any thief daring enough to intrude Uncle Sam's protectorate of Klondyke gold.—Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 20th July.

## FIRE-RESISTING MATERIALS.

The recent fire in a Melbourne tobacco factory has called forth "Some Notes," by Nahum Barnet, architect. "This fire," he says, "has proved a timely object lesson of the advantages of a method of construction which undoubtedly helped to save the building from a total demolition and secured a larger amount of valuable salvage." The floors of the building (60 by 60), are supported by Oregon beams, of a maximum thickness of 18 inches by 10 inches. The story-posts are of red-gum and Oregon pine.

The fire broke out in the sixth story. The floor (Baltic white deal), was destroyed, but almost all the burnt beams and story-posts held their position, and the floor battens remained intact. Work was resumed on the fifth floor within a few days. The other floors were undamaged.

Mr. Barnet cut sections of the beams and story-posts which had been subjected to the fullest force of the fire. Only an inch deep of the surface was found charred; the heart of the Oregon timber was as perfect as when cut in the forest. "The carbon surface," he says, "set up an almost impenetrable area to the incursion of flame, and the slowness of its combustion was, therefore, its salvation." This fire furnishes additional proof that timber supports are preferable to iron or steel or stone.

Slate roofs are denounced. Mr. Barnet says: "To cover with slate is actually courting danger, for a slate roof, under the action of fire, followed by a douche of cold water, results in a mass of flying pieces and the exposure of naked rafters to a heavy draught and flame." Flat roofs have disadvantages even when built of fire-resisting materials. They catch and retain falling brands. The most fire-protective roof is tile-covered, with the orthodox pitch for the descent of burning embers.

The foregoing views are supported by the results of the recent printery fire in San Francisco, where wooden posts were merely charred, and resisted a fire which destroyed floors and contents.—Coast Review.

## CURRENT LUMBER CONDITIONS.

Reports from our regular correspondents, and from dealers and manufacturers throughout the country, reflect a condition of quietude in the general market peculiar to the midsummer period. Yet there are redeeming features in the prevailing aspect of affairs. It is generally stated that business this month, both in volume and money results, is making a better exhibit than it did in July of last year, while indications for the fall are much better now than a year ago. Another satisfactory feature is that collections throughout the interior are generally easy, which places business in good financial condition, as well as indicates prosperity throughout the country. It is becoming increasingly evident that last year's good crops and remunerative prices therefor have placed the rural population in better condition than for several years. Now that another successful season has far advanced it is but reasonable to expect that there will be a new start in improvement, and that a brisk demand for lumber will be the result. Prosperity and enhanced money-power in the agricultural class must be felt this fall in increased thrift in the towns and cities. This will contribute to a better demand for lumber for building, repairs, and other improvements. It is probable that the large cities will lag behind the country in the new race for improvement, because they have nearly all been overbuilt, and to a degree on speculation, and such ventures are now culminating in foreclosures of mortgages and the depression of previously assumed values. The result of this has been a check in building enterprises in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Chicago, and other cities of the larger class. The speculative builders can no longer borrow money on the security they are prepared to offer, while the money lenders, into whose hands millions of dollars' worth of property has passed, are more anxious to get rid of their holdings than to further improve them. This state of things will continue until industrial and trade prosperity shall have again determined population into the large cities, and the increase shall have filled up vacant house room, and new structures shall be in demand. It is evident that this process will require some time, and meanwhile the lumber trade will have to depend on the country and special industries for a demand sufficient to keep business moving.—N.W. Lumberman.

## THE INFLUENCE OF WEALTH ON MORTALITY.

Mr. Neefe, the Breslau statistician, publishes an interesting paper, from which the following important facts are taken: "In the year 1896 it appears that the death rate of the poorer classes was nearly three times greater than it was among the rich. The amount paid in rent is given as a criterion of means, the figures being as follows: Out of every one thousand who paid a rent up to 300 marks, 20.7 died; out of every one thousand paying a rent of from 301 to 750 marks, only 11.2 died, and out of every thousand paying a rent ranging from 750 to 1,500 marks, only 6.5 died, the average being 17.6 persons dying to each 1,000 living." According to these figures the mortality of the Breslau poor population is at least three times greater than that of the rich, but as a matter of fact it must be much greater, the deaths of servants, journeymen, and persons who die in the hospitals not being included, and they in all cases belong to what are called the poorer classes. The same article shows that more than one-half of the children born belonging to the poor population died in babyhood, while the deaths of the children of the rich amounted to only about one-sixth of the total number born.

