

About People and Social Incidents.

AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

Washington, Dec. 28.—The President and Mrs. Roosevelt enjoyed a long horseback ride along the country roads this morning. They drove to the suburbs, where they mounted. The President spent about an hour in his office in the morning looking over his mail with Secretary Loeb. His only call before going out riding was Secretary Taft's, who discussed some details of the movement of ships and marines to Isthmian waters.

THE CABINET.

Washington, Dec. 28.—Unless Secretary Hay's condition improves within the next few days he will go to Thomasville, Ga., where it is believed, he will be able to return to his office in a few days. Mr. Hay's illness is not yielding to treatment as satisfactorily as his physicians could wish, and Mr. Loomis, the Acting Secretary of State, will officiate at the breakfast to the Diplomatic Corps on New Year's Day, at the home of the Secretary and Mrs. Hay.

THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS.

Washington, Dec. 28.—The Egyptian Minister and Mrs. Calderon introduced to society at a tea this afternoon. The first floor was decorated with Christmas greens and poinsettia blossoms, and the drawing room was fragrant with the floral tributes sent to the debutante. Mrs. Calderon presented her daughter, who wore a simply made gown of white. Tea was poured by the Countess Callera, formerly minister of the Netherlands at Rome, who is now in the city.

The Cuban Minister and Señora Quesada have with them Miss and Mrs. Quesada, the latter, formerly minister of the Netherlands at Rome, who is now in the city. Baron Gevers, the minister of the Netherlands here, has been selected to succeed Dr. Quesada, formerly minister of the Netherlands at Rome, who is now in the city.

Theodore Hansen, first secretary of the Russian Embassy, has received a leave of absence and will start for St. Petersburg soon.

Notes of Society in Washington. Washington, Dec. 28.—At the subscription dance given to-night at Raucher's for the future belles and beaux of society, the chaperons were Mrs. Robert P. Shepard, Mrs. Seaton Schroeder, Mrs. Henry Cleveland Perkins, Mrs. Henry W. Fitch, Mrs. Frank Lee, Mrs. Charles H. Johnson, Mrs. Francis E. Leupp will introduce her daughter to society to-morrow afternoon at the Washington Club.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Bennett and Miss Mary White are entertaining a Christmas Eve house party at the home of ex-Senator Faulkner, at Martinsburg, W. Va. The party is expected to make a Christmas week visit to Mr. and Mrs. George Westinghouse, at Solitude, their home at East End, Pittsburg.

New-York Society. Mrs. David M. Morrison's dance last night at Delmonico's for the "coming out" of her younger daughter, Miss Lillian Morrison, was the principal feature of the programme of society for yesterday. The cotillon was led by Frederick Woodruff, dancing with the debutante, and by Theron Strong with her elder sister, Miss Natalie Morrison. The favors were in the shape of sachets for the girls and cigarette boxes and sporting prints for the men.

At the close of the cotillon supper was served. After which dancing was resumed. Several dinners were given in connection with the dance, to which the various hostesses afterward took their guests. Among those present were Miss Elizabeth Olyphant, Miss Ella Adams, Miss Elizabeth Schieffelin, Miss Nina and Miss Elizabeth DeLafayette, Miss Adeline Havemeyer, Miss Elizabeth Auchincloss, Miss Marguerite Loew, Miss Ella de Feyster, Miss Dorothy Roosevelt, Miss Arletta H. Prentiss, Miss Miriam Blagden, Miss Elizabeth Tuckerman and Barent Lefferts, Harry Alexander, Raymond and Arthur H. Hays, Charles Schieffelin, William O'Connell, George Peabody, William Baylis, Jr., O. Ashton de Feyster, Marmaduke and Morris

THE DRAMA. NEW PLAY AT THE SAVOY. "Merely Mary Ann." Mr. Zangwill's new play, called "Merely Mary Ann," which has been received with some favor in other cities, was produced last night at the Garden Theatre, with Miss Eleanor Robson and Mr. Edwin Arden in the chief characters—Mary Ann, a servant, and Lancelot, the composer, and by him is captivated, but Lancelot behaves in a manner that is worthy of the bearer of his name, and these loving swains part in innocence. Later, when Mary Ann has inherited some money and become a polished member of society, they meet again, and at last they are happily united. The contrast of character as affected by social conditions. Miss Robson's limitations are extremely narrow. That the various emotions incident to the character of Mary Ann were felt and understood by Miss Robson was entirely evident, and so was her failure to move her audience by these displays. An apparent inclination to imitate Miss Maud Adams in a considerable hindrance to Miss Robson. Mr. Edwin Arden is an actor of experience and commonplace talent. His failure, therefore, to adequately impersonate the part of Lancelot would have been more remarkable than his success.

