PUBLIC LANDS.

The Salient Features of Secretary Lamar's Annual Report.

Wholesale Grants of Public Lands to Railroad Corporations and the Evil Effects Springing Therefrom—Remedial Measures.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 30.—One of the most important features of Secretary Lamar's forthcoming annual report is the part which relates to the adjustment of railroad land grants. He has received this part of his report from the Public Printer, and it reads as follows:

"Shortly after my appointment to the position I now have the honor to hold, and as I became somewhat familiar with the public land system, its organization and the workings thereof, I became more and more impressed with the fact that the public domain was being diverted from its legitimate purposes and converted to objects the inevitable effects of which were repugnant to the entire theory on which the land system was based.

"Apart from the methods of illegal appropriation of the public domain, I became convinced that the administration of congressional grants of lands to wagon and railroads has given rise to enormous abuses. Congress had not only made grants which in some instances exceeded in extent the area of a half dozen of the largest and most populous States of the Union, but in addition provided that any losses of land within the granted limits should be satisfied by sections of land within other and adjoining limits, thus nearly doubling the area of the original grants. Under these acts, the Land Department had withdrawn from public appropriation not only the granted limits, as required by law, but also the lands within the indemnity limits at the request of the grantee companies. Thus enormous quantities of the public land were held in reservation to await the convenience of the respective corporations in the construction of their roads, the selection of its lands, and the uncertain adjustments of the grants by the department.

"This land-grant legislation was certainly not in harmony with the theory of a distribution of the public domain among the people and gave up to capitalists as a basis for traffic and speculation and gigantic financial schemes what was, by the original policy of the Government, designed to be homes for an industrious and thrifty people, the abodes of domestic happiness and virtue and patriotism. Notwithstanding these indemnity withdrawals were made exclusively for the interests of the company, few of these, if any of them, constructed their roads within the time prescribed in the granting act, as an express condition on which the grant was made. Maps of 'probable,' 'general,' 'designated' and 'definite' routes of said road were filed with rapidity in the department and withdrawals thereunder asked and almost invariably granted, until the public lands in States and Territories were grid-ironed over with railroad-granted and indemnity limits; and in many instances the limits of one road over-lapping and conflicting with other roads in the most bewildering manner, so that the settler seeking a home could scarcely find a desirable location that was not claimed by some one or perhaps two or three of the many roads to which grants of land had been made by Congress.

"Nor was this all. Though the desired tract might not be apparently covered by a railroad location, the settler would hardly select it before agents of the corporations would set up a claim to it, or to the right to occupy and denude it under the right of way and construction privileges conferred by the granting act. Thus the settler, ignorant of his legal rights, and with no one to advise him with respect to either the law or the facts, would, for the sake of peace and a home, readily consent to purchase from the company. In this way these corporations, in addition to the lands granted them, have claimed, sold and received the price of a great deal of other land to which they had neither legal nor moral right, nor the shadow of either.

"When, however, through partial surveys or adjustments of grants, lands thus sold by a company were found to be outside of the grants and determined by the department to be public lands, the purchaser from the company found himself in the unfortunate predicament of having lost both his land and his money. Generally without the means to enter into a costly litigation with a powerful corporation, the deprivation of his home, the expenditure and waste of his years, his energy and strength, in redeeming that home from its wild condition, rendered his mere technical right of action against the company but little more than a mockery.

"Years have elapsed since many of the grants have been made, and other years since the withdrawals. Some of the companies have constructed the entire line of their roads, others fragmentary portions only, and others again none at all, but the withdrawals of the lands were no less effective as a barrier against the settlers in the one case than in the other. It mattered not what might be his equities acquired by years of toil upon what he believed to be a part of the National domain. It was declared by the highest judicial tribunal, as expounded by the highest law officers of the executive, that a withdrawal once made by competent authority was legal and effective to exclude all from intrusion within its limits.

"One such case where hardship and injustice where about to be inflicted under the law came under your observation. Guilford Miller settled upon lands afterward selected and claimed by the Northern Pacific Railroad Company to be within the withdrawal for indemnity purposes. Some doubt arising as to the legality of that withdrawal, the case was referred by this department to the Attorney-General for his opinion on the question of law. That officer held that the withdrawal was legal, and that during its existence Miller could acquire no right or title to the tract claimed by him and on which he lived. Whilst recognizing the correctness of the law, you saw the injustice of the case, so far as the individual settler was affected; and that hundreds of others were similarly situated who might and would be affected; and you directed that such grants should be so administered by this department as, if possible, to protect these settlers from such injustice, stating your belief that this can be done under the provision which declares that these selections shall be made under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior.

