

CURRENT TOPICS.

LATE advices from China give particulars of the terrible disaster that recently occurred at the Tienstin Rouge-House, in which the famine-stricken refugees from the Northern provinces had assembled. The building took fire, and of nearly 3,000 people in the building only about 100 escaped. Owing to the extremely cold weather, many of the refugees were frozen to death, while thousands are suffering from insufficient accommodation and lack of food, which can not be supplied in quantities to meet the demand. Charles Budd, of the China Inland Mission, at Wachung, who has recently visited the famine-stricken Province of Shensi, writes a heart-rending account of the suffering he witnessed. The Government's effort to supply food and assistance is to a great extent nullified by the dishonesty of officials. Children are sold by hundreds by their starving parents. In the large cities of Hou-cheng and Puching risings have occurred among the people, rendered desperate by seeing their wives and children starving before their faces, and many other outbreaks are reported. In Hou-cheng the people beheaded a Mandarin for speculating on their necessities. Cold has been unusually severe throughout the country for several weeks.

THE House Committee on Education and Labor, to whom was referred various matters in reference to Chinese immigration, report that, inasmuch as the great majority of Chinese immigrants are unwilling to conform to our institutions, to become permanent residents of our country and accept the right and assume the responsibility of citizenship, that the President be requested to open correspondence immediately with the Governments of China and Great Britain, with a view of securing a change or abrogation of all stipulations in existing treaties which permit unlimited immigration of Chinese to the United States.

REPRESENTATIVE SCALES, Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, in his report in favor of the bill for the transferring of the Indian Bureau from the Interior to the War Department, shows the present management costs the Government \$23.05 per capita, while under the proposed bill the cost to the Government will not exceed \$4.28 per capita.

THE Silver bill became a law without receiving the President's signature, both houses of Congress having promptly passed the bill over the President's veto by the requisite two-thirds majority. It is announced that the Secretary of the Treasury will at once issue the necessary orders for the mints to begin the coinage of the old silver dollar.

REPRESENTATIVE CLARK, of Missouri, has introduced in the House a bill providing for the removal of sunken vessels in the Mississippi River and its navigable tributaries. The bill provides that after 60 days' notice the Government boats shall proceed to remove any sunken vessel and make whatever disposal of the same the Government officials may see fit. At present there is no salvage law affecting the Western rivers, and the owners or underwriters can use their own pleasure in removing such obstructions.

It is not impossible that the famine in China may produce a profound effect upon the destinies of America. It is reported, upon apparently unquestionable authority, that 70,000,000 of human beings are now on the verge of starvation in the famine-stricken provinces of North China. And there is some reason to believe that the Chinamen, fleeing from this terrible scourge along the pathway which a few emigrants have opened, will come, in numbers immensely greater than any we have yet dreamed of, to our shores. No legislation could possibly check or divert such a stream if once its flow were to begin. It would be easier to dam the waters of the Mississippi with an Act of Congress. "The Chinese difficulty," says the London Times, commenting on this possibility, "may fairly become a greater menace to the future of the United States than the negro difficulty was at its worst: for the negro emigration was never voluntary, and closed with the abolition of the slave-trade, while if the Chinese tide once begins to flow in force it is difficult to see where and when it will stop."

A VERY interesting project is that of the Maryland and Delaware Ship Canal Company. They propose to build a

canal 17 miles long, having 25 feet depth of water and 100 feet width, between Chesapeake Bay and Delaware Bay. By this means Baltimore will be brought as near to Cape May at the mouth of the Delaware as Philadelphia is, and the distance for ocean vessels between Baltimore and New York and Europe will be shortened by 225 miles, while the saving of freight between Baltimore and New York will be about 50 cents a ton. The estimated cost of the enterprise is eight millions of dollars, and the company are authorized to levy a toll charge of 20 cents per ton upon all traffic passing through the canal.

THE public debt statement issued March 1 shows a decrease in the debt for the preceding month of \$2,250,237, and the following balances in the Treasury: Currency, \$2,690,765; special fund for the redemption of fractional currency, \$1,000,000; special deposit of legal tenders for the redemption of certificates of deposit, \$28,555,090; coin, \$131,318,156; including coin certificates, \$48,456,000; outstanding legal tenders, \$348,618,024.

