sunk more money in it than he could afford to, and had reluctantly concluded that the best thing to do was to dispose of it or leave it alone. He could not sell a worthless mine, and so the property was abandoned. In the West, these worthless properties are called "holes in the ground," and they abound in mining countries. The brothers had been down in the abandoned shaft and through its stopes and drifts. They had sunk the shaft a few feet deeper and suddenly struck the vein the owner had long sought, but never found. It was covered up and the shaft partially flooded by the melting snows. The proposition to lease was accepted, the owner to have 25 per cent of the output and the brothers 75. They had no money to purchase machinery, and so the old fashioned windlass was put up, and a bucket made out of a half-barrel. With this they slowly emptied the shaft of water, and after two weeks' steady work were able to go down and open the vein. It proved rich beyond all expectation, and the first month they took out $100,000 without assistance. The strike was soon known all over that section, and they had plenty of opportunities to sell their lease. Knowing that all mines must "cap" sooner or later they concluded to take no risks and disposed of their lease interest for $225,000, leaving them just $100,000 each. When the sale was consummated three happier brothers were never seen. They made no more attempts at mining, but soon started for their old home in Cornwall. The mine was worked by the new company, but the amount paid for it was never realized. It is a hole now.

SMASHING COSTLY IMPORTS.

WORSE THAN BULLS IN CHINA SHOPS.

HOW MERCHANTS HAVE GOODS BROKEN, STOLEN AND DELAYED AT THE PUBLIC STORES.

The complaints of importers of china, glass, earthenware and like fragile goods, in regard to the inexpert manner in which they are handled in the United States public stores at this port, are numerous and have been increasing. For the purpose of discovering what foundation there is for these expressions of dissatisfaction and complaints of loss by breakage, a reporter called upon a number of importers, who get their wares from France, Austria, Germany, Italy, England, Japan and other countries where this delicate material is made.

It may be proper to state here that the law requires that a certain proportion of imported merchandise shall be sent to the public stores for examination and appraisement. Under Section No. 2,901 of the Revised Statutes of the United States, the Collector is required to designate "one package, at least, of every ten packages of merchandise, and a greater number, should he or either of the appraisers deem it necessary to be opened, examined and appraised, and shall order the package so designated to the public stores for examination." These packages, so designated, are sent directly from the vessel in which they are imported, and are taken by the public store cartman, who is selected by the Collector and is in no wise responsible to the importer, to the public store building at Laight and West sts. The importer or consignee has no control of the goods, and is prevented from assuming any rights of ownership in connection with them until they are released from the public store after the examination and the appraisement.

SLIGHT REGARD FOR THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

During this period, it is said, while the merchandise is absolutely within the power of the Government, these delicately fashioned articles are so roughly and inexpertly handled that an undue amount of breakage is the result. In addition to this there is the further accusation that goods are unlawfully taken from these packages, while in the public stores, under the pretext of "sampling," which amounts in plain terms to a violation of the Eighth Commandment. Lack of expertness in getting the goods out for appraisement and returning them to the cases will account only for the damage done to the choice importations; it will not excuse the total abstraction of articles from the packages.

A further cause of complaint is the alleged needless delay which the merchants experience in obtaining the goods from the public stores after they have been sent there from the importing vessel. Under proper management, where no reappraisement is required, three or four days are ample for finding out the duty which any class of goods should legally pay. Yet a much longer time is usually taken. Ten days, a fortnight, three weeks, a month, six weeks, often elapse before the patient importer can get his goods. Various reasons are given for these delays. It is said that the public store buildings are inadequate to the demands of the growing commerce of New-York, and that it is impossible to receive and deliver the goods with the dispatch which is expected. On this account other warehouses are used to which public store packages are transferred, and additional delay is incurred in getting them from these outside warehouses. It is alleged that frequently it is not known with sufficient certainty to what particular warehouse they have been transferred, the result being confusion as well as delay.

WHAT THE SUFFERERS SAY ABOUT IT.

In prosecuting the inquiry in regard to the damage which has resulted to public store packages, and their depletion while in the custody of the Government, as well as the delays to which the importer is subjected in getting his goods back again, the reporter found much difficulty, for the reason that many importers expressed a disinclination to talk on the subject. The reason frankly given by some of them was that if they allowed the facts of their ill-treatment to be made known to the public, they must expect annoyances and multiplied delays from officials who might feel aggrieved at their disclosures.

"The people in authority have a score or more of ways in which they can make trouble for us," said a Barclay-st. importer yesterday, "other ways I would not hesitate to give you all the facts. I would only be injuring myself without doing any one else any good; therefore please excuse me."

There were others, however, who were not so fearful. At the house of Stollenberg & Co., importers of stationary, stained glass, vestments and the like, Nos. 51 and 53 Barclay-st., Mr. Miller, the manager, said that the proportion of the goods sent to the public stores which were damaged in the handling was not less than 25 per cent, and it frequently was greater. This was much higher than the percentage of loss where the cases come directly from the importing vessel to the store or warehouse.

"We have a 'hospital' downstairs," said Mr. Miller, "and when a case comes from the public stores it is the standing order that it shall go there at once. We know from experience that it will contain a lot of broken articles, without looking into it. Images are broken and mutilated, art-stained glass worth $4.50 a foot is broken, costly candelabra of polished brass twisted out of shape and rendered worthless, sanctuary lamps damaged, and satin vestments soiled and destroyed. Come down and look at the work of these bungling openers and packers."

In the "hospital" the reporter found John Knurck, the artist decorator and repairer, busily replacing the broken limbs of saints and the severed wings of angels and cherubs.

"I am the acting head surgeon of this 'hospital,'" said Mr. Knurck, "and the public store men keep me and my three or four assistant doctors employed a good part of the time repairing the damage they do. Look at this fine life-sized image of St. Joseph, with his head knocked off. It is terra cotta and durable, but it couldn't stand such usage. Here is this beautiful representation, also in terra cotta, of Our Lady holding the Child in her arms. The child's hands are both gone and the front of the image is shockingly disfigured. This angel holding a font (an image several feet in height) has been deprived of her wings. This costly statue of St. Patrick, as you see, has lost his head. Another terra cotta image of St. Joseph stands here decapitated. This lovely adoring angel can't go on any mission of mercy until I repair her broken wings. Look at the damaged condition of this representation of the Baptism of Christ. Figures of angels, saints and seraphs, you observe here, have all received hot treatment. I could send these images to China and have them come back uninjured. The trouble is in repacking, I suppose. To break one of these large images as it stands here would require a blow from an axe or a heavy hatchet."

Besides these images a whole set of statues were chipped and damaged. Out of forty-eight sanctuary lamps not one was perfect; either the glass or the