OUR GRAIN INTEREST.

Something About Flour and Our Grain Interest Generally—A Word or Two for All the Cereals—Spring and Winter Wheats—The Trade—Strongholds of Each.

Few, other than experts, are possessed of any but the most meagre details upon this subject. In fact, popular credulity and manifest disposition to accept even the baldest generalities of the great milling interests of the country are a source of absolute amusement to those willing to take even an amateur's time and trouble in their verification or refutation.

The old fable of genuine "Genesee" flour, for instance, remains to this day one of the staple myths of the trade, although certainly none but the veriest outsider is ignorant of the fact that not a barrel of that flour has been milled in Genesee county for other than strict home consumption (if indeed any for that) for the last fifteen or eighteen years.

This last year (1868) is put down the world over as the greatest wheat year ever known. In fact, grains of all kinds have been planted in great quantity and of universally excellent quality, especially in all European grain growing countries—with the possible exception of Spain. Owing to this fact any advance in prices, gained by the United States this winter, will, undoubtedly, be overruled in the spring, as soon as the resumption of importations into Great Britain commences from the overflowing granaries of the Russian and Prussian ports. In view of this contingency, all our Northern and Northwestern States are pouring grain into the seaboard towns of the Union, trusting in rapid and easy transportation thence to all parts of Great Britain and the Continent.

The old time bugbear—the close of navigation—has, of late years, ceased to disturb the public peace to any great extent in the transmission of grain—facilities for its forwarding by land in as large quantities as desired, owing to increased capacity of freight accommodation, having effectually silenced the sting of that drawback, no less than 2,000,000 bushels of grain having been brought to the city last year, between the close and resumption of navigation the spring; and it is stated that these seven may as easily swell to ten millions, if necessary, over the same routes, which may be brought this year. Of course, this latter mode of transportation is a little dearer, but by it and no other can an adequate supply of grain at moderate prices be afforded for the season in the New York and Eastern markets.

Old merchants of this city state that an impression is gaining ground that the lowest point of depression in wheat on the other side of the Atlantic has been reached, and as a necessary consequence, confident to the falling off in the English deliveries on the closing of the Baltic and Black seaports, predicts a certain rise in prices. Chicago at present engaged in her old amusement of "selling grain" at which hazardous little game friend and foe alike "cornered" alike with impartial liberality. The English *Mark Lane Express* reports a continuance of favorable weather for wheat planting. It says, however, of the excessive dampness of the atmosphere as injuring the condition of the fresh sown wheat. It also reports the weekly sales of English houses to the Continent as having fallen off at the rate of 30,000 quarters.

To the above quoted Genesee county is due the first impetus given to the flour business in the United States. At present Virginia, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, South Indiana, Missouri and California give us our fall and winter wheats; Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and North Indiana the most of the spring wheat. This latter term applies to wheat sown in the spring and reaped in the fall. Of the names under which these various flours are palmed off upon an unsuspecting public the least said the better. They may be best classed, perhaps, under the general term of legion. Of late years the California has superseded the old time celebrated Virginia, or "James river wheat," which, from its excessive dryness, was a favorite export to the Indies and other tropical climates. Various brands of the Missouri flours have very lately entered into competition even with the California for this exclusively Southern privilege.

Southern wheat and grains usually look well this year, in common with other cereals the whole country over. Last year's wheat crop entire for the Union, on authentic statements, was fully 220,000,000 bushels. One-ninth of this enormous aggregate was the contribution of the State of California alone, or a round numbers 25,000,000 bushels. All over the South heretofore given over to tobacco and cotton fields have this year been sown with some order of grain instead. The North and West generally, following the Southern example in this respect, have also planted liberally, in many cases experimentally, but in almost all instances with excellent success, thus raising the running of the national aggregate up to 250,000,000 bushels this year—which is the estimate quoted for the entire Union—again a comparatively easy matter. Although the quantity of grain raised at present south of the line will scarcely be more than enough for local consumption, it will thereby tend to lessen the demand upon the St. Louis and New York markets, thus leaving a larger margin for export.