It was reported from Rome on the 1st that the Italian Government has warned the Vatican authorities through the Inspector of Police, that they could take no measures to prevent possible disturbances at the Pope's coronation as the Pope did not recognize the King of Italy. The Vatican was indignant, and decided that the coronation should be strictly private. An understanding between the Papacy and Italy is apparently as far off as ever.

It was officially announced in the Spanish Cortes on the 1st, that the Cuban Central Committee, the Executive and chiefs of insurgents had surrendered. A vote of thanks to the Generals and the army in Cuba was immediately adopted, and the Cortes went in a body to congratulate the King and Queen.

POPE LEO XIII. was crowned in the Sistine Chapel on the 3d. The ceremony occupied four hours. Cardinals, Prelates and diplomatists accredited to the Vatican, and a few other persons, were present. The Pope was afterwards carried to his apartments, blessing spectators on the way.

THE gratifying intelligence of the signing of the treaty of peace was promulgated on the 3d. The Grand Duke Nicholas announced the fact to his soldiers at a review, at San Stefano, when the Te Deum was sung amid great rejoicing. The news was received at St. Petersburg with great enthusiasm. Crowds gathered before the palace, shouting and singing "God save the Czar."

It is said that the Pope will dismiss the Papal guard and take up his residence at Castel Gaudolfo, a village 14 miles southeast of Rome, in order to be away from the Italian Government. Cardinal Simeoni has resigned the office of Pontifical Secretary of State, and Cardinal Franchi has been appointed in his place.

THE House Committee on Pacific Railroads, by a vote of seven to six, have finally decided to recommend the passage of the Texas Pacific Railroad bill. The bill which is reported is virtually that introduced by Alex. H. Stephens. It authorizes the company to execute and deposit with the Secretary of the Treasury construction bonds at the rate of \$20,000 per mile for 1,150 miles, and at the rate of \$35,000 per mile for 250 miles through the mountainous portion of the route, said bonds to mature in 50 years and to bear 5 per cent. interest. The Government is to guarantee the payment of the interest on these bonds, but such guarantee is in no event to extend beyond the period of the maturity of the bonds. As an indemnity, the Government is to have the following guarantees: A first lien on all the franchises and property; the retention of all dues from the Government from transportation; a reconveyance to the Government of all the lands of the road, and the transfer to the Government, "if the same should be necessary," of all net earnings. The report argues at length in favor of the bill; endeavors to show that the guarantees are ample, and that the National Government, instead of losing money, will actually make money by the operation, by a saving in transportation every year; and also emphasizes the consideration that aid for such an enterprise is due to the South and Southwest.

INFORMATION has been received at Washington that the authorities at Panama had ordered the release of Scraford, the Kansas bond forger, who was being brought home from Peru via Panama, by Mr. Clayton, the United States Consul. The United States has no representative at

Panama, and no official notification has reached the State Department, but so far as the facts are reported, the act is considered a direct affront to our Government.

PERSONAL AND POLITICAL.

JACOB R. FRIESE, late President of the State Savings Bank of Trenton, N. J., found guilty of embezzling the funds of the bank, has been sentenced to five years in the State prison. His sons, Louis K. and Harry C., who were implicated with the father, get six months each in the County Jail.

MAJOR LEWIS CASS, son of the late General Cass, died recently in Paris. He had resided abroad for many years.

CARDINAL McCLOSKEY arrived at Rome on the 25th. Upon presenting his homage to the Pope, he said he had no reason to deplore the lateness of his arrival, as the Conclave had made so excellent a choice.

LARS ANDERSON, a well known citizen of Cincinnati, died on the 27th. He was a son-in-law of the late Nicholas Longworth and brother of Maj. Anderson, of Fort Sumter fame.

ELMER WASHBURN, formerly Chief of the Secret Service of the Treasury, has been appointed Bank Examiner at Chicago, vice Watson, who resigned by request.

GUSTAVUS WILCOX and Richard Walker, two wealthy young farmers of Charles City County, Va., fought a duel with pistols, without seconds, on the 27th. The terms of agreement were that they should commence firing together and continue until one was disabled. After several shots had been exchanged, Walker fell, shot through the face. The duel grew out of an old family feud. Both were arrested after the fight.

