

POWER & BARKSDALE, PROPRIETORS. T. L. FOWLE, MARIA BARKSDALE. TERMS, \$7.00 PER YEAR, IN ADVANCE. City Subscribers, Served by the Carrier, \$2.50 per year.

PETITION AND APPEAL

Tax-Payers to the Legislature.

We ask the earnest attention of your honorable body to the following particulars in which by proper legislation very large sums may be saved.

PUBLIC PRINTING.

The public printing, by the grossness of its expenses, amounts to a heavy drain on the treasury. We submit that such is the practical result, whatever may be the motive, on which the extraordinary system is tolerated. Let examples be cited in evidence.

For the five years next preceding the first of January, 1861, the average cost of printing for the State did not exceed \$5,000 per annum.

For the five years commencing with the fiscal year 1870, the average cost of the printing for the State has exceeded \$75,000 each year, being an average excess each year over the former of \$65,000.

This enormous increase in the cost of printing cannot be attributed to increased expense of performing the public work, as the number of the number of our citizens, for the like conditions exist in Mississippi and Georgia; and yet the recent report of the Comptroller-General of Georgia shows that the average cost of the public printing in that State for the years 1872 and 1873 did not exceed \$10,000. Mark the contrast according to the above average.

The journals of the two houses of our Legislature contain a vast amount of matter utterly worthless to the public, and their enormous bulk, with supplements added, might well cause the inquiry, why were they gotten up in that bulk, which is not needed by the public printer? We cite for the contrast two examples, and may verify the figures in our State Library. In the year 1856 the journals of the two houses contained together 1,182 pages. In the year 1873 the journals contain together 6,393 pages—that is more than five times the number of pages contained in those journals of 1856. In the year 1873 the journals contain in full every little report that a certain bill does pass, and thus they are swelled with mass of useless matter. Doubtless the enormous difference in the cost of public printing in Mississippi and Georgia arises from the fact that our journals are thus bloated with useless matter, and also that official reports are printed and charged for more than once, and in part because our printers are allowed to our State Printer.

THE REMEDY FOR THESE GROSS ABUSES AND WASTE OF EXPENDITURE IS PLAIN.

The journals be greatly reduced in bulk so as to contain no more than what the public in a legislative journal. Require the official reports to be so reduced in bulk as to contain only essential matters, and those to be stated in briefest intelligible terms. Demand that no documents be printed and paid for more than once, and reduce to moderate rates the prices for public printing, by the same rules of economy and justice to the people to the public printing of counties, cities and towns.

DISTRICT PRINTING BILL.

In this connection it is proper to call special attention to the District Printing Bill, which was published in the issue of the 15th inst. It is both just and proper to tax the general public to sustain partly newspaper. In this connection, and in many others, the chief value of a newspaper publication consists in the fact that it gives notice to the people of the particular county in which the matter is to be published. It secures a mere mockery, under a pretense of fairness, to advertise the property of the citizen for sale under execution or for taxes in a distant part of the judicial district, and at a price which the citizen in the county in which the sale is to be made. The same is true of many other notices required to be published. In very many cases of publication required to be made under the law, the same notice can be of no possible use, and yet the poor citizen is taxed with the costs of such useless publication.

EXPENSES ON ACCOUNT OF THE JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT.

The number of circuit judges and chancellors is far greater than the needs of the public service require. Before the present constitution went into effect, there were but ten circuit judges, and the duties of the circuit judges were charged all the duties imposed on the present circuit judges now provided for, but also performed nearly all the duties now imposed on twenty chancellors; and there was no complaint that the number of circuit judges was insufficient. By the present system (and we believe in that respect it is a good one), most of the business formerly done by the probate judges is now transferred to the chancery clerks. The chancery clerks are almost exclusively occupied in what is strictly chancery or equity business, which, as before stated, was formerly within the jurisdiction of the circuit judges. The litigation in the circuit and chancery courts is now far less in amount and value than it was when we had only ten circuit judges. The constitution amendments by which the jurisdiction of justice of the peace has been made to include all civil cases not exceeding in amount \$150.00, and the poverty of our people, by which many transactions are very much limited in value, have taken away at least one-third of the civil business of the circuit and chancery courts.

LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.

