

Reform Backward.

In the House of Representatives, yesterday, Leslie and Keith made successful inflammatory appeals to the spirit of party to reject a bill reported from the Committee on the Judiciary, to repeal Section 13, of 28th Chapter, Title 7, of the Revised Statutes, which confers upon the Attorney-General power to approve the bonds of County officers. The reason for repeal is undoubtedly a good one. The thing by which, next to their own sense of responsibility and regard for their characters, County officials are most strongly controlled and kept in tolerable bounds, is the power of their salaries over them. When substantial citizens of a County are bound for a man, the community through them have a hold upon him. And he is constantly made sensible of the length of this tether. But if a power outside of the bounds of the County can come in and approve a bond over the heads of the County Commissioners, the safeguards would be thrown down. The responsibility resting with the commissioners before the courts to see to it that no malfeasance or misdemeanor in the approval of a bond should take place, would no longer rest upon them. The bill was lost by a vote of 75 yeas to 32 nays. The ground was taken that Democratic County Commissioners might see fit not to approve bonds of Republican officials, and it was necessary for party ends that they should be approved. It is surmised that the party lash was cracked ever this in order to get the furor up for the Judge's election.

The Committee on Privileges and Elections reported against a bill to give the election of Justices of the Peace and Constables to the people, and the report was sustained. This constitutional right of the people, to which the Governor pointedly directed the attention of the Legislature, as one upon which the people might insist, and had a right to insist, was quietly ignored. A joint resolution to repeal a joint resolution authorizing the County Commissioners of Edgefield to levy a special tax of three mills—relief from which is greatly needed and sternly insisted on in that County—had the enacting clause struck out, on motion of Mr. Paris Simkins. This is reform, with a vengeance.

The Infamy of Gin-house Burning.

The habit of setting fire to gin-houses, barns and dwellings has become chronic in this State. As was said by a radical politician, some years ago, matches only cost five cents a box, and the remedy for fancied injuries and the means of gratifying the spirit of revenge are within the power of the meanest and most malignant creature. It has grown to be an outrage of such proportions and so little checked or punished by the courts of the country, that it is not to be wondered at if citizens should despair of any means of preventing it except by taking the law into their own hands. Such a course would be much to be deprecated. Lynching for this offense, if it were not contrary to the forms of law, would be universally regarded as a mild punishment. A man caught in such an act would have reason to thank his stars that he got off so easily. Nor would the inmate property-holder be much censured by public opinion if he treated such a heinous criminal in the same way that he would the burglar, caught in his house at the hour of mid-night, or the foot-pad attempting to rob him on the highway. We suppose that lynching would be preferable to an incendiary of that sort to being shot on the spot. Judge Lynch is a fearful fellow, but sometimes a necessary evil. He is sure to make his appearance where the laws and courts fail to protect the rights and property of the citizen. The much traduced institution of Delaware would, if adopted where such violence reigns, be efficacious against it. There are a number of crimes, such as wife-beating, outrages toward children and the like, and this infamy of applying the torch in the dead hours of night to the accumulations of toiling years, which would be largely prevented by a punishment that would at the same time hurt, disgrace and expose the wretch guilty of them.

Gen. B. F. Butler is reported as hopeless of the success of the Republican party in 1876. Consequently, he expects to start one of his own, with a platform of protection to American industries and unlimited greenbacks.

Under the view that the State cannot escape liability for the bills of the Bank of the State, the Governor recommends that an arrangement be entered upon to distribute the burden over a term of years. Otherwise, as he will say, they will fall some day like an avalanche on the treasury. Preliminary to the adoption of any such arrangement, would be, we think, a thorough exposure of the management of its assets since they were taken out of the hands of the officers of the bank. The State, through its Judges and Receivers, has had them in charge, and the State should render an account to the people of the mode in which they have been managed. A concurrent resolution, demanding a report from the last appointed Receiver, has passed both houses and we hope will not be allowed to sleep.