MRS. J. H. A. BONE, wife of one of the editors of the Cleveland Herald, drowned herself in the lake on the 27th, while laboring under a fit of melancholy.

THE Berlin papers cordially welcome Bayard Taylor's appointment as United States Minister to Germany as one conferring honor on Germany and America alike, and calculated to strengthen the already strong ties between the two countries.

FATHER SECCHI, the famous Italian astronomer, died at Rome on the 26th ult. He was born in 1818, was a professor in the Georgetown (D. C.) College in 1849-50, and upon his return to Italy he assumed the directorship of the celebrated observatory attached to the Roman College.

THE engagement of Senator Don Cameron to Miss Lizzie Sherman, of Cleveland, a niece of Secretary Sherman, is currently reported. Senator Cameron is a widower, and has a daughter nearly as old as his reported fiancée.

PROF. ALBERT SMITH died at Peterboro, N. H., on the 22d ult. He was among the foremost of medical instructors in this country, and was connected with Dartmouth College at the time of his death.

MARSHALL H. TWITCHELL, of Louisiana, who was wounded in the affair at Coushatta, and lost both of his arms, will be appointed Consul to Kingston, Canada.

NILES G. PARKER, ex-State Treasurer of South Carolina, has been released from jail on his own recognizance, in consideration of his giving evidence inculcating his former associates in office, and surrendering documentary proof against them.

MR. WILLIAM McLAUGHLIN died at Aainsworth, Iowa, on the 24th ult., after 12 hours' sickness, aged 105. Up to the day of his death he was as robust as most men of three score and ten; he had never had a day's sickness, and never wore spectacles. His father lived to the age of 106.

THE Commissioner of the General Land Office on the 1st gave notice to 53 of the employees of that bureau, 20 of whom are ladies, that on account of want of appropriation, the Secretary of the Interior had been forced to present to them the alternative of resignation or forced leave of absence without pay until such time as funds might be provided.

PAUL DE CASSAGNAC, the famous Paris journalist and duelist, on the 2d had a hostile meeting with M. Thomson, a brother member of the Chamber of Deputies. Swords were the weapons, and Cassagnac inflicted a probably fatal wound upon his adversary.

EX-SENATOR BENJAMIN F. WADE died at his residence in Ashtabula County, O., on the 2d, of a lingering illness from typhoid fever. He was in his 78th year.

EX-PRESIDENT GRANT arrived at Constantinople on the 3d.

CHARLES S. WHITTIER, Town Clerk and Treasurer of Methuen, Mass., has absconded with all the available public funds, between \$12,000 and \$15,000. He was a man of high social and business standing in the community.

E. P. BANCROFT, of Emporia, Kansas, formerly agent for the sale of lands belonging to the State Normal School, has been arrested charged with appropriating to his own use from \$10,000 to \$15,000 of the proceeds of such sales. He was committed to jail in default of \$10,000 bail.

LATE NEWS ITEMS.

Temple & Workman's Bank at Los Angeles, Cal., was robbed by burglars of \$10,000 a few days ago. The bank was in the hands of a receiver.

Alcus, Scherck & Antley, prominent cotton factors of New Orleans, have suspended.

Near Mount Vernon, Ind., on the 24th, Commodore D. Curtis, a farmer, 53 years old, was shot through the heart as killed by his step-son, aged 13. Curtis was trying to murder his wife in a drunken spree, and the boy got a gun and shot his father. Shane, Harris & Co., Memphis coin factors and commission merchants, have made an assignment. Liabilities \$60,000. The Ohio House of Representatives has passed a bill making the owners of ex-

as cattle responsible for damages caused by their animals in localities through which they have been driven or shipped.

The President has nominated Mr. A. W. Beard for Collector at Boston. A strong pressure was brought to bear to secure the renomination of Simmons, the present incumbent, and all New England took sides in the controversy. Senator Hoar supported the successful candidate.

The Senate Committee on Claims will report a bill for the payment of \$150,000 to the Book Agency of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the occupation of its building at Nashville during the war.

Two murderers were executed in Missouri on the 1st—John W. Daniels at Warrensburg, for the murder of Jessie R. Miller, a Henry County farmer, near Sedalia, in February last, and Richard Green at Kansas City, for the murder of Deputy Marshal Hughes, near Independence, also in February last.