The expenses of the Legislative Department have grown recently into enormous proportions. The sessions are now annual, and have been greatly prolonged, and there has been a great deal, and as we respectfully insist, an unnecessary increase in the number of the members of the House of Representatives, of the clerks, door-keepers, sergeants-at-arms, porters and pages. Formerly all the clerical force needed was furnished to the House of Representatives at \$1,500, and to the Senate at \$1,200, for a session. We do not wish to be understood as stating that the services of the members of your honorable body are not worth that in now charged, viz: \$200 per annum. There is no price within our means to pay, which could possibly be too high for the inestimable blessing of an intelligent, working and earnest body of men, the contractors, their lives and devoted their talents to the study of political economy, and those arts which make a people great, prosperous and happy, and who bring to the great work of enacting

laws for the State, the rich results of a ripe and varied experience in court affairs. But, in our present impoverished condition, we respectfully, but earnestly, appeal that retrograde in its parts of the administration is absolutely necessary; and we cannot doubt that the members of your body will initiate this reform, by fixing their salaries of the sum paid before the year 1868, and, generally, to about \$250 for two years, there being but one session in that time. This sum would be greater than is realized on the average by citizens, in private life, and greater also than the average paid members of the Legislature by the other States in the Union.

FEES AND SALARIES OF PUBLIC OFFICERS.

The Governor's salary might, be without detriment to the public service, fixed at \$4,000 per annum, which is far larger than is paid by other States in the Union, having no more wealth than Mississippi. The Lieutenant-Governor's salary might also be fixed at the price usually paid to the presiding officer of the Senate, viz: \$2,500 per annum. The salaries of the Treasurer, Secretary of State, Auditor and Attorney-General, we ask, may be fixed at the rates under the Code of 1857; the clerks and assistants allowed thereunder, reduced to the number and compensation with the salaries fixed by that Code. And the salary and expenditures of the State Superintendent of Education should be fixed at a room in the Capitol.

And we respectfully ask that the salaries of all other State and District officers should be fixed as to not to exceed in any instance the \$2500 per annum. The salaries then allowed were sufficient to procure the services of able and competent men, and we feel sure they will be sufficient now. The truth is, that all private pursuits are so unprosperous, and all official positions so highly remunerative, that the difference betwixt a wide-spread greed for office, and encourages that base of free government—the growth of a large class whose interests in the State consist in their reception of the emoluments of official position.

The compensation of the county treasurers should be fixed so as not to exceed in any instance the \$500 per annum. His duties are light, and his responsibility will be small, if the county fees are restrained as are heretofore asked for.

The fees of the Chancery and Circuit Clerk and Sheriff are too high, and we are sorry to add, in many instances, are very much increased by exorbitant and illegal charges. We ask that this subject be carefully looked into, and that the fees be reduced to a fair and just compensation for the services rendered, and that the burden of the suitor shall not be so great as they now are.

The sessions of the Legislature should be biennial. It is within the power of the Legislature to fix by law that it should meet only once in two years. This is the plain meaning of Section 6, Art. II, of the Constitution. We ask, however, that biennial sessions be left to the discretion of the Legislature, but that the rule be adopted by constitutional amendment.

The Constitution should also be amended so as to prohibit all special legislation. A great portion of the time of the Legislature is now spent in making that kind of legislation, when the same end may be attainable by general laws.

One of the evils of the times is excessive legislation. Statutes are passed and then modified or repealed, in whole or in part, without due deliberation, and the result is that the citizen is harassed, becoming more and more intricate and confused, at every succeeding session of the Legislature. The laws should be plain and simple, so that the citizen may, without danger or mistake, conform his action to them.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.

But probably the most flagrant evil of the times is the excessive salaries of the tax-payers complain, and the great wrongs perpetrated on the rights, arise from the action of the Boards of Supervisors.

This court is really the most important of any in the State, and should be composed of the very best men in the several counties. As a general rule, we are sorry to say, the members of this Board are wholly unfit to discharge their duties, and are without respectability or account. They, however, are not the fault of the Legislature of the State; except in so far as it encourages such men to seek for that position. The county levies, in a large majority of the counties, are extravagant and oppressive beyond all endurance. The contracts for public work are made without economy or care, and with a reckless indifference to the interests of the public. These Boards, in some instances, employ their own members to do the work not authorized by law, merely for the purpose of making their extravagant allowances. In many instances these members are wholly ignorant, and are completely under the control of the clerks and Sheriffs of these counties, to whom they make extravagant allowances. This is a great evil, and we suggest that remedy be made immediately, by the Legislature, by immediately enacting, fixing the maximum rate of taxation at 50 per cent on the State beyond which they shall not go in any instance.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Again, the expenditure of the State's money—poor as the people are—and laboring under the most crushing taxation—for the board and support of certain students, is wrong. The State is under no obligation to furnish these favored few with what is denied to the children of the State at large. The State supports the discharges her duty to the great mass of her children when she furnishes schools free of tuition for four months in the year. These schools are for the fortunate persons the colleges and universities are for the more fortunate few. Not more than one in a thousand, even in the most favored States, are able to go to college. It is wrong that one hundred and ninety-nine should be burdened with a taxation so crushing that they are deprived, in many instances, of the education which is a common school—in order that one fortunate person shall have extraordinary benefits denied to the others. We therefore ask that the scholarships in the two Universities be abolished. The remarks apply, also, to the Normal school.