"After years of waiting, Congress had failed to empower the department to make the necessary surveys whereby some of the grants might be adjusted and no immediate prospect of such surveys was in sight. But a law was passed March 3, 1887, 24 U. S., 556, whereby the Secretary of the Interior was directed to immediately adjust each of the railroad land grants made by Congress to aid in the construction of railroads. With an earnest desire to obey the mandate of Congress to give to the corporations their every right under the laws, and at the same time follow the directions given by you to see that ample protection should be extended to settlers and those seeking to make settlement on the public lands (a matter which had been so long and so utterly overshadowed), I entered upon a most careful consideration of the whole subject of the history and law relating to land grants, and concluded that if the department was clothed with authority to make indemnity withdrawals, as had been done in so many instances, the exercise of that authority was a matter entirely within sound discretion and not a matter of legal obligation in any respect; that the same sound discretion which, in the interest of the companies justified said withdrawals was now demanded peremptorily in the public interest a speedy revocation of the same, and that the most effective way of expediting an adjustment of the land grants, and doing exact justice to the companies, guarding and promoting the interests of the settlers also, was to permit the public to enter into competition with the companies in the selection of lands heretofore withdrawn for indemnity purposes.

"Accordingly, on May 23, 1887, with your approval, rules were laid upon the different companies for whose benefit withdrawals had been made, to show cause by a day certain why said withdrawals should not be revoked. Some of the companies failed to show cause; others filed answers assenting to the revocations, as they had received satisfaction of the grant either in full or as far as possible; others assented on condition that lands covered by selections already made should be excepted from the order of revocation, and other companies objected to the order of revocation as illegal and in violation of chartered rights. Briefs were filed and oral arguments accorded to the counsel of such companies as desired to be heard, all of which were fully and carefully considered, as was due to the importance of the questions and the magnitude of the interests involved; and on August 13, 1887, my views were fully expressed in a decision rendered in the case of the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad Company, which by answer and argument raised nearly all the objections that were presented in part only by a number of other companies.

"I send herewith a copy of the whole text of that opinion, in which these objections were answered seriatim.

"Two days later the orders withdrawing the lands within the indemnity limits and reserving the same from settlement were revoked, and the lands restored to the public domain and to settlement, first, in the cases of two companies which had not answered; second, in those which answering assented; the third, in the cases of the companies which set up defenses coming within the rulings in the foregoing opinion.

"In the congressional grants to the following railroad companies: The Hastings & Dakota, the St. Paul & Northern Pacific, the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba, the St. Paul & Sioux City, the Sioux City & St. Paul and the Winona & St. Peter, it is provided that upon filing the maps designating the routes of said roads and branches it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Interior to withdraw from market the lands embraced within the provisions of the act making the grant.

"In consequence of this provision these roads were omitted from the orders of restoration.

"It will be seen from the order passed in the Atlantic and Pacific case, and which was applied to the other companies mutatis mutandis, that whilst it was determined that the lands in question should not longer be withheld from appropriation under the settlement laws, every precaution possible was taken to protect the legal rights of the corporations.

"Following this action, instructions were subsequently issued to the Commissioner of the General Land Office to detail all the available force in his office to the work of adjusting the road grants, and proceeding as rapidly as possible with the same.

"The amount of land restored to the public domain, through the orders revoking the indemnity withdrawals, is stated by the Commissioner of the General Land Office to be 21,323,-600 acres.

"I beg to refer to what has been said in another part of this report in relation to the imperative necessity of appropriations for the surveys, without which a complete adjustment of these railroad grants is not practicable at an early day."

O'BRIEN IN BALFOUR.

The Irish Editor Talks Surreptitiously From His Quarters in Tullamore Jail.

DUBLIN, Dec. 1.—Mr. O'Brien, in a letter smuggled from Tullamore jail to a friend in Dublin, says:

The substance of Mr. Balfour's letter has been conveyed to me. Mr. Balfour's statement that I pleaded weak action of the heart and delicate condition of the lungs as an excuse for not being forced to wear criminal clothes is a cruel falsehood. I am not aware of such weakness, and certainly never declared it. The medical examiner never referred to this, my only weakness being in my left lung, which does not trouble me at present. If Mr. Balfour is acting on the belief that the state of my health renders the application of brute force dangerous, the course he has pursued could not be recommended on the score of humanity. For six days after committal I was subject to constant threats of force and put on bread and water diet. When this proved fruitless I was led to believe that the point would not be insisted upon. Thereupon my clothes were stolen. Since securing new clothes I have been unable to change them night or day for fear of their being stolen. No official intimation has yet been given to relieve me of this continued strain. This letter is the only means of vindicating myself against Mr. Balfour's foul and dishonoring imputations. Henceforth I shall not speak concerning my health. I do not take any nourishing food. In the face of intolerable calumnies I leave it to honorable men to judge the chivalry of Balfour's false and heartless insinuations.

A Murderer's Horrible Confession.

COLUMBIA, S. C., Dec. 1.—Accounts were published ten days ago of a horrible wife murder committed by Stephen Bailey in Berkley, and the attempted suicide of the murderer. Bailey yesterday made a confession in the presence of Jailer Harris. Bailey was over seventy years of age. The substance of his confession is as follows: "I have been married three times. I killed my first wife with a club. Her name was Catherine. I buried her in the garden, and after a while it was found out and the people dug her up and buried her in the graveyard. She had six children for me. My second wife's name was Mary. I killed her with a brick by hitting her in the head. I will not tell what I did with her body. She had one child—a boy. His name is Sabey. I don't know where he is. My third wife's name was Sallie. She was unfaithful to me for a long time. My wife and I had not been on good terms for three or four weeks. That day I laid in wait for her in a footpath and as she came along I hit her on the head with an axe and killed her and dragged her body into the bushes until that night. Then I sent my boy to the yard for a wheelbarrow, and when he came I sent him to the house. Then I put the body into the wheelbarrow and carried it about a mile and put it in the furnace. At sunrise I started the fire, and about eight or nine o'clock it was found. Sallie had seven children."

