

## Lancaster Intelligencer.

THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 6, 1880.

## A Rotten Borough.

Senator Wallace, who has been investigating Rhode Island's political constitution, with the aid of the select committee, whose labors have likewise illustrated election methods in Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts, finds "good ground for the complaints made that Rhode Island under its present constitution is nearer an oligarchy than a democracy." And yet the committee is not ready to report that the government is so insufficiently republican in form as to permit the interference of the other states, under the clause of the constitution of the United States which gives the federal government authority to require republican forms of government in the states.

The people of the country do not take a very lively interest in the affairs of Rhode Island, which is too small a state to be very highly esteemed. No doubt its practices are very undemocratic. It has always enjoyed the reputation of being politically a rotten borough, under the control of a few important families. It is certainly disadvantageous to the nation that Rhode Island, so small in territory and voting population, should be given the political importance conferred upon it as an independent state; and it is especially unfortunate because of the character of its population and the state of dependence of most of the others upon this is the fact that foreign-born citizens are required to own real estate of the value of one hundred and thirty-four dollars. The amount is not great, but it is large enough to exclude nearly all the foreign voters who are not sufficiently interested in political matters to incur the expense and trouble of owning Rhode Island land. It may be said that a man who does not care enough for a vote to be willing to invest \$134 in a lot of ground, and pay the taxes on it, ought not to have a vote. But if that is a good argument it applies to the natives as well as the foreign-born citizens; whereas the native is not put to the test in Rhode Island. And still he does not vote. It is not only the foreigner who does not esteem it a very high privilege to vote in this little state. Only 26,627 votes were cast in the last presidential election whereas the census showed 42,741 legal voters in the state.

The truth probably is that most of the voters, being dependent for their bread upon the manufacturers who possess Rhode Island, and being afraid to vote as they think, do not care to vote at all. The trouble which a democracy always has to encounter with the dictation of capital is especially great in this rotten borough state. Capital is strong and aggressive. The employers claim to own their workmen as their slaves. They demand that they shall vote in the interest of those who give them bread; and that they shall let their employers decide what their mutual interests are. The granite companies at Westerly in the presidential election issued a general order to their people to vote for Grant or quit. It would be well if Rhode Island could be indoctrinated with a little of the republican spirit so sorely needs; but she is a little thing anyway, and not worth bothering much about.

## Re-Post the Prison Books.

In an article of a few days ago, reviewing the expert book-keeping of the prison management, it was pointed out by the INTELLIGENCER that the public are grossly imposed upon in the calculation which pretends to figure out the actual cost of the prison. The last annual report of the inspectors makes the net cost of running the prison for the year ending Nov. 30, 1879, to be \$13,955.69; but we have shown that, to get these figures, the inspectors or their lightning calculator deducted from the gross expenses, \$8,887.75 of book accounts, \$873.40 for provisions on hand, \$570 for live stock, \$1,192 for furniture, and \$1,058.50 for fuel and medicine on hand—a total of \$12,578.95—though "nowhere on the Dr.'s side of the account is any notice taken of the amount of these corresponding items last year."

Now we learn that the \$8,887.75 of book accounts was a "clerical error" for \$8,694.51, so that by their own system of book keeping the actual cost of the prison should be increased by the difference between these two amounts—\$199.24. This, added to their own report of the actual cost—\$13,955.69—makes the cost of the prison last year, by their own showing, to be \$14,154.93. Turning to the report of 1878, we find that the inspectors take credit for \$2,968.90 of book accounts due, \$722.50 of provisions on hand, \$540 of live stock, \$1,192 of furniture, \$1,060.50 of medicine—a total of \$6,483.90, with not a dollar of which have they charged themselves in the 1879 report. Add this to the actual cost as figured out by their own system of calculation, and it is demonstrated that the actual net cost of the prison for 1879 was \$25,638.83—or nearly double what the inspectors have reported to the court under oath. And the auditors appointed by the court have never discovered, or at least never disclosed, this fraudulent report, which, if not a contempt of court, is something far more serious.

Turning to the report for 1878, we find that the inspectors figure out the cost for that year, by the same patent system, to be \$15,788.77. This conclusion is arrived at by subtracting the items above referred to and not adding the corresponding items, on hand Nov. 30, 1877. They amounted to \$7,061.86, so that the "actual" cost of the prison for the year 1878 was \$22,850.63 instead of \$15,788.77 as reported to the court.