Satisfactory subsidiary performances were given by Mr. Frank Doane, W. A. Hackett, Thomas Graham, Mrs. Deane, and Miss Kate Estlin Selten— the latter an actress whose appearance emphasizes the advantages of natural talent, experience and training in the art of acting.

CAST OF "MERELY MARY ANN." Lancelot.....Edwin Arden Mary Ann.....Miss Eleanor Robson Mr. Peter.....Frank Doane Herr Brahman.....W. A. Hackett Miss Kate Estlin Selten.....Miss Kate Estlin Selten Miss Deane.....Mrs. Deane Miss Graham.....Thomas Graham Miss Selten.....Mrs. Deane Mrs. Leubacher.....Miss Kate Estlin Selten Mrs. Rowland.....Miss Kate Estlin Selten The Sisters Tripp.....Miss Kate Estlin Selten Lady Chelmer.....Miss Kate Estlin Selten Lady Glyn.....Miss Kate Estlin Selten The Hon. Mrs. Fitzgibbon.....Margaret St. John Mrs. Van der Zee.....Miss Kate Estlin Selten Mrs. Mary Ann Mervin.....Miss Kate Estlin Selten Mrs. Howard.....Miss Kate Estlin Selten

NEW PLAY AT THE SAVOY. "Glad of It." Mr. Fitch's new play, called "Glad of It," with Miss Milly James in the chief part, was produced last night at the Savoy Theatre. It shows how a shop girl became a chorus girl, and so tells a puerile story in an appropriately puerile manner. Miss James embodied the shop girl. The scene opens in "a department store"—object of pious and fervent admiration and imitation by New-York's principal dramatic managers—proceeds in a New-York theatre, devoted to "musical comedy"—that is, to horse play and a double dose of "ragtime" songs, and closes in a New-Jersey boarding house. In this "play" Mr. Fitch has once more shown his incompetence as a dramatic writer. His vulgar vacuity was delivered with commendable earnestness and wretched articulation by a numerous company. That portion of the public which delights to witness, on the stage, for \$20, what may be seen on Sixth-ave. for nothing, may find this "presentation" interesting—no one else will. Why Mr. Fitch cannot see to put upon one stage the heavy drivel which he labels "drama" we will have more occasion to be "glad of it" than was afforded last night.

LADY MOON HERE ON MINNEHAHA. Lady Cecil Moon, wife of the English cricketer, was a passenger on the Minnehaha, which docked yesterday. She is going to her cottage ranch near Fort Collins, Col. Her husband intended to accompany her, but engagements prevented. He is a member of the All-England Cricket eleven.

THE POPE'S VIEWS ON CHURCH MUSIC. Rome, Dec. 28.—After long talks with the Abbe Peroni, director of the Sistine Choir, the Pope has issued a note on the subject of sacred music in the churches. The Pope formulates rules which recall the churches to a strict observance of the instructions issued by former pontiffs. The Pope condemns the transformation of liturgical music into compositions for use at concerts. The Pontiff strongly favors the Gregorian Chant, and has ordered the Abbe Peroni to compose a Gregorian mass for the centenary of St. Gregory the Great, next Easter.

FUNERAL OF MRS. RUTH ANN HOAR. Worcester, Mass., Dec. 28.—The funeral of Mrs. Ruth Ann Hoar, wife of Senator George F. Hoar, was held in the Church of the Unity this afternoon. The Rev. Dr. Edward Everett Hale, of Boston, who was the first pastor of the Church of the Unity, conducted the service. The body will be taken to Concord, Mass., to-morrow for burial in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery.

great majority of cases where one person calls up another by telephone and finds the latter out, he prefers to wait until both can participate in the conversation. Nevertheless, in a few instances all practical purposes would be served if a message could be left. The proposed attachment may yet come into extensive use.

Will Commissioner McAdoo make a dead end on the poolrooms and the faro banks? If he does, what will "Big Tim" and "Little Tim" Sullivan have to say about it?