Of the best wheats now in the market, California, being naturally the dryest grown, and St. Louis contend for the palm of preference. California wheat is of course, comparatively speaking, a new wheat in the market, and for a long time a prejudice existed against it on account of its being sacked instead of barrelled. Now, however, owing to its having bravely fought its way to a deserved popularity, it bids fair to crowd all others—except, possibly, the St. Louis—out of the market, especially for West Indian and South American exportation. Another obstacle it has had to surmount has been the enormous freight charges, four dollars per barrel, in gold or its equivalent, being the charge per steamer for this Pacific coast article. Of course, the steamers are not very heavily patronized at these rates, buyers usually preferring to await its transit by sailing vessels around the Horn to liquidating such exorbitant monetary demands; and but little is to be hoped either—for a long time, at least—from the Pacific Railroad. The rate of charges by the form are but fifteen to twenty dollars, currency, by the ton (2,000 lbs. to the ton). To England the rates of transportation from California around the Horn are from £3 to £3 10 sterling by the English ton of 2,240 lbs. This year, owing to the opposition line of steamers, the cost per barrel on flour from California has been but $1 50 in gold. Unfortunately, this line is shortly to be withdrawn, which misfortune will run the rates up again to about three dollars (gold) per barrel. It is a point still disputed among millers as to which makes the stronger flour, California or St. Louis, and, in fact, one mooted generally, the comparative strength of the winter and spring wheat—some millers contending for the former, others again being in favor of the latter wheat. The best winter wheats are white; the spring wheat, red or amber colored. The California wheat, being planted immediately after the rainy season and thus enjoying the advantages of the dry, naturally contains the least moisture of any. Immediately after it in estimation (some contend equal to, if possibly even preceding it) is held the Missouri, which also, in finest quality of a fine white grain, is raised on the Missouri river, and also on the Mississippi, in the vicinity of St. Louis. The celebrated old Genesee was also a white wheat. This favorite grain was almost totally destroyed some ten or fifteen years since by the plague called the Hessian fly (a wheat pest differing from the weevil in several essential particulars), which received its name from the Hessians, by whom it is supposed to have been introduced into this country at the time of the Revolution. It is an insect about the size of an ordinary mosquito, which attacks the grain while in the soft or milk state. But these two enemies—the Hessian fly and weevil—are by no means the only evils to which "the nodding grain," while in its ripening stage, is liable. A small winged insect, in appearance somewhat similar to a butterfly—the grain moth (*Tinea Granella*)—is also addicted to working the surface of the budding wheat, &c., as the third enemy in the long list of insect makers.

Following these, in addition, may be mentioned the *Angoumois moth*, the *Anacampsis Cerealella* moth, and still another, the *Angourmais* (France). The latter is the wheat locust, virgin to our Southern States, and but slightly dissimilar to the ordinary locust. These are the principal insect pests dreaded by American farmers among their growing grain.

The New York millwrights prefer spring as a time to grind, although a goodly quantity of winter wheat is also daily barrelled in the city, and the exports of both hence are very heavy and on the yearly increase, not so especially in flour, however, as in wheat in grain. The West Indian and South American markets are falling back in extensive patronage on the New York market, the reason being that sooner or later all the best milled brands anywhere in the country find their way into the great *entrepôt* for anything and everything—the city of New York. This immensity of exportation is scarcely likely to be of any actual advantage to the city, however; for, as above stated, owing to the flooding of all foreign markets for some years past by the United States of inferior brands, buyers have grown wary and prefer now to purchase the grain instead of the trashy flours—popularly called "wildcat" brands—with which dishonesty of New York and Western shippers have, in so many instances, imposed upon their innocence for the genuine article. Another plausible reason, and one more gratifying to national conceit, is that grain, it is alleged, keeps better when ground to order, especially in warm climates, than when imported, even of the finest and driest brands of flour. Of course this rain of retributive justice "falls alike upon the just and the unjust," and many innocent millwrights unfortunately suffer acutely thereby in purse as well as character. In spite, however, of this slight cloud of national disgrace, which, whether justly or unjustly, falls upon the weight of the American milling credit, many of the leading firms of the city have lately made a specialty of certain brands which are superseding all others in the market, with the exception of California and St. Louis, for home consumption.

The New England grain interest is hardly of sufficient general interest to chronicle for the reader outside of her fine States, very little of any description of cereal being nowadays exported thence, with the possible exception of rye and corn meal, her wheat and oats being barely sufficient for local consumption. In fact, the Western and Southwestern brands of flour, especially those made from the grains grown on the Pacific coast (California and Oregon), are generally the favorite ones all over the American Union. It is estimated that of the entire wheat produce east of the Rocky Mountains three-fourths fully are of spring growth. The one-fourth remaining is scarcely permitted to travel far from its spot of raising, owing to the heavy demand for it in its own region of native culture; consequently this excessive demand in many instances tempts dishonor to the rescue by branding "wildcat" flour with old and long established favorite names. Similarly "Old Genesee" for years after the fly attacked it, to insure quick sales, was branded upon nearly every barrel containing flour grown anywhere west of the Alleghanies and to the extent, even, for a long time of a great percentage of that grown in Canada. This latter Canadian wheat proper, furnishes this year, and almost the only quotable instance, evidence of severe suffering from the long drought of the past summer. Apart, however, from the enormous local demands for the best qualities of Western flours, the present prevalence of trashy varieties—and there undoubtedly is an undeniable prevalence of inferior flours now before the public—is in a great measure due to the long continued and much anathematized hard times, during which breadstuffs have had and have still to be had, irrespective of diminished purses, and of the disagreeable, though incontrovertible fact that a dollar now, alas! is a dollar no longer.

