

CURRENT TOPICS.

A speaker in a Boston temperance convention said that he had, before becoming a total abstainer, spent over \$5,000 a year for rum for his own drinking.

Peers in the English House of Lords three days holiday a week, and on the remaining four meet at 5 o'clock, and unless a regular tough night is expected adjourn before 8, in order to get their dinners, which apparently they cannot enjoy unless they have ample time to digest them.

These are trying days for the young Douches of Edinburgh. Her mother-in-law is getting ready to go to war with her papa, and it is quite within the chances that her husband's ship may presently be blown up by one of papa's torpedoes.

The accidental explosion of dynamite a few days ago in the Baltimore water works made the number of men killed in that undertaking to date thirty. A tunnel, seven miles in length, is being made for the purpose of conveying water to the city.

People in the little town of Waltham, Vt., enjoy a sort of perpetual millennium. With an area of nine square miles and a population of 249 persons, it has no town taxes, no bridges to maintain, no minister, no doctor, no church, no lawyer, no town papers, and no jail.

More large and steady incomes have probably been got out of gas stocks than out of almost any form of investment, and the happy holders have rejoiced in the thought that however bad times may be, the people must have light.

In 1872 the Legislature of Mississippi passed an act virtually exempting from taxation for a period of ten years the machinery and other material manufacturing companies, the object being to encourage the establishment of factories in that State.

W. P. Longley of Texas, who killed thirty-two men in the course of his varied and exciting career, is now preparing for the gallows. The Appellate Court has refused to interfere in his behalf, and several thousand anxious Texans feel confident that they will not be deprived of their long anticipated hanging bee.

Gov. Rice of Massachusetts was petitioned by Boston atheists to omit from his Thanksgiving proclamation any acknowledgment of a God, and to say simply that he appointed the day in accordance with the wishes of those who desired it.

Surgeon Major Casse Johnston of the British army has lately made a remarkable report as to the heat of the body in different climates. This is put down in medical works as being in temperate climates about 98.4 Fahrenheit, and Dr. Becker has estimated the increase in hot climates at 0.5 Fahrenheit to one degree of increase in the temperature of the atmosphere.

The House committee on revision of the laws regulating the counting of electoral votes for President and Vice President, have agreed to a proposition providing for the election of the President and Vice President by direct vote of the people.

THE WORLD'S DOINGS.

Ex-County Judge C. H. Sedgwick has been arrested at Omaha for being \$3,000 behind in his accounts. At Westfield, Mass., James Kearney fatally shot John Wilson, on the 4th inst. Cause—both drunk and jealous.

Thomas Conroy, at the Penobscot (Montana) mine, fell down a shaft lately receiving injuries from which he died. The safe of the treasurer of the Eaton-town branch railroad was robbed of \$6,000 cash and \$20,000 in notes and mortgages on the 4th inst.

In an affray at Cincinnati, between one Henry Dilge and Joseph Schroeder, a saloon keeper, the latter was literally beaten to death. William B. C. Teller, the paying teller in the American National bank, in Detroit, Mich., has disappeared with \$5,000 belonging to the bank.

The residence of J. J. Winegardner, a farmer of Rushville, Fairfield county, Ohio, was entered by burglars on the 4th inst., and \$8,000 in currency stolen. The civil suit of J. A. Whelan against Major General Sheridan, for recovery of damages amounting to \$120,000, for the destruction of his plantation in Louisiana, during the war, has been set down for trial in the United States circuit court for the 24th inst.

A tank containing 40 gallons of benzene, at the factory of the Petroleum Composition Paint company, Broadway, Cincinnati, Ohio, exploded on the 8th, injuring several persons. One colored man named Poyntz died this morning from the effects of burns. The assignee of Samuel Ollendorf, the absconding Montreal jeweler, is suing his mother for the proceeds of jewelry sold previous to Ollendorf's departure for the United States. He failed for \$150,000, leaving assets only \$2,000.

Gov. Nicholls has signed the death warrants of Wesley Turner, who killed Frederick Ehardt; Jackson Edwards for the murder of James Edwards; and Alex. Brown, who killed William Dudley. The condemned are all negroes, and committed their crimes in the parish of St. Mary. They will be hanged on the same gallows, at Franklin, Monday, the 22d inst.

Mr. Henry S. Govesche, assistant physician at the insane asylum situated several miles from St. Louis, was run over by a train of cars on the 4th inst., and instantly killed, his body being horribly mangled. It is supposed that the doctor jumped from the train while it was in motion and was struck by the cars and thrown under them.