Possibilities of Trouble in France Over the Presidency.

LONDON, Dec. 1.—The problem of the presidency of the French Republic grows more intricate daily. It is now almost absolutely certain that the Republican factions will not combine, though they can not fail to see that it will be worse for them if they do not, and the Republic is confronted by the greatest danger that has ever threatened its existence. President Grevy has expressed his determination to cling to his office until he knows who has been chosen as his successor, and it is further asserted that he will not allow the newly-elected President to succeed him unless he shall be a Conservative and entirely acceptable to a large majority of the Republicans, even going to the length of using military force to prevent his taking possession of the office. How M. Grevy could carry out this programm no one can accurately judge, but all who know him believe that he would make the attempt against almost any odds if he believed himself justified therein. If M. Clemenceau should carry the election, or the Boulanger Extremists succeed in electing the General, through combinations with other sections, there will certainly be a row, and a bloody one at that. The excitement is great and party and factional feeling is wrought up to a point where the slightest thing may cause an outbreak.

Lake Navigation Statistics.

BUFFALO, N. Y., Dec. 1.—The *Commercial's* summary of the business of 1887, published yesterday, says: "The season as a whole, has been a peculiar one. It has been unusually profitable to owners of vessel property. Rates on grain, coal, ore and lumber have ruled high during the entire season, but it has been a most disastrous one to insurance companies on account of the numerous heavy gales, and unsatisfactory to canal-boatmen on account of railroad competition at this port. The movement of chief articles of commerce for the season has been very heavy, exceeding that of any preceding year, with one exception. The total figures in round numbers are as follows:

Receipts at Buffalo, by lake—Grain, 101,000,000 bu.; lumber, 265,000,000 feet. Shipments at Buffalo, by canal—Grain, 50,000,000 bu.; by rail, 27,000,000 bu.; lumber, by canal, 55,000,000 feet; coal, by lake, 1,800,000 tons.

An English Opinion of Mrs. Cleveland.

BOSTON, Nov. 30.—Mr. Wm. Jones, secretary of the English Peace Society of Philadelphia, in a letter to a friend in England, tells of a chat he recently had with Mrs. Cleveland, concerning whom he says: "Mrs. Cleveland impressed me as being a woman of noble aspirations. Her sympathy with suffering evinced in her feeling allusions to Nashville and the South, where I was going, in reference to which she observed: 'There you will find they know something of war in its reality,' showed an earnest desire on her part for the establishment of righteous and humane National relations in place of the miseries of war."

THE NATIONAL BANKS.

Report of the Comptroler of the Currency of the Operations of National Banks During the Last Fiscal Year, with Suggestions as to Amendments in the Laws Governing the Same.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2.—The twenty-fifth annual report of the Comptroler of the Currency now in print, will be presented to Congress on the first day of the session.

The report shows that the total number of National banks organized up to the 31st of October is 3,805, of which 621 have gone into voluntary liquidation, 119 have failed, leaving in operation at that date 3,061. Of this number 3,049 furnished reports of condition at the date of the last call, October 5, of which a complete abstract has been furnished.

The total number of new banks formed during the last year is 225; the total number closed during the year is 33, of which 25 went into voluntary liquidation and 8 failed.

The new banks comprise 5 in New England, 33 in the Middle States, 50 in the Southern States, 107 in the Central States and 30 in the Western States and Territories.

Of the failed banks, 1 was in New England, 2 in the Middle States, 4 in the Southern States and 1 in the Central States.

The gross increase in National bank capital during the year amounts to $36,894,775, of which $3,868,005 represent an increase of capital by banks existing November 1, 1886. There has been, however, a decrease of capital of $8,322,-450, of which $4,087,450 is the aggregate capital of the thirty-three banks which went into voluntary liquidation and failed, and the remainder represents a decrease of the capital by banks still in operation.

The net increase of capital for the year is therefore, $30,572,325. On the other hand, there is a net decrease of $50,495,590 in the circulation represented by bonds.

The decrease resulting from the surrender of circulation by banks still in operation is $57,-770,475, and the decrease caused by banks going into voluntary liquidation and failing is $1,274,380, making a gross decrease of $59,044,-855, offset by a total increase of $8,549,265, which consists of an increase by the formation of new banks of $4,592,090, an increase of circulation by previously existings banks to the amount of $3,957,175.

The affairs of five failed banks have been closed during the year, including among them one of those which failed during the year. In four cases out of the five the creditors have received payment of principal and interest in full and there has been a balance of assets transferred to an agent of the stockholders. In the other case, that of a bank which failed in 1879, the total dividends amount to 81 per cent. In each case a detailed account is given of the cause of failure and the progress made in liquidation.