Consequently trashy flours have had to be branded for public purchase and deception with attested and accredited names, much to the general detriment of American national credit, not only abroad, but in the Eastern markets, particularly of our own country. The city of New York has burnt her fingers considerably in this nefarious business—the deterioration of flours—as might naturally be expected among other schemists, but to no extent that with proper care and fair dealing for the future, especially in her Southern and West Indian relations, she may not ultimately recover from. The very considerable discrepancy in the prices now paid for inferior and family brands of flour (from five to eight dollars per barrel for flour that was formerly only from two to four) has presented a temptation so formidable that few indeed have been able to withstand it.

Great blame is attached to the laxity shown in the enforcement of the inspection laws. It is alleged that until the abuses incident to them are somewhat corrected but little can be hoped for the reinstatement of national credit on this question. But a few years ago these inferior grades of flour were purchased, almost without exception, by importers for the European markets and immediately shipped thence; the results of such unfair dealings were not long in fruiting, and, as above stated, now wheat in the grain for exportation continues in the majority of instances, as it has for a long time back, to supersede the old time branded barrel.

Thus has the milling business of the city of New York kept pace in suffering from this cause with that of all our Eastern cities, and whereas formerly in the city a single mill would easily turn out from 800 to 1,000 barrels per day the same establishment now manufactures but between 400 and 500 barrels.

Yankee ingenuity has within the last fifteen years put some wonderful self-raising preparations of different flours in the market. These extraordinary concoctions are so prepared, chemically, that but the addition of a little salt and water is necessary to make the lightest dough known. Hecker was the first discoverer of the invention of this marvellous manipulation.

In regard to the manufacturing interest of the cities of Western New York, so celebrated in times gone by for their fine brands of flour, it is only necessary to remark that they still flourish to a limited extent, but with a yearly decreasing patronage and prestige. The facilities for milling the wheat upon the field of its own Western growth becoming every year greater and more extensively worked, the prediction of the Western interest eventually swallowing up completely that of the Eastern is certainly a true one, and in reality but a question of time.

The magnitude of the wheat interest is so much in advance of any other grain interest in the Union that the facts in relation to the others fail to be of special moment to any but the interested. Corn meal ranks second in order to the wheat, but very far behind it in importance, although it, as well as other minor cereals, are raised in yearly increasing quantities. This meal is made in greater or less degree in every State of the Union. The favorite brand is, perhaps, the "Brandywine" from grain, raised in the vicinity of Baltimore, Md. The best varieties of it come from Maryland and New Jersey, although the States of Delaware and New York also furnish considerable quantities and of excellent qualities. Oat meal is very limitedly furnished also by nearly every State, though our markets for it are supplied strictly from Ireland and Scotland. Buckwheat is more of a national grain again, as buckwheat cakes are an indisputable, as incomparable Yankee (gastronomic) shibboleth. Barley is very limitedly cultivated in America, the "barley mow" being as yet an unnaturalized luxury among us. There remains but to notice the one more grain, which, as many will bear witness, has fortunately or unfortunately been cultivated to a considerable extent upon the American Continent. For bread, cakes and "mush" it is principally appreciated in the eastern part of the country, but in the West and Northwest generally, to a limited extent, also, in the South, it is better and more appreciatively known in its amber liquid form as unmitigated old rye whiskey.

LYNCH LAW IN TENNESSEE.

Close of the Career of a Negro Murderer, Desperado and Robber.

[Bartlett (Tenn.) correspondence of the Memphis Avalanche, Dec. 26.]

Our community was startled this morning by the recital of a most fiendish and diabolical attempt made upon the life of our fellow citizen, William A. Miller, who resides two miles north of Bartlett, last night, at twelve o'clock. A negro named John Bell, who has worked in the neighborhood during the year at different times, has been lurking around the premises of citizens for several days past, and it appears he was determined to make a "raise" of money by a most daring attempt to take the life of a peaceful, quiet citizen, whom he suspected of having money. About twelve o'clock last night John Bell proceeded to the ginhouse of Mr. Miller, which is within 100 yards of his dwelling, and fired it. He then went to the dwelling and stationed himself with an axe behind a large rosebush at the door, intending when Mr. Miller rushed out of the house to fell him with a blow of the axe. But, fortunately, when Mr. Miller discovered the ginhouse on fire he went out by another door, and soon aroused all the hands upon his premises.

The would-be murderer made his escape, and, fearing that he might be caught, started at a brisk run from the place. The moon was shining, and there was sufficient snow upon the ground to track him. The fire soon collected several of the neighbors, who went to work to discover the tracks of the incendiary. This they did after a little search. The negro came toward Bartlett at a "double quick," and some dozen or more of the citizens pursued at a very rapid speed, and when the negro reached the village he attempted to make such movements that his pursuers would be baffled, but in this he was mistaken, for they soon discovered his track on the railroad below Bartlett, and pursued with greater speed until they came upon him just at Wolf river railroad bridge, where he was ordered by the leader of his pursuers to halt. He stopped and informed them that he would not be taken, but seeing so many around him he surrendered. Bell was taken back to the scene of his depredations, where he confessed that his object was to murder Mr. Miller as he ran out, and go into the house, break open the trunks and get all the money he wanted. He confessed that his intention was to murder Mrs. Miller, too, if she gave the alarm. When captured he had the axe, which was identified by the owner, a negro man, Crump, from whom Bell had stolen it several days ago.

