

Lancaster Intelligencer.

SATURDAY EVENING, JAN. 13, 1883.

A Chance for Reform.

If the committee of the Legislature, appointed to investigate the subject of public printing and the other committees which are appointed to consider measures of retrenchment, are sincerely interested in the subjects assigned to them, they can very easily strike one lead which will open up a way to retrench where there has been waste. It has been the fashion for the Legislature to recklessly order larger quantities of public reports of various character to be printed for the use of the House and Senate, the number in the gross generally affording a per capita distribution of from 15 to 50 copies of each document for each member of the Legislature. These publications are put into boxes and shipped, at considerable expense to the state, to the members at their homes, most of whom relate that they have trouble getting rid of them, except for fuel, and that the well made and well-paid for boxes in which they are carried are much more highly esteemed in the rural regions for wood boxes than the publications are regarded for information. The agricultural reports are said to be of real value and in demand in the farming regions, but, under the present indiscriminate system of distribution, a large proportion of the agricultural reports go to Philadelphia, where nobody cares for them except such ploughmen as Childs and Drexel, who compose the Pennsylvania farmers' club; the coal mining reports are distributed as lavishly in exclusive agricultural counties, as in Lackawanna and Schuylkill; and of measures affecting cities, the rural counties are flooded with the publications, which lack of adaptation only increases the uselessness of the supply. This might measurably be remedied by leaving the distribution of reports to the several departments issuing them, to send them to such persons as they are specially requested for by members of the Legislature. This would meet every want. It would cut down the cost of the public printing materially; it would save the present sums annually paid out for "forwarding documents," and it would remove one excuse for the toleration of the pasting and folding department. If then the folding and mailing of the Reports were entrusted, as they manifestly ought to be, to the contractor for its publication, the pasters and folders could be entirely dispensed with, and at least \$15,000 be saved to the state per session in this alone. It seems to us that these reforms are so manifestly practicable that they might be legislated for at once.

A Perturbed People.

A striking illustration of the magnitude to which a small matter will grow in the eyes of people who constantly contemplate it and quarrel over it, is presented in the engrossment of the Tennessee people over their late state debt, which is really a very small thing for so great a state, and could be paid in full by its people without their feeling the burthen of it at all. For years, however, they have been looking at it and talking about whether they shall pay the half, or the third, or the quarter of it, until now they are in a state of mind which makes the majority of them feel as though their existence as a people depends upon their avoiding the payment of more than a fourth of the debt. The political parties in the state have divided on the question of the third or the fourth, no one at all apparently reaching the attitude of honest spoliation which would incline him to offer to pay the whole. Naturally those who think they can pay the smallest amount have proved to be in the majority at the polls, and now their representatives are sitting at the state capital's lonely considering an elaborate bill which offers to the creditors the fraction which they say, and no doubt sincerely believe, is all that they can pay and live. Meanwhile, the state treasurer has run off with all the loose money in the treasury, apparently concluding that while the Legislature was cutting away three quarters or more of the debt for the benefit of the people of the state generally it might as well cut off another slice for the benefit of the people's treasurer, who had need of the money for the development of his mines in Mexico. The idea is rather a good one, and we do not suppose the creditors of the state will kick against it very violently. If they give up so much to the state they will hardly be very seriously concerned over the toll taken by the treasurer. He has quite as lawful and reasonable a lien upon it as the people, whose only advantage is the fact that they have the money and can't be made to pay it. The treasurer also has the money and can't be made to refund it. The cases are parallel, and the equities are as easy as the honors.

Regarding Fire Escapes.

The newspapers are still engaged in drawing lessons from the Milwaukee fire, and of course are mainly howling for fire escapes. The inspector in New York city has been aroused to action, and the Grand Union hotel is the first one called upon to put up outside ladders. Probably the ensuing summer will see a great many handsome structures defaced with the ugly excrescences. Probably it is a good thing to satisfy the public demand; but until the Lord gives people who are in danger of fire a self-possession and courage which will enable them to use their natural faculties in escaping burning, fire ladders will not save them. The only effective way to haul such people out of the flames will be to make them sleep on the upper stories of high buildings with iron chains securely hitched to their night dresses, the said chains being run through the windows and attached to suitable lowering apparatus. Or we might have lines shot through the windows from the houses on the opposite side of the street that life cars might be drawn back and fourth, after the manner in which the life-saving crews on our coast are wont to save the folks on stranded vessels. But seriously, so long as we have tall and isolated buildings we will have loss of life at their burning; and the modern elevator adds greatly to this danger, not only by affording a flue to draw the fire from basement to attic, in a moment, as it was drawn at the Milwaukee fire, but by leaving the guests largely unacquainted with the location of the stair-ways, which are their avenues of escape when fire occurs. Prudent people will not lodge high up in hotels. When they do, they carry their lives in their hands.

