THE NEW CONGRESS.

IT HAS CONVENED AND WASHING-TON IS BUSY AGAIN.

Timely Gossip About Such American Statesmen as Have at Various Periods in the Nation's History Officiated in the Chair of the Speaker of the House,



most formal manner, and, as usual. capital contrast it days. When a congress convenes for its second or any subsequent session no one expects much of interest; for the speaker and all officers are already chosen, the

committees appointed, and generally the work pretty well laid out in advance. It is far otherwise on each December of the "odd years;" for it is one of the odd features of our mixed system of government that a congressma has a year and a month between election and the chance to serve-time enough for his constituents to measurably forget what he promised. To add to the anomaly, the is a continuing body, and the president calls it to order; but each successive house begins de novo, and every official must be re-elected or reappointed, from speaker to doorkeepers and pages. Then the clerk, who necessarily holds over to make up the roll of the new congress, is the principal organizing officer; but as almost every congress contains a large majority of old members, and nearly all the new ones have had experience in their state legislatures, they very soon take the thing out of the clerk's hands. That official has no discretionary powers. If a man comes with the certificate of his state that he received a majority of the votes, the clerk must put him on the roll, though another man bring conclusive proof that the vote was fraudulent. The first man becomes the "sitting member," and draws his pay, though every other member may have decided to vote him out; the claimant is the "contesting member," and has all the disadvantages of an outsider; but for many years past congress has voted full pay to success'il cutestants, though admitted on the last day of that congress. By this beautiful arrangement it often happens that two men draw pay for the same district; but Uncle Sam is rich and the people do not complain.

Only once has a clerk dared to exceed purely ministerial duties. That was in the memorable December of 1839, when the clerk decided that the certificates of certain members of New Jersey were irregular, and would not | terms, with a good prospect ahead; complete the calling of the roll till his claim was admitted; nor would he put a motion of had but one full term and two small fracfered by any member. There was a national logislative body at the mercy of a mere ministerial officer, when the venerable John Quincy Adams solved the problem by a motion to choose other officials and proceed, and standing on his chair, put the motion himself. It was carried unanimously, and a good precedent established. The office of speaker is one of steadily increasing importance, though it has always been one of high honor-one held by men the most eminent in the nation's history. The names of Jonathan Trumbull, Henry Clay and Schuyler Colfax at once suggest themselves as occupants of the speaker's chair during three momentous periods in our history; and the respective friends of those two gentlemen claim that James C. Blaine and John G. Carlisle take rank as able presiding officers with either of the previous three. Clay was speaker through two terms (1809-13), then yielded for one term to Langdon Cheves, of South Carolina, but returned to the chair for the three terms of

1815-21, less a few months' of the last. Colfax and Blaine each held three full terms, and Carlisle now enters on his third. Yet some men



R. M. T. HUNTER. HENRY CLAY. with marked unheard of, and the man who held the place longest is little known-viz. Andrew Steven-

success are today

HOWELL COBB. N. P. BANKS. son, of Virginia, from December 3, 1827, to June 2, 1834. The list of speakers immediately follow- feet; the length of the main bridge is 1,760 ing him is calculated to excite in the minds of old readers some melancholy reflections on the vanity of human wishes, when we reflect how great a place each of them once filled in the public eye, how sad the destiny of some, how peculiar that of several. First on the list is John Bell (1834-5), one year the candidate of a "Union party" for the presidency, the next year fighting to dissolve the Union, while his late colleague on the ticket, Edward Everett, was striving in his way to sustain it. The fact that James K. Polk was speaker in 1835-9 is forgotten by the majority of those who remember him only as president during the Mexican war. Robert M. T. Hunter followed him for one term, and became a very conspicuous figure; he was one of the many completely ruined by the collapse of the Southern Confederacy, and lived the next twenty years in such complete retirement that when he reappeared in public life for a brief period the majority of voters asked in wonder who this very old man was. An erratic and badly managed antislavery crusade brought on a reaction, which made Howell Cobb, of Georgia, speaker from Dec. 22, 1849, to March 4, 1851. The contest over his election was thought to be very exciting, and his administration was marked by the compromise measures of 1850; but that and all previous contests were completely forgotten in the long and exciting struggle to elect a speaker, which lasted from December 6, 1855, to February 2, 1856, and was then terminated only by sotting aside the majority. requirement and allowing a plurality to elect. Nathaniel P. Banks, of Massachusetts, thus choses, waste in a cotton mill in youth, and vers in a core a lectionately called "Nat

about his posicical life till the war began;

then, though he held the rank of a major gen

eral, he so an retired to private nfc, and for many years his name has rarely been mentioned. Compared with those stirring times of old the opening of the present congress does, indeed, seem tame, and the election of Speaker Carlisle like the choice of a Sabbath school superintendent, yet we do not seem to suffer from want of excitement even now.