Col. O. L. Shepard of New York, a retired officer of the United States army, has been tried by court martial for neglecting to pay over a fund contributed by brother officers in 1864, for a monument on the Stone River battle ground, and President Hays has approved the sentence, which is that Shepard be confined within the limits of the post at Fort Adams for one year, and thereafter until the money, \$1,903, with interest from 1864, shall be paid.

The Sandy Fashion, a small steamer running from Cattlesburg, Ky., up the Sand river exploded her boiler on the 6th inst., at the mouth of the Sandy and sunk in three minutes in nine feet of water. She had about forty passengers and crew. Joseph Newburg a merchant of Richmond, Ky., A. Osborn, pilot, and two others, names unknown, were killed. Hiram Rich, engineer was badly scalded. Cyrus Preston, clerk, was cut in the head and several others injured but not seriously.

Considerable excitement exists in Madison, Wis., over the fact that the old Middleton whisky fraud case is to be re-opened and men implicated, heretofore not supposed to have any connection with whisky frauds, are to receive trial for complicity therein. The distillery at Middleton was the first distillery seized in the Northwest at the commencement of the whisky fraud raid. Those implicated in it that were then known, escaping with light sentences. A United States attorney has been in Madison looking the matter up, and the case will be re-opened in the United States district court in June.

A variety company from Mosart's Garden, Brooklyn, has been playing in the Opera house at Pawtucket, R. I. One feat is the shooting of an apple from the head or hand of the performer. Mlle Volante, trapeze performer, held the apple on her head and Mrs. Jennie Fowler, known on the stage as Franklin, was to shoot the apple. With uncommon recklessness she stood with her back to the mark taking aim by reflection in a mirror. The rifle was discharged, and Mlle. Volante fell dead on the stage, shot through the forehead. Nothing can be learned of the victim who has been on the public stage but five weeks. Mrs. Franklin was taken into custody by the police.

H. B. Tuttle, a highly respected and prominent citizen of Cleveland, O., and senior member of the firm of H. B. Tuttle & Co. dealers in pig iron and iron ore, died very suddenly on the 9th inst., of apoplexy.

A banquet was given in New York on the 4th inst., to Bayard Taylor, minister to Berlin. Wm. Cullen Bryant presided, and a distinguished list of guests were present.

Lawrence Bencorri of Nashville, Tenn., while laboring under temporary aberration of mind leaped from suspension bridge, a distance of 100 feet. He was rescued, brought to himself and was in his fruit store in the afternoon. Domestic troubles the cause.

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Roman gossips speak about the approaching marriage of King Humbert's brother, Amadeus, Duke of Aosta, and the Princess Colonna, daughter of that famous and fabulously wealthy house. The Duke had not long been a widower, and so great was his grief for the loss of his beautiful and loving wife that the Roman gossips had settled it that he was to enter the Church, be made a cardinal, succeed Pio Nono as Pope, and thus harmonize

the relations between the Vatican and the Quirinal.

A special from Washington says several Senators have of late discussed among themselves the propriety of preparing a joint resolution which should express deep regrets on the part of the people of the United States at the prospect of serious misunderstanding and interruption of peaceful relations between the people of Great Britain and Russia, and requesting the President to use all means, as far as he can consistently with his constitutional duty, to aid in restoring the relations of amity and confidence between the two governments and people, to one of whom we are bound by common ancestry and language and similar institutions, while with the other we have ties of an ancient and unbroken friendship. It is proposed to discuss with Secretary Everts the propriety or usefulness of such a resolution before it is drawn up.

Chicago is moving for a branch mint. The grand national hunt, steeple chase at Hereford, Eng., was won by Filbert. The engineers and firemen on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad are on a strike.

A thirty-five hundred ounce retort, valued at \$50,000, was received at Helena, M. T., from the Penobscot mine on the 4th inst. The Dominion House of Commons rejected the resolution to impose a duty upon flour and wheat imported into Canada. The vote was 28 yeas and 358 nays.

A Toronto dispatch says: "The Manitoba sections of the Canada Pacific railway are being rapidly constructed. Several thousand work-men are engaged at \$2 a day and more needed.

It is announced that the great trotting stallion Smuggler, who has a record of 2:15 1/4 will not run during the summer, but will make the season at Wilson's Abdallah Park, Cythiana, Ky.

A Vicksburg special announces the failure of Moss & Martin, cotton buyers. Liabilities \$100,000. No assets. The failure was caused by the suspension of their St. Louis branch house.