The total amount of money paid in dividend during the past year is $2,106,203.41; the whole amount paid to creditors of insolvent banks since the system has been in operation is $29,-431,980 upon proved claims amounting to $46,-938,388; the total assessments on stockholders, $9,945,250, of which the gross collections have been $4,632,569.

Very full statistics have been collected about the State banks, savings banks, loan and trust companies and private banks and bankers throughout the country.

The suggestions made by the comptroller as to amendments to the laws are in the form of a code revising and consolidating all existing laws, with a number of changes, each of which is fully explained and the reasons for it are set forth at considerable length. The most important of the changes recommended is that the minimum amount of bonds to be deposited as security for circulation shall be 10 per cent. of the capital of banks of not over $250,000 and $25,000 for banks of which the capital exceeds $250,000; also that the semi-annual duty on circulation be hereafter charged only on the amount issued upon bonds deposited in excess of the minimum amount as above. He also recommends that the National bank notes be counted as a part of the lawful reserve of the banks.

The existing provisions of law as to the responsibility of officers and directors of banks are modified so as to avoid heretofore existing obstacles to their prompt and certain enforcement.

The restriction upon banks as to making loans in excess of 10 per cent. of capital to any one party is modified in respect to loans upon collateral security and the total limit is raised to 20 per cent. of capital and surplus.

The provisions as to reserve upon deposits are modified so as not to include Government deposits in the amount upon which reserve is to be paid. The provisions as to State taxation of National banks is also modified.

The proposed code has been transmitted to every Senator and Representative with a codification of all existing laws on the subject arranged in sections parallel with those of the proposed code and accompanied by a letter explaining each of the more important changes and giving the reason therefor.

THE SENATE.

Interest Awakened Over the Prospect of Objections Being Made to Indiana's New Senator,

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2.—The caucus committee of the Democratic Senators held another meeting yesterday to consider the question of the organization of the Senate next Monday. Their report will be submitted to the caucus to-day, and it is understood that it will recommend that the party insist upon the seating of Messrs. Turpie, of Indiana, and Faulkner, of West Virginia, at once.

The *Star* last evening, in speaking of the Turpie case, says:

In accordance with the custom the names of the newly-elected Senators will be read out four or five at a time, in alphabetical order by the chief clerk, and as thus called the oath will be administered. As this is the regular practice it will be adhered to on this occasion, and it will place the Democrats at a disadvantage, as the name of Turpie will be the last called, and hence he will be the last to whom the oath will be administered. Then a single objection would prevent his being sworn in, and the Republicans could send the case to the committee on privileges and elections, and there delay it. This feature of the situation is one that the Democrats are considering. They do not want to take the initiative in objecting to the administering of the oath to any Republican, nor do they want to be left helpless in the event any Republican should object to Mr. Turpie being sworn in. There seems to be no doubt that the Republicans intend to oppose the seating of Mr. Turpie. Senator Edmunds, chairman of the caucus, has notified all the Republican Senators still absent from the city, to be here if possible, by noon next Monday, in order that the entire party strength may be mustered for the fight. The Indiana Republicans committed their case to Senator Hoar, chairman of the committee on elections, and it is understood that he means to make a determined fight against Mr. Turpie's right to the seat. Just how the Democrats will proceed in order to hold a point in reserve in case of Republican objection to the swearing in of Mr. Turpie, has not developed, but they seem determined to do their best. Even the members of the caucus committee shake their heads with an air of determination and intimate that they will be ready for the fight.

With regard to the West Virginia case the general opinion seems to be that M. Faulkner will be admitted without delay.

Garfield Monument Unvailed.

CINCINNATI, Dec. 1.—The Lincoln Club and other buildings on Garfield place are decorated to-day in honor of the unvailing of the statue of General James A. Garfield, erected by the citizens. The exercises took place in Music Hall, and consisted of music and addresses by Governor Foraker, Judge Ezra B. Taylor and General S. F. Hunt. At the conclusion of this programme a large parade was given, the halt being made at the statue at the intersection of Race street and Garfield place. Miss Leonora Smith, daughter of the mayor, unvailed the statue, and Hon. Aaron F. Perry spoke of its history and presented it to the city, in whose behalf Mayor Smith responded.

Fatal Tenement-House Fire.

NEW YORK, Dec. 1.—Shortly before five o'clock this morning a fire broke out in a tailor shop on the first floor of a tenement house, No. 345 West Forty-third street, and spread so rapidly that the eight families living in the house were driven out before they could save any of their property. Mrs. Jacobs, a tenant on the third floor, escaped with her youngest child, a three-year-old boy, in her arms. Her husband followed, leaving behind him their five-year-old son, Joseph, who was burned to death. Mr. Jacobs afterward said that in his excitement he had forgotten the boy. The building was completely gutted. Loss, $20,000, covered by insurance.

THE TARIFF.

Outline of Representative Mills' Proposed Tariff Measure. Now Ready for Presentation to the Fiftieth Congress—The Bill in the Hands of Treasury Experts for Revision.

