Contracting the Currency Congress and the Secretary.

From the N. Y. Times. The House has rendered a decisive verdict against Mr. McCulloch and his policy of conbracting the currency. Without debate or Relay, and by a vote of 127 to 24, it has sus-Rained the measure of the Ways and Means Committee, suspending the authority by which the Secretary of the Treasury is empowered to reduce the volume of currency. Nor does there seem any reason to doubt that the same view will prevail in the Senate, with force enough to render nugatory the anticipated veto.

When Mr. McCulloch wrote, the other day, that "the public mind is too sensitive, business is too unsteady, and the political future is too uncertain, to warrant any financial experiments," he passed the severest censure upon the policy to which Congress is applying a partial check. That policy has been altogether experimental, and its results have been singularly at variance with the "conservative legislation' of which in his recent report he speaks as "now indispensable." The attempt to regulate the gold market by sales of the gold which should have been hoarded as a reserve preparatory to specie payments, has been confessedly a failure, since it has neither diminished the premium nor crushed speculation, while it has weakened the Treasury and postponed resumption. Equally mistaken has been the conversion of currency obligations— the redemption of which formed the proper use of every spare greenback-into gold bonds. entailing an enormous yearly addition to the gold interest, and consequently to the load of taxation. And the immediate effect of contraction has been to augment the uncertainties of business, and to multiply the causes of difficulty and depression. Every step he has taken has been in its nature a "financial experiment," for which justification will be vainly sought in the circumstances that make necessary the intervention of Congress.

That a reduction of the currency must eventually precede a return to specie payments, is as certain as that inflation now exists. By no other process known to monetary science may the evils incident to inflation be removed. The fundamental blunder of the Treasury has been the supposition that overissues of legal-tender paper might be summarily ended, and specie payments as summarily resumed, by the exercise of a discretionary authority vested in the Secretary. The condition of the country was not considered in the calculation. The fact that a reaction from the excitement of the war had set in strongly was overlooked. No notice was taken of the paralysis through which trade and industry must pass before escaping from the effects of the prolonged and excessive strain to which both had been subjected. The necessity of allowing time for the recovery of health by the body politicfor the restoration of vigor to industry and life to trade—was utterly ignored. These errors in the diagnosis of the disease led to the disasters which have characterized its treatment. Principles, in themselves sound, have been so injudiciously applied that instead of mending matters they have made them worse. The country has endured the pains of harsh treatment without any corresponding advantage. Nay, the precautions provided for its protection have been systematically disregarded. The provisions of the law relating to a sinking fund have been violated. Gold bonds, carrying interest equal in currency to more than eight per cent., have been issued in redemption of compound interest notes, instead of the three per cent. certifi-cates which were authorized for this special purpose. The financial difficulties of the country have therefore been aggravated by "financial experiments" which would be sufficiently trying at any time, but which from their unskilful application have produced

wide-spread and unnecessary distress. Mr. McCulloch errs in supposing that 'le-gitimate business has not suffered by the cur-tailment which has taken place within the last two years." Credit enters more or less into all business, and as the tendency of contraction is to lower prices, it necessarily inflicts loss upon the debtor interest. Some loss is inevitable if we would regain a specie basis. Fortunes will be reduced, and many who esteem themselves rich will find themselves poor. Such being the result of contraction, come when it may, its application should be gradual and judicions. The losses should be distributed over a series of years, partly as a measure of equity between debtors and creditors, partly in order that commerce and production may acquire strength to sustain the certain shock. It is idle to say, then, that "legitimate business has not suffered" from the curtailment which has taken place. Speculation may have suffered most, but "legitibusiness" has also experienced trials which have strained to the utmost its power of endurance. Contraction has undoubtedly not been the sole cause of these embarrass-General depression, here and abroad, contributed somewhat to their intensity, and, perhaps, the uncertainty attaching to finance in consequence of the vast discretionary power wielded by the Secretary, has contributed still more. These considerations, how-ever, vindicate the action now taken by the House. For as trade suffers from causes beyoud the control of legislation, it is entitled to ask that legislation shall not multiply and aggravate them. And if the interference of the Treasury is one of these avoidable causes, the House takes a proper step in preventing