The Livingston (Alabama) Journal expresses a just view of the mode by which immigrants may be induced to seek their fortunes in that State. The field must be cleared of obstructions, the State Government purified of abuses, taxation made moderate, its proceeds honestly applied to legitimate objects, before men will venture to change from the evils they now suffer from to those of an unsettled condition of society, where safeguards and protection are systematically ignored. What our contemporary well says might prove a useful lesson here also: "Our present Legislature can promote white immigration and induce an influx of capital more effectually by such general legislation as will contribute to the social, political and material prosperity of our own people, than in any other way."

MULTUM IN PARVO.—The Richmond Dispatch occasionally shows how a great deal can be said in a very few words. Take this specimen:

"One Northern paper thinks that if the Southern people were let alone they would be as orderly as ever. Another one wants to know if this can be possible while White Leaguers and the Ku-Klux exist? We scarcely know whether to regard the essay to patronize us, or the attempt, by implication, to libel us, with more contempt. This foolishness might cease. It has ceased to pay."

Now, that the wild human beasts are let loose upon the streets of Northern cities and wild Ku-Klux are "banging like a thunder-cloud on the declivities of the mountains" in Pennsylvania, the North had better look to herself. The day of retribution is at hand.

PRESIDENT GRANT AND THE PANIC

The President, in his message, says: Since the convening of Congress, one year ago, the nation has undergone a prostration in business and industries such as has not been witnessed with us for many years. Speculation as to the causes for this prostration might be indulged in without profit, because as many theories would be advanced as there would be independent writers—those who expressed their own views, without borrowing, upon the subject. Without indulging in theories as to the cause of this prostration, therefore, I will call your attention only to the fact and to some plain questions as to which it would seem there should be no disagreement. During this prostration two essential elements of prosperity have been most abundant—labor and capital. Both have been largely unemployed. Where security has been undoubted, capital has been attainable at very moderate rates. Where labor has been wanted, it has been found in abundance at cheap rates, compared with what the necessities and comforts of life could be purchased with the wages demanded. Two great elements of prosperity, therefore, have not been denied us. A third might be added: our soil and climate are unequalled within the limits of any contiguous territory under one nationality for their variety of products to feed and clothe a people, and in the amount of surplus to spare to feed less favored people. Therefore, with these facts in view, it seems to me that wise statesmanship at this session of Congress would dictate legislation, ignoring the past, directing in proper channels these great elements of prosperity to any people. Debt—debt abroad—is the only element that can, with a sound currency, enter into our affairs to cause any continued depression in the industries and prosperity of our people. A great conflict for national existence made necessary, for temporary purposes, the raising of large sums of money from whatever source attainable. It was made necessary in the wisdom of Congress, and I do not doubt their wisdom in the premises regarding the necessity of the times, to devise a system of national currency, which it proved to be impossible to keep on a par with the recognized currency of the civilized world. This begot a spirit of speculation involving an extravagance and luxury not required for the happiness or prosperity of a people, and involving, both directly and indirectly, foreign indebtedness. The currency, being of fluctuating value, and, therefore, unsafe to hold for legitimate transactions requiring money, became a subject of speculation in itself. These two causes,

however, have involved us in a foreign indebtedness, contracted in good faith by borrower and lender, which should be paid in coin and according to the bond agreed upon when the debt was contracted—gold or its equivalent. The good faith of the Government cannot be violated towards creditors without national disgrace.

