

THE ABOLITION OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE.

The present mode of electing the President of the United States is growing every day more unpopular. Many of our leading men have for years past urged a change in this, the most important election of the American people. Why the people should not be allowed to vote directly for their candidate, cannot be very readily explained. At present we vote for men who promise to vote, as electors, for the man of our choice. Thus we delegate to another the right of voting for us, and we have nothing but the vote of honor that he will fairly carry out his promise. Suppress the votes were nearly equally divided in the electoral college, and some half dozen electors from Pennsylvania or other States could be induced to violate their pledges, and cast their votes for the minority candidate and thus elect him? What would be the consequence if such an event should occur? Civil war or rebellion would follow without doubt. It is true, the electors have thus far proved faithful to their trust. But the very fact that there is a possibility of a violation of trust, in this circumlocution manner of electing the Chief Magistrate of the Union, is a sufficient reason for a change that would place the power where it properly belongs—in the hands of the people.

The President's message was sent into Congress on Wednesday last and furnished by us to our subscribers on Thursday morning in an extra sheet. The city papers, containing the message, reached here at 4.15 P. M., or nearly a whole day after it had been furnished by us to the readers of the AMERICAN. The message is not very long, and as it is the last annual message of A. J., it pitches into Congress as usual, and reiterates its old complaints on the reconstruction policy, and charges upon that body all the ills arising from his own bad policy. He recommends the election of President and Vice President by a direct vote of the people, to which all good citizens will respond, Amen! Had this been so before he assumed the office, A. J. might have been a better man.

We learn from the Report of Mr. McCullough, Secretary of the Treasury, that the receipts from customs or duties, for the last fiscal year, was 104 millions. Eight hundred and fifty millions of our bonds are held abroad. Of this amount he estimates that about six hundred millions are Government bonds. He recommends a reduction of the tariff and an increase of excise duties, and fixes the following as the "average" standard of receipts and expenditures, namely:

Table with 2 columns: Item, Amount. Includes Internal Revenue (\$200,000,000), Expenditures of the Government (\$250,000,000), and Leaving a balance of fifty millions to be applied to the payment of the principal of the public debt.

JUDGE GAMBLE.—On Monday last, Hon. James Gamble, the newly elected President Judge for Lycoming county, was inducted into office. Mr. Gamble has had some experience on the bench in the Centre and Clinton county district, and gave very general satisfaction.

THE Williamsport Standard complains, and cannot see why there should not be a decline in butter and eggs, as there has been in the price of coal, at that place. Perhaps there has been a strike among the cows and hens for better provender.

CONGRESS assembled at Washington on Monday last. The President's message was sent in on Wednesday. Among the first acts was the introduction of an important bill in regard to the naturalization of aliens, with restrictions that will prevent the wholesale frauds that have been practiced under the present loose system.

UNDER a recent Act of Congress, the members of the XLII Congress will organize their House on the 4th day of March next, instead of deferring it to December, as before the passage of that Act.

COMING TO HIS SENSES.—The 52,000 majority of Illinois for Gen. Grant seems to have brought the Chicago Times, the most influential of the Western Democratic papers, to its senses. It gives some wholesome advice to its friends in the South, and the editors are numerous that they are disappointed to follow it. Hear: "We must (says the Times) abandon the policy, which while preserving nothing, opposes everything that any other body proposes, and gives no honest reason for anything. What further use is there to fight in a direction where defeat must be certain and inevitable? Why, for example, seek to prevent the execution of the Federal reconstruction act? Why talk about State rights or Federal intervention? Why stand back and hurl the epithet 'unconstitutional' at measures and doctrines which the people have already passed upon and approved? Is this the business of statesmen? Is this the way to win popular favor?"

On the 27th ult., a band of Indians, under Black Kettle, were defeated signally after a desperate fight, by Gen. Sheridan, on the Washita. The dead bodies of 102 warriors were left on the field and the following property captured at the Indian village: Eight hundred and seventy-five ponies, 1,233 buffalo robes and skins, 255 pounds of powder, 1,950 pounds of lead, 4,000 arrows, 700 pounds of tobacco, besides rifles, pistols, bows, and an immense quantity of dried meat and other provisions. Our loss was stated as follows: Major Elliot, Captain Hamilton, and 10 enlisted men killed; Brevet Lieut. Col. Harriet, Captain, Second Lieut. B. Marsh, and 11 enlisted men wounded. Sheridan has issued a general order to his troops. It looks as if he would soon end the Indian troubles.

