

THE EVENING STAR.

WASHINGTON, September 28, 1893.

CROSBY'S NOTES. Editor, THE EVENING STAR has a regular and permanent circulation in Washington more than three times larger than that of any other paper. As a consequence, it is the only paper in the city that can afford to print its news in a more complete and accurate manner than any other.

Letters to THE STAR should be so addressed as to reach the Editor's office, and not the business Department, according to their character or purpose, not to any individual connected with the office.

At the time of the session of the present District by Maryland the then existing law of that State was in force in the District territory. The common law and the British and Maryland statutes which composed the Maryland law of that period have been repeatedly amended and revised by successive state legislatures, and the Maryland statutes have been amended and revised by the same. It is not surprising, therefore, that the laws of the District of Columbia, which are the result of the growth of modern ideas, in the District on the contrary the only alterations of the general laws of a hundred years ago have been scattered, unsystematic and entirely inadequate amendments of the laws which for three-fourths of a century took too little real interest in the capital, and which even in recent years, has not seemed able to relieve the District by a comprehensive enactment from the burden of antiquated laws of a bygone century. Not many years ago, after the session the people began to complain that through Congressional neglect their statutes were not sufficiently flexible. Since that time successive revisions have exposed the increasing defects, absurdities and barbarisms of the law, but all in vain. Not only has it been impossible to secure the enactment of a code which should embody some of the modern legislative ideas, but even attempts to secure an authoritative revision of the laws, which should state the law as it exists and permit obsolete and obsolescent enactments to be formally eliminated, have failed.

Some of the good friends of the District in the House are enlisting for another campaign to secure better and more certain laws for the capital. A special subcommittee on codification has been appointed by the District committee and there are other Representatives not members of that committee, who are deeply interested in this locally important project.

Five years ago there was an energetic movement for the revision of the local laws in which the Star actively participated. President Cleveland, in his message of 1888, called the special attention of Congress to the request for legislation which would enable the District to collect, digest and properly arrange the laws by which the District is governed. In March, 1890, Congress passed a law authorizing the Supreme Court of the District to appoint a commission to compile, arrange and classify, with a proper index, all statutes and parts of statutes in force in the said District, including the laws of the District of Columbia, the Fifth Congress, and relating to all such matters as would properly come within the scope of a civil and criminal code. When the compilation was completed 5,000 copies of it were to be printed at the government printing office at the expense of the Supreme Court. The result of the four years' labor of the compilers should now be available as the basis of intelligent activity in urging a revision or codification. It is full time that the commission reported its work completed. It is to be regretted that in this compilation to Congress, backed by energetic work in its behalf and by the present Congressional interest in the subject matter of the compilation by the national legislature, no recognition has been given as an official statement of the status of the law.

Congress has frequently authorized these compilations to be made, but has always dropped them after this preliminary work has been done. It will be a great benefit to the District if the existing law collected and printed in condensed form, in a clear and readable manner, should be made available as a preface to an improvement of that law. A compilation should be followed by a comprehensive code or body of revised statutes giving to this District the benefit of the modern spirit and the best of the best of the substantive law and procedure. Washington is a progressive nineteenth century city and an eighteenth century body of laws, merely preserved by subsequent random patching, is unsuitable to its condition. It is time that the statutes of the capital ceased to serve mainly as a museum of antiquities, displaying curiosities, wonders and horrors to the investigator.

Perhaps the financial situation would be greatly improved were it generally understood that more attention should be given to the visible supply of gold to fully ten times its present bulk and from sources long available yet unsuspected. For many years statisticians have known of the existence of gold in the Colorado mountains, but attending the separation of the Colorado from the rest of the States, the gold was regarded as almost insuperable. But now comes the inventor of a new process who has been experimenting with the water contained in the Great Salt Lake and who says that there are three dollars worth of gold in every ton of lake water. The extraction of the mineral will cost, he figures out, but fifty cents per ton. It is estimated that there are 5,000,000 tons of lake water. The Mormon wash bowl and unless the assayers and arithmeticians are seriously at fault it would seem as though the water should contain gold to the modest amount of \$5,000,000,000. The total cost of getting this amount of gold is \$250,000,000, which leaves an apparent profit of \$2,500,000,000. A congressional committee—composed principally of Senators Wolcott, Peffer, Stewart and Aldrich—should at once be sent to investigate and if the conditions are as they are represented to be should recommend the purchase of the lake by the nation, payment to be made in silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, and the acquisition to be followed immediately by the issue of certificates to hold certificates, the lowest in value to be based on not less than seven tons of lake liquid, equivalent, of course, to the sum of \$11 in gold. If that does not relieve the straits of the Congress may as well go out of business.

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Senator Cameron is reaping a very large crop of whirlwind from a comparatively small sowing of wind. The President has decided that business is more important than handshaking.

