

WASHINGTON LETTER.

WASHINGTON D. C. Oct. 11th 1886. This is the busy season in the Departments at Washington. The heads of divisions, the chiefs of bureaus and the Cabinet officers are preparing their annual reports. The President is writing his message. The Governmental history of the year must be epitomized the balance sheet must be struck off and the chief executive must suggest by the way of recommendation, the measures he will sanction, provided they receive the approval of legislation. All the members of the Cabinet, except the Secretary of State, have returned. Mr. Bayard was shrewd enough to postpone his vacation until autumn and is now resting away from the city during the season which, in Washington, is most trying to the corpus humanus.

Extracts from the reports of various Government officials prove by irrefutable figures that the present administration has saved the Government millions of dollars. That the public offices are better kept and that public work is better done is not so susceptible of mathematical demonstration; but it is a fact patent to every one acquainted with the public service. During the past two weeks over five hundred useless employes have been discharged from the Government Printing Office alone. Notwithstanding this great decrease in the force, the work of the office has not been at all impeded. The public land commissioner, General Sparks, says in his annual report: "The development of the past year under the agencies of the new administration have justified every word said in my report for last year in regard to widespread persistent land robbery." The report states that the total area over which fences have been or are to be removed either with or without resort to the courts is 2,714,926 acres, mostly in Colorado. The recommendation for an additional force of not less than one hundred special agents are renewed, as is also that in regard to adequate means for protecting the timber on the public lands. About 175,000 acres of land have been restored for public settlement; 1,485 cases, involving 225,000 acres, have been held for cancellation. President Cleveland is more sparing than any of his predecessors were of the appropriation made by Congress for the contingent expenses of the White House. The contingent fund covers stationary, telegrams, books for library, purchase of new carpets and furniture, cost of keeping carriage and horses, etc. The appropriation for Grant's last Presidential year was only \$6,000 and Grant spent every cent. Hayes at the end of his first year in the White House had an unexpended balance of 19 cents out of a contingent fund of 7,000. For his last year he had a contingent fund of \$10,000 out of which he saved \$39. Arthur managed to save only \$6,862 out of the \$10,000 contingent fund of his first year, and that was the largest balance he had on hand at the end of any year while he was the occupant of the White House. Mr. Cleveland saved \$3,348 during his first year out of a contingent fund of \$8,000. Without an act of Congress the Secretary of the Navy cannot abolish a bureau or organize one. But he can distribute the work and transfer some of it from one bureau to another. One of the main features of Secretary Whitney's plan of re-organization, as submitted by him to Congress, would be a bureau of supplies, that is, a bureau which would do all the purchasing for the entire Navy Department. Another would be to amalgamate several bureaus so that every care involved in the construction of ships would be confined to a single bureau instead of being distributed over four bureaus, as at present. Instead of eight bureaus acting separately and independently, he would have four bureaus, with a central council. At present each bureau advises separately for and separately purchases whatever it wants. Each, for instance goes to the market separately for the coal, the ice, the timber, the stationery it wants. This plan results in unnecessary advertising and in the higher prices charged for smaller purchases. During the past year Mr. Whitney has had his own office purchase the coal, the ice, the stationery for all the bureaus with the result as an experienced official estimates, of a saving of \$30,000 on these articles alone. The plan of concentrating the purchasing power will be extended to other articles, and the purchasing power may be located in some one of the bureaus now existing. It is not likely that Secretary Whitney will have all the purchasing done by his office.

Siam is open wide to the gospel. The missionaries have perfect liberty to go everywhere to preach and teach. They are gladly received by the king and the common people; yet but little is being done for them. The only society laboring among the Siamese is the American Presbyterian, with stations at Bangkok and Petchaburi. The Baptists have a small mission to the Chinese.

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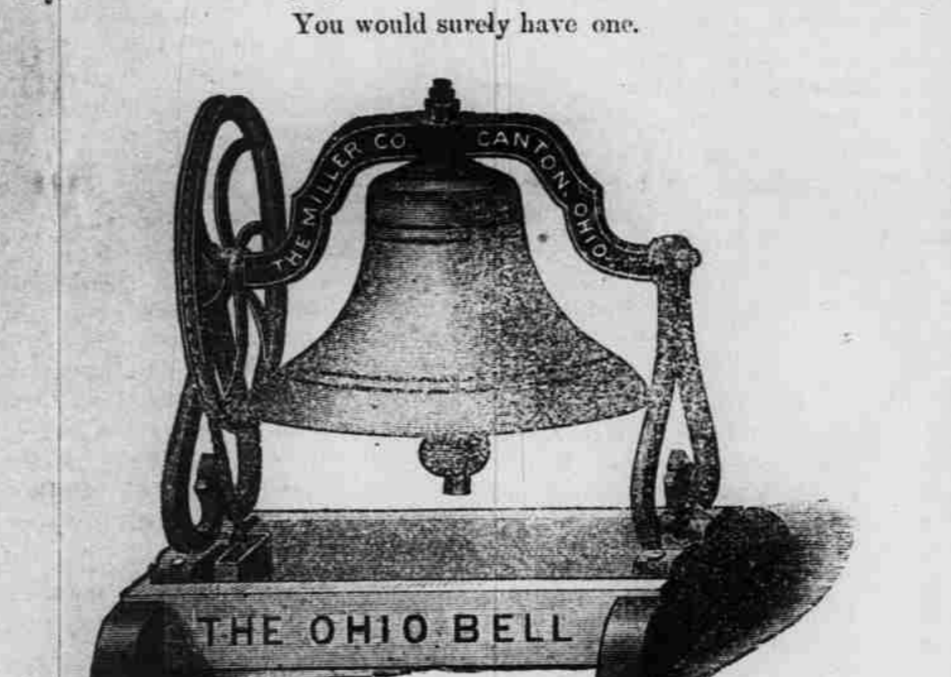
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