WANTS MORE POWER.

Comptroller Eckels' Authority Over National Banks.

HIS POSITION IS MERELY ADVISORY

Recent Bank Failures—How They Are Often Wrecked—The Comptroller Can Only Warn—He Cannot Enforce His Wishes. Liabilities and Assets.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5.—[Special.]—The recent numerous bank failures in the west have served to call attention to the importance of the supervisory work of the comptroller of the currency. The comptroller is by law given supervision of all the national banks in the country. His power over them is not great enough to enable him to compel them to obey the law, but he can and does exercise strong influence upon them. As was shown in the case of the recent failure of the National Bank of Illinois at Chicago, the comptroller had repeatedly warned the officers and directors of that institution that they were violating the law in their loans. The officers promised to reform, but did not do so. They promised to diminish the amount of loans to members of their own directory, but instead increased them. Of course such banking methods, such disregard of the warnings of the comptroller, could have but one ending, and that was failure, dishonor and ruin.

Wants the Law Amended.

If the comptroller had been given by law the power to enforce his demands, if he were something more than a mentor of the banking officers of the country, perhaps this Illinois failure would not have occurred. Comptroller Eckels has time and again asked congress for greater power in dealing with national banks, for authority to enforce his demands, but congress has not as yet seen fit to amend the law in the direction asked for. There can be no doubt that after some of the recent experiences in western banking methods, which have shown the value of the comptroller's checks upon the operations of bank officers, congress is more inclined than it ever was before to place power in the hands of the federal supervising officer.

The importance of the office of comptroller of the currency may be judged by the fact that he has supervision of 8,675 national banks. Their shareholders number nearly 300,000. They have notes in circulaton to the amount of $210,000,000. Their total resources are $3,260,000,000, and their deposits amount to the enormous sum of $1,600,000,000, or twice the national debt, less cash, in the treasury. This last item shows how close are the relations between the comptroller's office and the business of the country. If a bank failure occurs, business men are the chief losers. One failing bank pulls down another, and there is trouble throughout an entire community. It is the duty of the comptroller to so guard and supervise the operations of the banks that failures shall not occur, if possible. He must give warning when bad business methods lead to danger.

Losses In the Past.

But the comptroller can only warn. He has no power to enforce his wishes. He may, it is true, blast the credit of any bank by a public announcement of its weakness, but this would only serve to precipitate the disaster, which it is his duty to avert. There is no longer any anxiety concerning loss to the holders of national bank notes. In the old days of wildcat banking noteholders never knew whether they were safe or not. Often bank failures subjected them to great losses. But under the new national bank law, in force since 1863, no holder of a national bank note has lost a penny. All such notes are protected by deposits of United States bonds, which preclude the possibility of loss.

The comptroller's chief duty now is to guard the rights of the depositors and of the business community in general. This is a great and a delicate responsibility. If he is lax in enforcing the law, danger will creep in. If he is too tyrannical, banks will be forced into failure when a little more patience and tolerance might save them and all the interests involved. It is apparent that much more depends upon the fidelity with which bank officers discharge their duties than upon the zeal of the comptroller. If they are prudent and honest, there will be no trouble. If there is trouble, it has been brought about before the comptroller can know anything of it, and despite all he can do there may be no way of correcting the evil.

The chief trouble with national banks is that their officers persist in making loans to relatives and to personal friends who are engaged in enterprises of doubtful value. In this way bank after bank has been wrecked. The temptation to help out one's relatives or personal friends has been the undoing of many a fine reputation. There is one quality which a national bank officer must have if he is to be a success, if he is to avoid humiliation and disgrace. He must be able to say "No." The weak man, the good natured man, the kindly man, has no business in a bank, where other people's money and the prosperity of a city are intrusted to his care.

Since the present national banking law was passed, in 1863, there have been reported to the comptroller of the currency 1,158 national bank failures. That was up to Oct. 1 last year. The total liabilities of these failed banks was $199,000,000. When their affairs were finally settled up, it was found they were able to pay $93,500,000 in dividends, or about 47 per cent. This is not a bad showing, considering that most of the bank failures have been in times of panic, when values of securities were falling fast.

Bank Failure Waves.

The failures of national banks have come in waves. Between 1863 and 1872 there were only 44 failures, and their liabilities were small. But in the next six years—1873 to 1878, inclusive—there were 256 failures, with liabilities aggregating about $70,000,000. That was the panic period of 1873.