But our commerce should be encouraged, American ship building and carrying capacity increased, foreign markets sought for products of the soil and manufactures, to the end that we may be able to pay these debts. Where a new market can be created for the sale of our products, either of the soil, the mine, or the manufactory, a new means is discovered of utilizing our idle capital and labor to the advantage of the whole people. But, in my judgment, the first step toward accomplishing this object is to secure a currency of fixed stable value, a currency good wherever civilization reigns—one which, if it becomes superabundant with one people, will find a market with some other—a currency which has as its basis the labor necessary to produce it, which will give it its value. Gold and silver are now the recognized mediums of exchange of the civilized world over, and to this we should return with the least practicable delay. In view of the pledge of the American Congress, when our present legal tender system was adopted and debt contracted, there should be no delay, certainly no unnecessary delay, in fixing by legislation a method by which we will return to specie. To the accomplishment of this end I invite your special attention. I believe, finally, that there can be no prosperous and permanent revival of business and industries until a policy is adopted, with legislation to carry it out, looking to a return to a specie basis. It is easy to conceive that the debtor and speculative classes may think it of value to them to make so-called money abundant until they can throw a portion of their burden upon others, but even these, I believe, would be disappointed in the result if a course should be pursued which will keep in doubt the value of the legal tender medium of exchange. A revival of productive industry is needed by all classes, by none more than the holders of property of whatever sort with debts to liquidate from realization upon its sale. But admitting that these two classes of citizens are to be benefited by expansion, would it be honest to give it? Would not the general loss be too great to justify such relief? Would it not be just as honest and prudent to authorize each debtor to issue his own legal tenders to the extent of his liabilities? Than to do this would it not be safer, for fear of over issues by unscrupulous creditors, to say that all debt obligations are obliterated in the United States, and now we commence anew, each possessing all he has at the time free from incumbrance? These propositions are too absurd to be entertained for a moment by thinking or honest people, yet every delay in preparation for final resumption partakes of this dishonesty and is only less in degree as the hope is held out that a convenient season will at last arrive for the good work of redeeming our pledges to commence. It will never come, in my opinion, except by positive action by Congress or by national disasters, which will destroy, for a time at least, the credit of the individual and the State at large. A sound currency might be reached by total bankruptcy and discredit of the integrity of the nation and of individuals.

I believe it is in the power of Congress at this session to devise such legislation as will renew confidence, revive all the industries, start us on a career of prosperity to last for many years, and to save the credit of the nation and of the people. Steps towards the return to a specie basis are the great requisites to this devoutly-to-be-sought-for end. There are others which I may touch upon hereafter. A nation dealing in a currency below that of specie in value labors under two great disadvantages: First, having no use for the world's acknowledged mediums of exchange, gold and silver. These are driven out of the country because there is no demand for them. Second, the medium of exchange in use being of a fluctuating value, for after all, it is only worth just what it will purchase of gold and silver, metals having an intrinsic value just in proportion to the honest labor it takes to produce them. A larger margin must be allowed for profit by the manufacturer and producer. It is months from the date of production to the date of realization. Interest upon capital must be charged, and risk of fluctuation in the value of that which is to be received in payment added. Hence, high prices acting as a protection to the foreign producer, who receives nothing in exchange for the products of his skill and labor except a currency good at a stable value the world over. It seems to me that nothing is clearer than that the greater part of the burden of existing prostration for the want of a sound financial system falls upon the working man, who must, after all, produce the wealth, and the salaried man who superintends and conducts business. The burden falls upon them in two ways—by the deprivation of employment, and by the decreased purchasing power of their salaries. It is the duty of Congress to devise the method of correcting the evils which are acknowledged to exist, and not mine. But I will venture to suggest two or three things which seem to me as absolutely necessary to a return to specie payments. The first great requisite is a return to prosperity is that the legal tender clause to the law, authorizing the issue of currency by the National

Government, should be repealed, to take effect as to all contracts entered into after a day fixed in the repealing Act—not to apply, however, to payments of salaries by Government or for other expenditures now provided by law to be paid in currency.

