

The Cause of Hard Times.

Ever since the failure of Jay Cook in September, 1873, political orators have been accounting for the panic which then took place, and the hard times which followed that panic, and which, unfortunately, have not yet passed away.

Did the failure of Jay Cook cause the hard times? His failure, and the suspension of his bank, frightened many people, and undoubtedly caused a panic throughout the country; but this would have been but a temporary affair, passing away in a few weeks, if there had been nothing wrong save the insolvency of this prominent financier.

Did the contraction of the currency produce the hard times? This is a very common theory, and as erroneous as it is common. The paper money circulating in any country adds nothing to the wealth of that country; unless indeed the doctrine of fiat money, that is, that the government by affixing its stamp to a worthless piece of paper can thereby give it an intrinsic value, is true.

THE vitality shown by Wade Hampton is wonderful. It is stated that during the war he received eleven gun shot wounds, and he lately was obliged to submit to the amputation of a leg. Still he survives, and promises to live long enough to become Patterson's successor in the United States Senate in reality.

and it does so to the same extent, if it is paid for in grain, meat, or merchandise. The farmer who employs labor which would otherwise be idle, to clear his fields and otherwise improve his farm, adds as much to the wealth of the country, if he pays his hands in farm products, as if he paid them in bank bills or even in gold and silver.

Did over-production bring the hard times upon us? Over-production in any particular branch of industry, may, by reducing the prices of those products, so low that the further production will be unprofitable, clog that particular branch of business, but as those who have to buy these products are thus enabled to obtain them so much cheaper, they are benefited as much as the producers are injured, by the decline in prices.

THE death of Robert W. Mackey is an almost irreparable loss to the circle of shrewd and trained politicians that at present controls the organization of the republican party in Pennsylvania. As a manager and organizer of party forces he was without an equal in the State, and to his skill and sagacity it may be said the republicans are almost solely indebted for their triumphs in the past few years.

SETTLED AT LAST.—Public opinion long since settled that polygamy is wicked and wrong, and the Supreme Court of the United States decided, on the 6th inst., that Congress has the power to prohibit it in Utah. The decision was made on an appeal from the Third Judicial Court of Utah, in the case of Reynolds, who was convicted of contracting a bigamous marriage.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

HARRISBURG, January 7, 1879.

For many days the streets and public places of Harrisburg have given forth signs of an approaching session of the legislature of the state. With an assured republican majority in both branches, considerable interest was manifested by members of that party in the distribution of the spoils; and there were mysterious comings and goings of the faithful, quiet whisperings over the organization, and endeavors to arrange slates that showed conclusively that the race of patriots willing to serve the "dear people" for a reasonable compensation is not yet extinct.

On the Senate side there was no opposition to the nomination of Senator A. J. Herr, of this city, for President pro tem. of the Senate; but for the Chief Clerkship there was a spirited contest between Cochran, of Lancaster, who has filled that place since the retirement of Hamersley, some years ago, and Childs, formerly Librarian, in which the former proved the victor.

To-day, at precisely twelve o'clock, the two houses were called to order, the Senate by Lieut. Gov. Latta, and the House by Chief Clerk Shurlock, and both branches promptly proceeded to the work of organization. In the Senate, Mr. Herr was of course elected President pro tem., the democrats voting for Senator Ermantrout, of Berks. For Chief Clerk, Mr. Cochran received the votes of the republicans, and the democratic votes were given to that old veteran of the party, Uncle Jake Ziegler, of Butler county.

One of the queer features of this organization of the legislature has been the complete capture of the republican representatives of the oil districts, by Quay and his followers. For weeks before these members came to Harrisburg, many of them were bolder in denunciation of the ring rule and machine politics of which they had been made the victims last year, and avowed they would now act an independent part as the representatives of a peculiar interest. But, after all, the adroit management of the leader proved too strong for their good intentions.

tion or by its millions. Time will probably develop how completely these men have been caught by false promises, and show them, when too late, how foolishly they have placed themselves in the meshes of a net skillfully woven for them.

A republican caucus is called for to-morrow night to nominate a candidate for U. S. Senator. "Harmony" will again be sounded along the line, and the son of his father will not be disturbed. The Cameron dynasty will receive another six years lease of power.

Senator Alexander and Representatives Gophart and Murray were promptly on hand at the organization and have made a good impression on all with whom they have thus far come in contact.

Mr. Alexander, as is well known, has had experience in legislation and possesses ability as a debater. It is safe therefore to predict that he will in a short be regarded as one of the leading Senators. Messrs. Gophart and Murray though inexperienced, are intelligent men. They will doubtless give due attention to the interests of their constituents and prove worthy and useful representatives.