Between 1878 and 1893 there were a good many failures, aggregating 325 in number. But, as a rule, their liabilities were small.

The second great era of national bank failures began in 1893. In that year 276 banks failed. In 1894 the number was 79. In 1895 it was 117, and in 1896, up to Oct. 1, it was 81.

It will thus be seen that the panic of 1873 resulted in the downfall of 256 banks, while the panic of 1893 led to the failure of 528. The two panics, therefore, led to the failure of much more than one-half of all the failures in the third of a century which has elapsed since the law went into force, and to perhaps two-thirds of all the liabilities and losses.

WALTER WELLMAN.

THE NEWS IN BRIEF.

Possibly the oldest woman in England is Sarah Thomas, who, on Feb. 5, will be 109 years of age. Mrs. Thomas has smoked a clay pipe for sixty years.

Mrs. Emma Palmer, a Frankfort, Ky., divorcee, shot herself because Bash Fitch, a Vanceburg banker, did not cherish love for her.

The new Danish ambassadress at Paris is an American woman, formerly Mrs. Charles Moulton, nee Greenough, of Cambridge, Mass.

Mrs. Benjamin Larson of Marshfield, Wis., was assisting her husband to saw down a tree, when it fell, crushing her to death. She leaves four children, the oldest only 6 years.

"Jack the Ripper" tragedies are in course of perpetuation in Amsterdam, Holland. The last murdered woman, terribly mutilated, was found the morning before Christmas.

There are over 700 laundries in New York, the labor of which is carried on entirely by Chinese men and women.

Governor Sheldon of South Dakota denies that he either has or intends to pardon W. W. Taylor, the defaulting state treasurer.

It is propsed in Misouri to employ the state convicts in draining the swamps in the southeastern part of the state.

A Los Angeles (Cal.) jury refused to deliver a verdict until the fees were paid.

One of the valuble relics intrusted to the care of the grand master of Masachusetts Masons is "the Washington urn," a small golden urn containing a lock of General Washington's hair.

Two locomotives and three freight cars were demolished in a wreck on the Weyerhauser and Dobble logging road at Minnesung, Wis. One of the firemen received slight injuries, while both engineers escaped.

Drunkenness decreases nearly 3 per cent. per annum in London.

Thirty-six employes of Milwaukee were dropped from the service as the result of the civil service rule that all employes of the city shall be citizens of this country.

A Denver man says that Francis Schlatter, the "divine healer," will soon show himself again. He will appear in a wheatfield, surrounded by cherubs; he will be eight feet in height, and his hair will be white.

Hugh Hentchel's wife deserted him at Joliet, Ills., leaving four children. Hentchel hanged himself to a door, having previously slashed his throat and severed the arteries in his legs.

Legislators Snowbound.

Minneapolis, Jan. 5.—Specials to The Journal from Red river valley points indicate that the storm that has been in progress there since Sunday morning is more severe than that of Thanksgiving, though little snow has fallen. It is very cold, and the loose snow has been piled in tremendous drifts. The only train that left Grand Forks Monday morning was bound for Bismarck, and was loaded with members of the legislature. It is stalled just outside the city. There are no trains running in the Red river valley.

Killed by the Cars.

Springfield, Mass., Jan. 5.—A man supposed to be Richard Broulyette of Bay City, Mich., was run over and killed by the cars in West Springfield Monday.

THE MARKETS.

New York Financial.

NEW YORK, Jan. 4.

Money on call easy at 2 per cent.; prime mercantile paper, 3½@4½ per cent.; sterling exchange was steady, with actual business in bankers' bills at 488¼@488¾ for sixty days; posted rates, 484½ and 487; commercial bills, 483¾.

Silver certificates, 65¾; no sales; bar silver, 64⅝c; Mexican dollars, 50¾.

United States government bonds firm; 4's registered, 125⅝; do. coupons, 126⅝; 5's registered, 114; do. coupons, 114; 4's registered, 110½; do. coupons, 111; 2's registered, 95½; Pacific 6's of 95, 102½.

Chicago Grain and Produce.

CHICAGO, Jan. 4.

