

FARM PRODUCTS.

Wheat in Michigan Shows No Improvement—A Slight Advance in Illinois.

The Country's General Acreage Nine Per Cent. Less than at This Time Last Year.

National Department Report.

The report of the Department of Agriculture for May relates to the condition of winter grain, the progress of spring plowing, and proportion of the proposed cotton area already planted. It indicates a decline in the condition of wheat of two points since April 1, the general average for the whole country being 86, against 95 at the same date in 1886, 70 in 1885, and 89 in 1884. The changes in condition have not been uniform throughout the winter-wheat region, some States showing an increase, the majority a slight decline, and a few a heavy falling off.

The States of the Middle Atlantic coast from Pennsylvania to North Carolina show some improvement. In New York and New Jersey the amount of winter-killing was not fully known on April 1, and this, with cold, unfavorable weather during the month, has caused a serious reduction of condition. Drought has reduced the average somewhat in the Eastern Gulf States, and has wrought very serious damage in Texas and Arkansas, lowering the condition during the month nineteen to ten points respectively. Favorable temperature and seasonable rains have improved the prospect in Tennessee, West Virginia, and Kentucky, the condition being considerably higher in those States than it has averaged in May for the past five years.

The most serious reduction of the month is in Ohio, where there is a falling off of eight points since the 1st of April. Michigan and Indiana show a slight decline, while in Illinois and Missouri there is a gain of one point. Unfavorable weather in Kansas and California has caused a slight falling off, while in Oregon the prospect has advanced, it being the only State in which condition reaches 100.

The averages of condition by States are: New York, 86; Pennsylvania, 72; Maryland, 84; Virginia, 80; North Carolina, 90; Texas, 60; Arkansas, 93; Tennessee, 96; West Virginia, 89; Kentucky, 95; Ohio, 71; Michigan, 90; Indiana, 87; Illinois, 93; Missouri, 96; Kansas, 81; California, 89; Oregon, 101.

Rye has suffered from the same condition which has seriously affected wheat, but on account of its harder nature the general average is considerably higher, standing at 90.8 against 92.5 April 1, and 95.7 at the same date in 1886.

The condition of barley is low, the average being 87.8 against 96.7 in May, 1886, and 82 in 1885. The season has been more generally advanced in all parts of the country than usual, spring plowing being seriously behind only on the Atlantic coast south to Pennsylvania and on the Pacific slope.

The proportion of cotton already planted amounts to more than four-fifths the proposed area, and is slightly greater than at the same date in any of the preceding five years, but is a little less than the proportion returned by the correspondents as the average planting at that date.

Reports from Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan.

[Springfield (Ill.) special.] Advance sheets of the May crop report of the State Board of Agriculture show the condition of winter wheat in Illinois May 1 to be 92 per cent. of an average. This is an advance of 2 per cent. over the previous month. It is still 6 per cent. less than the average condition of May 1, 1886. In the northern and southern counties the average condition is 88 per cent., and the central counties 101.

[Indianapolis special.] Reports from every county in Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio state that the wheat crop has been damaged somewhat by the spring rains, and the average per cent. of condition during April was 83 in Indiana and Illinois and 79 in Ohio. The acreage of oats is 97 in Indiana, 104 in Illinois, and 98 in Ohio. The fruit crop promises to be larger than for several years past.

[Lansing (Mich.) special.] The Michigan crop report for April shows severe drought in all parts of the State. On sandy soil wheat has made good growth, but on clay soil the growth has been unsatisfactory. In the southern tiers of counties the condition is 87 as compared with average years. The central counties show 94 condition, while the northern counties return 93. But little of the grain will be plowed up. There has been marketed 54,801 bushels of wheat. Clover is badly injured, and in many sections it will be plowed up. The condition of horses and other stock shows but little change since last month.

Injury from the Drouth.

