

CURRENT TOPICS.

Farmers can find much to their profit in a study of the markets, both domestic and foreign. Keep watch of the movements of breadstuffs and stock, and note the fluctuations of prices and the shrinkages as compared with former years. There is food for reflection here.

Postmaster Anderson, of Pittsburg, has been notified, by the Department at Washington, that the scratch of a pen or any other mark on a circular, intended to call particular attention to one feature of the circular, does not subject the same to a higher rate of postage than for the original matter marked.

Michigan and Illinois rank as among the first of western States having little or no State debt to pay. Illinois has for years been virtually out of debt, that remaining being only such as payment would not be accepted until due, and for which there is ample provision.

Michigan is nearly out of debt, and in a few years will have no State tax. All her bonds will be paid before they fall due.

A stranger dropping into Memphis to-day can see no evidence of the fearful scourge that for three months has been destroying our people. The streets are thronged as of yore, with bright-eyed business men, intent on the main chance, and also with more than the usual number of idlers, with nothing to do but to hold to the lamp-posts.

The commission appointed by the French Government to consider the report upon the mode of carrying out sentences of capital punishment has unanimously recommended that executions should take place in the interior of prisons, and there can be little doubt that this recommendation will become law. It is proposed to limit the number of newspaper reporters to twenty.

A tramp going by the name of Frank Watson, who was mangled by a railroad train in Kentucky, proved to be a woman in man's clothes. The frequency of such cases indicates that it is a common thing for women to pass for men, the usual object being to get work more readily and at higher wages. It is said that robust women often work in the Pennsylvania coal mines in male attire, but without talking the trouble to pretend they are men.

In Russia much attention has been given of late to insuring a supply of carrier pigeons in all the principal fortresses. The pigeons are frequently exercised in flying from fortress to fortress, and not long ago twenty-five birds taken from Novogeorgievsk, were set free at Warsaw, seventy-five miles away. Two hours afterward a pigeon arrived at Warsaw from Novogeorgievsk, bearing a dispatch stating that seven of the birds liberated at the former had reached the latter place.

Washington Territory has adopted a constitution for the proposed State of Washington. The name is good, but the population—not over 55,000—is too small for a State. Washington has a fertile soil, a genial climate, and all the requisites for a flourishing commonwealth, except enough men and women, especially women. It would not do to admit to equal representation in the United States Senate with New York a State which has not the population of a New York city ward.

A remarkable case of defective vision is that of the three children of James Howard, a seafaring man, whose family live on Ocracoke Island, N. C. They become totally blind each day immediately after the sun goes down. If by chance they happen to be in the yard playing when the sun sets, their playthings are instantly laid aside, and efforts made to reach the house, when they soon after retire and sleep soundly until sunrise, after which their sight is described as being restored, and, to all appearance, perfectly unimpaired. The youngest is three and the eldest ten years old—two boys and one girl, all of light complexion. Their eyes are light blue, and there is nothing about them that appears at all strange.

Toward the end of her reign the Empress Catherine of Russia found the civil list of her son Paul much in debt. Several thousand bottles of brandy were charged as having been used by him, although he never tasted brandy. The charges were traced up to the day of his birth. There were some slight excoactions on his legs when he was born. The nurse sent for a glass of brandy to make a lotion for them. From that time a bottle of brandy had been sent or charged to him every day.

It is hard to believe, but it is a fact, that some of our shoemakers have shoes for which they ask \$125 a pair, and stranger still, there are people who are fools enough to purchase them at that price.

NEWS OF THE WEEK

CRIMES AND ORIGINALS.

The lynching of four horse thieves at Corning, Clay county, Ark., is reported.

A hotel keeper in Copenhagen has been arrested for threatening to shoot the king.

In a fight in Baxter street New York on Christmas night, John Brown killed John Regalia.

A Remer Baetter, Austrian consul at New Orleans, has committed suicide by drowning.

At San Andreas, Cal., in a quarrel, lately, Frank Descloix was shot dead by John Blackburn.

A tramp has been sent to the Arizona penitentiary for four years, for robbing a hardware store at Madison.

Officer Furness of New York city, shot by William M. Palmer, a lunatic, on Saturday Dec. 27, died of his wounds on the Sunday following.

A dyer was arrested at Altorburg, Saxony, charged with threatening to assassinate the emperor of Austria. He pleaded drunkenness.

Robbers attacked the train for Vera Cruz near Puebla on the 14th, killed the baggage master, wounded the conductor, and escaped with \$37,000 of silver.

J. W. Morgan, a Kentuckian, horse-whipped Charles Maguire, in the Chamber of Commerce the other day, because of a difficulty in a wheat transaction. Morgan is said to have been drunk.

On the 13th of December, John Boyd killed in a cowardly manner, Thomas O'Brien at Fort Wrangle, Alaska. The citizens tried him by a jury of his own selection, found him guilty, and hung him the next day.

In the criminal court at Chicago, in the trial of Joe St. Peters and Mrs. A. B. Clark for the murder of the latter's husband, at La Grange, the jury rendered a verdict of not guilty, as to both, after five hours deliberation.

Charles L. Otto, jeweler at Peoria, Ill., reported to the police that he had been robbed of \$2,800 cash and \$10,000 in goods. Investigation indicated Otto himself as the thief and he was arrested, his brother being held as an accomplice. Otto is a young German who moved in the best German society there.