Following were the quotations on the Board of Trade today: Wheat—January, opened 81⅛c, closed nominal; May, opened 85⅛c, closed 84¼c; July opened 81c, closed 79¾c. Corn—January, opened 28¾c, closed 28¼c; May, opened 26c, closed 25½c; July, opened 27c, closed 26¼c. Oats—January, opened and closed nominal; May, opened 19⅝c, closed 19⅝c; July, opened and closed nominal. Pork—January, opened $7.55, closed nominal; May, opened $7.95, closed $7.82½. Lard—January, opened $3.85c, closed $3.80; May, opened $4.02½ closed $3.97½.

Produce: Butter—Extra creamery, 19c per lb; extra dairy, 17c per lb; fresh packing stock, 8c. Eggs—Fresh stock, 15@16c per doz. Poultry—Turkeys, 9@11c per lb; chickens (hens), 5@6c; spring chickens, 6@6½c; roosters, 4½c; ducks, 8@10c; geese, 7@9c. Potatoes—Burbanks, 18@24c per bu; Hebron, 18@20c. Sweet potatoes—Illinois, $1.15@1.60 per bbl. Honey—White clover, 10@12c per lb; extracted, 5@7c. Apples—Common to fancy, 40c@$1.50 per bbl.

Chicago Live Stock.

CHICAGO, Jan. 4.

Live Stock—Prices at the Union Stock yards today ranged as follows: Hogs—Estimated receipts for the day, 21,000; sales ranged at $3.10@3.60 pigs, $3.35@3.60 light, $3.05@3.15 rough packing, $3.30@3.55 mixed, and $3.20@3.53 heavy packing and shipping lots.

Cattle—Estimated receipts for the day, 11,000; quotations ranged at $4.75@5.10 choice to extra shipping steers, $4.20@4.75 good to choice do., $3.80@4.25 fair to good, $3.00@3.75 common to medium do., $3.10@3.75 butchers' steers, $2.60@3.25 stockers, $3.35@3.90 feeders, $1.60@3.60 cows, $2.40@4.15 heifers, $1.75@3.75 bulls, oxen and stags, $2.80@4.10 Texas steers, and $2.75@5.40 veal calves.

Sheep and Lambs—Estimated receipts for the day, 1,000; sales ranged at $2.35@3.50 western, $2.00@3.00 Texans, $2.00@4.00 natives and $3.00@5.30 lambs.

East Buffalo Live Stock.

EAST BUFFALO, N. Y., Jan. 4.

Dunning & Stevens, Live Stock Commission Merchants, East Buffalo, N. Y., quote as follows:

Cattle—Receipts, 120 cars; market steady to shade stronger for good grades and desirable butchers' kinds; common steady; best heavy steers, $4.75@5.00; good to choice shippers, $4.40@4.65; good to extra fat heifers, $3.75@4.15; light to fair, $2.90@3.50; old to prime fat cows, $2.90@3.65; veals active; tops, $7.00@7.50; others, $4.5 @6.50. Hogs—Receipts, 103 cars; market active and higher; Yorkers, good to choice, $3.70@3.75; light, $3.90@3.85; pigs, $3.75@3.90; mixed packers, $3.55@3.65; heavy, $3.50; roughs, $3.00@3.20; stags, $2.25@2.75. Sheep and Lambs—Receipts, 50 cars; market active; sheep 10@15c higher; lambs stronger; best lambs, $5.40@5.50; fair to good, $4.75@5.35; culls and common, $3.75@4.70; mixed sheep, good to choice, $3.85@3.85; common to fair, $2.90@3.40; culls and common, $2.00@2.85; handy wethers, 4.00@4.15.

Milwaukee Grain.

MILWAUKEE, Jan. 4.

Wheat—No. 2 spring, 79½c; No. 1 northern, 83c. Corn—No. 3, 20c. Oats—No. 2 white, 18@19c. Barley—No. 2, 34½c; samples, 24@32c. Rye—No. 1, 39½c.

Detroit Grain.

DETROIT, Jan. 4.

Wheat—Cash white, 94¾c; cash red, 91½; May, 94½c bid.

MILLIONS GIVEN AWAY

Startling Report of Auditor Dunn of Minnesota.

RECOMMENDS LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

The Auditor Says That Railroads Claim Nearly Half the Area of the State, and That Valuable Iron Lands Are Now in Possession of the Rockefeller Interests—All State Lands Must Be Sold at Public Auction.

