

share of Venezuela's exports. The imports of this South American republic amount to nearly \$9,000,000 per year while the exports amount to nearly \$18,000,000 per year. Venezuela's annual revenue is in the neighborhood of \$7,000,000. Its national debt is estimated at \$40,000,000. Owing to the large number of revolutions which have confronted the government in recent years, the annual expenditure of the little republic has been about \$9,000,000 per year for several years past.

THE WIDOW OF THE LATE GEN. JOHN C. Fremont. Mrs. Jessie Benton Fremont, died December 27 at her home in Los Angeles. At the time of her death Mrs. Fremont was seventy-eight years of age. In her younger days Mrs. Fremont was one of the best known of American women. She was a daughter of Thomas H. Benton and was only fifteen years of age when John C. Fremont fell in love with her. Fremont was then engaged in exploring the country between the Missouri and the north frontier and he held the position of second lieutenant of engineers. Benton was then senator from Missouri and young Fremont met his future wife at the national capital. Senator Benton objected to the marriage and used his influence to have the war department order young Fremont to the west for the purpose of making an examination of the Des Moines river. This task accomplished, Lieutenant Fremont returned to Washington and in spite of the objections of the senator from Missouri was united in marriage to Jessie Benton.

TO JAMES BOWEN LINDSAY, THE SCOTCH inventor, Marconi has given the credit for being the first advocate of long distance wireless telegraphy. Mr. Marconi says that fifty years ago Lindsay began experiments in the vicinity of Dundee and for ten years these experiments were continued. Lindsay obtained a patent for his method of wireless telegraphy, but Mr. Marconi says that Lindsay's system was not considered practical because of the enormous electrical energy required. He says, however, that there is good reason to believe that had Mr. Lindsay lived to the present time he would undoubtedly have made a success.

SENATOR SCOTT OF WEST VIRGINIA HAS offered an amendment to the civil service law. The Scott amendment limits to six years the tenure of all persons now or hereafter employed in the classified service, except railway mail clerks, whom it considerably permits to continue to work during good behavior. At the end of six years' service, however, the limited clerks are to be eligible for reappointment for a like term. The inference is left open that at the end of their second six years these persons go out and stay out. They cannot even get their second six years without passing a non-competitive examination, and the same test is to be applied to the choice of their successors when they finally do quit. The persons already in the service are to be divided into groups to serve two, four, and six years and those who at the end of the period remaining to their group shall have passed the six year point are to be retired.

AN INTERESTING ANALYSIS OF SENATOR Scott's plan is provided by the Washington correspondent of the Des Moines Register and Leader. This correspondent says: "Anyone who scrutinizes this plan, which appears at a first glance wholly arbitrary, will discover a method in it. How are candidates selected for the non-competitive test? By patronage, of course, like cadets for the armed services and other positions protected by this thin shield. Who is to exercise such patronage? The great men whose terms of service put them into six-year groups. In other words, if Mr. Scott's plan should ever come into operation, we would see the senators designating for examination, just prior to their own ordeal of re-election, these persons whose friends and relatives would help the campaign in the legislature along. A clerk whose first six-year term was expiring, and who refused to help his senator to a re-election or to the privilege of naming his successor, would be refused a designation for examination for another six years of service. By the end of twelve years, it might fairly be assumed that the political usefulness of the same lot of clerks would have exhausted itself, or that a senator would be able to stand alone, or that fresh blood could be brought most effectively into the legislative campaign. The answer to this would be that not all the clerks from any one state would complete their six-year terms at the same time,

and therefore that the scheme here outlined would soon prove unworkable. That is a hasty conclusion. In all except a very small handful of states, the number of representatives who would have need of party aid every two years, exceeds considerably the number of senators. In distributing the congressional patronage of a state, therefore, the two senators could take the clerks whose terms expired at the proper dates for their uses, and the representatives could divide the rest between them."

WHEN THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN Venezuela and Great Britain and Germany comes before The Hague, it is probable that counter claims of an interesting character will be presented by the South American republic. It is believed that because of the wanton destruction of the Venezuelan fleet as well as by reason of other things done in the name of the British-German alliance in its operations against Venezuela, that republic will have some very material offsets to the claims made against the republic by European governments. The consideration of the European claims will provide immense work for The Hague tribunal and when to this work is added the task of passing upon Venezuela's counter claims one may well believe that there are busy days before The Hague tribunal.

ONE QUESTION WHICH THE VENEZUELAN authorities will probably seek to bring into the controversy relates to the title to the island of Patos. In January, 1901, the officers of a Venezuelan gunboat arrested several British subjects on this island. The British authorities asked for an explanation and Venezuela's representatives replied by reasserting their old time claim that the island of Patos really belonged to Venezuela.

THE BRITISH TITLE TO PATOS RESTS upon the claim that when Great Britain conquered the island of Trinidad in 1797 sovereignty over Patos was obtained, and so recognized by the Spanish government. The British ministry say that Patos has remained in peaceful possession of Great Britain for more than a century and that during seventy years Venezuela advanced no claim. Venezuelan authorities point to a letter written by the Spanish minister for state in 1873 in which he says that royal sanction was never given to the concession of Patos as alleged by the British government. It is not likely that the representatives of Great Britain will consent that this question shall be submitted for arbitration because their position has been that Patos is so clearly a British possession that it does not furnish a suitable subject for arbitration.