[From the Chicago Tribune.] Drouth in the grain fields of the Mississippi Valley was the one great topic of conversation in commercial circles Tuesday, and it materially influenced the course of prices for the leading cereals. The ground is very dry in the Southwest, and to this is superadded the appearance of the chinch-bug in Kansas, while the news from the great spring-wheat regions of the Northwest was very bad, the crop prospects in the fertile Red River Valley being described as poor indeed. Grass seeds and hay, as well as oats, corn, and wheat, promise but a scanty yield, unless there be a speedy change in the conditions. And in some cases the season is too far advanced to permit reasonable hope of a full crop. The time for spring showers has gone by, and the good, vigorous root, which is possible only when moisture has been supplied during the early stages of growth, is hardly to be expected now, the indications being regarded as decidedly unfavorable to an average yield in proportion to acreage. Our street markets show the effects of the unusual dryness in other directions. The strawberry patches in Mississippi are desiccated to the extent of rendering the fruit unmarketable, while the dusty appearance of the berries received from Tennessee tells of almost equal drouth in that State.

Contested Congressional Election Cases.

[Washington telegram.] The Clerk of the House of Representatives has received the testimony in the contested Congressional election cases of

McDuffie vs. Davidson, of Alabama; Worthington vs. Post, of Illinois; Lowrie vs. White, of Indiana; Frank vs. Glover, of Missouri; and Small vs. Elliott, of South Carolina. The time limitation has not yet expired in the New Hampshire case of Haynes against McKenzie. In the case of Theebe against Carlisle, the period within which the testimony must be taken ended on the 25th ult., but no testimony has yet been received.

BLOOD-STAINED BURGLARS.

Mother and Daughter Brutally Murdered by Rustic Robbers in West Virginia.

An Aged Woman at New Haven Bound and Strangled by Unknown Marauders.

Mother and Daughter Fully Murdered.

[Stenbenville (O.) special.] A shocking double murder was perpetrated at Halliday's Cave, Hancock County, W. Va., on the Pan Handle Road. When Mr. Van Baker, who left home Monday at 4 p. m. and spent the night at his father's, in Washington County, Pennsylvania, returned Tuesday morning, he found his wife, Eliza Baker, and her mother Suzelle McWha, lying dead in the sitting-room with their heads beaten brutally by a car pin. An ax was also lying beside them. Mr. Baker says the only thing missing is \$350 belonging to him. Evidences of search are plainly to be seen. The theory at first given for the murder is that it was for robbery. Mr. McWha had a few days ago received several thousand dollars, and Monday he went to Pittsburgh to deposit it. His son-in-law, Mr. Baker, also being absent that night, it is thought some one familiar with the situation, but not knowing that the money was gone, attempted robbery, and being discovered and identified by the women, killed them to conceal their crime. Mrs. McWha was 70 years old, her daughter about 40. The belief is general that the murderer is some one familiar with the family.

An Aged Woman Strangled.

[New Haven (Conn.) telegram.] Mrs. Margaret Ernst, a German lady, aged 74 years, was found early Tuesday morning by the milkman in the front room of her house, No. 34 Spruce street, with her hands and feet bound with ropes and a rope around her neck. She had been choked to death during the night and robbed. She was supposed to have had on her person at least \$400 in bills, but when the Coroner arrived Tuesday morning only \$1.27 was found. She was the owner of two houses, and there is about \$1,500 in the bank to her credit, she being worth about \$10,000. She made a will about two years ago and had notified her attorney that next week she desired to see him, as she had concluded to change it. The Coroner and police see in this fact the motive for the crime. She was the widow of John Ernst, a Union veteran who died two years ago.

GEN. BERDAN'S TORPEDO.

Designed Especially for the Attack of Vessels Protected by the Steel Net.

[New York dispatch.] The Berdan torpedo, a working model of which was shown before the United States Naval Torpedo Board at the Navy Yard Friday, is designed especially for the attack of vessels protected by the steel net, though equally effective in the absence of a net. The individual expression of the members of the Board was that of favor and admiration for the device, but this was not formulated by the Board, as it must await an authorization to accept the terms under which Gen. Berdan will let it go to the Government for trial. There is no doubt that an agreement will be reached, and the trial made this summer.