When we consider the hot fight of 1849 and the prolonged struggle of 1855-6, we should naturally conclude that the opening of the first congress was the beginning of a battle royal. In fact, there was almost no contest, and it was only with difficulty that ONGRESS has the new legislative body was got together at convened in the all. Rhode Island and North Carolina were not yet members of the National Union, and were, of course, unrepresented; and in sevold habitues of the eral other states the constitution had been barely squeezed through the ratifying conventions by very small majorities. The new government was feared quite as much as it was loved; there was such dread that the rights of the states would be overborne that in all the doubting districts the people took care to elect extreme anti-Federalists, and these gentlemen, having little faith in the new order, were naturally slow in getting to congress, and contrary to all recent experience, did not particularly care whether they got there at all!

It is amusing to learn that in after years, when the new government was an undoubted success, several who ar-

rived late were particular in having it recorded that they did so on account of "bad roads," Wednesday, the 4th of March, 1789, was the day preser i bed for the



SCHUYLER COLFAX. were present to appoint a

temporary secretary and JOHN BELL adjourn from day to day to wait for a quorum. Nor was it till April 6 that the house was organized and ready for business. It had many able and patriotic men, however, such as Fisher Ames, James Madison, Elias Boudinot and Roger Sherman, and one of the most able, Frederick A. Muhlenberg, of Pennsylvania, was chosen speaker. And this brings us to the most curious fact