Extensive and searching tests of submarine craft on both sides of the Atlantic have been made in recent months, and the tendency of thought among the men best qualified to judge seems to be that these stealthy monsters of the depths may be exceedingly destructive in naval warfare when the principal nations have constructed them in large numbers.

Members of the British Parliament and French legislators have been exchanging visits with excellent results in promoting amiability and agreeable sentiments between the two nations. The efforts now on foot to bring about similar hospitable and harmonious meetings between our French friends and Senators and Representatives of this Republic will, it is hoped, be crowned with abundant success. They can hardly fail to work for good.

Texas cotton planters appear to be convinced that with the extinction of the boll weevil their fields of snow-bloom would speedily become big bonanzas if the present price of cotton were kept up. But how are they to get rid of the pest?

Official reports show that the mortality from pneumonia is reaching considerable figures in New-York. Every medical man, however, will concede that our Health Department is in no way in fault. Climatic conditions are mainly responsible for the rising of the death rate. Other cities are afflicted with a serious prevalence of smallpox and typhoid fever cases, but Dr. Lederle and his assistants have kept vigilant watch and ward against these troubles.

Ex-Mayor Van Wyck is reported in "The New-York Herald" as denouncing Mayor Low's administration with exceptional vehemence. What the people of New-York think of Van Wyck was shown by his defeat for a Supreme Court judgeship after his term in the City Hall.

Greater confidence will be inspired in the safety of officers and crew, when submerged in a submarine boat, by the knowledge that the torpedo tube can be employed as an avenue of escape than would be felt otherwise. As the barrel has a diameter of about eighteen inches, it ought to accommodate all but men having exceptionally broad shoulders. Air pressure powerful enough to launch a torpedo would certainly be equal to projecting a man several yards through the water.

THE TALK OF THE DAY.

One of the strangest railroad accidents on record is reported from Hammond, Ind. A hotelkeeper, Charles Stahiborn, was driving home one night last week, and coming to a railroad track, tried to drive his horse across ahead of the fast freight. The engineer did not even know that he had hit anything, but kept up the speed of his engine until he pulled into a station fifteen miles beyond the scene. Then he got down to oil his engine and was slightly startled to see Stahiborn sitting on the cowcatcher, a whip in one hand and the end of some rail in the other. He shook him a few times, and when the hotelkeeper came to be asked where his hat and horse were. He did not know that the train had made them into soap stock.

"But why do you have your horse marry in the first chapter?" they asked. "Because," replied the author, "it has always seemed absurd to me to find a novel just where a man would expect to find that where you should begin the story." (Chicago Post.)

From Germany comes news of a locomotive worked by steam, and yet independent of fire of its own. The engine has just been completed at the Hagenwerk, near Dusseldorf, and is one of a type designed for shunting in explosive factories. Instead of carrying fire in its own boiler, it is filled with steam from stationary boilers, and when so charged is capable of several hours' work. The first warming up occupies half an hour, and subsequent recharging can be done in a quarter of an hour. The apparatus is so simple that an unskilled workman is able to look after it. The absence of fire in a place where dynamite or gunpowder is being handled is the reason for the invention of this type of engine.

He—Won't you let me give you just one kiss before I go? He—Just one satisfy you? She—Then I won't give it to you.—(The Standard.)

Ex-Provost Clark, of Paisley, England, has been relating the origin of cotton sewing thread, which was first used in that town in the weaving of "heddies" as a substitute for silk, which was stopped by Napoleon in 1802, when he seized Hamburg. He was obliged to grant to his brother the patent for the manufacture of cotton, which worked so smoothly that Mr. Clark's father, then a youth, took to recommending it to women instead of linen, then mostly used. Originally it was sold in hanks or skeins. These the women had to wind into little balls, as they do a cut of wool at the present day. The young man, who was then a boy, was charged with a skein of thread with a bobbin, for which he charged a halfpenny. This halfpenny was refunded when the empty bobbin was returned. Such was the beginning of cotton thread.

THE PASSING OF THE CALL. In days gone by, those happy days, When all the world was slow, My life was off to the blue sky, A-visiting would go.

Her dainty buckled shoes were donned, And laced her gown so gay, With ruffles of fancy work, Her hair was pinned so high.

Then father must have rolled the sphere, For bosom friend there could be found, But one brief afternoon.

