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FRIDAY. SEPTEMBER 18, 1891.

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#### The Numbered Ballot and The Constitution.

There seems to be a vast deal of misapprehension as to the conditions which existed previous to the adoption by the Constitutional Convention of 1873 of the numbered ballot provision of the Constitution of the State, and as to the evils which it was designed to remedy. This provision is simply the substitution of the infallible evidence of the record for the testimony of witnesses who had forgotten, or never knew, for whom they had voted, or who would not tell the truth in countested election cases. From time immemor ial illegal voters had been required in this Commonwealth to reveal the names of the Candidates for whom they had cast their ballots, on the principle that the secrecy of the ballot could not be pleaded for the protection of fraud. But the untrustworthy character of this evidence because of the bad memories, ignorance or untruthfulness of witnesses was notorious. Immediately before the adoption of the new Constitution there were flagrant cases in which hired repeaters went into court and swore that they had voted for the candidate against whom they had cast their fraudulent ballots. Thus the fraudulent voting of repeaters was aggravated by perjury : and the rendering of substantial justice in contested elections was next to impossible from the precarious character of the evidence.

In this history is found the reason for the numbered ballot provision in the Constitution, which gives in every contest the certain record for what was formerly the uncertain parole evidence of forgetful, ignorant or dishonest witnesses. The case which best exemplifies the operation of this important constitutional provision is the recent Metzger judical contest in Lycoming county. In that case, which was tried before three Judges learned in the law, not less than eight hundred ballots were attacked for illegality on both sides. Only after deciding that certain votes were invalid the Judges went to the numbered ballots and struck them from the return, while the secrecy of the ballots cast by legal voters was undisturbed. After the fraud had been judicially established the numbered ballot provision was invoked only to undo its effects. Under the old rule the Court would have been left to the testimony of eight hundred witnesses, more or less, who had forgotten, or would not tell the truth, or who never knew, for what candidate they had voted. In view of the utter worthlesssome technicality, and the true decision of the ballot-box would have been defeated. No matter for whom the decision had been made, doubt would have clouded the title of the successful candidate. But with the absolute certainty of the means of eliminating fraudulent and illegal votes from the poll provided by the numbered ballot provision the impartiality of the decision in the Metzger-Bently judicial case is beyond cavil or dispute. The numbered ballot has proved such an admirable device for defeating accomplished fraud that it has been retained as a part of the elective system in some parts of Australia and in other States, notwithstanding the objection that it prevents absolute secrecy and may afford a possible opportunity of intimidation through the collusion of dishonest election officers. The choice between the Australian plan and the method of election in Pennsylvania since 1874 is a choice between a means of preventing fraud with reasonable certainty and securing a free expression of the will of the voter in the first instance, and the abandonment of a means of detecting fraud afterward by examination of the ballot-boxes. There may be, and there is, a reasonable difference of opinion as to whether the numbered ballot, or an absolutely secret hallot, or a combination of the two methods, will secure the best results. But there is no necessity for calling a Constitutional convention to determine the matter. If the Constitution need amendment in this particular, let the Legislature agree upon the form ; and let the people have the opportunity to vote upon it as a single proposition, uninfluenced by other considerations. — Philadelphia Record.

### WASHINGTON LETTER.

From our Regular Correspondent. Washington, Sept. 14, 1801.

Mr. Harrison will return to Washington tomorrow, and if he can get his attention away from the horde of would be public pap-suckers now waiting to pounce upon him, for a few minutes, he may be able to help clear away the suspicion under which the United States Treasury department now rests, of having attempted to hamper the investigation which it has pretended to be so anxious to have made. of the affairs of the wrecked Keystone National Bank, of Philadelphia. It is regarded naturally as a suspicious circumstance that just as the expert accountants at work on the books of that bank were getting into the part of their work which promised important results, that it should be discovered at the Treasury that the fund from which they were paid was exhausted and that they must be dismissed and the investigation stopped. There's money enough to pay a thousand and one unnecessary expenses for this and that, but not enough to pay for the investi-gation of a wrecked bank with which a prominent member of the administration had been much mixed up. Isn't

that suspicious of itself? Treasury officials pretend to be rack ing their brains to discover a way to pay these men, meanwhile the men have stopped work. Perhaps when they resume, if they ever do, some of the books may be missing. The Philadelphia people have taken the matter up, and if their committee's stinging letter to the Treasury department does not cause Mr. Harrison to take some action he is either thicker-skinned than he has been supposed to be, or is afraid for his friend, Mr. Wanamaker At any rate the letter, a portion of which follows, will make Mr. Harrison do some thinking : "It is of vital importance alike to the credit of the national banking system and to the cause of justice, that the investigation shall be pursued to the end and directly under the auspices of the United States government. If it be true, as stated, that the experts employed by the government have been dismissed for the reason that there are now no funds available for the payment of their expenses, then this committee will advance any reasonable amount required to meet such expenses." Everything may be perfectly straight about the action of the Treasury officials in this matter, but it certainly does not look so. Everybody will concede that the financial system of a nation should be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion. There is now a large and respectable body of our citizens bitterly opposed to the entire National banking system, because of its principles, but even they have never charged that there was crookedness in the administration of the system, and woe be unto that administration upon which crookedness is proven.

