

# THE COLUMBIAN AND DEMOCRAT, BLOOMSBURG, COLUMBIA COUNTY, PA.

The Columbian.



BROCKWAY & ELLIOTT.

BLOOMSBURG, PA.

Friday, Jan. 13, 1878.

## OUR MILITIA.

We have always believed that "a well regulated militia" is indispensable to preserve the rights and liberties of the people of the States from centralized despotism in the national government, and to quiet tumults and sustain order in the State. It is our misfortune, however, that we have no "well regulated militia." We have paid enough for it;—it is numerous enough and well stocked with nicely dressed Major and Brigadier Generals,—the men look well at inspections and on dress parades,—but as to practical utility in facing a mob or repressing a riot, with a few exceptions, they do not amount to shucks. In the first place it has been made a political organization, and the officers are selected for past or expected party service, rather than for discretion and courage. Of course such men think about ballots more than bullets. Again, the men are not selected on the score of fitness, nor because in time of trial they would make good steady soldiers, but for social reasons.

As the organization is practically worthless it is an expensive luxury. We pay the Adjutant General's Department annually \$17,874. We paid it \$4900,—for the Centennial picnic. We pay annually \$22,278, for army rent. Of course all that is a trifle compared to the amount paid the officers and men. The late rents have cost the State, beside over half a million of dollars, exclusive of loss to property from blundering military operations. Notwithstanding we had this large and expensive organization, the State was obliged to call on the authorities at Washington for troops. It must be admitted that our present militia army is a failure, and should at once be placed on a more economical and effective footing. We also believe that every State that calls on the President for troops, should pay their expenses if sent. The people would then be more interested in protecting their own property and persons. There is enough in our present organization to pick out say 5,000 good men, who would do all that is required, and it would be better to have them even at the present cost.

## CONTESTED ELECTION CASES.

The trial of a contested election by a partisan tribunal, is deemed to be the veriest farce imaginable. Political majorities will seat their own partisans with little or no regard to law or evidence.

The "counting-in" of Hayes is a fair illustration of this, where even the highest judicial tribunal of the land seated a President against law and popular choice. And then came the anomaly of setting Kelloch of Louisiana, who claimed to be elected by a Legislature that even Hayes refused to recognize as legal.

But equally gross wrongs have been perpetrated in our own State. The case of Green versus Shortt is still fresh in the memory of our readers. In that case Mr. Green came to the Legislature with his credentials, signed by every Return Judge in the county, the most of whom were Republicans. But because he was a Democrat, the Republican majority refused him a seat, to which he had a *prima facie* right, and seated his opponent *ad. hoc*, before a contest, and when he had not a single scintilla of right to claim the seat. The instances might be multiplied.

The late Constitutional Convention sought to remedy this monstrous evil, but the bias of partisanship showed itself there, and had made worse. It provided in Sec. 10 of Art. II, that "each House shall judge of the election and qualifications of its members." This language is almost identical with that of the Constitution of 1838. But the new Constitution further provides that all contested elections shall be tried by "courts of law," without regarding whether or not their decisions are to be final; and the Act of 1874, designed to carry out that section of the Constitution, in effect only constitutes the judges a Court of inquiry. The Legislature is not bound by the decision, and take the testimony anew, just as if the question had not been settled by an impartial tribunal. In practice, a successful contestants before the Court, after a tedious and expensive trial, finds himself compelled to retry his case before a partisan committee, and generally the decision of the court is reversed.

A case in point will illustrate this. Mr. Hazlett was duly elected to the Legislature from Forest county in 1876. His seat was contested in the Courts by Mr. Agnew, his competitor, but the claim of Mr. Hazlett was confirmed. Agnew then appealed to a Republican House, which of course seated him. They claimed George Washington, and his daughter, the wife of General Robert E. Lee, occupied it till 1861, when he left it to cast his fortune with the arms of the Southern confederacy. It was occupied as headquarters of General McDowell and other military officers until 1863, when it passed into the hands of the Government. Should Gen. Lee win his suit the Government would undoubtedly purchase the property.—*Record.*

**Report Superintendent Public Instruction.**

There were expended during the school year for common schools \$8,964,629, of which \$20,000 was for soldiers' orphan schools. Estimated value of school property \$25,460,761. Number of teachers, 26,652; average salary of male teachers \$37 per month, female teachers \$32—a decrease in the former from the preceding year of \$38 per month and of the latter of \$1.30. Average number of pupils attending the 17,783 schools in the State is 575,597 out of an enrollment of 907,412. The attendance is 74 per cent of the enrollment. Average cost of tuition per month for each pupil, 89 cents. Directors, superintendents and teachers, \$4,862.

Decrease in cost of tuition, compared with preceding year, \$39,325; in cost of building, purchasing and renting, \$48,070; in fuel, contingencies, debt and interest paid, \$82,652.

The decrease in cost of expenditures of all kinds compared with 1876, aggregated \$50,549.24. In 1877, however, there were 280 schools more than in 1876, more teachers, an increase of 5,067 in the enrolled pupils, but a falling off in average attendance of 3,121.

The Superintendent recommends a revision and codification of the school laws and decisions. In reference to text books, he recommends that boards of directors furnish them as they do school apparatus and appliances free, to all pupils attending the schools. He says:

This plan has several very obvious advantages; it lessens the cost of the books one-third, if not one-half; it secures perfect uniformity of books in each school district, and, consequently, complete classification of the schools; it saves the expense of purchasing new books, upon changing residence from one district to another; it does away with the invidious distinction that is apt to prevail among the pupils of a school, where some procure books at the public expense, and others provide them at their own, and the school authorities advance their classes when prepared, and to introduce new studies, without meeting the difficulties usually thrown in their way when additional books are to be purchased.

