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FRIDAY, JANUARY 4, 1901.

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THE NAVAL OBSERVATORY REPORT.

THE first impression of our readers on glancing at the annual report of the Naval Observatory, of which the essential portions are reprinted in our columns, will be one of pleasure that the head of the Observatory has deemed it appropriate to review the conclusions of the board of visitors appointed by the Secretary of the Navy in 1899. But pleasure will be changed to disappointment at what the review omits. It maintains with an energy of expression quite unusual in an official paper that a majority of the board was hostile to the Observatory ; that it failed to report on the main points submitted, and that the measures which it proposed are 'preposterous' and 'only ridiculous.' But not a word is said in reply to the destructive criticism of the management of the institution 'during almost the entire period of its existence,' which is one of the most important features of the report. Had these strictures been now heard of for the first time some reason might have been found for ignoring them. But they are little more than an echo of strictures emanating from or endorsed by Secretaries of the Navy, the National Academy of Sciences, at least one distinguished naval offi-

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