St. Paul, Jan. 5.—The biennial report of State Auditor Robert C. Dunn to the Minnesota legislature was given to the press Sunday night and contains some startling figures and recommendations, drawn from a rigid interpretation of the law and a careful examination of the records of his office, which includes the land department.

He says that he realizes fully the immense benefit the railroads have been to the state, but in view of the immense grants of land they have received he has deemed it his duty to interpret the laws rigidly and wherever there is a doubt to give the state the benefit of it. The general land department business shows that the grants of land to railroad companies by congress and by the state within the limits of the state of Minnesota to aid in the construction of the 3,200 miles of line have amounted to over 20,000,000 acres. A reasonable valuation of these railroad lands is $103,000,000, or about $32,200 per mile. Of these lands the companies have already received over 10,000,000 acres, and under the swamp act, from the state, they have received over 3,000,000 additional.

Must Be Sold at Auction.

He calls particular attention to the grant originally made to the Little Falls railroad and now owned by the Northern Pacific. It consists of 300,000 acres, and was given to aid in the construction of that railroad from its eastern terminus to the western boundary of the state. For uncompleted portions on the line the land should revert to the state. The line was only built to Morris, altogether sixty-seven and one-half miles, and the auditor holds that the grant does not attach to the twenty-two and one-half miles from that to the state line, making a difference of 130,000 acres in the grant. As the company has already received 200,000 acres, which is in excess of what it earned, the legislature is asked to take proper action to recover these lands, which are valued at not less than $5 per acre.

The auditor's conclusions and recommendations regarding mineral lands, however, are more startling. He recommends that the legislature direct that action be begun in the courts looking to the recovery of lands already conveyed to the Duluth and Iron Range railroad, amounting to 200,000 acres, and that the remaining portion, 403,000 acres, be declared forfeited. These lands, conservatively valued, are worth $3,000,000, being located exclusively in St. Louis, Lake and Cook counties, which comprise the mineral and timber portions of the state.

Lands Should Revert.

He then calls attention to the constitutional provision that all state lands must be sold at public auction. As the timber has been considered part of the realty, it has been similarly disposed of in like manner. The Rockefellers and the Minnesota Iron company holds 90 per cent. of the mining contracts on state lands, including the famous Oliver mine, with its great ore deposits, and these were all secured at private sale, so that if his contention be approved there would be a general shaking up in mineral contracts.

The land where the rich Mountain Iron mine is located was selected in 1883 by the then state auditor for indemnity school land. In 1888 the same official—apparently through an error or oversight—executed a relinquishment back to the government. This land is valued at not less than $12,000,000. State Auditor Dunn takes the ground that possibly the state still holds title to these lands under the original selection, and that the relinquishment was null and void because the auditor had no power to execute such relinquishment, that power remaining with the governor.

Costly Fire at Nashville, Tenn.

Nashville, Jan. 5.—About 3 o'clock Sunday the fire which originated in the immense dry goods store of Lebeck Bros. at 11 o'clock Saturday night, was under control. Nine stores and the south end of the city market house, containing offices of heads of city departments, were destroyed. The loss is about $400,00. The origin of the fire has not been ascertained. Several firemen were injured by falling walls and Captain James Sullivan was caught by a falling wall and badly bruised, and when rescued was found with a broken leg. Charles Thompson, cashier, and J. B. Carr, manager of the Stief Jewelry company, were badly wounded by falling walls.

Notice of a Reduction.

Massillon, O., Jan. 5.—Notices have been posted at all the mines in the Massillon district of a reduction in the price of pick mining from 61 cents to 51 cents per ton. The notice says a rate of 60 cents has been agreed upon in Pennsylvania under the long established system whereby the Ohio rate is 9 cents less than that of the Pittsburg district, therefore the 51 cent rate will be maintained under existing conditions. About 2,000 men are now out, but it is thought they will resume work and continue till after the joint meeting of operators and miners at Columbus, Jan. 12.

Pugilist Duffy Dies.

New York, Jan. 5.—James Duffy, the Boston pugilist, who collapsed at the conclusion of a ten-round boxing match with George Justus at the Broadway Athletic club Saturday night, died Monday without having regained consciousness. Dick Roche, who acted as referee, and Tom O'Brien, manager of the club, are under arrest, also Justus.

Murdered Her Husband.