its recurrence. Here its action in regard to the currency should for the present terminate. It will blunder even more egrepiously than the Secretary if it listen to Mr. Ingersoll's proposition to restore to circulation the amount of currency retired since April, 1868. To do this would be to bring back the days when inflationally appears and the contraction of the contraction o tion, being in progress, unsettled values and converted business into gambling. Its re-newal now would entail mischief in every branch of trade, and shake one's faith in the redemption of the national obligations. There is no safety, except in remaining as we are, until time and prosperity enable the country to see its way to specie payments. All that is preventible in the evil of Mr. McCulloch's policy ceases with the discretionary power under which he has acted; and the further help which Congress may render must come through retrenchment, reduction of taxes, and the renewed industry which will follow reconstruction. An attempt to create anew prosperity by the reissue of scores of millions of greenbacks would destroy confidence in the financial future, and precipitate a crash which a little genuine statesmanship might easily

The Impeachment Question.

The House has closed the Impeachment question. As we expected, the project has been defeated by a decisive vote-108 to 57. We need scarcely say we are satisfied with the result. We have never felt that good would come from foreing upon the country an issue which could only postpone reconstruction, embarrass the finances, and perhaps impose upon us the responsibility of meeting a revolution. We never considered impeachment as a mere policy. It is too high and solemn. Instead of its being an improper proceeding in itself, we have contended that there is no act more expressly provided in the Constitution, and that a failure to obey this explicit law would be in the highest degree revolutionary. Impeachment is the constitutional safeguard between the people and a dictatorship.

To regard the Presidency as an intact, independent office, responsible only to the moral influence called "the people," and to a political mob called a "convention," is to make our ruler as absolute as the Emperor of China. Some of the President's advisers have not ceased to urge upon him theirresponsibility of his office, while earnest men upon our side contended that the real question was, "Could Congress refuse to impeach the President?" They argued very justly that, if we make the precedent that Presidents may do as they please, then they may legislate when it suits their fancy, and construe the laws when they are in a judicial humor; they may bring into their high office the obstinacy of George III. and the licentiousness of George IV, and public liberty will depend, not upon written law, but upon the nerve of the first demagogue who reaches the White House.

While we admit this, we cannot resist the conviction that to adopt impeachment now would be to bring upon the country greater evils than those we seek to avoid. To the Republican party Mr. Johnson is of more use in the White House than he would be anywhere else. Impeachment would make him a martyr; while, with no more evidence than this enormous volume of testimony, the Senate could never convict him. The country sees in Mr. Johnson an obstinate man who means honestly to deal with a question which he, of all men, is the least fitted to decide. To ask a representative of his class in the South to consider the negro question on a liberal basis, is to ask him to befriend a race which has been a successful rival in labor, although an inferior in the eyes of the law, the church, and society. We have a President to whom a prejudice is a conviction, and in whose mind, fifty years, a negro has never been more than a skilled mule, and we ask him to confer upon the mule the only right which has kept himself from political degradation. This has been the great difficulty with Mr. Johnson; and when he finds casuists as ready as Mr. Black and Mr. Seward, and sophists as eager to defend his cause as Mr. Cowan and Mr. Doolittle, and politicians like Mr. Raymond and Mr. Weed willing to indorse him, and to promise him the indorsement of the Republican party, we can understand the persistence with which he clings to his unfortunate and pernicious policy. Nor do we place on the shoul-ders of the President all the blame of the present trouble. He had Republicans enough to go with him-to cheer him on-to appland his course as liberal and patriotic. He found Republican conventions willing to sustain him, and to sacrifice the negro, provided our office-giving Casar with 20,000 palpable offices could be conciliated. These men only left Mr. Johnson when they saw the cloud of popular wrath rising over his head. While he was honestly wrong, they dishonestly followed his lead to serve their turn upon him. We forget that in traversing his record we traverse a record that many of our own friends would not care to face. Long since, when these men were sustaining the President, we remonstrated with them and denounced his policy. When they swiftly changed, and demanded impeachment, we resisted it as a concession to popular passion. We held that impeachment was a indicial task, and not political, and that, unless the nation's existence demanded it, there was too much to be lost by entering upon a harassing and purposeless investigation. felt this especially as success was doubtful,

