## OUR ALBANY LETTER.

A GREAT SCHEME OF RIVER IM-PROVEMENT.

A School Book War is On - Increase of Life Insurance Rates The G. A. R. Decreasing in Members But Not in

Special Albany Letter.

The work of improving the Hudson River so as to give a twelve foot chan-nel to Troy, which as far as Albany shall be 400 feet wide, is now in progress, and improved dredging machines are in constant operation scooping up the sand from the bottom of the river and deposdeposited behind the dykes. The International Dredging Company has a con-tract for excavating 2,000,000 yards of material from the river bottom. the most part this material is sand and mud. But near Troy there is a rock bottom to the river, and the work of removing this is comparatively slow, although the most improved machinery is employed. In former days rock of this kind was blown up with dynamite and afterwards dredged. No dynamite is now used. An improved rock-breaker takes the place of the powerful explo-This "rock-breaker" is constructed very much like an ordinary pile-driving machine, only it is much larger and more powerful. An immense iron "hammer," the outer edges of which are cov-



On the Hudson Between Albany and Troy ered with heavy steel, is elevated by the machinery and then allowed to drop into the water. It strikes the rock at the bottom and as the constant dropping of the rain wears the solld rock away, so the constant dropping of this hammer pulverizes the rock. The dredging is then made comparatively easy, but a different dredge is required from that used for sand. The sand dredge employs an immense scoop shovel, with a bottom that opens at the will of the operator. Such a dredge would be worthless for handling rock. The dredge employed for this purpose has an iron bucket, which opens like two immense clam shells. On the over edges of this are steel claws. The shell-like halves of the bucket are opened and closed by steam power. When the bucket de-scends into the water the open mouth closes upon the pulverized rock. It is then elevated and swings around over the scow. At the proper time a steam valve is opened and the load is quickly deposited in the scow. The three million yards of material which the contractors will remove from the bed of the river, if piled up in one spot, would make a deposit 45 feet high and a quarter of a mile square. The problem of getting rid of this immense quantity of material is a serious one. In some places the dykes are being raised with it and then paved with heavy stones. The effect of this improvement upon river navigation will be apparent. One purpose of the National Government in un-

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which are now being constructed there, A life insurance company with many millions at risk, and doing what is known as an "assessment business," has just notified its members of an increase of the assessment rates. These assessments are made at intervals of 60 days, and the increase called for amounts to almost 20 per cent, of the premiums now being paid. This increase will be a surprise to the policy holders, but there seems to be no doubt of the necessity for the action being taken.

dertaking the work was to make certain

that the waterway to the Watervillet ar-

senal shall always be ample to permit of the transporting of the heavy guns

The grip has been getting in its deadly work during the past few years, and all the life insurance companies are feeling the influence of this in increased death rates. As this particular company does not collect a large advance payment and then return the surplus to the policy holders, its only course in the presence of this increased mortality is to raise the assessments. Experienced life insurance men are commenting upon



The Last R .!! Call

doubt many members will be dissatisfied and discontinue their payments. But none who are in poor health will discontinue, for such cannot obtain other insurance. With the good risks dropping out and the others holding on, will not the mortality continue to increase even more rapidly than before?

Attention has been called to the increasing mortality among members of the G. A. R. Very few of these men are now under 50 or 55 years of age, and most of them are much older. The records show that the membership of the army in this State is slowly but steadily decreasing. A few years ago it was about 45,000. It is now but a little over 37,900. During the past six months more than 500 members have answered the last roll-call. This is a much larger number than have died in any previous haif year, even when the membership was much larger. Some politicians have been arguing that this indicates the decline in the political influence of the G. A. R. But such reasoning is not sound.

The tainning ranks of the veterans but increase for them the respect and love of all loyal citizens; and besides, there are thousands of sons and daughters of vetcrans who are now in active life and whose influence is augmenting that of their fathers.