Out of twenty-five torpedoes offered to the consideration of the Board, twenty-three were deemed to be unworthy of being ordered to trial. The one selected besides Gen. Berdan's was the Howell, a self-directing torpedo, against which the net is a sufficient protection. Gen. Berdan has contracts with the Governments of England, France, Germany, Russia, Turkey, Italy, and Spain for the use of this invention. In England it is known as the "Yankee trick."

The torpedo is described as a diving torpedo, with a snubbing line. It can be rigged on vessels of any size, and has the advantage of being capable of working effectively in heavy seas and rough weather when a self-steering torpedo would be as helpless as a chip on the waves. The boats are intended to be swift, handy craft, and to be used in connection with mother ships to carry coal and supplies. A heavy ram bow, plated to protect the men and machinery, is a feature of the boats, the slanting surfaces requiring only light plating for this purpose. The torpedoes may be fired automatically or by mechanical or electric devices controlled from within the boat.

LIVED NEARLY 102 YEARS.

He Voted for Madison and Cleveland, and Never Rode on a Railroad Train.

[Freeport (Ill.) telegram.] The oldest man in Stephenson County, if not in Illinois, has just died at his home, about seventeen miles northwest of Freeport. Had he lived until July 29, Mr. Smith would have been 102 years old. He was born in Guilford County, North Carolina. In 1815 he moved to Highland County, Ohio, and from there came to this county in 1846, and has resided here ever since. When about 20 years old he was married to Dorcas McDaniel in his native county. She bore him twelve children, all of whom but one grew to manhood and womanhood. Two years ago his hundredth birthday anniversary was celebrated with great pomp, there being present perhaps 2,000 people. When in his younger days he enjoyed fishing and hunting exceedingly, but when it came time for him to get down to business he learned the blacksmithing trade, which he followed for some time. The greater part of his life was devoted to farming. With the exception of chewing tobacco, Mr. Smith was a most temperate man all his life. He never joined any church, but had always been an attentive and careful reader of the Bible, and about six years ago was baptized. He cast his first Presidential vote for James Madison, and his last for Grover Cleveland, and had always been a Democrat. He never rode on a railroad train and never ate a meal in a hotel.

A SUDDEN CALL.

Death of William B. Woods, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Sketch of His Career at the Bar, in the Army, and as a Legislator.

[Washington special.] Justice William B. Woods, of the United States Supreme Court, died here on Saturday. He had been unable from dropsical and kidney troubles to perform any judicial duties for nearly a year, and spent the fall and winter in California. William B. Woods was born in Newark, Ohio, sixty-one or two years ago, graduated at Yale College in 1845, and began the practice of law in Ohio in 1847. From 1857 to 1861 he was a Democratic member of the State House of Representatives, and for one term was the Speaker. When the war broke out he entered the Federal service, and went to the front as Lieutenant Colonel of the Seventy-sixth Ohio Infantry, and served through the war with that regiment, being mustered out of the service with the grade of Brigadier and brevet Major General. He immediately settled down in Alabama, and was chosen State Chancellor for a term of six years. In 1869, while he was a resident of Mobile, President Grant appointed him United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit. When Justice Strong retired from the Supreme Court in December, 1880, President Hayes appointed Judge Woods, then, living in Atlanta, his successor. Although he was a carpet-bagger in the South and the Senate was Democratic, the Judiciary Committee reported his nomination favorably, and there were but eight votes against his confirmation. A motion was made to reconsider, but the Senate did not retract its assent to his appointment. Immediately upon his nomination the bars of Atlanta, Savannah, Mobile, Montgomery, Huntsville, San Antonio, New Orleans, and Jacksonville memorialized the Senators from their respective States to confirm the appointment.

Justice Woods' Vacant Seat.