and failure would only restore the Rebels to By impeachment now we cannot atone for our own errors in 1865, nor undo the mischief the President has done. Impeachment would not be a punishment, for in the tardy process of law, with Mr. Garret Davis—a talking Judge—and every Democratic Senator privileged to debate for a month, the trial would continue until the end of the President's term. General Butler's theory that he might be superseded was too dangerous to be accepted. have made the precedent that a majority of the House could suspend the Executive for an unlimited period would be to place the whole Government at the mercy of a majority, and majorities have passions and prejudices, and do heedless things. We do not know what temper the next House will exhibit. It is possible the Democrats may be in power, and under the law as General Butler construes it, they could speedily remove President Chase or President Grant. We have taken from the President all power of harm. We have placed reconstruction beyond his reach. We have given the negro the ballot, and it will require peace and careful legislation to coufirm him in his new responsibility. We cannot afford to waste that time in impeachment ceremonies. We shall have burdens enough to carry in the next campaign, without making Mr. Johnson a martyr and carrying him also. As it is, the Democratic leaders have formally warned him that he cannot enter their party. They accept his aid and his offices to make war upon us, but they insolently say that when he has given them this aid they have no further use for him. Impeachment, without better reasons than sny we have seen, would only throw Mr. Johnson into the hands of a powerful party, and compel that party to make him its leader. We say "impeachment without better rea-sons," The President has done much for which we have severely censured him. He has appointed Rebels to office. He has sought to usurp the legislative power by attempting to reconstruct the South without appealing to Congress. He has degraded amnesty into a political influence, at the expense of the gracious mercy that rests in his office. He may be even charged with attempting to make a treaty of peace with public enemies without the consent of the Senate, which has a direct advisory and concurring power in all treaties of peace. But he did this two years ago, and sustained by Republican Conventions, against our earnest protest. Since then, however, he has removed Republicans from office, and done many rash and painful things. This only proves that a Republican candidate be-came an anti-Republican President. That would be good ground for impeachment before a Republican Convention, but not before a National Congress. Our business is to continue the intrepid legislation of last session—to support the President when he is right, and assail him when wrong—to force upon him a clear,

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done this in reconstruction; we have done it in our well-intended but imperfectly digested Tenure of Office bill. We must remember the lessons of our Baltimore Convention experience, and be sure we have for our next can didates representative men. Mr. Johnson was nominated by the "hurrah-boy," melodramatic, blood-and-thunder feeling of noisy loyalty-just as we are requested now to nomi nate negative and uncertain men by the roll of the drum. We protested against the burnah" business in 1864—just as we protest against the drum-tay business now. can best avoid impeachment scandals by electing men whose records cannot be im

One point more. We trust the country will not fail to note that Congress has acted in this matter with patience-with wisdom-with serene dignity-without passion. A few individual members may have said intemperate things, but the action of Congress has not been intemperate. Impeachment has been put to rest. The national grand inquest finds no bill of indictment against Andrew Johnson. Now let us proceed to retrenchment, financial reform, and the final reconstruction of the

Signs and Wonders in the Heavens Above and in the Earth Beneath. From the N. Y. Herald.