Similar examination shows that the reported cost of the prison for 1877 which was \$12,761.33, should have been \$19,384.96. We have not at hand a complete list of the annual reports, but the same error or fraud runs through them for years back. These items that are credited to the current year and not charged from

the year previous amounted to \$3,488.08 in 1873. In the reports for 1870 and previously only the book accounts were thus deducted, amounting in 1870 to \$2,281.64; in 1869 they were \$1,451.93; in 1868 they are set down at \$723.89; in 1867 at \$186.74; in 1866 at \$288.60; in 1865 at \$169.09; and in 1864 at \$1,080.34.

It is likewise to be noted that in earlier years the manufacturing department, now conducted at a decided loss, was a source of profit. In 1860 it gained \$3,868.65; in 1861 it gained \$4,503.55; in 1862, \$3,292.46; in 1863, \$2,272.75; in 1864, \$2,680.26; in 1865, \$761.98; in 1866, \$456.94; in 1867, \$3,813.32; in 1868, \$2,098.00; in 1869, \$1,686.84; in 1870, \$885.13; in 1871, \$1,577.63; in 1872, \$2,103.60; in 1873, \$1,932.70. Why the marked change, which, in 1879, produced a loss of \$3,724.46?

Evidently there are other things than the book-keeping at the prison which need an overhauling. Will the court take cognizance of this imposition practiced upon it? If not, why not?

## The Pardon Board's Shame.

District Attorney Hollinger, of Dauphin county, resents the imputation that the commonwealth's counsel in the Kemble matter in any way assented to the action of the board of pardons. He shows that the board acted without conference with him or his associates and in defiance of its own rules which required notice of the application for pardon to be given to the judge and district attorney who tried the case, stating the time when it would be made and the grounds for it; and that in all proceedings for a rehearing of cases, substantial grounds must be stated for re-opening the case, and two weeks publication must be made. None of these requirements were complied with in the Kemble case. The district attorney was notified in the afternoon that the application would be heard next day, and in view of his duties in court and the rules of the board which made this notice insufficient he declined to be present.

The facts place the conduct of the pardon board in a very bad light. Their conclusion would have been bad enough if it had been regularly reached; but when we see them overruling their rules to reach it immediately, and furthermore basing their decision on an allegation that the judge's sentence was unlawful, without giving the judge an opportunity—by which his rules required—to defend his action, we know that their judgment was not conscientiously reached, but was forced upon them by the political and personal necessity for Kemble's release. It had to be done, and therefore they thought "twere as well as 'twere done quickly. But a little more hesitation would have been more seemly and given a chance at least to hope that they meant to be honest.

The district attorney forcibly comments on the fact that the attorney general was not present at the meeting of the pardon board and that his signature to the pardon had been previously obtained, in violation of the rule which forbade an application to be made to any individual member. If there had been any substance in the legal reason assigned by the board for the release of these men, surely the attorney general would have been at the meeting to meet the counsel for the prosecution and the judge and demonstrate to them and his associates his view. Manifestly it was but a pretext. Just as manifestly the first business of the Legislature should be to impeach the members of the board for a dishonest performance of their duty that makes Pennsylvania justice once more a byword and a laughing stock.

It is to be hoped now that the lawyers-members of the commission on revision of the city digest have got through the rush of legal business which besets them at this season of the year, they will no longer defer reporting to councils a plan to accomplish this needed work. They have been directed to devise ways and means to replace the present delusion and snare which is known as the "digest of 1875," and which is filled with a lot of obsolete enactments and irrelevant matter, with an accurate compilation of existing municipal regulations, city ordinances and acts of Assembly bearing on the city government. The work is one sorely needed for the convenience of councilmen and other members of the city government, and the passage of the joint resolution providing for the adoption of a plan of revision of the city laws was hailed as a measure of practical wisdom. The commission was directed to report at the subsequent meeting of council, but nothing was heard of the matter last evening. As implied above, this was no doubt owing to professional duties of the legal gentlemen who comprise the majority of the commission. The subject should not be longer delayed, as it is one of prime importance.

## MINOR TOPICS.

The Philadelphia *Tropic American* thinks that if he of the tawny hair insists on the unit rule he will either precipitate an unhappy dissension, which would weaken the party, or such indignation and combined opposition as would compel him to eat the loaf of humiliation by being coerced into a unit rule vote for Mr. Blaine.

There have been so many enormous bills presented and approved in Congress for the funeral expenses of deceased members, that it is worthy to remark that the whole bill for the burial of the late Senator Chandler, of Michigan, which Congress was called on to pay, was only \$81.80. The bill for the funeral expenses of the late Senator Houston, of Alabama, was \$1,064.34, and others have been even higher than this. In the case of Senator Chandler his family paid all the actual expenses, and the bill of \$81.80 was for the committee of Congress that went to the funeral.