CHICAGO, Dec. 2.—A special to the *News* from Washington says: Representative Mills, of Texas, who will be chairman of the committee on ways and means, has prepared a tariff bill. It is a complete revision of the present rates and a rearrangement of present schedules. His bill is divided into six schedules.

Schedule A embraces the present liquor schedule, and that is inserted without any change whatever, except that alcoholic preparations are taken from the chemical schedule and added to schedule A.

Schedule B imposes a uniform rate of forty per cent. ad valorem upon all the articles therein enumerated. In these are included jewelry, precious stones, including diamonds, all manufactures of sugar, molasses, confectionery and all other articles included in the present sugar schedule. Cigars, cigarettes of all kinds, leaf tobacco and all other tobacco, manufactured and unmanufactured, gloves of kid and leather of every description.

The articles enumerated in schedule C are to pay a uniform rate of thirty per cent. ad valorem. This schedule includes chemicals and proprietary medicines, manufactures of copper, brass, iron and steel, cutlery ot all kinds, muskets, rifles and all firearms, manufactures of leather, manufactures of wool, woolen cloths, including blankets, knit goods and ready-made clothing, and wearing apparel of every description, carpets of all kinds, manufactures of cotton, china, porcelain, earthen, stone and brown ware, not otherwise provided for, flax, hemp, jute and their manufactures, glass bottles and other manufactures of glass, including window glass.

Articles enumerated in schedule D pay a uniform duty of twenty per cent. ad valorem. In this schedule are included books and pamphlets, engravings, clocks and watches, common stone and brown earthenware, fish salted and fresh, straw bonnets hats and hoods, braids, lace trimmings for making or ornamenting straw hats, etc., India rubber, gutta percha and their manufactures, calf-skins and morocco skins, dressed and undressed, of all descriptions.

The articles enumerated in schedule E are to pay a uniform rate of ten per cent. ad valorem. In this are included wheat and wheat flour, Indian corn and meal, oats and oatmeal, beef, pork, and other provisions, manilla and other like substances for hemp manufacture and manufactures of paper.

Schedule F is the free list. The present free list is transferred to this schedule and a large number of articles upon the duty list are transferred to it, the greater number being chemicals. Among the other articles made free that now pay duty are salt, copper in plates, ingots, sheets, pigs and other forms, anthracite and bituminous coal, iron ore, lead ore, hair of the Alpaca goat and other like animals, all kinds of wool, including rags, shoddy, waste and flax. Timber, hewn, sawed, squared and side sawed, planks, staves of wood, pickets poles, laths, shingles, clap-boards and other forms of unmanufactured wood, empty casks and barrels. There is a "basket" clause appended which provides that all articles not enumerated in the bill shal pay a uniform duty of 30 per cent. ad valorem. The enacting clauses provide that it shall take effect on and after July first next. The bill is now in the hands of treasury experts, who are preparing a tabulated statement showing the rates now imposed and those proposed by the bill.

THE PUBLIC DEBT.

The Monthly Statement of the National Finances—An Increase in the Debt o Nearly a Million and a Half, Chargeable to Large Pension Payments.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2.—The debt statement issued from the Treasury Department yesterday, shows an increase during the month of November in the public debt of $1,490,350. The unusual occurrence—an increase in the debt—is attributable to the unusually large pensions payments during November, aggregating as they did, $18,287,850. In November, 1886, pension payments amounted to but $12,500,000. The net cash balance in the treasury yesterday was $55,258,701 against $56,758,703 on November 1. The gold coin and bullion balance yesterday was $211,880,-525, an increase of $900,000 during the month. The silver coin and bullion balance has decreased $650,000 since November 1. The store of silver dollars has increased about $1,700,000 during the month, and now amounts to $215,-882,443. Government receipts for November aggregated $29,128,567. Receipts from customs were $15,742,354; from internal revenue, $9,880,807, and from miscellaneous sources, $3,505,406, against $15,140,645; $9,689,251, and $2,746,205 respectively from these three sources in November, 1886. The total expenditures of the month were $28,378,381, or nearly $3,000,000 more than in November, 1886.

HOW THEY FEEL.

A General Sentiment in Favor of Some Sort of Tariff Revision Prevalent Among Politicians of All Classes in Washington.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2.—Since the United Press quoted Speaker Carlisle and other prominent Congressmen on the tariff question last week, there have been numerous publications of interviews on the same subject, but none of them change materially the sentiment of the leaders of the majority as then outlined, viz: that they favor the retention of most of the internal revenne taxes, an enlarged free list, high duties on luxuries and low duties on necessaries. Probably the most significant feature of the many expressions of opinion is the almost very general belief on the part of Protectionists that there will be "some kind of tariff revision" at the approaching session. The followers of Mr. Randall express a willingness to support a compromise or moderate tariff-reform measure, and there seems to be a desire for a free and frank conference with a view to reaching a harmonious understanding.

The Prohibitionists.

CHICAGO, Dec. 1.—The National committee of the Prohibition party, which has decided to hold the National convention at Indianapolis on the first Wednesday in June, 1888, assembled this morning under the presidency of Samuel A. Dickey, Professor of mathematics in Albion College, of Michigan, elected chairman of the committee to fill the vacancy caused by the death of the late John B. Finch. His duties as chairman will require his retirement from the college, and in view of that fact his salary was placed at $3,000 per annum. The headquarters will be kept in Chicago. General Clinton B. Fisk will probably be the next candidate of the party for President.