Willis, Percival & Co., of Lombard Street, London, a banking firm of 108 years standing, have failed on account of the suspension of a Greek firm at Finsbury who owed them £250,000.

Richard Bright, Conservative member of Parliament from Somersetshire, is dead.

The wife of Dwight E. Wheaton has disclosed the fact that her husband was the murderer of James O'Neill, the Chicago and Alton engineer, who was shot so mysteriously at Bloomington, Ill., in December last. Wheaton was previously arrested on suspicion, but discharged for want of evidence. He was rearrested on the 28th ult.

John J. Adams & Co., wholesale grocers at New Orleans, have suspended. Liabilities said to be about \$1,500,000. Both branches of the Legislature of Kentucky have adopted resolutions instructing Congressmen of that State to support and aid, in every possible way, the Texas and Pacific Railroad bill.

Dick Moore, of Louisville, Ky., Coroner of Jefferson County, accidentally shot and killed himself at Memphis, Tenn., on the 1st, where he had gone to witness the Carnival.

The Kaiser family of eight persons, who lived at Fish Landing on the Mississippi, 15 miles southwest of Waterloo, Monroe County, Ill., were all burned to death on the morning of the 1st, their house being consumed by fire. The family consisted of Moritz Kaiser, the father, aged about 50, Ellen Kaiser, the mother, and John, Leonard, Harry, Edward, Tommy and Ellen Kaiser, the children, aged from about 14 years to 1 month. When discovered by the neighbors the house was completely enveloped in flames, and any attempt to rescue the inmates would have been hopeless. The charred remains of the victims were gathered together and buried in a single grave. In the absence of all evidence to the contrary, the Coroner's Jury rendered a verdict of accidental death, but it is believed, from facts subsequently brought to light, that Kaiser, driven to a state of desperation by bad luck and improvidence, had murdered his wife and children, set fire to the house, and then committed suicide.

Albert Young, Robert Jones, Silas Wright and Lucius Porter, all colored, were hanged at Macon, Ala., on the 1st, for the murder of Isaac D. Moore, white, in 1876.

Demonstrations against the passage of the proposed new Tiff bill have been held in various iron manufacturing towns in Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

William Shelburne was married to Ada McCloy, in Clay County, N. C., on the 1st. They were both of the best families of the county, and the marriage was the consummation of a two years' engagement, a larger portion of which time had been spent by the gentleman in New Orleans, where he had a position as clerk in a cotton house. On the night of the marriage the young bride disclosed to her horrified husband a truth which she could no longer conceal—that she was about to become a mother, and named Simpson Foster a neighboring young farmer, as her seducer. Frenzied by the intelligence, the husband left the bridal chamber, seized a double-barreled shot-gun, and riding to the home of Foster he called him to the door and shot him without a word of explanation. The unhappy bride was utterly prostrated by the result of her criminal folly, and a few hours afterward died giving premature birth to her illegitimate babe. Foster's wound was not fatal, and it was expected that the injured husband would return and complete his unfinished work.

A terrible tornado swept over a portion of Csey County, Ky., on the afternoon of the 2d. The house of Vincent Wesley, near Rt. Hill, was demolished in an instant, and all the inmates, six in number, killed. These were: Vincent Wesley and wife, two grown-up daughters, a nephew named Sloan, and neighbor, Wm. Taylor. Mrs. Wesley's body was blown 400 yards, and her clothing was entirely stripped off. The two daughters were carried 50 yards, and were found dead in each other's arms. The father and nephew were fearfully mangled, and all must have been killed by the first force of the tempest. The dwelling, stables and out-buildings were blown entirely away, the ics being scattered for many yards along to sweep of the tornado, and the hearth and foundation stones blown from their places. In the vicinity of Mount Olive, Mrs. Morgan, wife of John W. Morgan, was killed, and several houses were swept away and the remainder otherwise injured. Large trees were twisted from their roots and carried hundreds of yards. A considerable number of horses, cattle and other stock, and nearly all the poultry in its course were killed. The pecuniary damage is not less than \$50,000.

A negro named Winston Anderson was taken from jail and hanged by a mob at Clarksville, Tenn., on the night of the 1st. He was guilty of attempting an outrage upon a young white girl.