SENATOR WOODIN, a New York delegate to the Chicago convention, was shown the dispatch from St. Louis announcing that he had written a letter stating that he was one of fifteen delegates to the Chicago convention from New York who had pledged themselves to vote against the nomination of Grant. "I

never wrote such a letter," said he, "to any one in Missouri or elsewhere. I have communicated with no one on the matter. The statement is absolutely without foundation. I have said nothing at any time to justify any such statement, and you are authorized to make a denial of it."

## PERSONAL.

Col. THOMAS BIGGER, a soldier of 1812, and who had been more than twenty years postmaster of Richmond, Va., besides filling various state offices, died in that city yesterday, aged 87 years.

The formal reception to General Grant in Springfield, Ill., took place yesterday. General Palmer delivered an address of welcome. General Grant, in responding, alluded to the revival of prosperity and return of love for the old flag in the South.

WILLIAM COLEMAN FREEMAN, of Cornwall, Lebanon county, with his bride, has arrived home from Toronto, Canada, where he married a daughter of Rev. Brown, an Episcopal rector, formerly from Manheim, this county. A magnificent residence has been erected for the young couple.

BENJAMIN P. CHENEY, of Boston, a member of the United States and Canada express company, has paid into the treasury of Dartmouth college \$50,000 by his check. Of this it is understood that \$40,000 will be devoted to founding a Cheney professorship of mathematics, and by Mr. Cheney's special desire \$5,000 will aid in endowing the Daniel Webster professorship of Latin.

The *Chicago Daily News* is authorized by the Hon. E. B. WASHBURN to state that that gentleman adheres unequivocally to his already pronounced position, and that the various movements looking to his candidature for the presidency are entirely without his approval. Mr. Washburn says positively that under no circumstances will he be a candidate for the presidency, but that he is for General Grant's nomination first, last and all the time. He is "very much pleased" at the course of gentlemen who profess to be his friends, but who are using his name in an entirely unauthorized manner.

It is VICTORIA WOODHULL, of whom *London Life* is talking when it says: "In each of her three English homes she is all that a daughter and sister should be; and before long, it is understood—nay, is even coyly confessed—she is to unite her happiness with that of an Englishman for whom the world has nought but praise, and we cannot but feel that where she loves, Mrs. Woodhull loves entirely. For her there can be no temperate zone, and she is as full of affection as of character. With the naive impetuosity of a child, she blends the deep sensibilities of a woman, and when her marriage has been announced to the world she will doubtless step at once into prominent place in the society of London."

The venerable Mrs. SYLVANUS COMB, the widow of the well-known Universalist clergyman and the mother of the well-known writer, has just died in Boston. She was a woman of great energy and determination. When, many years ago, her husband was a member of the Massachusetts Legislature, a committee of Mrs. Cobb's denominational friends visited her to ask her to influence her husband to recede from his position of obstructing a bill to prohibit extra judicial oaths. The stout hearted young matron said that she gloried in her liege lord's position. To the suggestion that her children's bread and butter might depend upon her action, she replied that rather than ask her husband to change his course she would take the children to the woods and feed upon nuts and acorns. No further effort was made in that direction.

## THRILLING SCENE IN A THEATRE.

A Maniac Rushes Upon the Stage, Kills a Man with a Hatchet and Himself.

A terrible scene took place in the Teatro del Circo at Madrid a few days ago. During the performance a madman forced his way into the house, armed with a hatchet and contrived to climb from the auditorium upon the stage, where, brandishing his weapon furiously, he announced himself to the terrified audience as "the Avenger of Mankind." Upon one of the attendants approaching him with the object of persuading him to withdraw from the stage, he made the unfortunate man lie on the floor with one deadly blow; and he managed to keep the police off, when they attempted to arrest him, by whirling his hatchet round his head with such force and swiftness that none of the agents of authority dared to rush upon him. Presently, however, a party of soldiers made its appearance in the theatre under the command of an officer, who summoned the raging maniac to give up his weapon and surrender himself, but in vain; whereupon the detachment received orders to fire at him with blank cartridge, in the hope of frightening him into submission. All this while he was yelling at the top of his voice, flourishing his hatchet and threatening to kill anybody who should approach him. He was then ordered to keep the police off, when they attempted to arrest him, by whirling his hatchet round his head with such force and swiftness that none of the agents of authority dared to rush upon him. Presently, however, a party of soldiers made its appearance in the theatre under the command of an officer, who summoned the raging maniac to give up his weapon and surrender himself, but in vain; whereupon the detachment received orders to fire at him with blank cartridge, in the hope of frightening him into submission. 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