[Washington special.] Some pretty shrewd and well-informed Democrats here are confident that Attorney General Garland will be appointed to succeed Justice Woods. They put the thing in this way: If the President had been dissatisfied with the course of the Attorney General during the last two years, he would have got him out of the Cabinet. His retention of him is evidence that he is entirely satisfied with the uprightness of his conduct. That being so, the Attorney General has been persecuted, and the President is under some obligation to vindicate him, or at least he may be supposed to be anxious to do so. Besides, there would be a fine stroke of politics in putting the Attorney General on the Supreme bench. The attacks on Mr. Garland have been to a large extent attacks on the administration. The vindication of Mr. Garland would certainly be confirmed, and if he were promoted from the Cabinet to the Supreme Court the administration would be vindicated at the point where it has been most sharply assailed. Secretary Endicott has been suggested, but no one can really expect that the President would appoint a Massachusetts man in the Southern circuit. Speaker Carlisle has been mentioned, but it is believed that his ambitions are political rather than judicial. He does not live in the Fifth Circuit, and there is already one Kentuckian on the bench. Senators Pugh and George have been spoken of. Both are members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Senator George has been Chief Justice of Mississippi. Both live in the Fifth Circuit, but George is sixty years of age and Pugh is sixty-six. The name of Secretary Bayard is freely spoken of in connection with the vacancy.

THE CATTLE INDUSTRY.

Reports from Thirteen States and Territories—The Past Winter Considered Favorable.

[Boston telegram.] The Commercial Bulletin publishes a special report of the range and ranch cattle industry. The reports are furnished by special correspondents from thirteen States and Territories, covering the whole field. The conclusions arrived at indicate that the early reports of winter losses have been considerably exaggerated. The only territory where cattlemen suffered severe losses was in Montana, where the mortality proves to have been from 15 to 25 per cent. on the average. The losses in Colorado, Western Kansas, and Northern Kansas were very light the past winter, running under 5 per cent. of the average. Parts of Idaho and Wyoming suffered quite severely, particularly the northwestern, but the average losses in the Territories were not excessive. Utah, New Mexico and Arizona were particularly fortunate. New Mexico correspondents write that the loss does not exceed 3 per cent. in either of the Territories named. Texas reports some suffering because of the drought, but the winter was much more favorable to stockmen than that of 1885-6.

On the whole, the conclusion is arrived at that the past winter was a favorable one to the cattle-raising interests of the West, and that the hide and leather markets will not feel the effect noticeably of what fallen hides will come upon the market. From every section come reports of the encroachments of immigrants upon the grazing territory, and particularly from Nebraska, Kansas, and Colorado, where the cattlemen are being pushed steadily westward. It is the opinion of some of the correspondents that the cattle-raising industry has reached its height, and several stations report that it is becoming necessary to raise alfalfa and grass for feed. The interstate commerce law works to the disadvantage of most sections, but the reports vary on this point.

Without exception as to a single State or Territory, the spring season has opened well, with an abundance of rain and a fine outlook for grass. Cattle-raisers in Montana feel much encouraged over the outlook, and feel that the favorable spring will go far to recuperate their losses and prevent further mortality among weak cattle.

OUR NATIONAL GAME.

The Unprecedented Interest That Is Being Taken in Baseball.

The Race for the Pennants—A Veteran's Advice to Amateur Ball Players.

[CHICAGO CORRESPONDENCE.] In no past year has the national game of base-ball aroused such interest as seems to have taken hold of the people in every League and American Association city since the championship seasons of these two big organizations have been inaugurated.

In Chicago more interest is taken in the League struggle than in the Association, presumably from the fact that this city is exclusively a League city and that no other professional organization supports a club here. General surprise and disappointment are being manifested in Chicago over the poor showing made by the Chicago champions thus far in the race. Their defeat in the opening game of the season, followed by defeat in two of the three games played at Indianapolis, and in the first two games played upon the home grounds, has had the effect of bearing Chicago club stock, so far as its playing strength is concerned, more than anything else that has happened; and with the impulsiveness usually exhibited under such circumstances, many admirers of the game, who should know better, have expressed a slighting estimate of the team's strength as compared with other clubs that it will be compelled to meet in the struggle for championship honors this season. Among the older heads, however, the hope prevails that Chicago is strong enough to give the most likely clubs in the League a hard race before the finish is reached.

Anson has expressed the opinion upon more than one occasion that New York will be the only club that Chicago will have to fear this season, and while one should have every regard for the big Captain's views in such matters, many differ with him to the extent of believing that Detroit, and not New York, will prove Chicago's most formidable adversary in this race.