The hours then increased their pace, And to her friend's duties driven, But minutes could be given.

As years sped on, and feeling time, Was filled with social care, A man of experience in such matters, Said a single hour could spare.

Till now, 'midst whirl of clubs and teas, When leisure is unknown, She takes the worn receiver down, And calls her up by 'phone.

America is not the only part of the world which is making contributions to the English language. "Barack" is an Australian verb, and Professor Morris, in his Austral-English dictionary, defines it as "to jeer at opponents, to interrupt noisily, to make a disturbance." According to Professor Morris, who occupied the chair of modern languages in the University of Melbourne for many years, the word was evolved about the year 1880 from the boisterous behavior of Australian football crowds. Since then it has spread in all directions, and has even had the distinction of being ruled an unparliamentary expression by the Victorian Speaker. There are two theories as to the origin of the word. The one that Professor Morris considers the more probable is that it is an Anglicized form of the aboriginal word "barak," which meant banter, chatter, or another's expense. But the belief that "barack" is merely an elongation of bark, just as that other Australian word "larrakin" came from lark, also finds acceptance.

Problem in Engineering.—A Scotchman who had been employed nearly all his life in the building of railways in the Highlands of Scotland, was in the United States in his later years, and settled in a new section on the plains of the Far West. Soon after his arrival a project came up in his mind for the construction of a railway through the district, and the Scotchman was applied to as a man of experience in such matters. "Hoot, mon," said he to the spokesman of the scheme, "ye canna build a railway across the country."

"Why not, Mr. Ferguson?" "Why not?" he repeated, with an air of effectuality setting the whole matter. "Why not? Ye see no one's country's as flat as a floor, and ye see no place whatever to run your tunnels through." (Spang Moments.)

is well for them, however, to keep in mind the record, and see if their new officials do as well. If they do not, of course nothing can be done for the world and against an achievement it cannot undo and lose the \$1,000,000. It should not take such statesmen as General Reyes, Dr. Herran and President Marroquin long to answer that question.

A FAITHFUL SERVANT.

In every trade and profession activity oscillates between wide extremes. At certain hours of the day the streets, restaurants and barber shops are crowded, while at others they are almost deserted. The merchants have their dull and busy seasons. If one stands near the switchboard of a telephone exchange just before 10 o'clock in the morning he will be astonished at the sudden increase of calls that come pouring in simultaneously a few minutes later. In like manner the duties of the lawyer, physician, preacher and teacher are more exacting at one time than at another, and all such members of society sigh for a more uniform distribution of the demands upon their time and strength.

From this universal law the postman is not exempt. Not only is he obliged to make his rounds in all kinds of weather, but his burdens vary greatly. Sometimes he has little besides letter mail to deliver. Sometimes he carries a load of papers and periodicals that would fill a pedlar's pack. His busiest season, though, is during and before the holidays. Practically all of the greetings that go in the form of cards and an enormous proportion of the gifts which are bestowed at this time of year are sent by mail. Much of this class of merchandise is sent to the purchaser at his home by the delivery wagons of the establishments at which he procures it. Thousands of parcels are carried by the buyers themselves in public conveyances. The resources of the express companies, in town and out of town, are taxed to the utmost in the same service. Yet the postman, with his conductor inside the office from which his issues, ranks first among the helpers of Santa Claus. For the promptness and patience, the intelligence and zeal, with which he meets his responsibilities he should have a unanimous vote of thanks.

GERMAN PROSPERITY. An interesting report from Mr. Mason, the American Consul General at Berlin, indicates that industrial and commercial prosperity is gradually being restored to the German Empire. For the last three years, as our readers know, there has been general depression. We cannot say that full recovery has been effected. Business seldom rises again as quickly as it has fallen; but the upward tendency is unmistakably marked and has already made material progress. This is shown by the movement of industrial stocks. In the United States the prices of securities in Wall Street are often taken as a standard with which to gauge prosperity. It is not always, by any means, a trustworthy standard, yet it is not without value. In Germany it is more trustworthy, because stocks there are less speculative than here and are less subject to artificial manipulation.

Now, Mr. Mason gives us a table of values of the stocks of twenty-two representative companies, including the empire's chief electrical works, iron and steel works, coal and iron mines and street railroads, showing their prices on April 17, 1900, before the great crash; on September 26, 1901, after the crash; on December 31, 1902, when recovery had begun, and on November 20, 1903, the latest available date before the preparation of the report. From this it appears that every one of them suffered serious loss between the first two dates, though not all in equal ratio. Thus the Eschweiler rolling mill fell from 258.75 to 67.90, while the Concordia Mining Company fell from 373.50 to 243.