In answer to the objection that it would increase the expense of schools, the Superintendent says it would decrease the expense as met by the people in much greater proportion. Philadelphia has furnished books to its schools for many years.

President Gowen and the other officers of the Reading railroad company were re-elected at the meeting of the stock-holders on Monday. Mr. Gowen, in his report, referred with much satisfaction to the victory the company had achieved over the Brotherhood of Locomotive engineers and the American Railway Association.

The new District Attorney of Schuylkill county, A. W. Schick, is accused of obtaining admission to the private room of a jury and holding conversation with jurors involving matters at issue in the cause. This is an unfortunate beginning for a prosecuting officer, and may be troublesome to the District Attorney.—*Times.*

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Kentucky's New Senator.

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## A PRETTY Muddle.

When, in the name of common sense, are the people of this Commonwealth to know what the order of business will be in the Legislature? Nearly three weeks have passed since body convened, and it has not yet been able to ascertain what kind of meeting it is holding. The members of that learned assemblage cannot find out whether they are holding an adjourned session or a regular annual meeting, and consequently the whole State is kept waiting in ignorance of the proper manner to proceed in the presentation of local bills. A large number of such bills were dropped at the last session because four or five months was not long enough in which to pass them. The question now is whether such bills shall be taken up where they stood on the calendar at the adjournment, or if they may be reintroduced as new bills. At the opening of this session the Senate decided to begin anew. This produced a dead-lock and a committee of conference was therefore appointed by each House to adjust the matter. This joint committee reported in favor of beginning all general legislation anew, but to allow local bills that were advertised at last session to be reintroduced without another advertisement. This report was adopted in the Senate, but voted down in the House. On Tuesday Mr. Geier moved that a new committee be appointed. Jackson of Mercer, moved the following amendment: "Resolved, that no bill is to be introduced as new which is not a well-dressed Major and Brigadier General,—the men look well at inspections and on dress parades,—but as to practical utility in facing a mob or repressing a riot, with a few exceptions, they do not amount to shucks. In the first place it has been made a political organization, and the officers are selected for past or expected party service, rather than for discretion and courage. Of course such men think about ballots more than bullets. Again, the men are not selected on the score of fitness, nor because in time of trial they would make good steady soldiers, but for social reasons.

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Prayer was offered by R. V. Dr. John Hall, after which the oath of office was administered to Governor McClellan by Chief Justice Beasley. The great seal of the state was then delivered to the new governor by his predecessor in office, Governor Bedie. The latter then introduced Governor McClellan to the president of the state senate, Hon. George C. Ludlow, who in turn introduced him to the state and general assembly. Governor McClellan then delivered his in inaugural address, and the ceremonies were brought to a close by the benediction of the Corinthisans: "I am of Paul and I of Apollo and I of Corinth, while others said I am of Christ." Shall we be of Paul or of Christ? Is Christ divided? No. Are his people? All Christians are individual members of one body of Christ. It is one of the sins of this age to deny the unity and oneness of Christ's body and set up tests of this unity others than those that he has appointed. The unity embraces the whole family of God. The fact that we are united to Christ is proof that we are united to his people. One has said: "Men restrict their fellowship, and hence while Christ's church is inclusive and far-reaching, their churches are narrow and shut out more Christians than they shut in." True hearts long for unity. Christ's parting prayer was that they might be one. Deeper than the same and creeds of men that thwart life which makes Christ's people one. Wicked men and devils would divide the flock of God. Let us pray that his people may be one. God says "I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me forever, for the good of them and of their children after them."—*Jer. 32: 39.*

Cataswau, Pa., Jan. 15, 1878.

## HETHERTON FREEMAS-OARY.

The State Board of Agriculture will ask the Legislature this winter to enlarge its powers that it may furnish quarterly reports, to contain the results obtained at the experimental farms, crop statistics of the several counties and of the State, and such other information may be found important and useful. An appropriation of \$5,000 is wanted to accomplish this result.

We have before stated this Board is an expensive lumbering, mainly devised to give sine cure effects to political dead beats. Last year it cost us \$5,456,118, and the people did not receive one dollar of benefit. A kindred fraud is the publication of the Agricultural Reports, bulky volumes of which are published annually, and which the people never see, for which they should be grateful. They are filled with reports from County Societies, which the people see in their local papers, and similar state papers. What interest is there in that? Mrs. Smith of Pikes County got a premium of 25 cents for a baby dress, or say 5,000 good men, who would do all that is required, and it would be better to have them even at the present cost.

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The suit of ejectment recently brought against the Government by General Custis Lee for possession of the Arlington estate in Virginia attracts particular attention, as that spot is now a national cemetery, where rest remains of nearly sixteen thousand of the sons of the Nation who fall on either side during the war for the Union. The property was never confiscated, as has been generally supposed, but was sold by the Government to a speculator, and the proceeds of the sale were introduced in Congress as a sum of \$25,000. The suit of ejectment was filed in 1876, and the constitutionality of the statute was questioned.

A majority of the people of this country feel that a great wrong was done, and the serious complications, perhaps even civil war, which might be caused by a recognition and patriotic spirit of that party which undoubtedly cast the majority of the slaves in the election in question, prove that they would not be easily satisfied. It is probable that they would be quieted by a recognition of their present form.

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