There are many indications that there is a school book war on hand in this State. The American Book Company, of New York, is probably the greatest concern of the kind in the country, but it has a lively rival in Ginn & Co., of Boston. The former company has had nearly complete control of the schoolbook business, but the Boston concern has been pushing their publications by

an army of agents. It is claimed that the hand of the school book publisher was shown in the law passed by the last Legislature providing more stringent rules for the study of the effects of alcohol and narcotics in onnection with text books upon physiology. The law prescribes that text books on physiology used in the public schools shall contain a certain percentage of instruction upon the aforesaid subjects. The law seemed so worthy that doubtless no member of the Legislature suspected that there was anything behind it. The law, however, was vigorously opposed by State Superintendent Skinner, and it is now being criticized severely by many teachers and others interested in education. The bone of controversy lies in the fac; that none of the text books on physiology now in use answer the demands of the law, and hence the necessity is placed upon all school districts of purchasing new text books upon physiology. The field of controvery opens a very nice question as to what particular new text book fulfills the requirements of the law. Many friends of education are concerned, because the effect may be to throw out text books now highly approved in favor of those of less repute, besides placing a new burden upon the taxpayers.

S. F. R. COE. Labor Strikes in France.

According to statistics just issued there were 391 strikes in France in the year 1894, in which 54,576 workmen participated, and by which 4,468 were thrown out of work. Altogether 1,062,-480 working days were lost. In 1893 the number of strikes was 634, involving 170,123 persons; in 1892 there were 261, and in 1891, 267. Wage questions caused 55 per cent, of the strikes of 1894. The strikers were victorious in 21 per cent. of the sirikes, which concerned 25 per cent of the strikers; 33 per cent, were partly successful, and 45½ per cent, were fall-ures. There were 101 appeals taken before the arbitrators appointed under the new arbitration law, 93 of which were made after strikes had been declared and eight before work had been stopped. The appeals by the workmen numbered 51, employers appealed four times, and employer and employees twice, while the judge having jurisdiction intervened 44 times. The masters refused to arbitrate in 24 cases, and the workmen in 16. The employees in two instances yielded after arbitration was refused, not having stopped work, a strike was declared once. 21 strikes were continued, and five ended in the defeat of the employees, who gave up their demands. Of 22 strikes begun or continued after arbitration was refused, six succeeded, seven ended in compromises, and nine were defeated. In 64 other troubles 65 conciliation counalls were constituted, two of which were

needed for one strike.

Revival of the Curfew. A revival of the curfew custom, which was originated in England by William the Conqueror, is noted in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. This revival affects all persons under 16 years of age, and was first started fir Stillwater, Minn., in the winter of 1894-5, About 20 cities in Minnesota have curfew ordinances. St. Paul, Minneapolis and Duluth, and other large cities, have countenanced the revival of the ancient custom, as not being in accord with the spirit of the times. In South Dakota half a dozen towns have adopted the custom, and it is thought that by January, 1896, every town in North and South Dakots will put it into effect. The new idea meets with enthusiasm among the foreign-born inhabitants, chiefly Scandinavians, but is not viewed with favor by Americans, who consider it unconstitutional, un-American and unprogressive. The various ordinances preribe the ringing of the hour, which is 9 o'clock in some towns and 10 o'clock in others. In some towns the church bells are rung, and in all the town bell warms the police to clear the streets of the minors affected. No boy or girl can escape arrest by reason of deafness or the assertion that the warning bell was not heard. It is thought that the custom will have a good effect on the community and make good citizens of bad

Glant Corn From Peru.

Samples of corn of a giant species have been obtained from Peru by the Department of Agriculture. The grains are four times the size of those of ordinary maize, and Secretary Morton believes that the plant may be turned to most valuable account in this country. very prolific, and bears ears of huge dimensions. The species is quite distinct from any known in North America, and the name, "Zea emylacea," has been given to it. All of our corn comes un-der the head of "zea mais." Prof. E. L. Sturtevant is now making a study of this remarkable Peruvian cereal, with view to finding out how it may be culti-

vated most advantageously. The grains are extraordinarily starchy, even for corn; hence the name "amy-Already ten distinct varieties of the species have been ascertained. One of them would probably be excellent for canning, inasmuch as it contains an unusual percentage of sugar. It has been named "Zea amylacea saccharata," Undoubtedly the species is derived from the same source as the malze of the United States. All known varieties of this cereal, it is believed, came originally from the "Zea tunicata," or "clothed" corn, which still grows wild in Mexico. Each grain on an ear of this primitive maize is inclosed in a little husk.-Washington Correspondence Boston Tran-

The Silk Petticoat. The silk petticoat has become an article of artistic elegance, made of rich bro-cades and moire silk and trimmed with lace-covered ruffles and flounces of chiffon, and is aimost as important an item of dress as the gown which is worn over it. A very dataty skirt is made of black and white striped silk, with a flounce, of yellow satin at the bottom, over which is a plaited slik muslin ruffle edged with narrow black guipure and headed with black insertion and a ruche of muslin. White satin and white chiffon are the ideal combination for a bridal petticoat.