Yesterday morning (Christmas) the body of a negro named George Biggs was found on the railroad, about a mile above Bartlett, lying on the track; and when the accommodation train came along, at nine o'clock, the train passed over it, severing it in a number of places. The officers of the train thought that the negro was drunk, and did not see the body in time to check up. The jury of inquest saw that the skull of the unfortunate negro was broken in; and it appears now that this negro, John Bell, killed Biggs early yesterday morning for a sum of money which Biggs had—he having been paid off the day previous—and put the body on the track of the railroad to avoid discovery of the murder. This much John Bell confessed.

It is proper to state that the colored people on Mr. Miller's place and others were as eager to capture Bell as any, and they did good service in the chase. Bell begged if they would let him go to Memphis he would get money enough to pay for the ginhouse and the cotton burned. But the citizens thought it would be best to administer Judge Lynch, and Bell is now dangling from the limb of a tree about 100 yards of the place where the ginhouse stood, and a jury of inquest is being held by E. W. Caldwell, which I think will read about like this:—"John Bell, a colored man, came to his death by a rope being placed around his neck, which was fastened to the limb of a tree by parties unknown—he having nothing to stand upon—consequently died, Saturday morning, December 26, 1868."

A WESTERN HEROINE.

A Sister of One of the Reno Victims on the Warpath.

[From the Chicago Post, Dec. 26.]

Miss Laura Reno, the sister of the victims of the New Albany assassination, who was in the city yesterday, is described by those well acquainted with her as a young lady of great beauty and accomplishments. It is also said that she possesses a large part of the brains of the family, which, added to an inflexible will and an intense desire for revenge, will sooner or later bring ruin or death upon some of the murderers of her brothers. At their funeral at Seymour, a few days ago, the attendance was quite large, and among other persons a resident of Seymour, whose name we have forgotten, dropped in. He had scarcely made his appearance before Miss Reno rose from her seat and walking across the room fiercely told him that that was no place for him, that she recognized in him one of the murderers of her brother, and if he did not leave immediately it would be the worse for him. The fellow slunk out of the house like a whipped cur, frightened almost to death. Unless a great mistake has been made in the estimation of Laura Reno's character, the Jackson county regulators will find that the oath of revenge she took over the dead body of Frank Reno was no mere empty threat to be forgotten in an hour, but a promise of terrible meaning.

IMPORTANT SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS.

Official Report on the Variations of the Magnetic Needle.

[Augusta (Me.) correspondence of the Boston Advertiser, Dec. 26.]

The Governor and Council were authorized, by resolve of the Legislature of 1866, to appoint a commissioner to ascertain all available facts in relation to the variations of the magnetic needle throughout the State, from its first settlement down to the present time. In May, 1866, Mr. Noah Barker, of Exeter Mills, was appointed commissioner to carry out the provisions of the resolve. Having been for a series of years land agent of the State, and being an experienced engineer and surveyor, who had made scientific subjects a life study, Mr. Barker was peculiarly fitted for the work of the commission. The result of Mr. Barker's investigations will be given to the Legislature immediately on the assembling of that body. Prior to the commencement of the United States coast survey but few of the variations of the magnetic needle, as observed in this State, are recorded; and owing to the doubtful character of some of the earliest of these observations, we are unable to place implicit reliance upon them. As the magnetic force of the earth is a planetary force, and is confined to no limited locality, the commissioner has recognized the necessity of being able to compare observations which have been made from time to time in places widely remote from each other; and in his report he has aimed at usefulness rather than originality. He has given such general rules and directions as will enable the land surveyor to determine the declination of the needle for himself, and with the instruments used in ordinary surveys. An original table of azimuths is given, extending forward to the close of the present century, and for every five minutes of latitude within the limits of the State; also, time tables for the culminations and elongations of the North star have been computed.

The commissioner proceeds to give a historical account of the magnetic compass and its variations. The variation of the needle from the true north appears to have been discovered by Peregrini, an Italian philosopher, in 1269; and Columbus, during his first transatlantic voyage, in 1492, made the startling discovery that the needle deviated in its direction from the north pole of the heavens and was not, therefore, that unfallible guide at sea which it had formerly been regarded. The variation of the compass has never been fully and satisfactorily explained by all the researches of science. About the middle of the sixteenth century observations were made in France and England which fully proved that the needle pointed eastward of the true north, and it was found to vary not only from the true meridian, but to vary differently in different places, and that the variation was not stationary in the same place for any length of time. In proceeding in either direction, east or west, from the lines of no variation, the declination of the needle gradually increases and becomes a maximum at a certain intermediate point between them. On the west of the eastern line the declination is west; on the east it is east. At Boston the declination is about nine and a half degrees west; in England it is about twenty-four degrees west; in Greenland, fifty degrees west; at St. Petersburg, six degrees west.

