

trunks of large trees transformed, apparently, into solid quartz. There are thousands of these; it is difficult to travel without meeting them. Petrified stumps of four and five feet in diameter are quite common, and some are from six to eight feet in diameter. When in place they stand erect in the soil in the position they once grew."

This particular locality is not the only one presenting these physical characteristics. Between Miles City and Glendive the road passes through many miles of a formation very similar but not quite so marked, and on the upper Missouri, above the mouth of Judith River, the Bad Lands and Castellated Rocks have long been objects of interest to travelers. It is, however, in Pyramid Park the most fantastic shapes appear.

Every form of man or beast,
The broad empire of Rome could furnish,

is here carved by the elements and placed in one long gallery of art. Monuments, cathedrals, pyramids, cones and houses appear like excavations of a buried city. Loud reports are frequently heard, resembling much the sound of distant cannon, not only here but in other places of a similar formation. These explosions, the smoke and heat from burning coal, and the weird forms and figures, appealed to the superstitious nature of the Indians, and led them to believe this region the abode of evil spirits. This, added to the fact that it was difficult to pass through them because of their broken nature, caused them to assure the early French trappers that it was a bad country. In the latter respect the whites found the report to be true, and called them "*Mauvaises Terres pour traverser*," which was soon contracted to *Mauvaises Terres*, or Bad Lands. In an agricultural sense this is far from being the case, for the soil on top of the buttes and bluffs and on the high prairie lands lying between and around the different groups of these peculiar formations is extremely fertile. Large herds of cattle and bands of sheep are grazed in and about the Bad Lands, and this is the headquarters of the Marquis de Mores, the originator of the business of slaughtering beef on the ranges and shipping it East in refrigerator cars. This business is a growing one, and the Marquis has facilities for conducting it at various places along the Northern Pacific in Dakota and Montana.

NEWSPAPER HYPERBOLE.

WITH a certain class of newspapers, when a barn blows down, there will first be a diagram of the premises; view of the barn before being blown down; view of the barn while being blown down; view of the ruins; interview with the hired man, who said he always knowed it was a-going to blow down; interview with the owner, with his and other theories on barns blowing down; interview with Professor Mugwump, the distinguished Chicago savant, with his views as to the reason why barns blow down rather than up; comparative table of barn mortality for the last forty years, showing percentage of barns blowing down compared with the illiterate vote; history of barns from the earliest times to the present; statement of loss, \$500.

FIREPLACE ORNAMENTS.

THE employment of plants for the decoration of the fireplaces in the principal apartments is steadily increasing, and much might be said in its favor, for, when the plants are appropriate and tastefully arranged, they present a far more attractive appearance than any of the so-called grate ornaments. The most useful plants are such as afford striking forms and pleasing tones of green or variegated foliage. The palms, *Dracaenas*, grasses and miscellaneous "foliage" plants of neat and, generally speaking, light habit should predominate—lumpy plants presenting large surfaces are not suitable—and there must be a fair proportion of colors to light up the group. For this purpose the flowers should be choice as well as showy. A general objection may be urged against all kinds of bedding plants as unsuitable; the same principle should be followed in selecting the flowers as the leaves, form and a certain airiness of style being of great importance. Hence a neat tuft of white *Marguerites* peeping out from among grassy leafage will be far preferable to a scarlet geranium. Many greenhouse plants answer admirably for this kind of decoration, which never need be costly, but must always be tasteful, and combine richness and delicacy without any strong display of color. A simple procedure that may or may not answer, as the case may be, consists in covering the back of the grate with cheap thin paper of a very dark green color and putting it on as much crumpled as possible, so as to be practically invisible, to afford a kind of distance rather than a background, its real purpose being to conceal ugly iron work and to prevent the intrusion into the midst of the plants of any such features. The plants must be all clean and dry when placed in position, but the soil in the pots should be moist enough to carry them through for a few days, when a change must be made for the sake of the plants.

THE FIRST SAW MILLS.

THE old practice of making boards was to split up the logs with wedges, and, inconvenient as the practice was, it was no easy matter to persuade the world that the thing could be done in any better way. Saw mills were first used in Europe in the fifteenth century; but so late as 1655 an English ambassador, having seen a saw mill in France, thought it a novelty which deserved particular description. It is amusing to note how the aversion to labor-saving machinery has always agitated England. The first saw mill was established by a Dutchman, in 1663; but the public outcry against the new fangled machine was so violent that the proprietor was forced to decamp with greater expedition than ever did a Dutchman before. The evil was thus kept out of England for several years, or rather generations; but in 1768 an unlucky timber merchant, hoping that after so long a time the public would be less watchful of its interests, made a rash attempt to construct another mill. The guardians of the public welfare, however, were on the alert, and a conscientious mob at once collected and pulled the mill to pieces.