If the house of lords has any care as to its own existence it will heed the warning uttered yesterday by Gladstone and applauded by the House of Commons. Gladstone intently and intelligently to his review and his prophecy. It was a remarkable speech and unless there is more of insanity in the house of lords than is generally and reasonably supposed to have an abiding place there the Gladstonian utterances can hardly fail to bring about an access of interest on the part of the peers in legislation submitted to them by the popular branch of Britain's parliament. Touching upon the constitutional question, the Premier revealed the historical truth when he said that they are too weak for their purpose, that they do not meet the demands of the country and that in spite of the sacrificial activity of the house of commons during the last session there was a legislative famine. This was due to the fact that a great unsolved problem—the Irish question—interfered with the transaction of much miscellaneous and important business, and the time which so long was the fault of the present house. The obstructiveness of that body has been of the most fatuous sort, without semblance of sound sense and provocation of the right of condemnation awarded it yesterday by the great and noble majority of the constitutional standpoint, on which a few peers have endeavored to se-

cur a foothold—Gladstone showed most conclusively that the house of lords had neither the right nor the power to bring about a dissolution of parliament, and their effort to usurp powers vested by the constitution in the crown, the ministry and the commons, was merely a farcical attempt at high treason. "If," he added, "this is to continue to be a self-governing country," the peers are without any other than personal responsibility while members of the house of commons. He merely reminded their constituents for their votes, and as the present house of commons comes from their creators, the people, it is undoubtedly a truthful mirror of public sentiment on the long-agoed Irish question. That the lords must recognize this condition can hardly be questioned. If they do not then they will surely imperil their legislative existence. In times past the peers have retreated. They assisted in the repeal of the corn laws, in the repeal of the church duty; they voted to disestablish the episcopacy in Ireland and agreed to the land act of 1870; although to each of those measures they had been as hostile as those now are to home rule. If they should be tempted to question the repeal of the corn duty, it would be to their great credit to read Gladstone's concluding declaration: "If the nation is determined," said he, "it will not be baffled by a phalanx of five hundred peers, who are the will of the country to execute and cannot submit to the house of lords, although they bear high-sounding titles and sit in a gilded chamber. The next session will not pass without your seeing this subject again appearing above the waves, where it has for the moment appeared to founder. The nation has given us the authority and propelled us on our course, and it is our duty and hope and belief that we shall find, with the help of the Almighty, means to reach the goal."

It is at least to be hoped that Mr. Aldrich will be enabled through some western newspaper paragraph to appreciate the lavish attentions which are being showered on him here in the way of indictments.

It is likely Washington and the Shamrocks will play here next Sunday—Cincinnati is likely to be the Shamrocks—whoever they may be—have a sure thing.

The wrecks which drifted about unheeded are unquestionably dangerous to North Atlantic trade. It is hoped that Europe will hasten to co-operate with this country in cleaning up the ocean.

Public interest at present is devoting itself largely to ascertaining the exact extent to which the American Embassy in London is Mr. Van Alen's diplomatic godfather.

The New York papers have striven earnestly to show that Lord Dunsford does not know how to pronounce the name of his own yacht.

There is a generally accepted report that the cackling of geese saved Rome. But even this does not justify all the Senatorial speeches.

The debate in the Senate, having about exhausted the store of generalities, necessarily turns occasionally to personalities.

The railroads are to be congratulated on the fact that the trip to the fair is not as slow as the decision to put down rates.

The Book That Helped Him. "Would you oblige me," said the reporter who gets novel interviews, "by telling me, what book has helped you most in life?" And after a thoughtful pause the great man answered: "My bank book."

An After Dinner Orator. "What shall I do in such a plight?" He shouted, some dismayed. "I don't know," said the orator. "And my scrap book I've mislaid."

The Cause of Delay. "Something seems to have clogged the wheels of legislation," remarked a visitor to the Capitol. "Yes," replied the man who was showing him around; "the silver Senators have gone and pulled the air-brake."

A Distinction. "I want to introduce you to Mr. Sadsacan," said the hostess. "Oh, yes," replied the young man, "he is one of our leading literary lights, isn't he?" "No; he is one of our heavies."

Arms for Railway Employes. Behold the porter—dreadful sight! This travel is no fun; In one hand is a whisk broom light—The other holds a gun.

Offended Sensibilities. "Certainly," said the farmer's wife to Meandering Mike, "I'll give you your breakfast."

Thank you, ma'am, for ever an ever. "Suppose," she went on with a glance at the wood pile, "that you start in with a chop."

And he turned haughtily away with a remark to the effect that nothing was so common as to see a man who says that there are three dollars worth of gold in every ton of lake water. The extraction of the mineral will cost, he figures out, but fifty cents per ton. It is estimated that there are 5,000,000 tons of lake water. The Mormon wash bowl and unless the assayers and arithmet