## WOMEN IN BUSINESS.

There was a time when matrimonial partnership was about the only one in which women were thought competent to engage. But according to the latest published volume of the Massachusetts census of 1895 the growth of partnerships involving women in purely industrial and commercial concerns is truly astonishing.

In 1885 there were 26,521 male partners in the private firms in the state, and 1,760 female partners. But in 1895 the male partners had increased to 27,653, while the female partners had increased to 2,598. In 10 years the male partners increased only 4.27 per cent., but the female partners increased 47.61 per cent.

Similar results are shown in Chief Wadlin's figures, as to how women are coming to the front in corporations as stockholders. The year 1885 saw 30,733 male stockholders in the corporations of the state and 11,572 female stockholders. By 1895 the number of the former had grown to 34,231 and of the latter to 17,369. The percentage of increase of male stockholders was 11.33 per cent., while the number of female stockholders was 50.10 per cent. Taking partners and stockholders together, the males increased from 57,254 in 1885 to 61,884 in 1895, or 8.09 per cent., and the females increased from 13,332 in 1885 to 19,976 in 1895, or 49.77 per cent.

It would thus appear that there is now one female partner or stockholder to three males in Massachusetts. What more convincing proof could be found of the growth of women's interests in the material as well as maternal concerns of society? If the present growth continues one-third of the partners and stockholders of the state will be women by the time the census of 1905 is gathered. Such facts will surely form new material for argument on the part of woman suffrage advocates.

The industrial side of woman is reaching astonishing proportions. What will be the ultimate result upon prevailing notions of "female limitations" remains to be seen. That women are growing to be more and more financially independent is a clear deduction from Mr. Wadlin's figures. That the growth and sacredness of the family are thereby destined to suffer is more easily asserted than proved.—Boston Globe.

## SURPRISES IN COMMERCE.

The record of the most remarkable year in the history of American commerce was completed last week at the Washington Bureau of Statistics so far as relates to the aggregates of imports and exports. The exports of the United States for the fiscal year ending June 30th, in merchandise alone, were $1,231,311,866. This total surpasses by more than $180,000,000, the exports of last year and by more than $200,000,000 the exports of 1892, which were the banner years up to 1898.

The still more remarkable excess of exports over imports is more than twice the sum ever previously recorded, amounting to $615,259,024. The exports were almost exactly twice the imports, tending to create a great balance of credits in favor of the United States on the other side of the ocean. The excess of exports in 1897, which was the largest previous year recorded, was $286,263,144. The next largest excess was in 1881, when the amount was $259,712,718.

The total imports during the fiscal year 1898 were $616,052,844, as compared with $764,730,412 in 1897. This volume of imports is smaller than in any year since 1885, and smaller than any year since 1879, with the single exception of 1885.

The excess of imports of gold during 1898 has been $99,849,095; of gold ore, $5,136,224, and of silver ore, $19,871,653. The excess of exports of silver coin and bullion was $44,052,311. Taking these figures in connection with those of the merchandise traffic, there is an apparent credit balance in favor of the United States of $534,000,000.

## A CAUTIOUS CHIEL.

An amusing scene took place the other day in the Glasgow sheriff court, during a Board of Trade enquiry into the circumstances attending the loss of the West Highland "puffer," or coasting steamer, the "Helen MacGregor. One of the witnesses was Capt. Fletcher, a previous master of the craft, and the sheriff asked him if in his opinion the vessel was seaworthy.

"Weel," said the witness, leaning his arm on the rail of the witness box, "the engines behaved no sae bad and worked middlin' weel."

His Lordship—"You are a very cautious man. 'No sae bad' and 'middlin' weel' may be very good Scotch, but they do not convey much information. Was she seaworthy?"

Witness—"Well, yes, in a way."

The Sheriff—"What kind of a way? The proper way?"

Witness—"Ou, just in a middlin' ordinary way."

The Sheriff—"But that is as vague as the other. Had you any fault to find with her?"

Witness (cautiously)—"Well, she was maybe getting old."

The Sheriff—"Did you think she was seaworthy when you saw her in the Crinan canal in November last?"