New York, Jan. 5.—Bell Smith, colored, stabbed her husband, Jesse Smith, also colored, in the neck Sunday, severing his jugular vein and causing almost instant death. Smith was beating his wife's 7-year-old child, by her first husband, when the wife interfered and the stabbing followed. The woman is under arrest.

THE BLACK SNAKE.

He Is as Much at Home In Tree Tops as on Terra Firma.

There has been much discussion among naturalists and in sportsmen's journals regarding the ability of the black snake, our one constrictor, to travel swiftly amid the branches. Ten thousand men have seen the sleek black streak of rope accomplish the feat easily. Here is but one incident:

The black snake's habitat includes Illinois. Lasalle county is not far north of the center of the state, and perhaps a little west of the center line drawn north and south. There are some very good woods in Lasalle county, because through that county run two of the Mississippi's tributaries—the Illinois and one of its branches, the Vermilion. Bailey's creek is one of the little farm land tributaries of the Vermilion river. Along the creek are reaches of woodland, or at least there were awhile ago. In those bits of woods—bits as compared with Michigan forests—there are and have been black snakes, great fellows, worthy of their reputation farther east. This is what happened one day when a young fellow went hunting. It is worth the telling, because it illustrates the black snake's nimbleness among the tree tops:

Wandering along cautiously and quietly, looking for a shot on either side, the young man heard suddenly an uncommon rustling among the leaves above him. He looked up and saw something that astonished him. A fox squirrel—and a fox squirrel is the biggest of the squirrel kind—was leaping from limb to limb, from tree to tree, in mortal affright, evidently fleeing from some deadly enemy. Close behiud him, curving, twining and twisting, but with all details of its locomotion invisible from below, so swift its progress and so easy its passing from limb to limb and tree to tree, came three to five feet of blackness. It was a black snake pursuing the fox squirrel. Its chase was hopeless, but the ability and the hungry earnestness of this one constrictor of our northern woods were demonstrated remarkably. As for the man underneath—well, he was a young fellow with a shotgun. The young fellow with a shotgun is a reasonably good shot in the country, and he kills snakes. He poured a load of shot into that black streak among the branches, and it dropped to the grounnd, merely a foul, dead, moderately sized specimen of Boscanion constrictor. —Recreation.

COOKS ON A PILLOW.

Domestic Economy In Wong Seek's Tiny Chinatown Home.

The smallest residence in San Francisco is, of course, located in Chinatown. It is not, however, at the end of a dark alley in a damp cellar. In many of these are some very diminutive roosting places, but they are elegant homes and flats compared to Wong Seek's private residence on the corner of Waverly place and Clay street.

Wong's home is about as big as his skin—a trifle larger, of course, to allow for his wooden shoes that go to bed with him, but the difference is not material. Wong's home is a box nailed to a brick wall over the fruit stand where Wong makes a living that would not keep a white baby fat.

Directly opposite—that is to say, on the southeast corner of Waverly place and Clay street—there is another Chinaman who has a residence similar to that of Wong. But his is larger than Wong's—whether owing to larger wooden shoes or to just what is not known. But it measures fully a foot more in length and is an inch or so more in thickness.

The dimensions of Wong's private residence—he lives in it all by himself—are 5 feet in length, 2 feet in width, with a ceiling height of 3 feet clear of the gas fixtures. For a pillow Wong has a 90 cent oil stove, and in the morning he cooks his breakfast on his pillow. He uses a rope ladder to get into his home, and when he has tucked himself in for the night he pulls up his ladder and is safe.

Wong is saving money and will some day take the steamer for China and cart off 200 or 300 American gold dollars to the slums of Hongkong, where he will live like a prince.—San Francisco Call.

Utilizing His College Education.

A tramp appeared at the house of J. H. Barton, three miles south of Columbia, Mo., one morning and asked for cold victuals in Greek. He stated that he was a graduate of Princeton. Mr. Barton, himself a Greek scholar, was just about to start for Columbia, and his horse was hitched in front of the house.

Jestingly he offered to give the tramp the horse if he could recite the Greek alphabet without a mistake. The tramp looked at the horse and then at Mr. Barton, and then inquired if the bet included the saddle and bridle. Mr. Barton said that it did, and then went into the house to get a Greek book.

Returning, he found the tramp mounted on the horse. As Mr. Barton stepped from the porch the tramp rattled off the alphabet without a mistake, and, turning the horse's head, disappeared in a cloud of dust. The animal on which the Princeton pilgrim rode away was one of the best blooded horses in Boone county, noted for its blooded stock.—Philadelphia Press.