INTERESTING TIMES ARE LOOKED FOR IN Canada owing to the undeniable sentiment that has begun to form there against the policy of England as regards trade concessions. According to a correspondent in the Chicago Tribune Premier Laurier and scores of other leading Canadian politicians have avowed over and over again that the continuance of Canada's political ties to Great Britain are conditioned absolutely on the unquestionable right of Canada to govern itself. That this sentiment will go so far as to lead to an open rupture between Canada and the mother country is rather doubtful, but some authorities in Canada do not hesitate to express the opinion that there is a tendency in some quarters to look to Washington with an eye to closer relations.

AN INTERESTING STORY IS RECALLED BY the recent death in Baltimore of the widow of Henry Winter Davis. Henry Winter Davis was elected to congress from Maryland in 1854. He was a brilliant orator and it is said could have been nominated for vice president on the ticket with Mr. Lincoln in 1860, but that he declined to permit the use of his name. He died in 1865. The enmity existing between James G. Blaine and Roscoe Conkling grew out of circumstances relating to a reference made to Henry Winter Davis by Mr. Blaine.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN 1866 Mr. Blaine, then a member from Maine, engaged in a tilt with Mr. Conkling. The proud gentleman from New York attempted to dismiss the gentleman from Maine with a fine bit of sarcasm, but in reply to Conkling, Blaine made so cutting a speech that he was never forgiven. Addressing himself to Conkling, Mr. Blaine said: "As to the gentleman's cruel sarcasm, I hope he will not be too severe. The contempt of that

large-minded gentleman is so wilting, his haughty disdain, his grandiloquent swell, his majestic, supereminent, overpowering, turkey gobbler strut, have been so crushing to myself and all the members of this house that I know it was an act of the greatest temerity for me to venture upon a controversy with him." Referring then to the statement of a newspaper that the mantle of Henry Winter Davis, who had died in 1865, had fallen on Mr. Conkling (which he interpreted sarcastically), Mr. Blaine continued: "The gentleman took it seriously, and it has given his strut additional pomposity. The resemblance is great; it is startling. Hyperion to a Satyr, Thersites to Hercules—mud to marble, dunghill to diamond, a singed cat to a Bengal tiger, a whining puppy to a roaring lion. Shade of the mighty Davis, forgive the almost profanation of that jocose satire!"

THE SCULPTURES WROUGHT BY NATURE in the great canyons of the west are described by a writer in the Chicago Chronicle in this fascinating way: "Famous the world over are the grand canyons of the Colorado and of the Yellowstone. In both there is wealth of coloring. The ravines are abruptly countersunk in a plateau and both are mainly the work of water. But the Colorado's canyon is more than a thousand times larger and as a score or two new buildings of ordinary size would not appreciably change the general view of a great city, so hundreds of Yellowstones might be eroded in the sides of the Colorado canyon without noticeably augmenting its size or the richness of its sculpture. But it is not true that the great Yosemite rocks would be thus lost or hidden. Nothing of their kind in the world, so far as I know, rivals El Capitan and Tissiack, much less dwarfs or in any way belittles them. None of the sandstone or limestone precipices of the canyon that I have seen or heard of approaches in smooth, flawless strength and grandeur the granite face of El Capitan or the Tenaya side of Cloud's Rest. These colossal cliffs, types of permanence, are about 3,000 and 6,000 feet high; those of the canyon that are sheer are about half as high, and are types of fleeting change, while glorious domed Tissiack, noblest of mountain buildings, far from being overshadowed or lost in this rosy, spiry canyon company, would draw every eye, and, in serene majesty 'aboon them a,' she would take her place—castle, temple, palace or tower. Nevertheless, a noted writer, comparing the Grand canyon in a general way with the glacial Yosemite, says: 'And the Yosemite—ah, the lovely Yosemite! Dumped down into the wilderness of gorges and mountains, it would take a guide who knew of its existence a long time to find it.' This is striking and shows up well above the level of commonplace description, but it is confusing and has the fatal fault of not being true."

THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT HAS AP-plied the X-ray machine to a novel use. It is said that mint authorities have missed a large number of gold coins and that it has been discovered that some of the mint employes have the habit of swallowing the small coins and in this way remove them from the mints. One official suggested the use of the X-ray machine and a Philadelphia firm has recently filled an order for such a machine to be used by the Japanese government. It is the intention of the Japanese mint masters to occasionally apply the X-ray to employes in the mint and the genius who devised this plan believes that the knowledge that the X-ray machine is at hand and likely to be applied at any moment will persuade even the dishonest employe of the Japanese mint that honesty is the best policy.

THE CITY OF KELBURG, NEAR CRACOW, Poland, is said to be one of the most remarkable in the world. The town is situated underground and is excavated entirely in rock salt. A writer in the Chicago Chronicle, describing this strange city, says: "The inhabitants, to the number of over 3,000, are of course workers in the famous salt mines, and all the streets and houses are of the purest white imaginable. One of the most famous features of the city is the cathedral, carved in salt and lit with electric light, and when the late Czar Alexander visited it eleven years ago he was so fascinated with the magnificent effect of the light upon the crystal walls that he presented the cathedral with a jeweled altar cross. Such a thing as infectious disease is unknown in Kelburg—in fact, the majority of the inhabitants die of old age."