The race for the league pennant shows the Detroit club still holding on to the lead, with New York a fair second, and Boston close upon the heels of the "Giants." Chicago is fighting nobly for last place, but may succeed in gaining the proud (?) distinction of becoming the tail-enders of the string. Pittsburgh is playing a remarkably pretty game, and playing it in a style, too, that would indicate its ability—barring accidents, of course—to hold to the place indefinitely.

The following table will show the work of the League clubs to date:

Clubs.	Detroit.	Chicago.	New York.	Boston.	Pittsburgh.	Philadelphia.	Indianapolis.	Washington.	Games won.	Games lost.	Games played.	Rank.
Detroit.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	8	1
Chicago.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	5	7
New York.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	7	2
Boston.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	7	3
Pittsburgh.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	5	4
Philadelphia.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	5
Indianapolis.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	6
Washington.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	6	8

The Chicago Club is badly off for pitchers, and herein lies the trouble. Clarkson is the club's only thoroughly conditioned pitcher at present, and, disagreeable as it may be, it is, nevertheless, true that, with Flynn in his present crippled condition and Ryan firm in his determination not to pitch, there is but little, if any, probability that Chicago will play well enough to win a majority of the games in their series with any of the clubs they may meet until this weakness is remedied. This condition of things, however, can not last for long. Neither Anson nor Spalding will approve a team that has shown its inability to play better ball than Chicago has played thus far this season; and if Van Haltren does not join the team at an early day it may be depended upon that Chicago will go out upon its first Eastern tour next week with two, or at least one, able, experienced, and thoroughly conditioned pitcher to relieve Clarkson in future. The fact that the box is the very dangerously weak point in the Chicago team, Anson long ago recognized, and that the gap in the team's ranks made by this shortcoming will be soon filled is a foregone conclusion.

Not for many seasons past has amateur base-ball enjoyed so great a boom in Chicago as it is now experiencing. Every Saturday afternoon the great open lots upon the prairies, as well as the lawns of many of the public parks, are covered with amateur teams and their friends. With few exceptions the new rules of the League and Association, as given in "Spalding's Guide," are adhered to. For the benefit of young players it may be well to quote that veteran in base-ball efforts, Bob Ferguson, of the Metropolitans, who says in reference to the work and style of a player in the field: "To stop a ball well requires practice. An infielder should have agility and a quick eye. Little more is required. The dead ball is much easier to stop than the lively ball that was in use when I played this base. In those days the balls came to you red hot, and it was a frequent occurrence to see a player knocked off his feet by them. The dead ball as used now comes to you without any lie, and the only thing is to have hard enough hands to hold it. I could describe a number of ways in which the ball is stopped. Some players will shin the ball; that is, they will stop it with their shins with the intention of picking it up quickly, but in doing this the ball is apt to bound away from them. Again, some players will 'crowd' a ball by dropping on it with their hands and knees, but unless they are very quick they are not able to recover themselves in time. Then I have seen players 'draw the ball,' as it is called, by standing in front of it with legs close together, and let the ball run up to their hands. This is the worst of the lot, for if the ground is in any way rough the ball is sure to bound away to one side. The perfect plan, according to my idea, is the one which I always used, and I found it to be the most effective, and that is to scoop the ball as it comes to you. This I do by holding the hands close together and give the arms full play. As the ball comes up let the hands go back between the legs slightly, and when the ball is about a foot from you, suddenly bring the hands forward and run the fingers under the ball. It is easy and sure."

INDIANA STATE NEWS.

—Attorney General Michener has filed a suit against H. C. Tinney, Clerk of Tippecanoe County, to compel him to pay over \$1,300 claimed by the State. The money is the unclaimed residue of the estate of Annie Gwimp, deceased, and the law provides that such moneys shall be paid to the State, to be held in trust for future claimants. Mr. Tinney claims that the law only requires him to pay the money to the County Treasurer, and that official to the State. He wants to find out to whom he must pay it, and has refused to pay, so that it may get into Court and bring a decision which can be used as a precedent. It is a test case.