The western line of no variation now passes through Cleveland, Ohio (or about south twenty-four and a half degrees east), passes near Raleigh, N. C., and is still receding slowly to the west. At all places lying to the east of the line, including the New England States, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, nearly all of Pennsylvania and the eastern half of Virginia and North Carolina, the variation is westerly—that is, the north end of the needle points to the west of due north. At all places lying to the west of this line, including the Western and Southern States, the variation is easterly—that is, the north end of the needle points to the east of due north. This variation increases in proportion to the distance of the place on either side of the line of no variation—receding more than twenty-one degrees, easterly variation, in Oregon, and about twenty degrees of westerly variation in the northeastern part of Maine. But no annual rate can be fixed on as a certain rule for the declination of the needle, as its motion is much more rapid in some years than in others. The secular and diurnal changes of the needle are noted at length, as also the annual change, magnetic storms, auroral disturbances, local attraction, magnetic dip, magnetic force, the magnetic poles and meridians. About eight o'clock in the morning the needle is in its most easterly position; from that time until two o'clock it moves to the west; from that time until evening it moves to the east, and from eight to nine o'clock in the evening until three in the morning it moves west again, after which it returns to the place from which it started, to be ready for similar oscillations the next day. The amplitude of the oscillation is greater in summer than in winter, and is greater in high magnetic latitudes than it is near the equator. Thus at Cambridge, in June and July, it is fifteen minutes of arc, and in December and January it is ten. In consequence of the diurnal change it is evident that a line run in the morning cannot be retraced with the same bearings at noon; therefore, not merely the date at which an important survey is made should be recorded, but also the time of day.

A large and carefully prepared map is given of magnetic declination, and the report closes with an appendix by Edwin F. Johnson, of Connecticut, civil engineer and surveyor, which throws additional light on the variations of the magnetic needle along the eastern boundary of the State and explains the term "due north" as used by land surveyors to mean the true north as distinguished from the magnetic north, or north as pointed out by the magnetic needle.

The report will pass into the hands of scientific surveyors and engineers of our own State, who will have an opportunity to judge of its merits. While the author has embraced in his report many facts on this interesting subject it is still only the merest broaching of an inexhaustible theme. This is the first move of the kind, we think, ever made in the United States; hence Mr. Barker, in shaping his report, had no precedent or model to go by, but, like the explorer and surveyor in the wilderness, he was obliged to strike out and blaze his own lines without any pathway ahead. As a preliminary work this report will be sought after by scientific men.

A ROMANTIC INCIDENT OF THE WAR.

A Sick Soldier Corresponds with a Young Lady and What Came of It.

[From the Louisville Democrat, Dec. 28.]

A little incident occurred in Cleveland, Ohio, a few days ago which illustrates the beauty of the correspondence system adopted so generally during the war by mischievous and lovesick men and maidens. Albert H. Winters, a resident of Cincinnati, Ohio, enlisted in one of the Ohio regiments early in the beginning of the war, and while sick in a hospital in Louisville, received from an agent of the Sanitary Commission a pair of stockings, one of which contained a slip of paper giving the maker's name and address, and requesting the one into whose possession the stockings should come to enter into a correspondence with her. Winters as he grew better found time hanging heavily on his hands, and for, as he expressed it, mere fun, wrote the young lady. In due course of time he received a letter from her couched in ladylike and pleasing terms, and young Winters resolved on continuing the correspondence. Letter after letter was received and sent, and finally photographs were exchanged. This led to a deeper resolve on Winters' part, and just about the time the war closed he sent on a formal proposal of marriage, which was as formally accepted. The time for the ceremony was set, but it appears that in this, as well as in many other cases, the course of true love was not destined to run smoothly. Some envious person, learning of the correspondence and its results, wrote the lady that Winters was anything but the model young man that she supposed him to be; in short, that he was already married and the father of an interesting and happy family of three children. This rather staggered the lady, and she wrote Winters about it. He, it appears, was too proud to deny anything, replying that if she loved him as she said she did she must trust to his honor and honesty, which she agreed to do for a time, at least, or until she could become better satisfied upon the point. In the meantime the appointed day for the wedding had passed, and another, remote a year, was fixed upon. For some cause, when the time was up, an extension was asked by the lady and agreed to by Winters. Her letters suddenly began to grow less frequent, and decidedly less affectionate, and the perplexed lover decided upon going to her home to see what was the matter. On his way to the depot the carriage he was in met with an accident, Winters was thrown out and sustained a compound fracture of the right leg. This, of course, prevented him from carrying out his plan for several months, and when he got able to be about had about made up his mind, as he had received no word from his affianced during his sickness, that he would seek elsewhere for a wife. Immersed in business he partially banished her memory from his heart, but it seems fate had ordained that their paths, though diverging for a time, should run together again and that they should unite their fortunes.

