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BUSINESS DIRECTORY.

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WASHINGTON LETTER.

Washington, D. C., August 11, '84.

While Washington has never been particularly proud of her hostesses, she never supposed that any of them were so depraved as to tumble down upon the heads of guests without a moment's warning. Yet such was the case with the United States Hotel last Sunday, whose walls slew five persons outright and maimed a score more. A kind Providence postponed for an hour the casualty that would have overwhelmed sixty guests who were at the table in the dining-room. How many more of these ramshackle man-traps there are in the city, no one knows but the Building Inspector, and he won't tell. While Yankee ingenuity is being put to its best to devise fire-escapes, a new kind of horror presents itself, against which there can be no protection save the faithful discharge of the duty of those assigned to look after just such specimens of rottenness as this. By the second volume of the "Blue Book," which has just made its appearance, we are made acquainted with a good many of the minor details of office-holding which fail to reach us through the ordinary channels. The "Blue Book" no longer ago than the reign of Mr. Buchanan, was a volume containing not more than one hundred and sixty pages. The enormous multiplication of offices necessitates now two volumes of a thousand pages and more each, which are published every two years for the use of Congress. The second volume which pertains distinctively to the Post Office Department, informs us that there are upwards of 50,000 postmasters in the country, who receive salaries ranging from nine cents, received by the postmaster at Redalia, N. C., to \$8,000, received by the postmaster at New York City. There are 2,400 of these postmasters who receive a salary of less than \$10 per annum, and yet not one of the 2,400 would resign except under the weightiest kind of a consideration. When postmasters were paid salaries in proportion to the number of stamps sold, there was a lively interest in being postmaster even at the smallest cross-roads office, and the demand for stamps from all these small offices became so great that Uncle Sam began an investigation, only to find that postage stamps had become the staple currency of the realm and entered into all sorts of trade, commerce and barter. Then Congress stepped in and said that salaries should be paid in accordance with the number of stamps canceled at the office, and this has canceled much of the desire to be a country postmaster. Beside the nine cent postmaster in North Carolina there are thirty-four others in the country whose salary does not reach \$1 per year, and a dozen of these are in North Carolina which State contributes just one-ninth as much postal revenue as the cost of transporting her mails. Ordinarily the work of making up a quarterly report in a country post office, requires a well-balanced mind, a patience beyond that of Job, and a full week of time. In ninety-seven cases out of one hundred, the work is not then done to the satisfaction of the department, and the whole business is returned to the exasperated postmaster to be done all over again, and that postmaster does not live in the United States who sends in his report to Washington without serious misgivings, and, I might say, absolute certainty that it will come back for readjustment. A hundred years of postal service in which the methods of keeping postal accounts have not received the slightest simplification, have furnished our mad-houses with most of the inmates that politics and religion have to answer for.

Ex-Speaker Kiefer having defied the newspaper men to do their worst, has received the full benefit of their attentions, and his political cadaver is now lying in state at Springfield, Ohio. Not a newspaper in his district could be cajoled into his support for a renomination, and therefore Kiefer started one of his own, with the usual disastrous results that come of a bad politician blowing his own horn. The defeat of Kiefer puts an end to a man whose public life has been nothing but a continued public calamity, and the country owes a debt of gratitude to the newspaper correspondents of Washington who have compassed the abolition of one of the worst of our political pests.

DOM PEDRO.

Progress of the Panama Canal.

The sanguine friends of the Panama canal project have evidently underrated the expense of the enterprise and the difficulties to be surmounted. On paper it is easy to show that a waterway, 44 miles long, 25 feet deep, and from 84 to 162 feet wide, can be completed and opened for traffic in the latter part of 1888; but these moderate figures do not bring before the eye with sufficient vividness the great masses of solid rock to be cut away. In some places it has been found necessary to make cuts nearly a thousand feet in width. Even in districts where no such mineral barriers exist the ground is uneven, and frequently so high that the levelling process will be long and tedious. According to the reckoning of the engineers 75,000,000 cubic meters of mud, earth and rock must be disposed of, and it is needless to say that even a great army of laborers will find this task a serious drain upon their capacities. By the terms of the contract the company is allowed until 1893 to finish the work, and an esteemed contemporary is of opinion that M. De Lesseps may congratulate himself if his work has been accomplished by 1891. Original estimates placed the cost of construction at 600,000,000 francs, but one-third of this amount has already been paid out and much more than two-thirds of the labor remains to be performed. The total cost of the Suez canal was double the sum stated in the prospectus, and the Mount Ceniz, St. Gothard and Hoosac tunnels consumed a greater outlay than their promoters anticipated. Minor works, such as hospitals, dams, short branch railways, docks, piers and harbors swallow up a large part of the money intended for the canal, and rolling stock, dredges, tools, vessels, houses for laborers and other articles materially swell the expense account. This is the dark side of the picture, but the bright side should not be forgotten. Great industry and skill have been displayed, and there is little reason to doubt that the work will eventually be an important accession to the world's commercial factors. By lessening the time spent in many voyages and obviating the necessity of the dangerous trip around the Horn, it will redound to the benefit of ship owners and reduce the cost of many South American and Pacific products. There will be business enough for the canal and for the Panama railroad also, but while it is unquestionable that the water way will be a boon to shipping interests, it is not so clear that it will prove a bonanza to its stockholders.—Railway World.