The Oil Well Record.

BRADFORD, Pa., Dec. 1.—In the New York and Pennsylvania oil fields 111 wells were completed in November with a new production of 1,624 barrels. The dry holes numbered forty-nine. Compared with October, there is a decrease of thirteen wells completed and of 952 barrels new production. For the close of November the record shows 45 new rigs, 114 old rigs, and 130 drilling wells. This represents a decline of 24 new rigs and 8 drilling wells from the figures of October 31. A number of wells are being sunk for gas, most of them in territory that is reasonably certain to furnish nothing but gas.

FASHION LETTER.

An Endless Variety Without Any Special Features.

[New York Special Correspondence.]

What particularly characterizes the fashions of the present seems to be an entire and perplexing lack of characteristics. The endless variety displayed in every department of dress, and the minute gradations that fill the degrees between widely differing styles, prevent the attention from being directed to special features, and render it a matter of no little difficulty and discrimination to separate essentials from among the mass of details, and to select and decide upon modes and fabrics for citation, which shall be typical of a class. Promenade costumes remain in most instances extremely simple in style, yet for those who have already tired of the very severe tailor-made gown, are produced many elaborate costumes.

Plaid velvet and plain plush lower skirts will find great favor this winter, and, instead of appearing as a panel on one side, they are made full, and show on both sides of the tunic-drapery and up the middle of the back. English tailors are designing new wool gowns in broadcloth, camels hair and the like, with plain skirts made very bouffant and full at the back, with a band of rich fur at the foot of the skirt. The long Russian polonaise falls straight in panel effect over this skirt, with open space on one side or both, or else it may be lightly draped in front. In this case it is caught up in a careless fashion on one side and held by silk cord ornaments. The former model, designed for a leading New York fashion journal, is here illustrated. The elegant short dresses for visiting and reception toilets sent out, show a combination of two kinds of velvet, or else of camels hair or India cashmere, with velvet; or of faille francaise combined with velvet striped moire. Among the novelties are braided stripes woven in bold relief to represent rows of braid-work sewed to the fabric. Wide stripes are formed of six or eight rows of what appears to be soutache of rich handiwork in silk applique, but is in fact woven into the background, these groups of stripes separated by plain strips of diagonal fabric, the braid in black on terra cotta, Russian green, rosewood, dahlia, and all the bronze and golden brown shades. Superb silk cord ornaments are seen upon the stylish cloth coats made by fashionable tailors and modistes, and to these are added fur trimmings of martin, beaver, blue fox or Persian lamb skin. These are noted on the new velvet-like cloths now used for jackets, and a coat of this description costs considerably more than a plainly-made and trimmed confection of Lyons velvet.

Basques and bodices are gradually being lengthened to cover the hips still more deeply. The vest, the plastron, the separate waistcoat, the demure nun's corsage lapping from right to left, and revers of every shape and kind are seen on the newest Paris dresses. It is almost impossible to make the front of the bodice too dressy in effect, or to go far astray in the design. The broad and showy directoire revers give the effect of breadth, and are seen alike on the richest and simplest gowns. Collars remain high and close, often to exaggeration, and are often made of two fabrics, the one in front matching the vest or plastron, the one on the back and sides being of the third material used for decoration, be it braiding, embroidery, a contrasting material or corded silk finished with French pipings.

In evening dress dark velvet bodices will again be worn over airy skirts of lace tulle silk etamine and crepe lisse. Many are cut V shape or square in the neck, with drapery of lace or other diaphanous textile over the shoulders. Very effective toilets show these skirts finished with bands and loops of velvet corresponding with the bodice. Among the late importations are pink camels hair tea gowns, silk embroidered and trimmed with narrow bands of dark fur. Fancy muffs made to match the toilet, and formed of a combination of materials, are small and compact. Muffs of fur are much larger in size.

Large hats and small princesse bonnets take the lead in popularity. Changeable velvet is much used for dressy head gear, and ribbon loops in moire and satin; and slender quill feathers, richly shaded to correspond in tone with the shot velvet, are used to trim. Black velvet bonnets and round hats are enriched with bands of jet medallion heads, at the edge of the brim and around the crown. The hat is then trimmed with sable plumes and long ribbon loops from the back, a style that is finding increasing favor. Seal-skin garments are greatly improved in shape, being fitted more closely to the form. Short wraps in seal are made in all the fashionable shapes of velvet or plush mantles. Monkey skin, golden beaver, and blue fox for linings, are very popular. The tournure still lives, but appears, just now, subject to modifications and repressions, owing to the crusade against it. C. D. F.