The Bell Punch.

The Auditor of the State of Virginia has sent in a report to the legislature of that State upon the workings of the Moffet liquor law, which shows that the bell punch method of collecting taxes upon the sale of spirituous and malt liquors has produced better results for the State treasury than the old system of assessments. The total receipts at the treasury for the year just ended, under the Moffet law, were \$472,834, being an excess of \$210,638 over the assessments of the preceding year.

IT APPEARS that Chairman Potter and Gen. Cox, of the Potter Investigating Committee, went to New Orleans for the purpose of affording John Sherman an opportunity to present whatever further evidence he might have to sustain his charges of intimidation and bulldozing in the election of 1876 in Louisiana. The New York World says that, "Last summer Mr. Sherman and the Republican press complained bitterly that the Potter committee would not receive his proposed testimony as to intimidation in Louisiana. In time the committee decided to receive this testimony, and after an unsuccessful effort on Mr. Sherman's part to prove bulldozing the attempt was abandoned. Recently his counsel have claimed that they were prevented by the yellow fever from getting this testimony in. Accordingly Mr. Potter went to Louisiana expressly to afford them once more an opportunity to exploit it, and once more they have declined."

Morton McMichael.

The brilliant career of this distinguished journalist and useful citizen was closed by death, at his residence in Philadelphia, on Monday last. He was proprietor of the North American, which he conducted for many years, with great ability, and led a most blameless life, public and private.

We propose to publish from time to time a series of articles culled from letters written to one of the editors by a friend travelling in Europe during the last summer. The information they contain and the histories they recall have afforded much pleasure to us, and no doubt will be acceptable to the readers of THE DEMOCRAT.

HISTORIC FRANCE.

BY G. F. JOHNSON.

ST. DENIS.

The speed slackened—the train stopped. "St. Denis," cried the guard, in that familiar and distinct tone in which railway conductors, the world over, announce the stations. Undecided, I looked out. A crowd poured from the different compartments of the train,—respectably dressed men, workmen in the characteristic blue blouse, with a fair sprinkling of women and children.

The town of St. Denis is just beyond the ramparts of Paris; and yet one would imagine himself one hundred miles away, so great is the contrast. St. Denis is dull, dirty and soiled in appearance; old and almost worn eaten. Paris is gay, clear, fresh and new. Yet St. Denis is like Paris; but only in some of those narrow streets hidden away in old quarters of the Metropolis, where the buildings crowd so tightly against one another that here and there they seem to bulge out at the top, like great cubes of stone and mortar that some strong force has squeezed and pressed into deformity, till their square windows suffer from the same cause. This resemblance is only, however, in miniature, as the buildings in Paris are taller. Through this monotony I hurried, until a turn revealed to me what I at once knew was the object of my visit—a small open square and in its face a great Gothic Minster; two towers, the one capped by a high pointed spire and the other by a carved Mansard. I approached, halted and looked at it. I had seen it in imagination often—the St. Denis of history—but here it stood before me, clear and perfect in reality. In wonder I gazed upon it, and well I might. Thought is rapid; in an instant I was far back in the past of antiquity, rapidly clanking up along the centuries to the present.

St. Genevieve, tradition says, founded the church; Dagobert re-constructed it; Charlemagne enlarged it; Able Suger repaired it, and St. Louis rebuilt it. Its tombs were rifled in the days of the National Assembly by its direction, and later it ordered the destruction of the church. This vandalism was but partially accomplished, and thus it rested until Napoleon the first restored and completed it. It had held the ashes of Merovingian and Carolingian royalty, the third race of the French Kings, the Valois and the Bourbon. For almost twelve centuries these, worthy and unworthy, had slept side by side. All these, whose names were great in history, had moved in life about the now deserted spot on which I stood. I paused for a moment, and then passed over and entered the open doorway. An immense chamber of great height; down the centre nave stood long rows of high-backed church chairs, so familiar a sight in European Cathedrals. At one end of the Basilica stood the high, but not extravagant Altar, in front of which and traversing the body of the edifice passed a low railing with gates at either side. A few persons wandered silently over the cold floors examining the architecture and stained windows, making distributions of some kind. At length he approached me and extended a large, yellow ticket and uttered, "One franc, if you please." I received the ticket. Pointing over his shoulder with his thumb, he said, "That way, sir."