## THE NATIONAL CAPITAL.

POPULIST POLITICS OF INTEREST TO POLITICIANS.

The Views of Senator Peffer Decline of Silver Agitation - Another Washington Tragedy Secret Service Detectives Discover a Noted Gang of Counterfeiters, Special Washington Letter.

The position of the Populist party is exciting much anxiety in the breasts of numerous politicians at the present time. Apparently the free silver leaders have een counting too readily upon the adhesion of the Popullsts to any political schemes they might originate. Peffer has thrown a dose of very cold water upon the new Silver party by declaring that the Populist party will not merge with the silverites nor accept their leadership. While the Kansas Senator has been an uncompromising advorate of the free and unlimited coinage of both gold and silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, yet he does not believe that a party can be built up or perpetuated wholly on the financial idea, and the Populists have a number of rather Socialistic schemes which are quite as dear to them as free silver. In fact, Senator Peffer, who may be looked upon as the leader of the Populists, has no hesitation in saying that he does not believe that the silver question will be the dominant issue next year,

Senator Peffer declares that it is a mistake to suppose that the Popullst party is decreasing in strength. He has evidently noted the fact that the sliver movement is losing strength both in the South and West, while it has never been able to secure a respectable foothold in the Northwest or East. He frankly declares that manufacturing industry has improved, that crops promise large re-



Senator Peffer, of Kansas.

turns, and that the business outlook is cheerful. He plainly sees in this situation a prospect that the people will not take very kindly to financial agitation

The Kansas Senator is really a shrewd politician. He has kept rather in the ackground of late, but has been watching the situation, and as a result he is satisfied that the free silver movement has no vitality that will justify its claims to success as a national issue. He is quoted as saying that the interest in the subject is now on the wane, and that we will probably have no silver

arty in the field this year. Senator Perfer has some peculiar lews. He believes that it is one of the missions of the Populist party to reform the currency, but he is rather in favor of plenty of money than of silver money explusively. On the tariff question he is non-committal, but is inclined to think that McKinley and protection will be the sene on the Republican side. He thinks President Cleveland desires a third term, and has the strongest individual following of any man in the Demogratic party, but he rates Gorman as the strongest Democrat before the country. It is least worthy of note that he believes the country to be upon a rising tide of

The National Capital has always been noted for its tragedles. I fear, as Ambussador Bayard is reported to have lately said in England, that we are ratha turbulent people, and disposed to Washington tragedy was the shooting to death of Ernest Green, a small colored boy, by Miss Elizabeth Flagier, daugh-

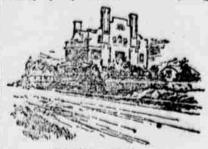


William E. Brookwa". ter of Gen. Flagler, Chief of Ordnance of the United States Army. To the novelist looking for new developments of the curious phases of modern life, this case presents some novel features.

It appears that Gen. Flagler and wife were in Canada, leaving an only daughter at home in charge of the family residence in this city. Miss Flagler, as is natural with the daughter of a soldier, is accustomed to the use of firearms, and possessed a pistol of her own. Among the trees in the front yard of the Flagler residence is a pear tree. It is needless to say that this tree, with its load of ripened fruit, was an object of envy to every boy in the neighborhood, white or colored. As a matter of fact, they made Miss Flagler's life miserable by raids upon the choice pears. On the morning of the tragedy Miss Flagler heard a rust ling in the branches of the pear tree, and the dog barked. She divined at once that the boys were at the fruit, and, in pursuance of a previousl formed plan, she rushed to a bureau that contained her pistol and, securing it, fired it hastily out of the window. The bullet sped true and straight to where twelve-year-old Ernest Green, the colored lad, was hiding behind the helge, frightened by the barking of the dog. He fell mortally wounded, and died shortly after being brought into the Flagler house.