Since the beginning of October we have had to chronicle a succession of hurricanes and earthquakes that did immense damage in the West Indies and on the Gulf Coast. First we had to record the tornado at Galveston, Brownsville, and Matamoras on October 3 next came the destructive gales at Martinique and St. Vincent Islands on October 7, followed by the still more disastrous hurricane that tore all before it in St. Thamas on October 29, and in Porto Rico, St. Domingo, and at Cape Haytien on the following day. All the steamers plying in the Gulf of Mexico reported tempestuous weather in the beginning of the first and second weeks of October and November. and the United States steamer Wilderness, with ex-Minister Romero on board, had a rough experience of the gale at the beginning

of November. Succeeding each of these hurricanes were shocks of earthquake, following the same course traversed by the tornadoes, and corresponding in violence to the preceding gale. The most violent of these convulsions were felt at St Bartholomew, St. Martin, St. Croix, St. Thomas, and Saba Islands, at Mayaguez, in Porto Rico, and St. Domingo city, on the afternoon and night of November 18 and 19. The observations made at Mayaguez establish the fact that the course of this tremendous earthquake was from east to west. At that place water spouted out of the earth, while the earthquake caused such an upheaving in the Virgin Islands that some of the smaller ones are reported now as totally destroyed.

The island of St. Croix, where it was most violent, is sixty-five miles east southeast from Porto Rico, and is the largest and southernmost of the Virgin group. With St. Thomas and St. John it forms the Danish possessions in the West Indies. It is twenty miles long by five miles wide, and has a population of 25,600 inhabitants. Its surface is level, and earthquakes are frequent. St. Bartholomew is about one hundred and twenty-five miles to the eastward of St. Croix. Its area is thirty-five square miles, and its population 18,000. Its conformation is similar to St. Croix, but the inhabitants have to rely upon rain for their supply of fresh water. It has a fine harbor—the Carénage—on the west side, and is the only Swedish possession in America. St. Martin is about one hundred miles northeast of St. Croix, and has an area of about thirty square miles, with a population of 8000 inhabitants. The surface of the island is hilly and not fertile. About twothirds-the northern-of this island belongs to the French, the balance to the Dutch.

of weak nerves; but, in view of the facts ab stated, it is our duty to call attention to the shaky condition of our globe at the present time. Almost every day for some time past we have published startling accounts of terri-ble earthquakes, or volcanic eruptions from old craters and from new clefts in the crust of the globe; of the sinking down of islands beneath the ocean; of the rising of the sea fifty feet above its ordinary level; of tornadoes such as have hardly been known since the Flood of showers of meteors, and of a general disturbance in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. What all these things portend we do not pretend to say, but they are ominous. The first question that arises is, Has the world become so wicked that the vials of wrath spoken of in the Apocalypse are now being poured down upon it? And here we think the writers on prophecy, the expounders of Daniel and of St. John the Evangelist, are at fault and behind the times. Where, too, are the Millerites and those wonderful modern Spiritualists, who can see through a millstone easier than ordinary mortals can through glass? People who have a clear view of what s passing in the seventh heaven and all other heavens by merely closing their eyes and calling the disembodied spirits to their aid, ought to be able to throw light on the subject. The prophets and revealers of prophecy and the penetrating mediums being unable to satisfy us, we must ask what are men of science

We do not pretend to have the gift of pro-

phecy, nor have we any desire to alarm people

doing to explain the startling phenomenon They, too, seem to be ignorant. But our scientific men, as far as we have heard, appear not to have any knowledge of the matter. Dellisier, a French savant, it seems actually predicted the earthquake and harricane at St. Phomas and other parts of the West Indies. He even gave the date, the 12th of November. and it was on the night of the 11th that the convulsions of nature commenced, or were preceded by a "terrible display of electrical light." From that time to the 19th, Jamaica, t. Thomas and a large portion of the West Indies were in a fearfully convulsed state. M. Dellisier, it is said, made his calculations from astronomical observations and from the influence of planets on the surface of the earth. It is reported he is preparing a work on the subject to be read to the Academy of Sciences at Paris. This work will be looked for with great interest, and when we get it the religious and spiritual prophets may be helped out of their dilemma. We may then know whether the spheres of the universe are going to jostle against each other and bring the world to an end. But where is philosopher Loomis and all our other savans just now ! The earthquakes and hurricanes have bewildered them as much as the meteors did. It is evident that if we must have information about such phenomena, so as to be able to "gleep o' nights" without fear of the earth being smashed up, we shall have to find more