CONGRESS assembled on Monday for the short session. It will be a busy winter, the currency and the tariff requiring adjustment as well as the policy of the late rebel States. In the Senate, forty-eight members were present. The credentials of Senator Hill, of Georgia, were presented and laid on the table. Mr. Sumner introduced a bill establishing negro suffrage in all the States, and providing for a resumption of specie payments; also, a resolution directing the President to open negotiations with Great Britain for cheap ocean postage. Mr. Croghan, of N. H., offered a universal suffrage amendment to the Constitution. Messrs. Yates, Morrill and Frelinghuysen introduced bills amendatory to the act authorizing the grades of General and Lieutenant General of the Army.

In the House, 164 members answered to roll call. Messrs. Dickey, and Pettis, from Pennsylvania, and Stover, from Missouri, were sworn in. The credentials of Thomas J. Hamilton, elected as Representative at large from Tennessee, were referred, and his admission to a seat in the meantime refused. Bills amending the naturalization laws were introduced by Messrs. Broome, of Pa., and McKee, of Ky. Mr. Schenck, of Ohio, offered a resolution directing the Law Committee to inquire into the expediency of certain amendments to the naturalization laws, which were adopted. Bills and constitutional amendments were introduced by Messrs. Boutwell, Broome and Kelley. Bills regulating the currency, providing for redemption of greenbacks in gold, and prohibiting sales of coin by the Treasury, were presented by Messrs. Lynch and Pike, of Mo., and Ingersoll, of Va. Mr. Morrill offered a joint resolution, concerning the conduct of Reverdy Johnson, and asking his recall, which, on motion of Mr. Banks, was referred to the Foreign Committee, by a vote of 94 to 41. On motion of Mr. Boutwell, the Reconstruction Committee was directed to investigate affairs in Texas, and on motion of Mr. Schofield, in Georgia. Mr. Elliot, of Mass., introduced a bill continuing the Freedmen's Bureau in Virginia, Mississippi and Texas. Mr. Mullins, of Tenn., introduced a bill to suppress the "Ku Klux." Mr. Bingham presented a bill providing for an election in Virginia next January. On motion of Lawrence, the Ways and Means were directed to consider the expediency of sales of surplus Treasury gold to assist in liquidating portions of the public debt; and, on motion of Mr. Spaulding, the same committee were instructed to report on the expediency of providing for a resumption of specie payments. Mr. Cary, of Ohio, offered a resolution repealing the Tenure of Office bill, which was referred to the Judiciary Committee. The bill of last July came up in order, but was left for consideration by the Ways and Means Committee. Mr. Shanks, of Ohio, offered a resolution recognizing the Provisional Government of Crete. Mr. Johnson, of N. Y., introduced a resolution concerning the president for correspondence relating to imprisonment of American citizens in Ireland, etc. Mr. Banks moved its reference, whereupon Mr. Robinson withdrew it.

Heavy Wind Beecher. For many years Mr. Beecher has been a power for good in this community. He has exerted an immense influence, not only over the congregation of Plymouth Church, but upon a large class of liberal and progressive Christians in this country and in England. Nor is it difficult to understand the secret of this influence. Christianity, as he understands it, is a Christian faith of inspiration, which is the formal of the human character in the teaching of too many divines it becomes. He regards it as a living force, able to grapple with and overcome the evils of the day, and to be the inspiration of the great philanthropic movements and progressive reforms that have been the glory of this age. Conservatives have blamed Mr. Beecher bitterly for turning his pulpit into a theatre, in conventional phrase; in other words, for discussing in his pulpit practical questions of vital interest and importance, instead of confining himself exclusively to the discussion of dogmas. But the earnest and eloquent preacher has well known that the spirit of the age was with him, and that thus alone could he accomplish the work laid out for him to do.

THE reports of the officers are very conflicting, but as near as we can learn, 45 passengers, including 18 ladies and 7 of the crew and cabin crew, and 7 of the officers, were killed or injured. The vessel was on the point of colliding. It is believed that seventy-five to eighty persons have been lost, including thirty-eight women. W. C. Taylor, clerk of the Amies, after securing the books, register, and valuables, went through the cabin kicking in the door of state-rooms. Through his intrepidity no lives were lost on his boat.

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