William Snively, a notorious counterfeiter, died recently at his home on the Little Muskingum, near Bloomfield, Ohio. He was 65 years old. He was very miserly, and his wealth being variously estimated at from \$100,000 to \$250,000, but he died without revealing where he had hidden his treasures.

George A. Blaikie, of Chicago, who robbed the Fidellty special deposit vault Dec. 26, of \$3000, was brought before Justice Morrison, but Dr. Turpin, receiver of the bank, declined to prosecute, on the grounds that the money had already been returned by Blaikie's father, and that he considered the young man insane, and not responsible for the deed. Justice Morrison, however, bound him over in \$2,000 bonds.

Some time ago the Chicago & Northwestern railroad built a side track to the ice houses in Watertown, Wis. Residents along the line commenced suit for a large amount of damages, so the company resolved to tear up the track, and sent men there for that purpose, but they were driven off by a mob composed of laborers employed by the ice house company. The mob subsequently paraded the streets in honor of their victory.

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Commemoration services in honor of the late William Callen Bryant were held in the Academy of Music in New York city, Dec. 30. President Hayes, Secretary Evarts, Gen. Sherman, Gen. Hancock, Bishop Potter, Samuel J. Tilden, and other distinguished persons were present. Mrs. Hayes, the Misses Evarts and other prominent ladies were present. George William Curtis delivered an enthusiastic address.

There were 180 deaths in New York last week, from scarlet fever.

The Armstrong block in Rome, N. Y., has been burned. Loss, \$40,000.

The American hotel at San Francisco has been burned. Loss \$30,000.

Major Pazeonski's house, at Chippewa Falls, Wis., has been destroyed by fire.

A general and plentiful fall of rain throughout the State of California is reported.

The snow blockade on the side tracks and switches at Buffalo, N. Y., stops business.

The Chicago and Northwestern freight depot at Fond du Lac was destroyed by fire Dec. 25.

Great distress prevails in Switzerland there being 6,000 unemployed persons in Geneva.

A fire in the Catholic publication society's building, in New York city, resulted in a loss of \$50,000.

Business failures to a great or less extent are reported in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and West Virginia.

A Dec. 30th, Green Bay telegram says, a fire at Fort Harwood destroyed the Grand Central hotel and barn.

The liabilities of the Wheeler & Co's Pork house, in Cincinnati, O., amount to between \$40,000 and \$50,000.

A fire in the Cocheco print works, at Dover, N. H., damaged the buildings and contents to the amount of \$75,000.

The Emerson piano factory has been destroyed by fire. Loss, \$100,000. 85 men thrown out of employment.

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CATHOLIC FINANCES.

[Cincinnati Special to Chicago Tribune.]

A report gained currency here to-day that the venerable Archbishop Purcell has written to the Pope asking to be relieved from all active church duties, and that this action was the result of the troubled condition of the financial affairs of the Catholic church in Cincinnati. Investigation proves that the appointment of a bishop, with cardinal powers to share with him the labors and responsibilities of his high office. Should the request be granted, the archbishop will retain his present titles and authority, but will be relieved from the burden of managing the financial interests of the church, which have grown into large proportions. Archbishop Purcell is 79 years old, and began his labors in Cincinnati when there was but one Catholic church in the city. In regard to the reports of the financial troubles, which have been freely circulated of late, Bishop Purcell, brother of the archbishop, this morning made the following statement: There has been a run for several days by depositors which the church managers have been somewhat embarrassed to meet. There have also been some losses—one of \$60,000—by the Slevin failure, but the church has a large and valuable property, which is ample security for her liabilities. A financial failure would be impossible, and depositors are gradually coming to understand this, and are quieting their fears. It may be stated in explanation that the authorities of the church have for many years received from the Catholic people their savings, giving notes bearing interest in return. This money has been loaned to the Catholic church and schools, hospitals, and individuals, at a higher rate of interest. Thus an ecclesiastical savings bank of very large proportion has grown up. The same causes that have affected other savings banks have effected this system, and serious embarrassment is the result. Within the past few weeks five or six of the most valuable pieces of Catholic property have been mortgaged for heavy sums, and the proceeds paid over to the anxious depositors. There is no doubt whatever that the people who have committed their earnings to the care of the church will receive every cent back, but the present situation is none the less embarrassing to all parties.

Lady Smokers of Russia.

[Buffalo Commercial.]

Russian ladies smoke cigarettes and do it in a way that is not unpleasant even to foreigners who are not accustomed to woman's use of the weed; one correspondent writes that they smoke at railway stations, on steamboats and at hotels, dozens of cigarettes a day sometimes, scratching the necessary matches on a pillar or post, just like a man. Sometimes a light goes out and they try again—as why shouldn't they? If they have no matches or wish to save themselves the trouble of lighting one they ask the first gentleman smoking they meet to favor them with a light! Leaning forward to the cigar, pipe or cigarette which he extends, they ignite their little roll, bow silently and pass on. Sometimes a gentleman asks a lady to extend to him the same favor. Well, in Russia it may be all well enough to do as Russians do; but we trust that in America the male sex will enjoy and insist upon their monopoly in the use of tobacco.

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