I saw the rest gathering at one of the gates. I had joined in parties of the kind so often that I knew the formula and took my place with the others—ten or fifteen in all, representing half a dozen of this world's nations. A tall man, with a strong voice, stood to receive the tickets. After first casting his eye over his flock, he opened the gate, and as each passed through he lifted their ticket, with a loud, "Merci Monsieur, or Madame," according to the sex. It burst on the funereal silence like a blast from a trombone. Then he led us through his collection, letting off on the way a stereotyped recital in a pitch of voice of a dolorous chant—to which requiem-like description I paid little attention as each royal figure was labeled with a printed card between the feet. There they rested in monotonous regularity, packed away side by side on block-shaped marble tombs about the ordinary height of a table—these twelve hundred years of French Royalty. Here and there the long list was broken by absence—Charlemagne, Louis the Eleventh and some few others. Each effigy rested on its back, with a stiff precision of attitude running through the lot. Rigid and uncomfortable they looked—their chins forced against their throats, palm folded to palm, wrists bent and hands upright on their breasts, whilst on the head of each sat a stiff looking crown, which some wore as uncomfortably in their life as they seemed to wear here in the marble. If the effort was to make them look severe and terribly stern, it was successfully accomplished. To-day all these tombs are but cenotaphs, as they are without contents; all that was left of their Kings and Queens was mingled with the vulgar earth long ago. One day, men mad in their hatred of Monarchy, tore them away and cast them into a common fosse. Some were but dust, others bones—a few still bore some of the outward semblance to humanity. Henry the Fourth, or Henry

of Navarre as he was known, was taken out preserved, as he had been lain away. A good man and king, a disposition of him was delayed. His body was placed that the curious might look upon it under the feet of the very altar before which he had professed another religion, that peace might result to distracted France; but the times prevailed, and he too, in a few hours followed with the rest, to profanation.

From there we went to the Sacristy. Here our guide, having lighted a lantern, opened the doors of the Cabnet. The precious service of the church flashed before us. The highly wrought monstrance, or Pyx, was there, with the sacred ecclesiastical vessels—and crowns also, though not so beautiful as some I had seen, yet fully as historic. I stooped down and read the names of their wearers: There was the coronet of the assassinated Charles Duke of Berry, and next to it a rather plainly constructed crown of gold, set with a few jewels, but as weighty as any that ever pressed the brow of a king. It was that of Louis the Sixteenth. For inheriting that bubble the honest, but weak man, had paid upon the scaffold the penalty of the crimes of his ancestors. It had been the pretext of a revolution which was only satiated after it had drunk the blood of two millions five hundred thousand human beings! I looked long and intently at the unfortunate jewel. The verger saw my interest and held the lantern close that I might the better inspect it. I turned away. He closed the cabinet to conduct us to the crypt, down a dark stair-way and under the rear of the building. Semi-circular in shape, it swept around the outer edge; partitions cut it into sections and windows lighted it from without. Here and there stood a relic that had escaped the hands of the iconoclast and destroyer. I passed hurriedly through and returned a few steps to await the others of the party. I had carelessly placed my foot upon the empty sarcophagus of some defunct king, when my eye caught a gleam of light. I approached it. A gas jet flickered within a walled space immediately under the altar. Through a narrow slit I inspected its contents. I stuck my face as far in as possible. It was a wretched chamber. Long bars of rusted iron, elevated about a foot above the floor, spread like huge cobwebs from side to side, and on them rested a few dust and mould-covered coffins. Their adornments had long since yielded to damp and lung in rotted tatters. A thick noxious atmosphere pervaded this chamber house, the recollections of which clung to me for a full day after I was in fresh air. Whose bodies were they? I questioned the guide when he returned. Carelessly he replied, "Louis the Sixteenth and Marie Antoinette and * * *"

The sound of his foot-falls smothered the balance of his answer as he hurriedly led the way up stairs, anxious to be rid of us, but only to tramp down again with another batch. As I followed him, I took one last look about me and said to myself, Old walls, you hold a little Royalty still, even though it is but a handful of dust—you hold their crowns and why not hold what remains of them? What a strange story! These two unfortunates perished under the axe of the Guillotine—and this in sight of the Palace of the Tuilleries, within the walls of which they long had reigned in splendor. Two shallow graves in the Cemetery of the Madeleine had received their headless trunks, until, by the change of power so common to France, the race of the Capet went again upon the throne, when they with others were exhumed and placed where I saw them in the vaults of St. Denis. How long to rest there who can tell? Certain it is, had the Communists of 1871 held the location for but one of the closing hours of their struggle, venerable St. Denis, you with your empty tombs, your few Imperial cinders and all your tangible associations, would have been swept into oblivion!

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