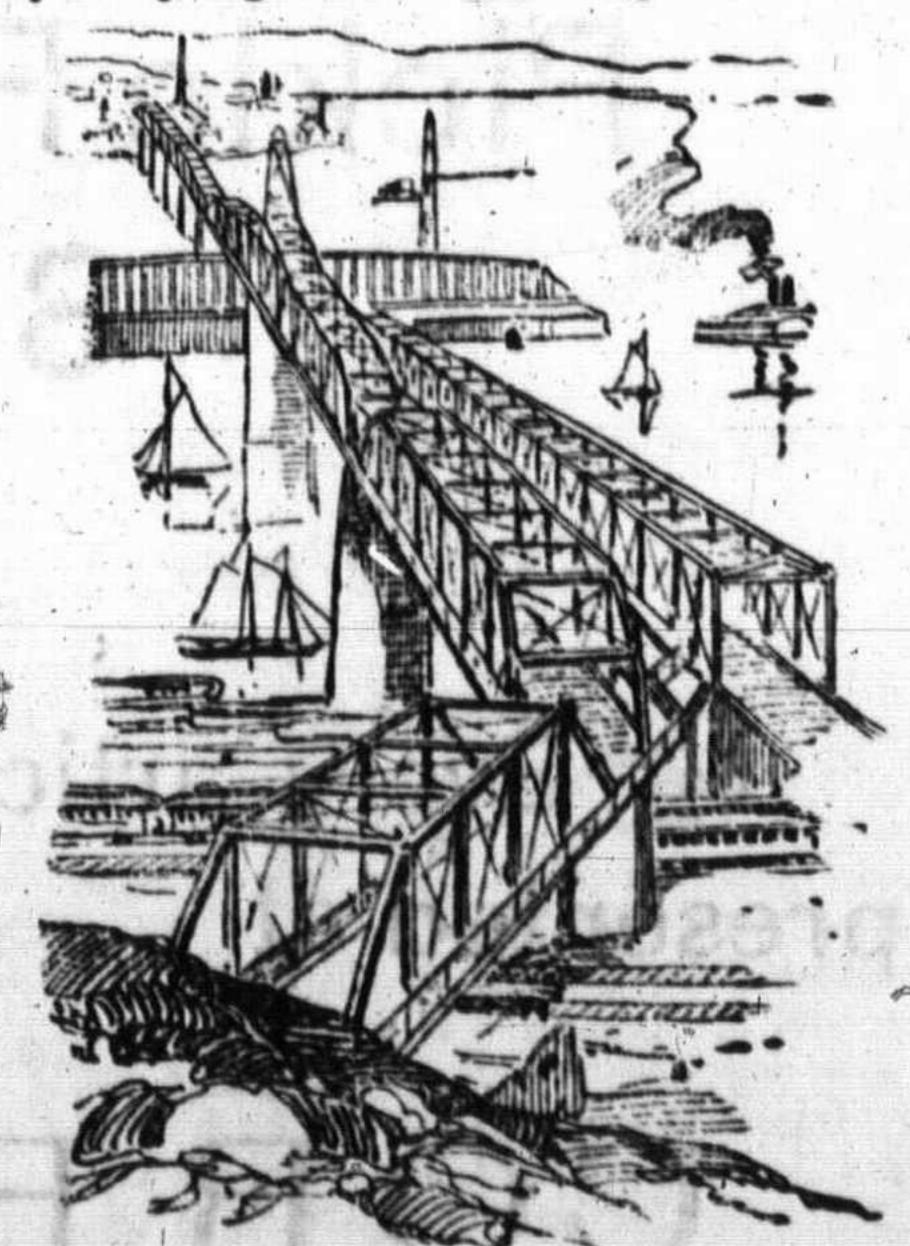
about this office-its limited geographical range. Twenty-four of the present states have never furnished a speaker, and more than half of the other fourteen have had but little of the office, so that the honor has been almost confined to seven states. Kentucky leads all others by a long distance, having furnished the speakers for twelve full while the great state of New York has tions. Virginia is second, with seven full terms, and Massachusetts next with five. Indiana barely fell short of five by the untimely death of the lamented Michael C. Kerr in the recess of 1875, which gave Pennsylvania a fraction over four. Ohio, the third state in the Union, and in popular estimation the home of the ambitious, has had but one term; Connecticut but one, and Maine three. Georgia has also furnished but one, but he was a "hustler," the noted Howell Cobb, and won high honors during the memorable session of 1849-51, when the country was again and again on the verge of dissolution because of the exciting slavery issue. All the region west of the Mississippi has not furnished one; and only one speaker, James K. Polk, has ever reached the presidency. Of course speakers pro tem, are not included in this summary.

ANOTHER BIG BRIDGE.

The Structure Lately Erected Across the Mississippi at Dubuque, Ia.

Dubuque, Ia., now boasts of the finest common road bridge over the Mississippi, and the only one passable for carriages between St. Paul and Davenport. It is also who filled the chair | the only bridge above St. Louis under which the largest steamers can pass without a draw, and the center of the main span is fifty-five feet above the highest flood level of the Mississippi. It unites Dubuque with the rich regions of northwestern Illinois and southwestern Wisconsin, and an equally interesting fact is the rapidity with which the structure was provided for and completed. In the spring of 1886 a canvassing committee. began its work in Dubuque, and soon secured | cording to Art Interchange. Very pretty subscriptions to the amount of \$80,000 for a ones can be made of denim, which comes in spected the plans he argued the abandonment of the pontoon plan so as to take adment of the pontoon plan so as to take adlev piece with an oval top which must be pontoon bridge. When the contractor in- two colors, golden brown and blue, and is constructing a high bridge without a draw. turned in and bound with braid of the same This idea was adopted, the money was raised, color as the material; then cut two smaller the first pile driven Sept. 7, 1886, and the bridge was ready for the public in November | brella-and sew them to the back with the of this year, at a cost of \$128,000.

great success in engineering. The channel the center but 5 feet above each end; there or door. are four spans of 205 feet each and one of 248 feet and of the approaches 1,040, and the structure of iron rests on seven immense piers. It is but 75 feet from the railroad bridge, and so much higher that the end of the draw on the latter swings under the great cantilever span. Seen from below the bridge appears an airy structure floating in space; but on close examination it is found to be extremely substantial, and has been approved by every engineer who has inspected it. All



THE DUBUQUE BRIDGE.

the material was thoroughly tested before being put in. The approach on the east side contains two iron spans of 120 feet each, serving as viaducts over the Illinois Central and Chicago, Burlington and Northern railroads. It is to be operated as a toll bridge

ALL AROUND THE HOUSE.