On Monday Winters had occasion to visit Cleveland on business; and, while talking to a friend at the Union depot, he recognized the original of the almost forgotten picture upon which he used to dote with so much fondness and expectation, pass in from the carriageway to the ladies' sitting room. Taking a sudden resolution to at least clear up the mystery of her continued coolness he sought her in the room. Mutual explanations followed, and in order to prevent a similar misunderstanding it was agreed to take advantage of the opportunity presented and unite their fortunes. A clergyman was sought out, and in less than half an hour from the time of the first meeting Winters was the happy husband of a beautiful woman. Winters found it convenient to postpone his business and accompany his new-made wife to the residence of her father, a short way down the Lake Shore road.

THE WILL OF CORNELIUS HOLMES.—The following is a copy of the will of Cornelius Holmes, of Kingston, who was murdered by Samuel M. Andrews, his appointed executor and legatee:—I, Cornelius Holmes, of Kingston, State of Massachusetts, being for the present of sound mind, but premising the uncertainty for the future, of my own free will:—First—I give to the Baptist church $1,000, of which I am a member, and my pew. Second—I give to Frank H. Holmes my marble clock. Third—I give to Mary W. Leonard, of St. Joseph, wife of James A. Leonard, $100. Fourth—I give to Lucy E. Adams my easy chair that was my mother's. Fifth—I give to Joseph A. Holmes my silver spoons that were my mother's. Sixth—I give to Samuel M. Andrews and his heirs the rest of my silver plate, also my gold watch and chain, also my clothing. Seventh—I hereby appoint Samuel M. Andrews and Joseph H. Holmes, both of Kingston, the first executors of this my last will and testament, and also bequeath to Joseph H. Holmes and Samuel M. Andrews the remaining property, to be divided equally after these legacies are paid.

FORTRESS MONROE.

Condition of the Fort Since the War Ended—National Cemetery—The Freedmen's Bureau—Military Post—Sale of Ordnance Stores.

FORTRESS MONROE, Va., Dec. 28, 1868.

Fortress Monroe, which during the war served as a base of supplies for the armies operating against Richmond and Petersburg, has since that time quietly settled down on a peace footing, and is hardly a ghost of its former self, when all was confusion and bustle, troops moving hither, with drums beating and colors flying; but now we have nothing exciting to break the usual monotony of garrison life.

Hampton Roads, which formerly carried upon its tranquil bosom some of our most ponderous monitors and heavy transports, now has scarcely a sail to disturb its waters, unless some foreign vessel puts in for provisions or orders. This quiet state of things, although it is to be deplored in a business point of view, is the inevitable result of peace, and as such has been accepted both by the army and the civil portion of the community.

There has been a Sailors' and Soldiers' National Cemetery established near Hampton during the past summer. It is a beautiful spot, located near and commanding a fine view of the Roads. There are over 8,000 soldiers buried there; each one has a white head-board, with his name, rank, company and regiment. These are numbered in alphabetical order, and a list of the same kept by the superintendent for reference and the information of visitors. There is an Episcopal church within the enclosure, also a building for the accommodation of visitors. There is a fine granite monument in the centre of the grounds, which was erected by the untiring exertions of General Blunt, Colonel Curry, Miss Dix and others, who raised the funds to complete the work.

There is an old and time honored cemetery on the beach, about a mile north of the fort, and located in a beautiful pine and live oak grove, which has been used as a burial ground ever since the fort was established. In this secluded spot lie the mortal remains of many brave fellows who died or were killed during the late war.

The Freedmen's Bureau, which has been in operation here for the past few years, with headquarters at Hampton, will on the 1st of January be discontinued except for educational purposes.

The American Mission Association has erected a large school building near Hampton for the purpose of educating the colored children in that vicinity. They have also purchased a large farm adjoining the school, on which they raise an abundance of peas, potatoes and other vegetables for the Northern market. The children who attend the school are required to do from two to four hours' work each day on the farm. The profits on the produce pay the teachers and other incidental expenses, so that the school is self-sustaining.

There is a military camp near Hampton, Va., which is also used as a military prison. Company F of the Twenty-first United States infantry are in charge.

A large sale of condemned ordnance stores took place at the fort to-day, consisting of old cannon, muskets, sabres, &c., which had been damaged during the war. The stores brought very fair prices.

THE ALASKA SEAL FISHERIES.

Description of the Locality Where the Seals are Found—How the Animals Are Taken—New London Sends the First Vessel There from the Atlantic Coast.

[From the Hartford Courant, Dec. 30.]