The total number of B. & M. engines now number 117, and ten more are ordered and are to arrive this fall. Several years ago the B. & M. had 26 locomotives and other rolling stock in proportion, and when the new locomotives arrive the increase in the number of new locomotives on the road in seven years will be just an even hundred.—Plattsburgh Journal.

OWEN ELIZABETH of Roumania, one of the foremost literary ladies of all Europe, is responsible for the statement that "The virtue of a wife must often be great, for unfrequently she must be sufficient for both herself and her husband." Wonder if Elizabeth intended to make a local application?

We have it that a black eye is simply this—and nothing more: "A black eye is simply a severe contusion of the integuments under the orbit, with great extravasation of blood, and ecchymosis in the surrounding cellular tissue, which is in a tumefied state." If that's all the worse, we can stand it.

"A MAN who is so mean as to thus sue a widow woman ought to be kicked to death by a jackass," said a Tecumseh attorney at a recent justice court, "and I wish the court would appoint me to do it."

The Cost of Some Statues.

Chief Justice Marshall's bronze statue, which was dedicated recently, cost \$40,000, and it is a valuable addition to the art works of the capital. Washington city has several very large fortunes represented by its art works. Greenough's naked Washington at the front of the capitol cost \$43,000, and the two statues facing it on the portico represent in hard cash \$24,000 each. The ridiculously placed naval monument at the foot of Pennsylvania avenue cost \$25,000; the bronze statue of Freedom on the dome, \$23,000, and the group of the emancipation, in Lincoln park, \$17,000. For the pedestal of Gen. McPherson's statue which stands opposite the Arlington hotel, the government paid \$15,000, and for Minnie Ream's bronze Farragut, \$20,000. The equestrian statue of Gen. Scott, in front of Don Cameron's residence, cost \$73,000, that of Gen. Thomas, \$65,000, that of Andrew Jackson rearing up in front of the white house \$50,000 and the equestrian statue of Washington on the edge of Georgetown a like sum. There is a statue of Gen. Rawlins beyond the white house that cost \$10,000, a statue at the soldiers' home of Gen. Scott that cost \$18,000, and a statue of Gen. Greene in East Washington which represents a money outlay of \$50,000. For the Bartholdi fountain in the Botanical gardens the government paid \$6,000, and the capitol itself had cost three years ago about \$13,000,000. The Washington monument will cost \$1,000,000. The state, war and the navy building has already cost \$7,000,000.

A VERY fishy story comes from Philadelphia to the effect that a citizen of that city claims to have discovered a fleet of sunken Spanish galleons in Vigo bay, Spain. His claim is that the galleons were sunk early in the eighteenth century and that they contained bullion to the amount of \$20,000,000. He has made some observations on the scene of "the wreck," and has the permission of the Spanish government to proceed in his work of fishing up the wealth which he says is so easy obtainable there. The next step in the scheme will probably be the formation of a stock company of gullibles who will live in hope for a few years while the originator of the scheme will be living on them.—Republican.

GOVERNOR ABBETT, of New Jersey, has just now secured a plume by saving a young lady from drowning who was swimming at Long Branch. Should the Governor run for office again he can depend on the young lady's brothers and cousins as Abbett men.

A LONDON paper has discovered that in the cholera epidemic of 1832 not one tobaccoist died from the disease. This is a neat way of starting a boom in the tobacco business. We suppose everybody will take to smoking now.

A WELL-KNOWN publisher of New York is now lying seriously ill from the effects of arsenical poisoning caused by contact with the new postal notes. Heaven only knows where the adulteration of this age is going to stop.

MISS LULA HURST, who has been "downing" Americans, Irishmen, Germans and in fact representatives of nearly all nations, has at last found her match in a Japanese student. The Mongolian wouldn't go.

STOKES, the red-handed murderer, was present at the recent "independent" meeting in New York City. Curtis is getting into refined and moral society—out of the frying pan into the fire.

THE Omaha Republican states that "Mother Hubbard" came out of her tussle versus the state of Nebraska, with flying colors.

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