WIT AND WISDOM.

It was because he could not tell a lie that Washington confessed that he was the father of his country, but it was terribly humiliating.—Rome Sentinel.

A MAN must be grounded upon a moral mountain to be able to withdraw a counterfeit half dollar from circulation if he happens to get stuck with it.—Bridgeport Standard.

MISTRESS—Mary, has that parcel of stationery arrived yet from the store? Maid—No, ma'am. But I can lend you a few sheets of my own note-paper, if you don't mind using my monnygram!

"ANY news, Mr. Jenkins?" asked the landlady, as that gentleman laid down the paper and began to struggle with his steak. "Yes, ma'am," said Jenkins, "Sitting-Bull has crossed the border."

"MA!" screamed young Matilda Spilkins the other morning, when she got the paper, "Ma, Silver Bill has just passed the House." "Has he, my dear?" replied Mrs. S. from up stairs, "Why didn't you ask him in!"

THE other day such a beautiful young lady, eyes like midnight, hair like the raven's wing, brow like alabaster, lips like coral, purse like an overland mail-pouch, went into a Jefferson Street dry-goods store and asked to see some coral-colored silk. The youngest clerk limped painfully behind the counter and handed her down a piece of scarlet. "I said coral-color," she murmured. The young salesman hesitated and fidgeted. "Well, by dad," he exclaimed, "that's the prevailing color of all my corns." And by the time the proprietor could hurry over to ask what was the matter she was out of the door and half a block away.—Hawkeye.

THE EDITOR'S TRADEMARKS.

Two ragged holes beam sadly out Below the suburbs of his vest— Like guardian angels of unrest, They follow him fore'er about. No picture could the people scan With half the greedy, sad intent That on the dual holes are bent— These trademarks of an honest man! How came those hungry holociets there? Ah, ask the hours of toil and pain, The pencil, lamp, the woven cane, The creaky, rusty office-chair! Why, every thing is new a first And made to stem the tide of life, But all must yield at last to strife— And even pants at length will burst. And so, O honest holes! we greet You with a proud and kingly grace— Good welcome to the resting place— Thrice welcome to the royal seat! In all the turmoil, all the strife, There are no teachers half so true, To teach us what we learn from you— The stern realities of life. —St. Louis Journal.

Punishment by Torture.

Some persons have doubted whether the Babylonians were guilty of such "extreme cruelty" as to cast persons alive into a burning, fiery furnace, as in the case of Shadrach, Mesbach and Abednego, mentioned by Daniel (iii. 26). They are strangely forgetful of innumerable fiery martyrdoms, very much more slow in their torture, and therefore more cruel, than the seven-times heated furnace of Babylon. H. F. Talbot has discovered ample proof in the Assyrian writings that both this punishment, and that of casting men alive into a den of lions, as Daniel was treated, were in common use at Babylon during the reign of Assurbanipal, who preceded Nebuchadnezzar on the throne by less than 20 years. Saulmugina, the younger brother of Assurbanipal, having risen in rebellion against his sovereign, and having failed in the attempt, was not spared by his angry brother. The following brief record is sufficient to tell its own tale: "My rebellious brother, Saulmugina, who made war with me, was cast into a burning fiery furnace." Many of Saulmugina's adherents were treated in the same manner; and the remainder were otherwise disposed of in the following way, as Assurbanipal very pithily says: "The rest of the people I threw alive among bulls and lions, as my grandfather, Senacherib, used to act; and I, following his example, have thus treated these rebellious men." Truly may we exclaim with the Psalmist, "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."—London Quarterly Review.

A Horse's Little Joke.

The Canan-laigua (N. Y.) Journal tells the following: Along the sidewalk leading from the Globe Hotel to the hotel stable is a high board fence. North of this fence is a yard where Mr. Decker frequently turns his horse loose for exercise. The ground in the yard next to the fence is a foot or two higher than the sidewalk. The horse occasionally stands there with his head over the fence. On Tuesday last the man who runs the Naples stage was passing along the walk. Just as he passed, the horse reared down his head, seized him by his coat-collar, lifted him a foot or two from the ground, and after shaking him a little dropped him in the snow by the fence, and then scampered away, kicking up his heels.