—A Spanish medical journal states that twenty-seven of the officers and crew of a gunboat belonging to the navy of Spain were poisoned, some time ago, by eating fish caught in a bay on the southern coast of Cuba. None of the patients died, but the illness was severe in some cases, although in most instances it did not last longer than two days.—*N. Y. Ledger.*

—"So you are to be married?" "Yes, and to the nicest girl in the world! Charley, she's worth a million!" "You don't say so! Harry, I congratulate you, old boy!" "Yes; she's worth a million of such girls as one sees in society." "Oh!" [Charley murmurs, as he goes off, "Poor fool, how I pity him!"]

—Gus (who has been making an evening call)—"What a very cold and distant girl Miss] Waldo is, Jack. When I bade her good-night she only gave me three fingers. I actually had a chill." Jack—"And what did you do, Gus?" Gus—"I stopped on my way home two or three times and got three fingers more."—*N. Y. Sun.*

FOREIGN GOSSIP.

—There are 60,000 women farmers in Ireland.

—A new electrical system is to be introduced in the underground system of London. Large electrical engines will be built.

—The natives of Yucatan are the only people near the equator, according to a traveler, who pay any attention to personal cleanliness.

—There is a Shakespeare hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon, and instead of numbers the names of plays are upon the room doors. "Take the gentleman's luggage up to Romeo and Juliet," is a common order.

—A sign in front of a store in the city of Bari, on the Adriatic sea, in Italy, recommends to the public the following goods and services to be had from the proprietor: "Leeches, bread sold in slices or loaves, and tuition in mathematics."

—Seven boa-constrictors from Cuba arrived at Berlin. A few days later one of them laid four eggs and died in the performance. On opening it ten more eggs were found of the size of a man's fist. Out of the four eggs four snakes emerged about twenty inches in length."

—There are cities in Asia the date of whose origin is not actually known, but it is known that they are older than Rome or any other city in Europe. Jerusalem and Hebron in Palestine and Damascus in Syria are all many centuries older than Rome.

—The little city of Weilderstadt, in Swabia, Germany, is the birthplace of the great astronomer Kepler and the reformer Brenz, well-known in Wurtemberg history. In 1870 a monument to Kepler was erected in the city, and now they have restored to its former condition the house where Brenz was born and affixed a plate, celebrating the occasion by a meeting at which Rev. Von Geroth delivered the speech of the day.

—A lake at Kirknitz, in the Austrain Alps, has for many years mystified every one by drying up at one season of the year and filling with water and overflowing at another. During the dry spell the people raise very good crops in its basin. Recent explorations show in one part of the basin an immense cave, which, when the water has reached a certain height, begins sucking it up till the basin is empty. The cave leads to a long series of underground lakes, all connected with one another by a continuous current.—*Chicago Times.*

—Large quantities of gunpowder are at present being sunk at the mouth of the Thames by a government steamer. This gunpowder has been accumulating for some years in the magazines at Purfleet, having been returned from stores as deteriorated or unreliable. The government has attempted to find a market for this condemned powder, but no manufacturers were willing to undertake the risk of the process of extracting the saltpeter.—*Industries.*

—At the recent eclipse of the sun the Chinese authorities, in accordance with the usage of the empire, ordered the Buddhist and Tavist priests to recite their incantations to rescue the sun from being devoured. It was at the time of the festivities over the Emperor's birthday, when all officials were required to wear embroidered robes, but it is also the law that during an eclipse officials who participate in the ceremonies must wear ordinary garments until the sun is rescued. An edict had to be got from the Emperor to settle it. He ordered the officials to ignore his birthday and attend to the sun, so they all wore ordinary robes.

SENSITIVE PLANTS.

Humility as Typified by the Meek, Gentle and Shrinking Mimosa.

The sensitive plants *Mimosa pudica* and *sensitiva* are among the most interesting products of the vegetable kingdom. Nearly every one has seen these graceful and humble children of nature, and touched their tender, shrinking leaves with an experimenting hand; but very few have taken the trouble to examine them as they deserve. The botanist—restrained, perhaps, by pity for their humility—seems to have seldom used his section-knife and forceps on them; and while other wonders of the plant-world have been fully investigated, the Mimosa remains almost unknown.

The Mimosa is a native of Brazil; but it has long been an occupant of our greenhouses. In grace of form and beauty of color, no other plant surpasses it. Its tender leaflets shrink and droop at the slightest touch, like a meek spirit from the world's gaze. Its graceful feather-shaped leaves, in common with most similarly shaped leaves of the *Lequminosæ* or pea tribe, to which botanical order the Mimosa belongs, close at the approach of darkness; and its extreme sensitiveness is but an extension of this peculiar plant-sleep. Wind or rain causes its leaves to close and its stalks to droop. When suddenly shaken by the wind, the leaflets and leafstalks fall simultaneously. The same effect is seen when a plant is put into a darkened room during the day. A strong light from a paraffin lamp was placed near two plants of *Mimosa sensitiva* at night. After thirty minutes had elapsed, one of the plants, the more vigorous of the two, opened its leaves partially; the other or less robust plant showed almost no feeling. A plant which had been on an exhibition table at a flower-show for two days, and which was noticed to receive constant attention from some children present, was found to have lost much of its excitability, and did not again return to its normal state, though the plant continued in a seemingly healthy condition for about a month afterward. Two leaves which were nearest the edge of the table, and consequently oftenest touched by the children's fingers, were completely immobile for ten days after the show.