A gentleman who is very close to Representative Mills said of the report that Mr. Mills'was hedging on the silver question : "Those who believe such a story do not know the man. He never straddled a question in his life. I could talk to you for an hour about his position, but instead I will refer you to the first speech he makes in Ohio, which will be on the 19 inst. I would probably have gone off upon of fully define his position on occasion fully define his position on every question now before the public, and," with a wink, "that is more than some of his competitors for the Speakership dare to do." The democratic missionary party, or rather a portion of it left here yesterday for Chicago, where they will be joined by the remainder. Their first stop will be at St. Paul on the 15th inst. They are due at Spokane Falls, Washington, on the 24th inst. Tariff talk will be given everywhere. Your correspondent was shown to-day what purported to be a letter from an Ohio republican to a member of the same party in Washington, which, if the writer knew what he was talking about, contained a most important piece of political news. Following is a copy of a paragraph in the letter re-terred to: "Don't get worried about the newspaper accounts of the Sherman-Foraker feud ; there is no feud between them, but on the contrary the most perfect and cordial understanding. It has been thought best to have them appear to be fighting each other in order to bring out a full vote through the efforts of their respective followers many of whom are not in the secret. If we succeed in electing a majority of the legislature, which, between us. is far from a certainty. John Sherman will be re-elected to the Senate as a "vindication" so to syeak. He will, as may seem best at the time, either decline or before the adjournment of the legislature resign, giving as a reason his desire to retire from the cares and troubles of public life, and Foraker, will then be elected to succeed him. Be careful to whom you speak about this as it might seriously interfere with the party leaders' plans, should it get out ; but you may depend on its being true.

REFORMS.

This is an age of reform. There are many things that need it, and there are many people who talk about it. but the need and the talk are both greater than the rapidity with which the reforms come. The trouble is that those who talk the most about reform, and those who pose as reury" as it were, are generally men who do it for the purpose of pulling the wool over the eyes of the people so that they can get a grip on the public pap without being suspected of dishonesty. The people have lost faith in politicians, because so many of them have proved to be wolves in sheeps' clothing, and hence it is that he who enters public life with an honest desire to do his country some good, does so with the suspicion resting upon him that he is acting only from selfish motives, and with the purpose of self-aggrandisement. Unfortunately, this has been too often the case. There are so many imitation statesmen that it is hard to distinguish the true from the false.

The man who is an honest, carnest advocate of reform is not found telling how good he himself is, and how wicked somebody else is. An honest reformer does not run for office and upon being defeated, constantly attempt to injure his successful opponent by inventive and misrepresentation. An honest reformer does not cast discredit upon his political party by repeated efforts to show that the men who have been elected by that party for public office, are dishonest rogues. An honest reformer does not draw the line so closely that he classifies all public officials who obey his orders, as competent and capable pubic servants, and all who will not bow down to him as the Supreme boss, as incompetent, dishonest and disreputable. He is only an imitation; aye. worse than an imitation, he is a demagogue and an impostor. And yet, alas, how blindly the people sometimes follow such an imitation statesman and reformer ! He may be a political and social leper; he may have been publicly accused of perjury, bribery or worse; there are men upon whom this seems to have no effect they still stand by him, and uphold him. Is it because there are too many of the same kind?

There are reforms needed in the Democratic party right here in this county, but we cannot look to the professional "watch-dogs" to accomplish them. First, we want men to run for office who can do so upon their own merits, and not merely upon the strength of some faction whose candidates they are. Second, we want men to run for office whose merits do not depend upon the amount of money they spend for beer and whiskey during the last week before the county convention.

Third, we want men to be elected who will wear no man's yoke after they are installed in office.

Fourth, we want honest politics and in order to reach this desired result, we must prosecute some of the boodlers. and enforce the election laws. That money is used unlawfully in our primary elections, is a subject of constant comment.

Fifth, we want nothing but straight out, honest, reliable Democracy. Away with imitations ! away with in

### The Coming Fair at Brook Park, Lewisburg.

The Union County Agricultural Society is one of the oldest organizations of the kind within the confines of the State. The experience it has had, therefore, is of considerable moment, and fully justifies the officers thereof in saying that their exhibition this year the thirty-eighth-promises to eclipse formers, as "watch dogs of the treas- anything of the kind heretofore held. It will take place at Brook Park, Lewisburg, Pa., Oct. 7, 8 and 9, 1891. The premiums offered are very liberal, covering all industries - the farm, the workshop, the fireside, aud the fleet footed roadster. The race-course or track is in first-class condition, while the trials of speed promise to be most exciting. Their spacious grounds and buildings are also in excellent order. The people of beautiful Buffalo Valley extend hearty greetings to all visitors at their coming Fair. Make note of the date-Oct., 7, 8 and 9, 1891.

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Block, Rochester, N. Y. mar-6-1v DEMOCRATIC TICKET.

STATE.

AUDITOR GENERAL, ROBERT E. WRIGHT.

> STATE TREASURER. A. L. TILDEN.

DELEGATES AT LARGE, CONSTITUTION-AL CONVENTION.

CHAS. R. BUCKALEW, CHAUNCEY F. BLACK, FEORGE A. JENKS, GEORGE M. DALLAS. S. GUS. THOMPSON, DAVID W. SELLERS. HENRY W. SCHALL, ROBT, E. MONAGHAN WM. S. MCLEAN. FRANK M. VANDLING JOHN LATTA. ROGER SHERMAN. WILLIAM WEIHE. THOMAS LAZEAR. SAMUEL GRIFFITHS, GRANT WEIDMAN, GEORGE B. ZEIGLER, H. MORGAN ROOT.

> ASSOCIATE JUDGE. C. G. MURPHY.

COUNTY.

SHERIFF, JOHN MOUREY.

DELEGATE TO CONSTITUTIONAL

CONVENTION. ANDREW L. FRITZ.

Subject to decision of District Conference.

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Gt.

office after fair week.



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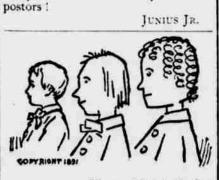
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