The Chicago Academy of Homeopathic Physicians and Surgeons have had before it a resolution affirming the doctrine of similia similibus curantur, but it met with unexpected opposition, and was finally referred to a committee for report.

The Official Gazette, of Havana, has published a decree by the captain general, directing, that in conformity with the proclamation of the 28th of March, the restoration to its owners of all property embargoed for political offenses shall begin immediately.

Wild chickens, numbered by thousands, are hunted as wild game in Comanche county, Texas. A few years ago a large number of domestic chickens were deserted for some reason by their owner, when they took to the brush, and the woods are now full of wild chickens.

It is estimated that the Texas cattle drive for 1877 to Nebraska and points on the Union Pacific, will reach 250,000 to 300,000 head. Besides this, there are enroute from Oregon 50,000 head. The Montana and Idaho drive will number at least 25,000 head, making a total of from 335,000 to 360,000 head.

Cotton seed oil manufacture is becoming a marked industry in the South. There are now seven large mills in New Orleans, and others at Baton Rouge, Shreveport, Natchez, Vicksburg, Dallas, Memphis, Nashville and even St. Louis and Chicago. A ton of seed produces twenty gallons of oil, worth \$3.50, while the refuse cake, worth \$20 per ton is valuable as feed for domestic animals and for fertilizing land.

A Portland dispatch says it is asserted on good authority, that an arrangement has been perfected by which the English and German bond-holders who have for some time partly owned the Oregon and California railroad, the Oregon Central railroad, and the Oregon Steamship line, are to divide the property. The English bond-holders will take the Oregon Central railroad, which they have controlled for some time, and the Oregon Steamship company, and the German capitalists will take the Oregon and California railroad.

The New England Methodist conference at Westfield adopted resolutions declaring it the duty of citizens, and especially Christians, to prevent the elevation of bad men to civil offices; deploring the corruption in society and prevalence of communist infidel sentiment, and declaring the course of the government toward Africans, Indians and Chinese, to be full of injustice, bad faith and cruelty. The conference also adopted a resolution approving fraternal relations with the Methodist church South, but maintaining the claim of its own denomination to be the original Wesleyan Church.

Accounts from the Texas border show that recently there has been but few if any incursions from the Mexican side. Members of Congress who have the subject of our relations with Mexico under consideration, say the delay of our government in recognizing that of Mexico, has produced an improved condition of affairs on the border, but that government has not yet done what is required by our own as a prerequisite to recognition, one of the most serious causes of complaint is that our citizens are not protected from the forced loan, while British and French subjects residing in Mexico are, it is said, not subjected to such illegal transactions.

The Rochester oven for baking janned tin cases in the thermometer factory, fourth story, over Graves & Co.'s candy manufactory, Rochester, N. Y., exploded on the 5th inst. The roof was entirely blown off and a workman named John Prescott, shaking the fire in the oven at the time, was carried to the floor by the debris and slowly burned to death before those endeavoring to rescue him. Frank McDonald, while carrying out goods on the floor below was carried by the falling debris to the cellar, where he remained three hours covered with timbers. He was finally rescued unhurt. He said two others were carried down with him, but as yet they have not been found. Loss on building and adjoining edifices over \$30,000; insurance \$13,000.

A teachers' institute is to be held in Pope county this month.

CONGRESSIONAL.

SENATE.—Mr. Chaffee introduced a new Pacific railroad bill. The naval appropriation bill was reported. Minor bills were passed. Mr. Booth spoke on the Pacific railroad funding bill, and Mr. Thurman offered an amendment making the bonds to be issued non-transferable. After further debate, the senate adjourned, Thurman not insisting upon a vote.

HOUSE, April 3.—A resolution was adopted admitting to the floor of the house one representative of each newspaper. The case of Doorkeeper Polk was considered. The river and harbor bill was reported.

SENATE, March 4.—A resolution for the appointment of a committee to consider the taking of the eighth census was adopted; also, a resolution to print 25,000 copies of the report of the commissioner of agriculture, on forestry. The bill for the relief of James Fishback, Illinois deputy collector, was considered and laid over. The bill authorizing the secretary of war to prescribe rules for the making of contracts was passed. The Pacific railroad funding bill came up, and Mr. Matthews spoke in favor of the railroad committee bill.

HOUSE, April 4.—Mr. Butler offered a bill to direct the issue of fractional currency. The House resumed consideration of the case of Doorkeeper Polk, and finally adopted the resolution declaring the office vacant. Pending action upon a resolution devolving the duties upon the sergeant-at-arms, the House adjourned.