watchful and abler astronomers at home. Under this state of things it devolves upon us to allay the fears of quiet, respectable people; but at the same time we have no wish to lesson the apprehensions of the wicked and conecience-stricken. Geologists tell us that before the crust of the earth was well formed there were continual fiery storms of the most terrible nature, such as, in fact, we can form well-defined, and resolute policy. We have no idea of, and that for a long period, while

the crust was cooling and forming, the most tremendous convulsions recurred frequently, creating the vast chains of mountains and the depths of the sea. It was not till after the surface was cooled and became solid and something like the present atmosphere was formed that anything could live upon the earth. All this interior period, or succession of periods, were what is meant probably by the six days of Greation mentioned in the Scriptures. Many animals existed before man was able to live on the earth, and, therefore, as the Mosaic account properly says, man was created last.

The earliest account we have of any great convulsion of nature since the creation of man was the deluge in the time of Noah, when "the fountains of the great deep were broken no. This was probably only the Asiatic deluge; for though it is said in Scripture the whole world was covered with water, we know that the Old Testament writers speak generally of Asia as all the world. There have been, no doubt. other deluges in other parts of the globe, for geologists inform us so. After Noah's deluga followed the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. This, most likely, was an earthquake with great volcanic action; for it "rained fire and brimstone," and these cities sunk far below the level of the sea. The water of the lake which now covers the spot, and the whole region around about, indicate there was fearful volcanie action.

In profane history, among the earliest acis that which destroyed Herculaneum and Pompeii in the year A. D. 63. Sixteen years after these cities were buried in the ashes from Vesuvius. Some countries are frequently visited by earthquakes. Calabria, the southern extremity of Italy, and the neighboring island of Sicily, are examples. From February, 1783, to the end of 1786, less than four years, this country was in a continual disturbed state, when nearly a thousand shocks were felt, and most of them of great violence. Aucient Antioch, in Syria, was visited several times by earthquakes, and in A. D. 526 the most disastrous one occurred of which there is any record. Gibbon states that 250,000 people perished at that time. In more modern times that of Lisbon in 1755, of Java in 1772, and in Chili in 1822, are the most noted. In six minutes sixty thousand persons perished at Lisbon. Humboldt estimated that the extent of the earth's surface shaken by that earthquake was equal to four times the area of Europe. At the Java earthquake one of the lottiest volcances, with an area fifteen miles long and six broad, sunk down and carried forty villages with it. We might enumerate many other such remarkable disturbances of the earth's surface, but these are sufficient to show that its crust is constantly subject to unknown forces, both within and without. It is now generally believed by geologists that the solid part of the earth is only about as thick to the whole mass as the rind of an orange is to the pulp, and that the interior is liquid fire. We need not be surprised, then, at the terrible convulsions and e-uptions which have occurred lately, and which we have referred to as occurring in former times.

We do not know what effect the outside pressure of planets or masses of meteors may have in producing earthquakes, hurricanes, and volcanic eruptions, but doubtless they have an influence. We know, however, that the gases with which petroleum and other substances are intimately associated are connected with these phenomena. The Caribbean coast of Venezuela is known to be highly volcanic, and is frequently subject to earth-quakes. Near this, in Trinidad, is the famous lake of bitumen or petroleum. At one spot along the Gulf of Cariaco, Mr. Humboldt found a petroleum spring bubbling through the water of the sea. The atmosphere was filled with the peculiar smell for a great distance around, and after finding the place from which it came, he waded in the salt water to examine the phenomenon. Perhaps it may be some comfort to our people that a great deal of this material and its gases have been set free lately by the vast number of petroleum wells sunk in the United States. We recommend all with surplus cash to employ it in letting out the petroleum and other gases in the bowels of the earth, and thus save us perhaps from earthquakes and such like terrible catastrophes. Above all, we call upon the people and politicians to cease from wickedness and sectional strife, for when "the times are out of joint" we may expect the forces of nature to war against us.