Between the second and third dates all but five showed gains. Four of the five which showed further losses were electrical concerns, and the fifth was the Concordia Mining Company, which had lost so little at first, but which by the third date given fell to 238. The gains of the other seventeen varied in amount, not one of them rising to the original figures which prevailed on the first date. Finally, between the third and fourth dates every one of the twenty-two showed a gain, and of the five which had continued to fall between the second and third dates, all but one, the Siemens & Halske corporation, showed an increase above the second date. Two of the twenty-two stood on the fourth date just where they had stood on the first, before the fall. The average price of the twenty-two on the first date was 271.28, on the second it was 154.54, on the third it was 177.32 and on the fourth it was 208.91.

The causes of this recovery of values are varied. Mr. Mason dwells upon the three chief ones. One is the favorable progress that is being made toward the negotiation of new commercial treaties on the basis of the new tariff, coupled with the expectation that the new tariff system, which will go into force some time next year, will conduce to increased prosperity. The second is the fact that some of the electrical manufacturing concerns have made large and valuable contracts for work in Mexico, South America and elsewhere. The third is the natural cause that the panic has run its course and reaction toward renewed prosperity has set in. These causes should continue to be operative for some time, until prosperity is fully restored to its former basis. Nevertheless, it is evident that the rising tide might be disturbed, if not wholly checked, by some untoward occurrence, such as a commercial quarrel with some important power or a war which would unfavorably affect German interests.

In this consideration we may find an explanation of Germany's obvious desire for maintenance of peace in Eastern Asia. Whether or not a war there would directly involve the empire as a combatant, it would certainly interfere with its large and profitable commerce, and would entail upon it much expense for military preparations to meet possible contingencies. Besides, if Russia were beaten by Japan, as she well might be, her value to Germany as a trade customer would be much impaired. It is therefore the part of enlightened and far-seeing self-interest for the German government to advise German bankers not to promote hostilities by lending Russia the "shew's of war" and to exert its whole influence for the maintenance of peace in the Far East.

COLLEGE SPORTS THIS YEAR. The contests of the collegians even a quarter century ago brought together multitudes of gratified and enthusiastic spectators. But 1903 in many fields of endeavor has excelled records to an extent that has caused a general rubbing of eyes and countless gasps of amazement.

It is a striking feature of this memorable year that the attendance at several of the competitions in which our best known universities took part surpassed all preceding figures. The financial managers of football are especially jubilant, and have so much cash on hand that the calls for subscriptions to meet expenses may be comparatively easy in 1904.

Wherein Craven's recording telephone is superior to Poulsen's telegraphone does not appear from the dispatches which mention the former. Perhaps there is no essential difference. The Danish device, which first appeared about four years ago, and which is a combination of telephone and phonograph, appeared to be a success, but it has never been introduced. In the

tion is, then, whether Colombia shall "join the procession" in accepting an accomplished and irrevocable fact and get \$1,000,000, or shall stubbornly hold out alone against the judgment of the world and against an achievement it cannot undo and lose the \$1,000,000. It should not take such statesmen as General Reyes, Dr. Herran and President Marroquin long to answer that question.

UNACCEPTABLE.

Announcement is made that the official investigation of the recent fatal wreck on the Pittsburg division of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad has been completed, and that the official conclusion is not merely that no employee of the company was responsible, but that the disaster was unavoidable. In consideration of prospective damage suits, it is not difficult to see why the company should choose to adopt that position, instead of confessing liability in advance; but it can hardly suppose that the public will be satisfied. There is one acknowledged and indisputable fact, namely, that the accident was directly due to the falling of lumber from a westbound flatcar on the eastbound track. The investigation must, therefore, have started with the question, Why did the lumber fall? That question was promptly and frankly answered the next day in the statement, attributed to an officer of the company, that one or more of the stakes inserted along the side of the car to hold the lumber in place were weak or improperly secured. That explanation, which originally seemed and still seems natural and reasonable, has not, so far as we have observed, been reaffirmed, and it certainly is not so much as suggested in the published result of the explanation. But, on the other hand, it does not appear to have been either officially withdrawn or practically discredited. It is obvious that the lumber would not have been dislodged if it had been securely fastened, and in the absence of evidence to the contrary it is fair to conclude that the stakes gave way.