New London claims the honor of having sent the first vessel from the Atlantic coast to the waters of Alaska to engage in the fur seal business. This vessel was the bark Peru, E. Morgan, master, owned by Williams & Haven, of that city. Captain Morgan has recently returned home, overland, from San Francisco, and gives an interesting account of his operations and a description of the locality where the fur seals are found. He joined his ship at the Sandwich Islands in February last, proceeded via Sitka to the island where the seals resort, and arrived there on the 13th of April. Soon after he landed his men, with building material, provisions, salt and utensils, and hoisted for the first time the American flag on the island. The master hired some natives to assist, and made preparations for the summer's work. Needing more supplies the ship was sent back to Honolulu for additional provisions and lumber, which arrived later in the season. Some twelve or fourteen buildings for dwellings, stores and salt-houses were erected along the shores, and in due time the taking of skins commenced. The men employed in this [illegible] followed the old Russian rule of killing only the males, and removing these back from the beaches before despatching them, lest those coming in from the water should be alarmed and driven off by blood or carcases on the shores. The young seals, or pups, were never molested. The men report the antics of these little fellows, gathered in vast numbers learning to swim and fish, as very amusing.

The Peru party met with strong rivalry and opposition in their work from the employes of a San Francisco concern, who, having bought out the stock of goods and vessels belonging to the old Russian American Fur Company, claimed to be their successors in the fur business of the territory. They tried almost every means of annoyance, but soon found that our New England seamen were not to be coaxed or driven away.

The islands known for many years as the home of the fur seal are two in number, and are situated inside or north of the Fox or Aliatan Islands, about forty miles apart and 200 or 300 miles from any other land. They are triangular in shape, the largest about twenty miles long, east and west, the other about two-thirds the size. The soil is sandy, with underlying clay and rocks; some prominent hills, with low places and ponds between. Along the shore are sand beaches, with cliffs and projecting ledges of rocks, on which the ocean surf constantly breaks. No harbor affording good security is found at either island. Strong winds from almost every quarter are prevalent, and during the summer fog and rain are very common, induced by vast quantities of ice that come floating down from the northern seas. In winter the cold northern winds make the climate extremely cold and inhospitable. No trees or shrubs of any kind are found; a rank grass, some vines producing berries and a profusion of flowers are the sole vegetable products. Of animals, sea lions, walrus, foxes, ducks and fish comprise the list. About 100 families of the native Aluteс live upon these islands, and derive their subsistence from the products of the land and sea. They are an active and hardy race, peaceably disposed, resembling somewhat the Esquimaux, but more intelligent. They live in huts or caves, speak the Aleutian and Russian languages, and have been employed for many years in the taking and curing of the fur seal skins. The seals are found at these islands only in the summer season. They begin to arrive in April or May, and continue to come and go during the summer, occupying the shores, often coming up the bluffs to a considerable height. Their number is legion. The young are brought forth during the months of June and July, the mothers suckling them for nearly two months, when they can provide for themselves. Later in the season all the old seals shed their coats of hair. As soon as this is renewed they begin to migrate, and before winter sets in the whole herd have departed on their annual voyage to sea, not to return until the next spring.

The bark Peru is believed to be the only vessel on this side of the continent that has been sent to engage in the fur business in our new possessions. There were, in fact, but few vessels at the seal islands this year, all of them, except the Peru and one other, combining to work together, thus obtaining a large number of skins. The merchants and masters of New London engaged in the whaling business have always been found foremost in every sea to discover and fish on new grounds for the pursuit of their game, and the adventure of the bark Peru in a new trade shows that the past reputation of that port for marine enterprises is not likely to die out.

The last of September the Peru took off her catch of skins, left a part of her crew to remain through the winter, carried some of the natives employed during the summer to their homes in Kodiac and proceeded thence to Honolulu, where she arrived November 2 with a valuable cargo. We congratulate her owners on the success attending their enterprise and hope they may continue the business more successfully in the future; that others may engage in it, and thus develop an interest which is one of the most important of our newly acquired possessions.

A REMARKABLE DISCOVERY.

The Son of an English Lord and his Family Living in a Cave.

[From the Middletown (Conn.) Sentinel, Dec. 27.]

A singular discovery was recently made in Cromwell. It was that a man, his wife and two boys had taken lodgings in a cave which they had dug in the bank near what is called "Bow Hole." Quite a number have visited the place and find him a man of from thirty to thirty-five years of age, light complexion and light hair. He says he came here in a boat which lies near, about the 1st of December. This boat is built of white oak and cedar, and is about twelve feet long, yawl built, with sail. He is a man of good education, and tells the following story of himself:—"I was born in England, and my father was a lord; I went through college and graduated, after which I enlisted in the English army and served one year, when I deserted and came into the State of Maine; from there I went to New York and worked as a bricklayer. Last fall, while at work on a staging with two others, it gave way and precipitated all three to the ground, killing one and injuring another badly, and laying me up for some weeks. When well enough to walk, having lost my job, I took my family and started in this boat; got as far as the fish house on the east side of the river (opposite where they now are), when my wife was taken sick, and went there expecting to stay till spring; but the owners drove me out, and I crossed over and built the present cave." He has asked for and obtained a job at chopping wood. His wife is Irish, or of Irish descent. The children are said to be very bright. People living in that neighborhood have furnished them with many needed articles of comfort. It is a singular case that a man with the education he appears to have should be under the necessity of burrowing in the ground to find a place to shelter himself and family during the coming winter. He gives his name as Trent.