Leather Decorations -- Suggestions for

Christmas Work-Useful Recipes. Ornamented leather represents fashion's latest whim in handsome interior decoration, threatening to supersede even costly frescoes. Decorated leather is used for finishing the walls of libraries, dining rooms and halls,

Only the first grades of leather, prepared and ornamented with greatest skill and care, are suitable for this exclusive and costly style of decoration.

An Excellent Pudding.

Mrs. Henderson recommends the following as one of the plainest and the best puddings ever eaten. The ingredients are one cupful of boiled rice (better if just cooked and still hot), three cupfuls of milk, three-quarters of a cupful of sugar, a tablespoonful of corn starch, two eggs and flavoring. Dissolve the corn starch first with a little milk and then stir in the rest of the milk; add the yolks of the eggs and the sugar beaten together, now put this over the fire (there is less danger of burning in a custard kettle), and when hot add the hot rice. It will seem as if there were too much milk for the rice, but there is not. Stir Re carefully until it begins to thicken like boiled custard, then take it off the fire and add the flavoring-say extract of lemon. Put it into a pudding dish and place it in the oven. Now beat the whites of the eggs to a stiff froth and add a little sugar and flavoring. Take the pudding from the oven when colored a little, spread the froth over the top and return it to the oven for a few minutes to give the froth a delicate

Holiday Fancy Work. Woven matting cuffs such as butchers use make pretty holders for whisk brooms, when bronzed and hung by ribbons,

A beautiful blotter is made by covering two pasteboard leaves for covers with gray Line and fill with blotters as usual.

A pleasant gift for a sick friend, who can keep it near the pillows to enjoy its subdued odor, is a rose leaf bag. Make a bag of pale pink, blue or oli osilk, fourteen inches long and seven wide, and an overslip of thin sheer linen or swiss. Embroider the latter in silk with a rose and its foliage, with single petals as if they had fallen. Add in outline stitch "Sweets to sweets" or other pleasant motto. Fill the silk sack three-fourths full with dried rose petals. Slip the thin sack over it and tie with a ribbon and bows.

A Decorative Little Cushion.

In the dainty little pin cushion seen in the cut may be found a suggestion to ladies who are manufacturing their Christmas gifts betimes. This cushion, sometimes called pompadour, is usually made to hang on the dressing table or bureau, a style frequently more convenient than the old one. It represents such as everybody has use for at the holiday



POMPADOUR PIN CUSHION.

An ordinary cushion of muslin or drilling is stuffed with hair and inclosed in a bag of silk, satin or any preferred material. The bag is just wide enough to let the cushion the cushion in, the upper part of the bag is tied together just above the cushion with a cord, over which a ribbon is tied in a large bow. A loop of ribbon, with a bow at one end, is then fastened on to hang the cushion by, but may be left off, if preferred. The outside cover or slip is sometimes made of different colored ribbons joined together with fancy stitches. Plain covers of solid color are very pretty, and are ornamented with a design or monogram, embroidered or painted.

A Useful Christmas Present.

Umbrella and parasol cases to hang on bedroom walls are coming into fashion again, acpieces-large enough to hold a good sized umsame finish of braid. Paint on these pieces This structure is worthy of study as a in oils some appropriate conventional design or simply a mass of flowers, if preferred; finspan is a cantilever, 363 feet in length, with ish with bows of ribbon and hang on the wall

Confectioners' Thick Icing.