At all events, the company's case would not be helped by an hypothesis that some other condition essential to security was lacking.

If the finding were merely that no employee of the company was to blame—implying, perhaps, that the company meant to disclaim responsibility on the ground that the lumber car had been received from some shipper who was bound to see that it was properly loaded—that of itself would be an exceedingly disquieting proposition. It would warrant the inference that the company was not accustomed to inspect rolling stock delivered to it for transportation, but was willing to take great and constant risks. The assumption of that attitude would be an invitation to the traveling public to dread a succession of disasters. It would be interesting to know just what meaning we are expected to attach to the declaration that no employee of the company was responsible.

But the company does not stop with acquitting itself. It proceeds to acquit everybody. The accident, we are informed, was unavoidable. That is to say, when heavy freight, on the careful bestowal of which the safe operation of a railroad depends, falls in the way of a passenger train, and scores of lives are sacrificed in consequence, no human being is to blame in the slightest degree. We must humbly bow to an inscrutable decree and murmur, "It was the act of God." Such is the verdict gratuitously found for us in this case by a great corporation. But it will not be accepted. It is an effort to reason and an insult to the Almighty.

Some man who ought originally to have made that lumber secure defected. Some other man who ought to have corrected the first error was remiss. Until the company has found those men the public will justly consider its investigation a farce or a fraud.

THE LESSON OF THE DEATH RATE. According to one of our learned magistrates, the people at the last election were tired of mere businesslike management of their affairs and wanted an "administration with a heart." They are going to have it, and one of the tests of its worth will be found in the record of the death rate for the next two years. Will an "administration with a heart" see that the rules of sanitation are so enforced as to decrease the number of deaths among the people for whom its heart beats, or will its palpitations manifest themselves merely in being good natured and generous to persons with a "pull"? We fear that the sort of heart which was in demand on Election Day was mostly the latter, for in the things that really made for the welfare and happiness of the whole people this present one will be the lowest in the history of the city.

The final figures cannot yet be made, for there are the deaths of the last few days of the year to be added, but it will not be more than 18.15, and is likely to be somewhat lower than that. The rate for 1902 was 18.74, up to that time the lowest in the history of the city, while that for 1901, the last year of Tammany rule, was 20. This is what Mayor Low has done for the people of New-York, and it remains to be seen if Mayor McClellan can make heart beats turn in the same way to the saving of human life. The reduction in the death rate this year means that about two thousand persons are alive who would have been dead if the conditions of the year before had continued, and the reduction of 1902 from the rate of 1901 meant the saving of nearly four thousand lives. Statistics are dry things and percentages mean little to the average man, but these figures show what a little thing like a fractional reduction in the death rate by vigilant sanitation amounts to in this great city.

A certain part of this gain has been due to favorable weather conditions, but in great part it has been brought about by vigilance and intelligence in the administration of the Sanitary Code. It is not mere chance of weather that accounts for this steady improvement. One year with a low rate followed by one with a higher rate might be so interpreted. In the campaign Tammany said the rate for 1902 was all due to the weather—there having been a decrease in the number of sunstrokes—in spite of the remarkable decrease in deaths from consumption, smallpox, children's diseases and other troubles responding directly to sanitation. Now comes the record of even better results this year, and though last summer was, perhaps, favorable to health as compared to the average year, it could hardly have been more favorable than that of 1902, which, according to Tammany, was so good that Dr. Lederle was entitled to no credit for the city's health. It would certainly be remarkable if Nature for two years running, of all the years of the city's history, should discriminate in favor of a reform administration. It is believed that this year's rate will show a particularly large number of deaths from pneumonia, which would tend to indicate that what was gained by a cool summer has been lost by unfavorable winter weather. But for the present epidemic of pneumonia, which is by no means confined to New-York, this year's rate would be much lower. The great saving of life last year, and in all probability this year, was made by the campaign against consumption and the more careful inspection of fruit and milk.