The vapor of chloroform, prussic acid, ether and nicotine irritates the leaves, and in some cases destroys their mobility. A little chloroform dropped on the base of a leafstalk causes it to droop; and the leaflets, beginning at the apex, and proceeding to the base of the leaf, close in succession. A plant, the leaves of which were heavily chloroformed several times, withered and died in a few days. The sun's rays concentrated in a lens and thrown on a leaf cause it to contract quickly.

The cause of the peculiar excitability of sensitive plants, and the center of its action, are still undetermined. Various theories have been adduced to explain them. Dr. Dutrochet's theory is most favored by botanists of the present day. His explanation is, that "the principal point of mobility exists in the little swellings situated at the basis of the common and partial leaf stalks. This swelling, or intumescence, is formed of delicate cellular tissue." He says that "the agency producing the mobility is in the ligneous part of the central system of this intumescence, and in certain tubes supplied with nervous corpuscles serving for the transmission of the sap."

Dr. Balfour says: "In the swellings at the bases of the leaf stalk the vascular bundles are disposed in a circle near the periphery, and may be concerned in the leaf movements. Mechanical and chemical stimuli are supposed to act by inducing alterations in the contents of the vessels and cells."

These theories are unsatisfactory, and there is still much room for further investigation into the origin of the peculiar phenomena seen in the Mimosa. The manner in which it closes its stalks and leaves at the approach of darkness is very interesting. As the gloaming gently falls round the plant, the leaflets move upwards towards each other till they touch; the secondary leaf-stalks converge and slowly droop till they are nearly parallel to the main leaf-stalks, which, in their turn, fall till they point to the ground. Thus gently and silently it folds itself to sleep at the close of day, and rests till the light of morn awakes it to renewed grace and beauty.—*Chambers' Journal.*

APPLE-WOOD PIPES.

An Eastern Factory That Uses Up Orchard Butts and Stumps.

"Briar-wood or apple?" said the keeper of a tobacco store to a customer who asked for a pipe. "The fact is that some dealers sell briar or apple out of the same box. But the briar is a little darker and does not have quite as fine a gloss as the rich, red apple-wood takes. Both come from up the country, I guess."

In traveling around Rockland County, one may run across a pipe factory which supplies a large part of the city trade. It is built near Spring Valley, at the headwaters of the Pascack creek, where there is a never-failing water-power. A little hamlet has grown up around the pipe factory and is called "Pipeville." If one passes the place in the winter months he will see cords on cords of appletree wood piled up in the mill-yard where it has been brought by the farmers around about. The country is full of fruit trees, and as orchards continually need thinning out or cutting down when too old to bear, there is plenty of material. The economic agriculturists prefer to sell the wood at ten dollars a ton, solid measurement, to working it up for firewood. Of course, they must deliver it at this place, and the factory wants only the sound, good-sized logs or branches. Farmers and farmers' sons know how hard it is to split apple-tree wood. It cuts easily, however, being of a "cheesy" quality, and these points make it desirable for pipes.

Two men first attack the logs in the yard with a crosscut saw and divide them into short pieces which are thrown into the mill. Here they are divided again into small bits and are seasoned. Those without splits or other defects are then selected and the work of making the bowls begins. A long row of operators sit at a bench before lathes, boring machines, rasps and sand-papering apparatus and the bits of appletree pass rapidly from one to another as each does his special work. When the bowl is finished a stem of bone, wood or amber is deftly inserted and fastened, the bowls receive their final coat of varnish and are packed in boxes.

Many thousand pipes are turned out every season. Some are ingeniously carved by experts, who make good wages at the business. Animals, birds and human faces are carved with great fidelity and one of these specimens will compare favorably with meerschaum pipes for artistic effect. This firm also manufactures briar-wood pipes, but has to bring that wood some distance. The briar is a favorite with many smokers, just as the corn-cob or the long clay "nine" has its admirers. The choice of a pipe depends not a little on association and suggestion. Certainly there could be less pleasing suggestions than the apple-tree pipe brings, as one pictures in its fragrant cloud of smoke a lordly apple-tree on some Rockland County hill-side, with its fruitage of Newtown pippins and its possibilities of rare, rich cider.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

A Constant Reminder.

"Why do you wear that nickel on your watch chain?" asked a city hall attache of a milkman who was after a board of health permit to peddle cow juice. "I wear it as a reminder to get even with one of my customers, was the answer. "Over a year ago I took that nickel, which was then beautifully gold-plated, as a five dollar gold piece in payment of a bill. As soon as I detected the fraud I took it back to the woman who passed it on me, but she refused to make it good. So I attached it to my watch-chain and kept on supplying her with milk as though nothing had happened. But now every day I make her quart one-fourth water and once a week I credit her with one-fourth the amount of her milk bill in a book which I keep for that purpose. When the sum total standing to her credit is $4.95 she shall have pure milk once more, and not until then. She knows the milk is watered, but whenever she shows an inclination to complain I handle the nickel and say that my milk is as 'pure as gold.' That settles it."—*Buffalo Express.*