In the interval pending between repeal and final resumption, provision should be made by which the Secretary of the Treasury can obtain gold as it may become necessary, from time to time, from the date when specie redemption commences. To this might be added a revenue sufficiently in excess of expenses to insure an accumulation of gold in the Treasury to sustain redemption. I commend this subject to your careful consideration, believing that a favorable solution is attainable, and that it reached by this Congress, and that the present and future generations will ever gratefully remember it as their deliverer from the thralldom of evil and disgrace. With resumption, free banking may be authorized with safety, giving the full protection to bill holders which they have under existing laws. Indeed, I would regard free banking as essential. It would give proper elasticity to the currency. As more currency should be required for the transaction of legitimate business, new banks would be started, and in turn banks would wind up their business when it was found that there was a superabundance of currency. The experience and judgment of the people can best decide just how much currency is required for the transaction of the business of the country. It is unsafe to leave the settlement of this question to Congress, the Secretary of the Treasury or the Executive. Congress should make the regulations under which banks may exist, but should not make banking a monopoly by limiting the amount of redeemable paper currency that shall be authorized. Such importance do I attach to this subject, and so earnestly do I commend it to your attention, that I give it prominence by introducing it at the beginning of the message.

I have stated that three elements of prosperity to the nation—capital, labor, skilled and unskilled, and products of the soil—remain with us. To direct the employment of these is a problem deserving the most serious attention of Congress. If employment can be given to all the labor offering itself, prosperity necessarily follows. I have expressed the opinion and repeat it, that the first requisite to the accomplishment of this end is the substitution of a sound currency in place of one of a fluctuating value. This secured, there are many interests that might be fostered to the great profit of both labor and capital. How to induce capital to employ labor is the question. The subject of cheap transportation has occupied the attention of Congress. Much new light on this question will, without doubt, be given by the committee appointed by the last Congress to investigate and report. A revival of ship building, and particularly of iron steamship building, is of vast importance to our national prosperity. The United States is now paying over \$100,000,000 per annum for freights and passage on foreign ships, to be carried abroad and expended in the employment and support of other peoples. Beyond a fair percentage of what should go to foreign vessels, estimating the tonnage and travel of each respectively, it is to be regretted that this disparity in the carrying trade exists, and to correct it I would be willing to see a great departure from the usual course of the Government in supporting what might usually be termed private enterprise. I would not suggest as a remedy direct subsidy to American steamship lines, but I would suggest the direct offer of ample compensation for carrying the mails between the Atlantic sea-board cities and the continental or American owned and American built steamers, and would extend this liberality to vessels carrying the mails to go to American States and to Central America and Mexico, and would pursue the same policy from our Pacific sea-ports to foreign ports on the Pacific. It might be demanded that vessels built for this purpose should come up to a standard fixed by legislation in tonnage, speed and all other qualities looking to the possibility of the Government requiring them at some time for war purposes. The right, also, of taking possession of them in such an emergency should be guarded. I offer these suggestions believing them worthy of consideration in all seriousness, affecting all sections and all interests alike. If anything better can be done to direct the country into a course of general prosperity, no one will be more ready than I to second the plan.

DESTROYED BY FIRE.—The residence of Mrs. Gordon Campbell, three miles from Aiken, S. C., was destroyed by fire last Monday night, about 9 o'clock. It was an entirely new house, with six rooms, and had no chimneys, being warmed by hot air. It caught fire from the kitchen and burned very rapidly. Nothing was saved but the furniture of one room. Mrs. Campbell is a Northern woman.

Subscriptions in aid of the sufferers by the late storm in Tusculum, Ala., have been received by the New York Cotton Exchange, to the amount of \$650. A meeting of the Produce Exchange was held to take measures to aid the sufferers in Nebraska. A committee was appointed to receive subscriptions.

There were 35 deaths in Charleston for the week ending the 5th—whites 19; colored 16. The Methodist Conference meets on the 10th instant, in Greenville.

CITY MATTERS.—Subscribe for the Phoenix—don't borrow.

Reading matter on every page. Fight shy of too many tips to-day and be happy.

Hen fruit is steadily advancing to the Christmas altitude.

The way John Barleycorn is taken hold of and shaken up this weather is a caution.

The latest style of female fashions is more honored in the breach than in the observance.

Necessary household articles of various kinds can be obtained from Mr. Lantry, nearly opposite Phoenix office.

Mr. McKenzie is having Santa Claus' reception room put in trim, in anticipation of the arrival of his Highness.