It is due to Dr. Lederle and to the administration of which he is a part that this work should be known and appreciated. It is now too late for the people to assure the continuance of such excellent service; they have displaced it and intrusted their lives to other hands. It

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PANAMA AND COLOMBIA'S DEBT. Mr. Bunau-Varilla makes the interesting and, on the whole, gratifying announcement that Panama will voluntarily assume its proportion of Colombia's foreign debt. This is somewhat unexpected, since the impression was recently given that Panama would refuse to assume any portion of that debt, and there were those who supposed the United States would approve and sustain such refusal. The case of Cuba was recalled, in which, despite the strenuous efforts of Spain, the American peace commissioners steadfastly refused to let the island be burdened with any part of the huge debt which Spain sought to saddle upon it. But the two cases are not exactly alike. The debt which Spain wanted Cuba to assume was contracted not for Cuba's benefit, but largely for its subjection to Spanish rule, and for other purposes of Spain in other parts of the world, and Cuban repudiation of responsibility was therefore logical and just. Panama, however, has hitherto sustained a more intimate relation with Colombia than Cuba did with Spain, and the indebtedness which it is now to assume is not a separate debt, specially created and specially charged against Panama, but merely a part of the common debt of Colombia, for which Panama was indisputably responsible as long as it remained a member of the Colombian union.

Had Panama decided to resist responsibility for any part of the Colombian debt it might have made a strong case. Much might have been said upon both sides. Questions of international law would have been involved concerning the responsibility of a seceding State for the financial obligations of the parent State, with various arguments and precedents pro and contra. Questions of fact would have been raised concerning the actual benefit received by Panama in return for the indebtedness incurred, on which testimony would have been profuse and contradictory. There would also have been the question of equity—whether, apart from law and fact, Panama ought not to assume some of Colombia's debt, seeing that it was securing so large a share of Colombia's assets.

All these questions are brushed aside, however, by Panama's offer to assume a share of the debt proportioned to her share of the whole Colombian population, to wit, about \$1,000,000. In so doing Panama may be acting generously or merely wisely, we need not discuss which. What seems certain is that it is acting wisely. In view of what it is to receive on account of the canal, Panama can easily afford to pay so small a sum as \$1,000,000, and in doing so it will commend itself to the world and will place itself financially above the reproach of either Colombia or the world. Its doing so is, of course, conditional. Panama will not assume the indebtedness until Colombia recognizes its independence. That is a reasonable stipulation, and the making of it will probably expedite its fulfillment; for practically all the world except Colombia has now recognized Panama's independence, and that independence is an established fact and is sure to remain. The ques-

tion is, then, whether Colombia shall "join the procession" in accepting an accomplished and irrevocable fact and get \$1,000,000, or shall stubbornly hold out alone against the judgment of the world and against an achievement it cannot undo and lose the \$1,000,000. It should not take such statesmen as General Reyes, Dr. Herran and President Marroquin long to answer that question.

UNACCEPTABLE. Announcement is made that the official investigation of the recent fatal wreck on the Pittsburg division of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad has been completed, and that the official conclusion is not merely that no employee of the company was responsible, but that the disaster was unavoidable. In consideration of prospective damage suits, it is not difficult to see why the company should choose to adopt that position, instead of confessing liability in advance; but it can hardly suppose that the public will be satisfied. There is one acknowledged and indisputable fact, namely, that the accident was directly due to the falling of lumber from a westbound flatcar on the eastbound track. The investigation must, therefore, have started with the question, Why did the lumber fall? That question was promptly and frankly answered the next day in the statement, attributed to an officer of the company, that one or more of the stakes inserted along the side of the car to hold the lumber in place were weak or improperly secured. That explanation, which originally seemed and still seems natural and reasonable, has not, so far as we have observed, been reaffirmed, and it certainly is not so much as suggested in the published result of the explanation. But, on the other hand, it does not appear to have been either officially withdrawn or practically discredited. It is obvious that the lumber would not have been dislodged if it had been securely fastened, and in the absence of evidence to the contrary it is fair to conclude that the stakes gave way.

At all events, the company's case would not be helped by an hypothesis that some other condition essential to security was lacking.

If the finding were merely that no employee of the company was to blame—implying, perhaps, that the company meant to disclaim responsibility on the ground that the lumber car had been received from some shipper who was bound to see that it was properly loaded—that of itself would be an exceedingly disquieting proposition. It would warrant the inference that the company was not accustomed to inspect rolling stock delivered to it for transportation, but was willing to take great and constant risks. The assumption of that attitude would be an invitation to the traveling public to dread a succession of disasters. It would be interesting to know just what meaning we are expected to attach to the declaration that no employee of the company was responsible.