SENATE, April 5th.—The naval appropriation bill was passed. The Pacific railroad funding bill then came up, and several senators spoke. Mr. Thurman announced that he would ask the senate to sit until a vote was reached. After debate, a motion to adjourn to Monday was carried—32 to 31.

HOUSE, April 5.—Nearly the entire session was taken up with a long discussion upon the nomination of Gen. Shields, of Missouri, for door-keeper, made by General Butler. The Democrats refused to permit a vote to be taken and the matter went over. Several private bills were passed, and the house adjourned until Monday.

SENATE, April 8th.—The credentials of Senator-elect George H. Pendleton, of Ohio were presented; minor bills and resolutions were introduced and referred. The Pacific railroad funding bill came up, and Mr. Blaine offered his amendment relinquishing the right on the part of the United States to alter or amend the law. After debate Thurman said he would ask a vote to-day, and the senate adjourned.

HOUSE, April 8.—The House was full in expectation of the doorkeeper election. Mr. Butler's resolution for the election of Gen. James Shields was voted a question of privilege and a long and excited debate ensued thereupon, in which Butler took the chief part in advocating the election of Shields. Finally a vote was taken and Field, the regular Democrat caucus nominee, elected by 123 to 110 for Shields and 8 scattering.

SENATE, April 9th.—A bill to repair and put in order the mint in New Orleans and the deficiency bill were reported, and Senator Edmunds spoke on the Pacific railroad funding bill.

HOUSE, April 9.—Mr. Wright offered a concurrent resolution to authorize the printing of \$400,000 of treasury notes. Mr. Bunker, from the committee on banking and currency, reported the bill for the substitution of treasury for national bank notes. The House went into committee of the whole on the tariff bill, and Mr. Wood addressed the House in explanation of it.

The Life Insurance Situation of the Past Year.

[New York Mail.] At length, the figures are at hand to show what kind of record the American life insurance companies wrote for themselves last year. The enterprise of the Spectator company has put the public in possession of the returns of forty-two companies—embracing all that are of any account that are left of the seventy odd once cavoring over the field. The insurance department will come straggling along during the spring and summer with their elaborate volumes; but, meanwhile, all that the public needs to know is given in the Pocket Index now before us, and which the policy holder can conveniently carry in his pocket for ready reference.

The aggregates of the forty-two companies, as to business done in 1877 and financial condition at the close of the year, are as given below. They will give the reader a more effective view of the situation if he can imagine the figures to be those of a single company, and thus enable himself to strike an average which will be all the fairer for life insurance itself, even if it may not be entirely accurate as respects each company contributing to the consolidation:

Table with 2 columns: Item and Amount. Includes: Number of companies (42), Policies issued in 1877 (9,643), Amount insured in 1877 (\$22,658,313), Premiums received in 1877 (66,195,930), Interest received in 1877 (24,071,063), Total income in 1877 (90,239,507), Losses, endowments and annuities paid (20,290,583), Dividends to policy-holders (15,716,134), Total payments to policy-holders (64,615,406), Taxes paid (1,226,452), Expenses of management (10,533,138), Whole number of policies in force (677,327), Whole amount insured (\$1,638,019,312), Average amount on each policy (\$2,418), Capital stock paid in (6,416,500), Reserve of 4 1/2 per cent (342,212,191), Liabilities, excluding capital (351,291,968), Gross assets January 1, 1878 (444,163,370), Expense ratio to total income (13.36 per cent).

Of course some companies have done better than others. As the statements have appeared in our columns we have taken occasion to note instances of individual progress and prosperity. We now have to do with companies and their condition in the aggregate; and, so far as we can judge, the survey offers ground for congratulation that so good an exhibit is possible. Against \$350,000,000 of public liability the companies can show \$414,000,000 of sound, available assets. Of the \$90,000,000 of total income, nearly \$5,000,000 (7 1/2 per cent) has been appropriated to policy holders in one or another of the several forms of claims, endowments, annuities, dividends or surrender values. The diminished expense ratio shows clearly that the economical reform so loudly called for has really been begun. The number of policies in force is 677,327, an indication that a very large and rather brave army of believers has withstood the blast which would have shaken them out of their investment if their faith had been less solidly founded. There has been a falling off of perhaps \$200,000 or \$300,000 in the gross amount of insurance in force. But what else could have been expected, and for that matter, why should life insurance assume to be the only interest in finance or business remaining unaffected by the general depression? It would be a miracle were it otherwise than as it is. The wonder, rather, is that life insurance has so nobly

held its own against the raid from within and without it has been called to encounter.