The Wilmington (N. C.) *Star* has the following suggestive paragraph:—"If a tract of land containing 5,000 acres increase in value 2,000 per cent in fourteen days, what will be its value in twelve months if the same ratio of appreciation be maintained?"

THE CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS OF NEW YORK.

Relief of the Poor During the Winter.

Thus far the winter has not been particularly severe, and to this perhaps more than to any other cause is owing the fact that gaunt want has not obtruded itself and its objects more prominently into public notice. The experience of those who are obliged to deal more directly with the poor in the distribution of alms shows, however, that there is as much real poverty to be found in the metropolis now as in any previous winter since the beginning of the war. To those who do not take the trouble to ascertain the condition of those whom they meet from day to day it may appear to be somewhat inexplicable that there should be so much poverty existing when trade seems to be quite brisk and mechanics generally better paid and supplied with more work than could be obtained during the last winter. Now, during this season of festivity, when all Christendom is rejoicing, a little time might be spared to look into the condition of the poor and needy and observe what influences are at work to ameliorate their sufferings. In this connection it may not be out of place to ascertain the

CAUSES OF INDIGENCE.

In this city the causes are many, but indigence chiefly results from "improvidence or a lack of wise economy in the affairs of life and overwhelming misfortune, which paralyzes effort by inducing discouragement and hopelessness." To liquor, also, is a very large percentage of the existing poverty to be credited either directly or indirectly. Too great fondness for the dram gives rise to a great amount of improvidence in regard to the real necessities for life and comfort and helps to make more indigent widows and orphans and paupers generally than any other cause. In addition to these, in this city, may be added the great flow of lazy and thriftless persons from different parts of the country, who find here so many methods of obtaining relief—it can scarcely be called charity in their cases—that they leave those localities in which their habits and dispositions are too well known and place themselves in the way of being taken care of in our public institutions. A large proportion of these find employment during the summer months on the canals, but their scant earnings are generally squandered before the severe weather sets in, and with the closing of the canals commences their return to the metropolis. There are also many of the same kidney who remain in the city, living as best they can during the mild weather, who are only too willing to take refuge on "the Island" as vagrants or paupers during the severity of the winter. Still another fruitful source of indigence is the enormously high rates of rent charged by landlords. The rent, in fact, with very many is the greatest trouble. Landlords generally require payment punctually in advance, and this fact adds to the infliction, which is oftentimes so heavy as to be intolerable. The poor tenants cannot meet the demands of landlords or the unnecessary severity, and in many instances the brutality of the landlords or the "middlemen," real estate agents and collectors is such that they are obliged to seek poorer and less healthy localities or pawn all their available property to satisfy their persecutors. It is a notable fact that the more tyrannical tenement owners and rent collectors are those who, in times past, have been as needy as many whom they so heavily oppress, and their mushroom growth and little brief authority, in almost all cases, fully prove the many adages in regard to "turned heads," "beggars on horseback," and such like.

But to return from the digression. It must be seen that families driven to poor and therefore less healthy localities become sickened in mind and body. The former leads to discouragement and hopelessness, which materially aid the latter in reducing the persons thus afflicted to indigence and abject poverty. The reactionary effects of the late war have also tended materially to add to the poverty of a large number of residents of the metropolis. It cannot be doubted, therefore, that there is a large amount of alms needed to alleviate the condition of the poor during the coming winter, and the recent report of the New York Association, organized for that especial purpose (from which report the majority of the above facts have been culled), together with the testimony of the superintendents of public and private charities, shows such to be the case. The report of the New York Association is exhaustive on the subject of the condition of the poor, and has evidently been prepared with much care and labor, and while it contains many statements that may be regarded as being questionable, both in regard to veracity and delicacy, it contains also much that will be found of interest and will repay a careful perusal. The report, in comparing the amount of distress which has existed here during the past year to the

SUFFERING ABROAD,

says:—

Great, however, as was the distress in this city and portions of the country the past year, there was abundant occasion for gratitude that, as a people, we were more favored than most other nations. The new world suffered less intensely than the old. The commercial and industrial interests of half the civilized world were subjected to almost unparalleled derangement and suffering. The distress among the laboring classes in Great Britain was more severe than had before been known for half a century. The cry of the famishing from nearly every city, town and village in the kingdom was heard through every issue of the press. The London *Times* of December 11 says, "Last winter the demand is on the public were unprecedented. The amount of money given to the poor in London beyond that dispensed in legal relief to the poor was almost incredible. It seemed the demand had reached the highest; if we are not mistaken the exigencies of the present season will far surpass those of any former year in British history." The London *Star* of a later date says:—"Men and women die every day in our streets of starvation. Whole districts are sinking into one vast, squalid, awful condition of helpless, hopeless destitution." The condition of many parts of Continental Europe was not less appalling. In portions of France and Spain the scarcity was very great. In Paris 50,000 persons were daily fed from the soup kitchens of the imperial palace. The United States Secretary of State presented to Congress a letter from the American Minister at Copenh