But the company does not stop with acquitting itself. It proceeds to acquit everybody. The accident, we are informed, was unavoidable. That is to say, when heavy freight, on the careful bestowal of which the safe operation of a railroad depends, falls in the way of a passenger train, and scores of lives are sacrificed in consequence, no human being is to blame in the slightest degree. We must humbly bow to an inscrutable decree and murmur, "It was the act of God." Such is the verdict gratuitously found for us in this case by a great corporation. But it will not be accepted. It is an effort to reason and an insult to the Almighty.

Some man who ought originally to have made that lumber secure defected. Some other man who ought to have corrected the first error was remiss. Until the company has found those men the public will justly consider its investigation a farce or a fraud.

THE LESSON OF THE DEATH RATE. According to one of our learned magistrates, the people at the last election were tired of mere businesslike management of their affairs and wanted an "administration with a heart." They are going to have it, and one of the tests of its worth will be found in the record of the death rate for the next two years. Will an "administration with a heart" see that the rules of sanitation are so enforced as to decrease the number of deaths among the people for whom its heart beats, or will its palpitations manifest themselves merely in being good natured and generous to persons with a "pull"? We fear that the sort of heart which was in demand on Election Day was mostly the latter, for in the things that really made for the welfare and happiness of the whole people this present one will be the lowest in the history of the city.

The final figures cannot yet be made, for there are the deaths of the last few days of the year to be added, but it will not be more than 18.15, and is likely to be somewhat lower than that. The rate for 1902 was 18.74, up to that time the lowest in the history of the city, while that for 1901, the last year of Tammany rule, was 20. This is what Mayor Low has done for the people of New-York, and it remains to be seen if Mayor McClellan can make heart beats turn in the same way to the saving of human life. The reduction in the death rate this year means that about two thousand persons are alive who would have been dead if the conditions of the year before had continued, and the reduction of 1902 from the rate of 1901 meant the saving of nearly four thousand lives. Statistics are dry things and percentages mean little to the average man, but these figures show what a little thing like a fractional reduction in the death rate by vigilant sanitation amounts to in this great city.

A certain part of this gain has been due to favorable weather conditions, but in great part it has been brought about by vigilance and intelligence in the administration of the Sanitary Code. It is not mere chance of weather that accounts for this steady improvement. One year with a low rate followed by one with a higher rate might be so interpreted. In the campaign Tammany said the rate for 1902 was all due to the weather—there having been a decrease in the number of sunstrokes—in spite of the remarkable decrease in deaths from consumption, smallpox, children's diseases and other troubles responding directly to sanitation. Now comes the record of even better results this year, and though last summer was, perhaps, favorable to health as compared to the average year, it could hardly have been more favorable than that of 1902, which, according to Tammany, was so good that Dr. Lederle was entitled to no credit for the city's health. It would certainly be remarkable if Nature for two years running, of all the years of the city's history, should discriminate in favor of a reform administration. It is believed that this year's rate will show a particularly large number of deaths from pneumonia, which would tend to indicate that what was gained by a cool summer has been lost by unfavorable winter weather. But for the present epidemic of pneumonia, which is by no means confined to New-York, this year's rate would be much lower. The great saving of life last year, and in all probability this year, was made by the campaign against consumption and the more careful inspection of fruit and milk.

It is due to Dr. Lederle and to the administration of which he is a part that this work should be known and appreciated. It is now too late for the people to assure the continuance of such excellent service; they have displaced it and intrusted their lives to other hands. It

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PANAMA AND COLOMBIA'S DEBT. Mr. Bunau-Varilla makes the interesting and, on the whole, gratifying announcement that Panama will voluntarily assume its proportion of Colombia's foreign debt. This is somewhat unexpected, since the impression was recently given that Panama would refuse to assume any portion of that debt, and there were those who supposed the United States would approve and sustain such refusal. The case of Cuba was recalled, in which, despite the strenuous efforts of Spain, the American peace commissioners steadfastly refused to let the island be burdened with any part of the huge debt which Spain sought to saddle upon it. But the two cases are not exactly alike. The debt which Spain wanted Cuba to assume was contracted not for Cuba's benefit, but largely for its subjection to Spanish rule, and for other purposes of Spain in other parts of the world, and Cuban repud