Marriage Between White and Black Citizens,

From the N. Y. World. The Civil Rights bill passed by Congress April 9, 1866, declares that all persons born in the United States, except Indians not taxed, are citizens of the United States, unless convicted of crime, and have co-equal right, in every State of the United States, to make and enforce contracts. The same law also ordains that whoever, under color of any statute (which includes no State officer acting under a State statute), shall subject any colored man to any different punishment, pain, or penalty, from that prescribed for white men, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction, be punished by fine or imprisonment. The purpose of the law is to make political equality between black and white men, and its effect is to make Indians inferior

A committee of the Alabama Constitutional Convention reported an ordinance making it obligatory on the Legislature of that State to prohibit, under severe penalties, and make void in that State all marriages between white and black persons. When the report came up for consideration in the Convention the radicals strongly resisted it, and a black delegate said it was "contrary to the Civil Rights bill" to which we have just referred. The report was thereupon laid over for a day.

Marriage, according to the general princi-ples of American jurisprudence, while it may be said to proceed from a civil contract between one man and one woman of the needful civil and physical capacity, is yet something more than a contract, for it is a civil status permitted by the sovereign will of the State, and only to be abrogated by that will, whenever the public good, or justice to both or either of the parties, will be thereby sub-served. The obligation of marriage is created by the public law, subject to the public will, and not to that of the parties. The State has therefore the right to say who shall marry, and what circumstances or events shall constitute a legal marriage. Want of mental capacity; of proper age; inexpedient relations of affinity or consangunity; physical impotence and incapacity from social causes, have aiways been considered among the causes justifying the State in prohibiting marriage. So, too, in the olden time, as for exam in Massachusetts, until the year 1843, when the statute was pealed, certain Northern States prohibited marriage of white persons with Indians, negroes, or mulattoes. But this was long before the adoption by Congress of the notions of the equality of the white and black races, which underlie the Civil Rights bill of April, 1866.

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the law, the equal of the latter.

man, is, in every respect, and certainly before

manhood suffrage is vindicated. It is evident,

therefore, that those who reported the ordi-

nance in the Constitutional Convention of

Alabama, to which we refer, must have had in

view an element in the relative conditions of

white and black citizens which ought to pro-

hibit intermarriages between the two. It is

evident, also, that the radical white Republi-

cans, agreeing with the colored delegates in

the convention, do not recognize any such ele-

ment. It becomes material, therefore, to inquire

what this element is, how far it extends, and

whether it does not reach beyond the mar-

riage relation, and extend to political affairs and

There is another feature of this subject

which it may be interesting to consider. It is

an admitted principle of American law that a

marriage valid by the law of the State in which

it is celebrated, though it would be invalid if

entered into under the same formalities in the

place of the domicile of the parties, is good

everywhere. A white man and a negro woman,

citizens and residents of Alabama, can, there-

fore, so far as difference of color is concerned,

contract and solemnize a valid marriage in

Massachusetts, if they conform to all the pro-

visions of the statutes of that Commonwealth

and when they return to Alabama their chil-

dren of the hybrid race will be legitimate and

This question of intermarriage of Africans

with persons of the white European races is

mest interesting, and becoming every day, by

reason of Republican legislation, of fearful

practical importance. The fundamental idea

to be permitted to intermarry? We shall be

glad to hear from the Tribune on the moral,

social, ethnological, political, legal, and prac-tical relations of this subject! Major-General

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TABLE DAMASKS Which they offer at \$1.25 and \$1.50 per yard. These goods are from forced sales by the g

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Also, 40 and 45-inch PILLOW LINEN, re-

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