The Governor has appointed John H. Livingston County Treasurer of Orangeburg, and Samuel Mitchell, of Edgefield, a Notary Public.

There was a heavy white frost, yesterday morning, which greatly delighted the youngsters, who think it an indication of snow.

Why did she turn her back on you, young man? Innocent child! She wished to make an exhibition of her new overskirt.

The Abbeville Press and Banner has been enlarged; but, like some individuals we vot of, the columns are too long for the width.

The majority of the papers in this State, as well as the principal journals at the North, commend the inaugural of Gov. Chamberlain. "I told you so."

The Lenoir Railroad is about to be rebuilt. Col. H. T. Perke has the contract, and our word for it, the work will be pushed forward rapidly.

Mr. Cheswell drew a very respectable audience, in Irwin's Hall, to listen to his arraignment and denunciation of the whiskey demon. He is a capital speaker.

Messrs R. & C. Swadfield, who conduct the oldest established clothing establishment in the city, are out this morning in a lengthy advertisement, containing information for those in need of first quality articles. Peruse it.

The election for a Judge of the First Circuit comes off to-morrow. The prominent candidates are ex Solicitor Reed, Messrs. Baker and Whipple. It is an important position, and should be filled by a man of experience.

The fund appropriated for repairing the State House and grounds has been exhausted, leaving the work incomplete. Secretary Hayne will, doubtless, request additional funds from the Legislature for that purpose, and it is to be hoped the necessary amount will be provided.

A private despatch from Mr. Kaufman, dated Spartanburg, December 9, says that in consequence of recent accidents upon Spartanburg and Union Railroad, no extra train will be run on Saturday. Persons desiring to attend the mass meeting at Union must leave Columbia on Friday morning.

It will be seen by reference to the proceedings of the City Council, that they oppose no obstruction to the investigation of the condition of the city finances and its causes, by the committee of citizens appointed at a public meeting some days ago. They propose that another committee shall cooperate in this work, to be appointed by themselves, and to this, we suppose, there can be no objection.

The Grand Lodge of Ancient Free Masons commenced its session in Charleston on the 8th—a quorum being present. Grand Master J. B. Kershaw read his annual report, and at its conclusion declared a re-election. A jewel, belonging to Union Kitwinnig Lodge, which disappeared during the burning of Columbia, was returned to its proper owners by a brother from Plattsville, Nebraska.

The following officers were elected, last night, to serve Columbia Chapter, No. 5, R. A. M., for the ensuing Masonic year: M. E. H. P.—W. P. Hix; E. King—John Dorsey; E. Scriba—R. A. Keenan; C. H.—R. E. B. Hewetson; R. S.—John Sutphen; R. A. C.—C. Nary; G. M. 3 V.—A. H. Halladay; G. M. 2 V.—W. J. Cathcart; G. M. 1 V.—Owan Daly; T.—C. F. Jackson; S.—Jacob Sulzbacher; S. at.—J. P. Williams.

We had a call, yesterday, from Dr. T. A. Lufar, formerly a resident of this city, but now located in Baltimore. The doctor is on a visit to his old friends in the South. He will be remembered by many old soldiers in connection with the State Bureau of the South Carolina Hospital in Richmond during the war. Dr. Lufar has delivered several lectures, while on his tour, and it has been suggested that he repeat them in this city.

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.—Nothing has yet been heard of Mr. Lawrence S. Reynolds, who mysteriously disappeared in New York several months ago. He proposed to change his boarding-house, and had made the necessary arrangements, since which time nothing has been heard of him, and it is feared that he has been foully dealt with. Mr. Reynolds is a son of Prof. J. L. Reynolds, of this city. The family have the earnest sympathy of the entire community.

FATAL RAILROAD ACCIDENT.—A fatal accident occurred on the Wilmington, Columbia and Augusta Railroad, near Mrs' Bluff, on Tuesday night. The locomotive and ten cars of a freight train were thrown from the track and about 150 feet of the roadway torn up, by running into a mule team. The colored rider, whose name could not be ascertained, was instantly killed, as was also the animal. The passenger train was delayed eight or ten hours, but everything was right again, yesterday.