She Knew Better.

"Chaste moon," sang the poet.

At that the moon hid her face behind a cloud.

"Alas, that I am unworthy of his praise!" she sighed.

She doubtless had in mind the notorious fact that once a month she got full and staid out all night.—Detroit Tribune.

Same Old Way.

Robert—When I get into my new house, I mean that everything shall go like clockwork.

Richard—I see. The same as heretofore—tick, tick!—Boston Transcript.

Beauty of the Creole Women.

"As you see his face," writes Ruth McEnery Stuart in an article on the creoles, "A People Who Live Amid Romance," in The Ladies' Home Journal, "you will know that he—the creole husband or father—realizes that no flower upon the lily covered altar is half so fair or so fit for the temple's perfect adorning as his blooming wife and budding daughters, who sit in line beside him. If he does not think these things, he is a dullard—or, maybe, only half creole. Perhaps his mother was an American or Scotch. And then? Perhaps he would not think them because they might not be true. They would be other things, other things just as fine and good no doubt—they might even have rare beauty of a different type—but the creole woman is a flower. She is a magnolia or a jasmine—occasionally a camellia, or, especially when there is a good warm drop of Spanish blood in her veins, she is a red, red rose—a rose too sweet to pass untouched but for her perfect dignity and a piquant hauteur that is as protective as any thorn upon a rose's stem.

"Properly speaking, or, rather, narrowly speaking, the creole is an American, born of French or Spanish parents or of both, and strictly both parents should themselves be foreign born, but the creole is often only the great-great-grandson of a creole, and some of their families of purest blood could not reach the mother country without going back through three or four American born generations."

Theories of the Jack-o'-lanterns.

The scientists have put forward theories to account for the appearance of the will-o'-the-wisp, or jack-o'-lantern lights. One of these is that they are due to phosphureted hydrogen gas, which possesses the peculiar power of spontaneous ignition on coming in contact with dry atmospheric air. This gas could be easily generated by the decomposition of animal matter in marshy soil, and it would be especially liable to cause the appearance of "phantom lights" if it should become mixed with the gas from decaying roots, etc. Jack-o'-lanterns of this variety generally recede on being approached, and travel with great rapidity.

The second theory is that such lights are due to light carbureted hydrogen gas, such as might arise from decaying grass, leaves, etc.

While these theories have been advanced they have never been proved to be correct; neither has the moving away phenomenon when approached or that of their spontaneous ignition ever been explained. The chemist and experimenters in general are unanimous in the conclusion that jack-o'-lanterns cannot be artificially produced. Other names for this light are friar's lantern, grave light and fool's fire.—St. Louis Republic.

The English Soldier.

Tommy Atkins knows of many ways by which he may add to his regulation pay of a shilling a day. He is a shrewd individual, and knows his worth, and frequently realizes quite a nice little sum by "doing a bit outside."

Smoking concerts in public houses are of almost daily occurrence in garrison towns. On these occasions a pianist and a chairman are indispensable, and the landlord finds it well worth his while to induce a soldier to attend, for the presence of a red coat is usually popular among civilians.

At theaters and music halls, too, Tommy finds himself appreciated. He can take a hand in the orchestra, while a man who can act the soldier to the life, and will bring his own uniform with him, will find a ready wage awaiting him.

Many hotel proprietors employ soldiers as waiters and find that as smart serving men they are thoroughly appreciated. In fact, Tommy Atkins can turn his hand to anything, even to helping bootmakers make boots. — Pearson's Weekly.

Patents In Japan.

No patent is granted to a foreigner in Japan. No foreign inventor, by applying through a Japanese citizen, can obtain a patent except by fraud. If a patent were obtained by a false representation that the Japanese citizen was the inventor and it was discovered that he was not, the patent would be at once canceled. It is precisely the same with trademarks and designs—there are no registration and no protection. The result is that all goods of foreign produce and manufacture, of which the label is worth copying, can be bought all over Japan of Japanese manufacture, and at a quarter of a fractional part of the cost of the original and genuine foreign made article.—Ham's Horn.

His Excuse Insufficient.

The witty remarks of Judge Craig Biddle, if gathered together, would fill a good sized volume. Here is a good one gotten off by him recently while sitting in the quarter sessions court: A German juryman asked to be excused from serving on the jury.