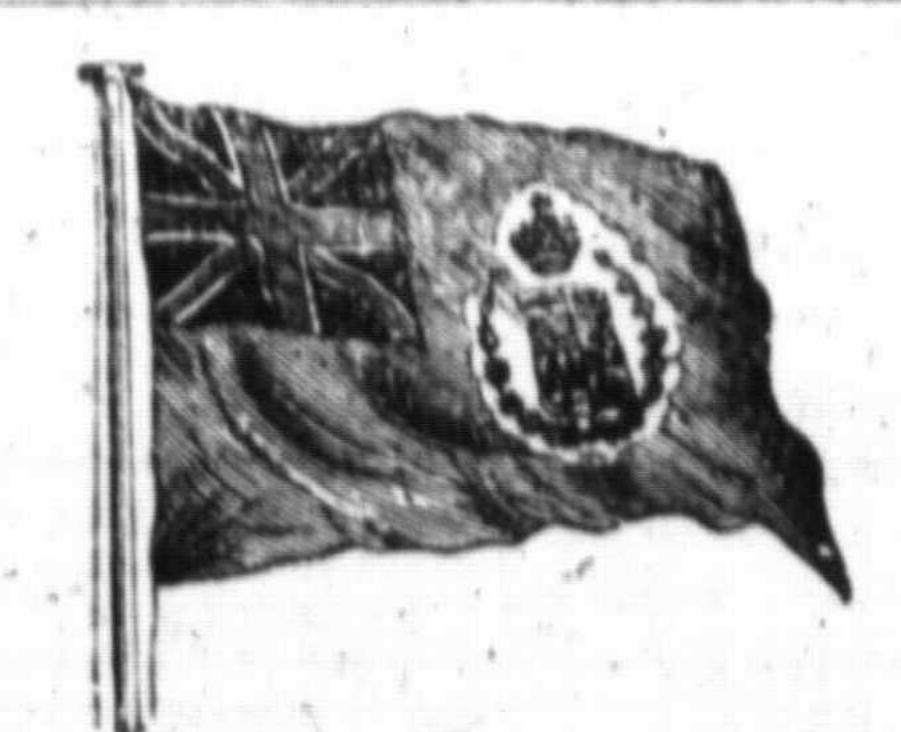
Table Talk tells how to make the confectioners' thick icing that will soon be wanted in the home kitchen to give the finishing touch to the holiday fruit cake. Put one pound of granulated sugar and a half pint of water in a perfectly clean saucepan, stir continually over the fire until the sugar dissolves, then boil without stirring until the syrup spins a heavy thread from a spoon dipped into it. Beat the whites of two eggs to a very stiff froth; add to them gradually the syrup, beating rapidly all the while; then add a quarter teaspoonful of cream of tartar, and beat until cold and thick. Flavor to taste.

Stuffing for Baked Poultry.

Stuffing for baked turkey, chicken, etc., is made as follows: Soak sufficient stale bread in cold water to fill the bird and then squeeze it dry in a towel. Put some butter in a stewpan, and when hot stir in a little minced onion, a tablespoonful or two of chopped parsley, half a teaspoonful of powdered thyme, a little grated nutmeg, pepper, salt and stock or water to moisten all sufficiently. Stir over the fire until it leaves the bottom and sides of the pan, then mix in two

Milk Cooked Without Scorching. The surest way to cook milk without scorching is in a double boiler or a tin that sits in a kettle of boiling water. The wetting · of a kettle with cold trater and allowing it to remain a few minuter, before putting the milk in will lessen the dar ger of scorching.

To Erighten Polished Wood. A polished wood surface that has grown dull with age may be brightened with linseed oil. Tut a drop or two of oil at a time on a



CYCLONE OF BARGAINS

-FOR THE---

--AT--

Grand Sacrificing Sale of

linen, embroidered in solid palm leaves of deep blue crewel, the leaves being about an inch and a half apart and at various angles. FALL AND WINTER DRY GOODS

COMMENCING

MONDAY, DEC. 12th.

We are bound to make a CLEAN SWEEP of our entire stock. one of those pretty, unpretentious trifles a little ready money just as soon as it can be gathered in from willing buyers.

A SACRIFICE IS NECESSARY

To Capture the Cash Quickly and Here is our Offering.

Lowest Prices Yet Named FOR GOODS THAT ARE IN EVERY WAY DESIRABLE.

slip in, and about two inches longer. It is finished at the top with lace. After putting Bargains in Dress Goods, Bargains in Cloakings, Bargains in Tweeds, Bargains in Hosiery, Bargains in Gents' Furnishings, Bargains in Ladies' Wear,

Ever Known to the Trade.

Come soon for Special Bargains. From DEC. 12th, '87, to JAN. 31st, '88, Every Day will will be a BARGAIN DAY at

Minnes & Burns'

RELIABLE AND CLOSE-PRICED DRY GOODS STORE. woolen rag and rub quickly but evenly. Use Watch for our Price Lists