A GOOD IDEA.—The following resolution was cooked up in the Senate, yesterday, for presentation:

Resolved, That the Clerk of the Senate be authorized to employ Mr. C. Frohish Howard, the California lightning calculator, now in this city, to investigate and calculate the extent and amount of the assets and liabilities of the Bank of the State and the amount of the floating indebtedness of the State, including pay certificates, bills payable, &c.

UNITED STATES COURT, COLUMBIA, December 9.—Court opened this morning, at 10 o'clock—Judges Bond and Bryan presiding.

Attorney-General Melton resumed his argument against jurisdiction of the Court in case of Alexander Mattison. Messrs. Corbin and Baxter in reply. The Court reserved its decision. In the case of James Rollison, indicted for intimidating voters, it was ordered that the indictment be amended and a new trial granted.

A verdict for the plaintiff was rendered in the case of J. T. Davis vs. John W. Simpson for the sum of \$867 48.

The case of the Richmond and Danville Railroad Company vs. the Air Line Railroad Company et al., and that of the Bank of Commerce vs. the Commissioners of Pickens County, were argued.

The Court adjourned at 5 P. M., to meet to-morrow, at 10 A. M.

SUPREME COURT—WEDNESDAY, December 8.—The Court met at 10 A. M. Present—Chief Justice Moses and Associate Justices Wright and Willard.

Janet H. McLaren, respondent, vs. Knox & Cunningham, appellants, was resumed. Mr. Cochran was heard for appellants; Mr. Burt for respondent; Mr. Thomson for appellants in reply.

William H. Parker, Commissioner, respondent, vs. Frances L. Wilson, executrix, appellant. Mr. Burt was heard for appellant; Mr. McGowan was heard for respondent; Mr. Burt was heard for appellant in reply.

The following cases were continued: Susan Trotter, appellant, vs. William W. Robinson, respondent; State ex rel. Lydia A. M. Van Wyck et al., appellants, vs. Isabella H. Norris et al., respondents, (three cases); Sallie A. Gower, respondent, vs. Thomas Thomson, appellant; James A. Clarke, appellant, vs. John E. Schweisenger, respondent.

Ex parte Joel S. Perrin—petition for admission to practice in the Supreme Court. Mr. McGowan for petitioner. Upon production of the proper evidence, the petition was granted, and Mr. Perrin sworn and enrolled as an attorney, solicitor and counselor of the Supreme Court.

The State, respondent, vs. Jerry Coleman, appellant. Ordered, that the prisoner be remanded to Richland County Jail, until the further order of the Court.

At 3 P. M., the Court adjourned until Thursday, 10th, at 10 A. M., when the Second Circuit will be called.

LIST OF NEW ADVERTISEMENTS.

- W. B. Gulick—Committee of 20. E. H. Heintz—Queen's Delight. R. & W. C. Swadfield—Just Received. D. C. Peixotto & Sons—Auction. C. J. Lantry—Butter, &c. HOTEL ARRIVALS, DECEMBER 9.—Hendrix House—James Geddes, Baltimore; T. M. McTearns, Charleston; W. A. Evans, Chesterfield; W. E. Camp, Philadelphia; Rev. G. D. Rikes, New York; Rev. James Powell, Chicago; T. W. Murph, Orangeburg; W. Allen, G. W. McEachern, J. B. McEachern, E. M. Lee, Sumter; W. M. Kelley, New York; A. Zorn, Wm. Millville; A. S. Barnes, T. B. Terhough, Charleston; D. M. Echlin, Montgomery; J. D. Towers, Rome; John B. Watson, Anderson; E. George, N. C. Mansion House—J. Y. Bryce, Charlotte; John H. Evans, John W. Carlisle, Spartanburg; Dr. E. W. Wheeler, city; Philip L. Alexander, Greenville; J. J. Smith, Walhalla; G. L. Eryan, Charleston.