"Why?" asked the judge.

"Well, your honor, I don't understand good English."

"Oh, you will do," replied the judge. "You won't hear much good English here anyhow."—Philadelphia Record.

An impudent youngster came very near getting his ears boxed the other night at a wedding party for wishing the bride "many happy returns of the day."

CURIOUS RELIGIONS.

Some Sects the Members of Which Thought They Couldn't Die.

Our congress is prohibited by the constitution from making laws respecting religious views and theories. This being the case, fanatics of all kinds have taken the opportunity to propound their views and make an effort to spread their doctrines. Within the present century not less than a half dozen deluded mortals residing within the limits of the United States have claimed to be Christ returned to earth, and the queer thing in connection with the ministry of such fanatics is the fact that they can persuade persons who are supposed to have a fair amount of brains to believe that they are all they claim to be.

Since 1830 five different sects have been founded in the United States the members of which claimed the ability of either themselves or their founder to live forever. Each of these queer communities has been known by its neighbors as "the immortals," and each has in the course of time come to grief, as all such visionary dreamers must. The last deluded being to found a sect on the theory that he himself, at least, was immortal was David Patterson, who was known to his followers as "the eye of Jehovah." The Patterson sect were known as "the children of Zion." Their headquarters were mainly at Grand Rapids, Mich., although there were upward of a dozen branch organizations in the different states of the Union. Patterson claimed that he would never die, and the great tenet of faith with the children of Zion was belief in the claims which their leader made. In 1888 this self styled "eye of Jehovah" began to grow dim—in other words, to waste away with an incurable disease. Finally he went to France, where he died, just as all other mortals have done or will do. This cured the delusion of the Michiganders at Grand Rapids, who soon awoke to the fact that their leader had either been a crazy fanatic or a blasphemer. Sects founded on claims of immortality are not at all dangerous, as it is only a question of time when the delusion will be effectually dispelled.—St. Louis Republic.

THE GOLDEN THROAT.

Bell-like Tones Not Always a Gift of Nature, but May Be Acquired.

The power of the highest interpretation of music in song is vouchsafed to but few favored mortals and is not to be acquired by any amount of endeavor, if the true "golden throat," with finely adjusted chordæ vocales, be lacking. A voice of sweet and mellow quality in speaking, however, is not always a gracious gift of nature, but is a possible attainment to persons of the most ordinary musical capacity. A prima donna spends scarcely more time practicing her scales than an ambitious actress devotes to the cultivation of a ringing, bell-like intonation to her sentences, for public speakers and people of the theatrical profession understand the value of vibrant tones, of the "thrilling, solemn, proud, pathetic voice," whose echoes linger long in the memory of the enthralled listener.

Among well bred people low voices are the rule—low, but not always musical, a tendency to falsetto marking any effort beyond ordinary conversation, which is simply an evidence of the lack of proper training, or of a failure to practice those primary principles of elocution that are a part of the briefest common school education.

Lessons under a teacher are not an absolute necessity to the woman who would secure the grace of clear, sweet accents. Deep breathing and chest expansion are the first steps toward the desired end, and a systematic course of throat strengthening, combined with enough discernment to decide between a nasal twang and pure tone, is about all that is needed to achieve a fair degree of success.

An excellent method of strengthening the throat is gargling with cold salt water in the morning, bathing it at the same time, first with very hot and then with very cold water. It thus gets a slight shock and is braced up and permanently benefited.—New York Journal.

African Blood Brotherhood.

The method of making blood brotherhood among the Galla and Somali has its peculiarities. It is described by William Astor Chanler in "Through Jungle and Desert:"

Lokomagul, on behalf of his people, and I, on behalf of my own, each seized in our right hands a round stone. Upon the stones we liberally expectorated. Each then passed his stone to his following, who did likewise. We then exchanged stones, and each, holding the stone in his right hand, with his left dug a small hole in the soil, meanwhile uttering words of supposed magic import. In these holes we finally placed the stones and covered them with sand. We then grasped hands and assured each other that we were the best friends possible.

Tit For Tat.

The wits of Washington are suggesting that this is a good time for Great Britain to give tit for tat and insist that the Cuban question should be submitted to arbitration, just as the United States government suggested to England that such a course be taken with her troubles in Venezuela.—Chicago Record.