

profit. Where profits are high, interest is high, and *vice versa*; in fact, the rate of interest is simply the net profit on capital. Besides this, however, the interest on each particular loan must further vary according to the supposed risk of the lender, the supposed solvency of the borrower, etc. In Europe formerly the imposition of interest was alternately prohibited and permitted, the clergy being generally unfavorable to the practice. Calvin was among the first to expose the error and impolicy of prohibition. In 1546 it first received a parliamentary sanction in England, and it was fixed at 10 per cent; in 1624 it was reduced to 8, in 1651 to 6, and in 1724 to 5, at which rate it remained till 1854, when all usury acts were repealed. Similar reductions have taken place in the United States, high rates of interest prevailing in newly settled regions and low ones in the older districts, 5 per cent being a common rate in the large cities and thickly settled States.

Interference (in-tér-fér'ens), in physics, the mutual action of waves of any kind (whether those in water, or sound, heat, or light waves) upon each other, by which, in certain circumstances, the vibrations and their effects are increased, diminished, or neutralized. When two minute pencils of light, radiating from two different luminous points, and making a small angle with each other, fall upon the same spot of a screen or a piece of paper, it is found that in some cases they illuminate the paper or screen more strongly than either would have done singly, and sometimes they destroy each other's effects and produce a black spot or fringe. Such phenomena have been explained in accordance with the undulatory theory of light, and furnish a strong argument in favor of that theory. The interference of waves of sound is a phenomenon which may be frequently observed in the *beat* of the tones of the heavier organ pipes. Again, to a person situated in the middle of a bell the sound waves from the vibrating segments of the bell interfere and produce only a moderate loudness, whereas to a person at a short distance outside the edge the loudness is intolerable.

Interior, DEPARTMENT OF THE, organized in 1849, one of the administrative departments of the United States government. Its head is the Secretary of the Interior, a member of the Cabinet. It supervises all public lands and patents, education, the census, pensions, the territories, Indian affairs, etc.

Interlaken (in-tor-lák'en; 'between the lakes'), a village in Switzerland, in the canton, and 26 miles s. e. of Berne, beautifully situated near the left bank of the Aar, between the lakes of Thun and Brienz, much resorted to by tourists. Pop. 3747.

Interlude (in'tér-lúd), originally an entertainment exhibited on the stage between the acts of a play, or between the play and the afterpiece, to amuse the spectators, while the actors rested or shifted their dress, or the scenes and decorations were changed. In England dramas appear to have borne this name from the time they superseded the miracle and mystery plays till the period of the Elizabethan drama. The name is also given to a brief piece of church music, prepared or extempore, for the organ, and played after each stanza except the last of a metrical psalm or hymn.

Interment (in-tér'ment). See *Burial*.

Intermezzo (in-tér-met'so), in dramatic literature, nearly the same as interlude, a short musical piece, generally of a light sparkling character, played between the parts of a more important work, such as an opera, drama, etc. Pieces intended for independent performances are sometimes designated by this name by the French and the Italians.

Intermittent Fever. See *Malaria*.

Internal Revenue, a term used in the United States to designate revenue collected by the government from taxes aside from those on imported goods. The first tax of this kind was laid in 1791 on distilled spirits. Taxes were afterwards laid on carriages and several other articles. On the recommendation of President Jefferson, all internal taxes were repealed in 1802, and no others were authorized until 1813, when the war of 1812 made an increased revenue necessary. After 1818 no such taxes were levied until 1861, when the Civil war compelled a re-enactment of internal-revenue laws. A tax was imposed on a great variety of articles, also on incomes, sales, legacies, etc. By the acts of 1866, 1867 and 1868 many taxes were abolished, but revenue on spirits, tobacco, fermented liquors and a few other articles was continued. In the Spanish-American war, 1898, and the European war, 1914-18, internal revenue was relied on chiefly to meet increased expenditures. In Canada and Great Britain the taxation which corresponds with the American internal revenue is known as *excise* (q. v.). See also *War Revenue*, *Income Tax*, etc.