The coroner's jury promptly acquitted Miss Flagler. There is indeed not the slightest reason in the world to suppose that she intended to commit homicide. No doubt the pistol was fired simply to

care the boys off. Yet it was fired in the direction of the ground and not in the air, and as Miss Flaglor is a practised markswoman, albeit somewhat shortighted, it is easy to imagine a case where the question of animus and pur-puse would prove very serious in the hands of a good lawyer. Indeed, as the basis of a plot for a modern novel, it pre-sents a number of very interesting fea-There has been no little excitement, but the supposition that the colored residents of the District would infounded. Indeed, there seems to have een sympathy on all sides for the young



The Flacier Residence woman placed in such an unfortunate position. There was certainly no race assec in it, and it is not probable that public sentiment will demand any further punishment than the young woman must necessarily suffer for her act. But it is easy to imagine a state of affairs that would indicate that all the romance has not passed out of our modern life. The case will be presented to the grand jury, but it is hardly likely to result in an indictment.

It is a curious fact that no note, bond or security of the United States has ever been issued that has not been counterfeited. So say the officials of the secret service of the Treasury Deparement, and the fact seems to have bearing upon the theories of those who believe in the free and unlimited issue of currency of any particular kind. It is evident that if the question of a free and unlimited currency were left to the counterfeiters it would be soon decided. American counterfeiters are noted the world over. This country seems to be a sort of nursery of new mechanical ideas, and so the counterfeiters find the best workshop here. In a subdued and reticent way our soil has long been the home for the manufacture of currency for the

For two years past a gang of counterfeiters have been issuing \$500 and \$100 United States gold certificates, and have flooded Canada with notes of smaller denominations. This gang has just been unearthed by secret service detectives in Hoboken, N. J. Among the counterfeiters arrested was William E. Brockway, the most expert operator of his kind in the world. The plates captured show that the gang was one of the boldest and most successful that has ever been unearthed. According to Chief Hazen, of the secret service, the paper used by the counterfeiters is such a close imitation of the official paper used by the Government for notes and bonds that it seems as if the ounterfelters were in possession of a quantity of the original. But the paper is in fact a counterfeit. The chief of the gang is supposed to be Dr. O. E. Bradford, a dentist of New York, who managed to escape. It is expected that

ie will be soon arrested. Although Bradford escaped, the Govrnment has at last secured Brockway.



the most noted counterfeiter in the world. Brockway studied electro-chemlstry at Yale, and studied both printng and engraving. He began his criminal carser soon after the war. He counterfelted the 7-39 bond so cleverly hat \$80,600 of the issue was redeemed by the Treasury before the fraud was discovered. Brockway was arrested and tried in 1889, and sentenced to thirty years in prison, but his sentence was suspended by the United States Court in consideration of his surrendering all the plates in his hands, so langerous to the credit of the Government were these plates considered at the time. He was arrested in 1883 for forging Morris and Essex Railroad bonds, and was sentenced to five years in Sing Sing by Recorder Smyth, of New York. He served his sentence, and has since been a mystery to the detecives of the country until his arrest for be present crime.

TOWNSEND.

Future of Farming. Commissioner of Education Harris, at Washington, in a recent speech, stated has farming to the United States must gradually drift into market gardening. If he had said that the future American ormer whi follow those lines of farming hich require the highest degree of skill and best knowledge, he would have come a little nearer the truth. It is bubiful if grain growing will ever again be profitable, because of the competition nat the American former has in Argenine, India, Russia and other countries there labor is cheap. It requires very tile skill to grow wheat. The poor ryot f India can grow it cheaper than the telligent American farmer, but the naked Indian cannot make a sample of butter that the Englishman will buy. He cannot produce the beef and pork that will satisfy the appethe of John Bull; nor does he understand all the ins and outs of fruit growing. The only diference between wheat and butter is that skill has been added to the butter, and skill always commands a good price. The farmer should turn himself into a ort of manufacturer, and convert his naw products into a commodity that will command a good price.

Villow of Spiders.

Experiments have recently been made decide how far spiders can see, and as result of these investigations it has been determined that they have a range of vision of at least a foot. It is not always possible to tell, however, whether the lower animals perceive by sight or hearing, or by the action which air in motion has on their bodies, Experiments tend to show that mice are sensitive to motions of the air which to human ears greate no sound whatever.

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