—The Auditor of State asked for the Attorney General's opinion regarding the right of a County Treasurer to retain 6 per cent. of delinquent taxes collected by prosecuting attorneys under Section 6491 of the Revised Statutes. Attorney General Michener holds that a county treasurer, under Section 5928 of the Revised Statutes, is entitled to retain 6 per cent. of all delinquent taxes collected. There are no words of limitations in the Statute. On the contrary, the law expressly says that the treasurer is entitled to 6 per cent. of the collections no matter by whom they are made.

—A man was taken from his bed by a band of masked men and tied to a tree in his yard, and unmercifully whipped. He is a young married man, and lives about five miles south of Corydon. Just before orders were given by the captain of the gang to lay the lash to his bare back, he was informed that he was about to be whipped for general cussedness. But the true reason of the whipping he received is supposed to be that he had denounced the Knights of the Switch, and had accused a number of parties of belonging to the organization. His dose was a terrible one.

—In the Allen County Circuit Court judgment in foreclosure was rendered in favor of H. B. Hollins against W. K. Vanderbilt and the Nickel Plate Railway for \$281,667. The property affected, and which will be sold by the Sheriff at Fort Wayne, is the bed of the old Wabash and Erie Canal from the Ohio State line to LaGro, Ind., a distance of thirty-three miles, except five miles constituting the Nickel Plate right-of-way through Fort Wayne.

—While standing conversing on the pavement in front of a two-story building on the north side of the public square at Greencastle, Hon. J. G. Dunbar, and Mr. Artie Call, of Madison Township, were struck about the head and neck by portions of a falling brick cornice and dangerously, though it is thought not fatally, injured. Had not the fall of the brick been broken by an awning both men would doubtless have been killed instantly.

—Not long since a man at Crawfordsville lost his false teeth, and, as he was to make a public speech the next day, he was in an awkward predicament. But he was not long in solving the question what to do, and he soon persuaded a neighbor woman to loan him her teeth for the special occasion. The speech was delivered, the teeth returned, and no person was the wiser.

—A curious phenomenon resulted in Harrison County a few days ago from a bolt of lightning striking a tree standing in the yard of William Alstott, near Nevin. Near the stricken tree was a large pond, which had been used for watering stock. Shortly after the lightning stroke, the pond began sinking, and has, in the few days since that time, disappeared entirely.

—The State Medical Society, in session at Indianapolis, elected the following officers: President, S. H. Charlton, Jackson County; Vice President, C. W. Burkett, Kosciusko; Secretary, E. S. Elder, Marion; Assistant Secretary, John Nixon, Randolph; Treasurer, C. B. Higgins, Miami.

—Wm. Pogue, a young man, 22 years old, residing at Anderson, a brakeman on the Panhandle Railway, was instantly killed at Dunreith, by falling from a west-bound freight train while the cars were in motion. He was cut to pieces, his head being severed from his body.

—The Battle-ground Camp-meeting will begin on the 27th of July, this year, and continue over two Sundays. It is understood that the Louisville, New Albany and Chicago Railway will run Sunday trains this year—something that has not been done for some years.

—Mrs. Wm. Gates, an eccentric old lady who died at Elkhart, was found to have \$5,000 sewed up in her skirt—\$300 in small change, \$200 in one-dollar bills, and the remainder in bills of various other denominations. She was wealthy, but had no confidence in banks.

—Mrs. William St. John, of Martinsville, fell down a stairway into the cellar of her residence, striking her head against the steps, and died in a few hours. She was an estimable lady, about fifty-five years of age, and the wife of one of the leading citizens.

—Levi Thomas, who was sent to the Michigan City prison for two years, was visited by his wife, who walked two hundred miles to see him. She has engaged as a domestic in a family near the prison that she may be near him during his incarceration.

—Martin Bout, while plowing on his farm, near Michigan City, exploded a dynamite bomb which had been placed there by unknown parties. His arm was blown off, both legs broken, and he was otherwise terribly mangled. He will hardly recover.

—Oliver Linsey, of Alamo, was stricken with apoplexy at Crawfordsville, and fell from his wagon to the ground, and now lies in a serious condition.