HOUSE AND FARM.

Butter-milk is drunk by many dyspeptics. Use carbolic acid and water to purify sinks, drains, etc. Make a paste of soft soap and emery for polishing steel.

Dip candle wicks into spirits of turpentine and then dry before using. Old pain pails and cans may be thoroughly cleaned with strong, hot lye.

When washing cambrics, do not allow soap to come in contact with the fabric. Ink stains on silver can be removed by rubbing with a paste of chloride of lime and water.

A small quantity of turpentine added to stove blacking will make the stove easier to polish.

To keep stoves from rusting during the summer: rub with kerosene and wrap well in papers.

A bottle of flaxseed oil, chalk and vinegar mixed to consistency of cream, should be kept in every house for burns, scalds, etc.

Housewives, provide yourself with a bottle of ammonia and a package of borax before commencing your semi-annual renovations. A few drops of glycerine in a bottle of mucilage will cause the mucilage to adhere to glass when used upon labels.

Farm Notes. Setting Out Rhubarbs.—Digging holes: for each plant is a decided waste of labor better plow out a dead furrow, fill up with old manure, in spots three feet apart plow the earth back again, and set out the plants. A man could do ten times as much in a day in this way as by digging and the work will be better when done.

Salsify. Many are very decided in their praise of this vegetable and we are among them. It is not cultivated enough, and generally where it is cultivated, too little care is given to the manner of cooking it. It needs about the same management as parsnips or carrots. Sow the seeds an inch deep in drills a foot apart and thin out the plants to six inches apart when two or three inches high. They may be eaten in the fall or left in the ground until spring or taken out as needed. Respecting cooking—scrape them and throw at once in water to which a little vinegar has been added. Then boil in fresh water until it has evaporated—add butter, pepper and salt, mash, form into patties and roll into crackers crumbs and fry the same as on oyster. We think those of our readers who will "try this tittle of cooking salsify or the vegetable oyster," as it has been well named, will ever after find a little place in the garden for its cultivation.

Some of our readers will be asking themselves "Shall I plant strawberries now or wait until summer or fall?" We say, plant now. This will insure a full crop for next year. If it be deferred until late in the season, a partial crop only will result next year. Select young plants which may be known by their fibrous, whitish roots, while those of old plants are longer, darker and more stringy. For home use, use manure without stint, of almost any kind. Ashes—bone-dust are excellent, but barnyard manure will suffice. Plant in rows two feet apart and eighteen inches apart in the row. Triumph de Grand, Jucunda, Boyden 30, Charles Downing are fine varieties. Capt. Jack with us is preferable to the old Wilson. Try the Gt. American, Beauty, Pres. Lincoln. Upon a number of plants we last year tried the effect not only of a combination of all the manures at hand, but we also applied liquid manure bountifully. The result was a surprising growth of leaves such as we have never before seen in the strawberry and very large berries, but fewer than those borne by other plants not so treated.

Covered Barn-Yards. We find an excellent communication on this subject in the Country Gentleman from a Maryland correspondent. After speaking of the disadvantages of manure cellars directly under the stables, he says: "The only argument for this cellar is that it will keep its contents dry, and save waste, and this can be done as well, and in a much more practical manner, by making the barnyard the receptacle for all the manure, and then roof this completely over, and allow cows or cattle the range of it the most of the time. There is a three-fold advantage in these covered yards: 1. It is impossible to keep a yard in decent order in wet weather, especially in early spring, or fit to be occupied by dairy cattle at least, when it is exposed to the storms; a roof is cheaper in the end than litter. 2. The cattle themselves will appreciate the benefit of the shelter, and pay for it in contented looks, as well as in the more substantial results of the pail. In this sort of a yard, with water always at hand, they are not disposed to be uneasy. It is just the greatest cruelty and waste to shut cattle up in warm stalls and then turn them out in all sorts of weather to wade through mud or snow, or walk on treacherous ice for 100 yards or more, to fill themselves overfull of water once a day. 3. Manure under cover from cold rains will decompose much faster than that exposed, and in much better condition for bandling, and is worth much more when it is applied. Straw will remain a whole year in a wet yard, and seem as strong as when first put in. Where room is of value, the consolidation of the manure pile by the constant pressure of the hoof is also an item. A yard under cover, where cattle are fed, can be traversed by man at any time without danger of offence."