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Yesterday the work of removing the ruins of the burned hotel was continued, and large forces worked on both the Broadway and Michigan street front. At 10:20 o'clock the debris gave up the remains of one of the victims. The workmen engaged in the southwest corner dug up a piece of a skeleton and one shoulder blade, which were picked up and placed in a box. Miss Libbie Chellis, a dress-maker, was in this part of the hotel, it is supposed, and it was thought that the remains were those of that lady. Later, however, they were identified as Mrs. L. W. Brown of Allegheny City, whose husband is a railroad man. Shortly after another body was discovered in a standing position. The breast faced the north and from the neck down the body stood straight. The arms extended east and west and were severed at the joints. The head laid back and the whole suggested that the person had been standing when the walls fell, had started to throw up his arms when the hot bricks rained down and he was caught in that position, while his head was pillowed backward in the mottled mass.

THE HOTEL HORROR.

There are many ways—and some of dubious propriety—of calling men to grace. A Portland revivalist is by business an auctioneer. He is quoted as explaining in the midst of a fervid exhortation to sinners: "Twenty nine I've got; thirty, shall I have 'em? Bless the Lord! Twenty-nine are saved; who will come next? Shall I have thirty?"

THE HOTEL HORROR.

Now is the winter of the nine dollar dry goods clerk's discontent made more vivid by the spectacle of the "flyers" that are daily swooning down East King street to the merry accompaniment of the jingling bells. The sight of the iveryman's tariff charges is calculated to bring vividly before his vision the old saw that none but the wealthy enjoy life.

THE HOTEL HORROR.

It seems that the state treasury sinking fund has \$2,017,893.59 lying idle, or rather deposited in banking institutions for the benefit of those which are favored. The Allegheny national bank of Pittsburgh has \$322,939.39, and the People's (Kemble's) of Philadelphia has \$276,000. The only favored banks in this city are the Fulton with \$45,000 and the First national with \$10,000.

THE HOTEL HORROR.

There is a tragic coincidence in two murderous occurrences reported within twenty-four hours respectively from Cincinnati and St. Louis. In both cases we read of the killing of a young man by his infuriated and drunken father, with the additional information that in each instance the murder constitutes the second of the kind to be charged to the hand of the unnatural parent, both having escaped the penalty of their previous crimes. The circumstances of the two cases are so similar that the transposition of the names would almost suffice to report either or both.

THE HOTEL HORROR.

The New Holland Clarion begins its eleventh year with an enlargement of its space and several other conspicuous improvements that promise to gain for it a still larger circle of readers than it already enjoys. The Clarion has been a hard and faithful worker in the local field and has proved itself a valuable adjunct to the journalism of the county of which it stands as a very creditable exponent. The evidences of deserved prosperity which it puts forth with the new year can be scarcely less gratifying to the community than they certainly must be to our esteemed contemporary's able and energetic editor and proprietor.

THE HOTEL HORROR.

AND now it is a member of Mapleson's company, an Italian Signor Somebody, who has been robbed of hundreds of dollars worth of valuable jewelry at a high-priced hotel in Philadelphia. The circumstances of the affair are described as "peculiar," but then it is a peculiar thing that as a general rule there is more or less peculiarity about these peculiar proceed-ings. The most notable fact in the present peculiar instance is that the alleged victim told the hotel keeper he wouldn't say anything about the robbery and thus save the reputation of his house provided the proprietor would bear half the amount of the loss. Such a proposition coming from anyone but an Italian signor in a big opera company would smell very strongly of blackmail.

THE HOTEL HORROR.

The Harrisburg Telegraph, which had for years been the home organ of the legislative roosters, but which now booms the reform cause with all the energy of a sudden convert, takes the Legislature to task for working only eleven hours in eleven days, and its censure of the apparently derelict public servants will find a responsive public echo. Of course the editor in announcing the House committees somewhat retards business on that side of the capitol, but after they are named, and when the inauguration is over, the public will insist upon the Telegraph's demand for "business." The members owe it to their constituency to give to the public work at least five days of square honest work per week, devoting as much as six hours a day to sessions. Less than this they will not be left off with.

THE HOTEL HORROR.

The committee of three appointed by the Democratic House caucus to inquire whether members are entitled to \$100 worth of postage stamps, besides the \$50 allowed in lieu of all "stationery and perquisites" has concluded that "perquisites" does not cover postage stamps. Perhaps not, but the question is a very close one. As few members use anything like this amount of stamps for their official correspondence, and as many of them convert their postal orders into cash, even "saving" their face value, we agree with the Patriot that "the first duty of the Democrats should be to introduce a bill forbidding entirely the distribution of postage stamps. The state could thus be saved in the neighborhood of twenty-four thousand dollars at every session of the Legislature. Here is an opportunity to cut down expenditures which should not pass unimproved."

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