Which we cordially endorse the wisdom of that policy which extends to the children of the State the advantages of a free common school education, we re-

spectfully submit that our present legislation in that respect is radically defective in theory, and in its practical workings is a gross wrong rather than a benefit to her citizens. The present rate of taxation for education is so high, and the appropriations made for that purpose, amount to the enormous sum of \$750,000 annually—greatly more than is necessary for carrying on the State government. We suggest that the mistake in this matter has been this: The attempt has been made on an impoverished State, with all its industrial pursuits in a degrading and constantly changing condition, and all of its property values greatly depreciated, to suddenly inaugurate a complete system of common schools fully adequate to the wants of the whole people of the State, and to extend this even to collegiate education. What this would be well enough perhaps in a great, prosperous and wealthy commonwealth, yet the attempt in our State in its present condition has been a gross mistake.

The salaries of teachers in the common schools are far greater than is necessary to secure the services of the persons employed. For second class schools \$25 per month would be ample, and for first class \$50.

On this subject we suggest that a constitutional amendment is necessary in order to give to the present common schools the benefits of taxes, forfeitures and licenses now required to be funded.

AN UNNECESSARY OFFICE.

The Commissioner of Immigration is an unnecessary office. His duties are not clearly defined, and his salary suggests that his salary might be abolished, or be made merely nominal, and all appropriations subject to his control be repealed.

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THE FIRST GIFT.

BY J. AUGUSTIN BENOARD.

The pretty dower she gave to me shall be an amulet. By the way I will ever see the day when first we met; I'll prize it more than sight of earth, I'll prize it more than gold and silver, I'll prize it more than all the world to me.

AN ANGEL THAT CAME FROM HEAVEN BY WATER.

BY B. P. HILLIARD.

Down where a great river joined the sea lived an old fisherman and his wife, in a small house, and their only family, a boy and a girl, were as good as orphans. The old fisherman was a very pleasant man, except when he was ill-natured, which happened too often, because he was a man who loved strong drink and was as good as a drunkard.

Many years ago there lived in a large town in Virginia a man of considerable means and of good connections. His name was Stacy, and he was a very respectable man. He had married, early in life, a handsome girl of Irish descent, by whom he had four children. She was very happy with her husband, and after the birth of their fourth child, Mr. Stacy, unable longer to bear the habitual and increasing infirmities of his wife, instituted suit for divorce, and, meantime, separated from her, taking the children into his own care.

One day, when the fisherman was down by the shore, preparing to go out and catch some fish, he heard a queer sound on the water, and he looked up and saw a boat with a man and a woman in it. The man was holding the woman by the hand, and she was looking up at him with a look of terror. The man was shouting to her to get up, and she was trying to do so, but she was unable to rise.

"It is not ours to keep," said the fisherman, "and it is not ours to give." "Yes, it is," said the fisherman. "I've found it on my farm, and what I find there is mine. I should like to see any man who would take away from me anything that I find on my farm."

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A FAIRY STORY FOR LITTLE FOLKS.

Once there was a little boy named Alfred, and he had heard so many fine stories about Fairyland that he fancied he should like to go and see it. It happened, too, on one of his birthdays that his fairy godmother sent him a fairy picture-book for a present—a wonderful little book, just the kind you would like for it had not only a blue silk cover, but a golden clasp, and within was full of lovely pictures that were continually changing. Now it was a brook in Fairyland, in which little fairies with rainbow wings were chasing each other; and now it was a room in the Fairy Queen's palace, where you see a fairy first just the toy or book that you wish; and now it was a great bank of flowers, that grew again as fast as picked; and now it was the splendid rose-colored palace of the Fairy Queen herself, or the grove, golden gates, with merry little sunbeams hanging on the trees.

All this made Alfred ten times as anxious to go to Fairyland, and of every day he asked his mother to send him a big, bustling grown-up people only said, "Pho! pho! get out of the way! There isn't any Fairyland!"

But one day it happened that Alfred caught a sunbeam hiding away in a flower-cup, and though the little bright-yellow fellow tried hard to get away, Alfred had him fast.

"You shan't go till you tell me how to find Fairyland," he said to the sunbeam.

"That's easy enough. You must buy a fairy glass and when you see it first it fast enough," answered the slippery little rogue, sliding out of Alfred's fingers.

Alfred went home quite chagrined, and getting all the money out of his box went to the shop to buy a fairy glass. The man smiled at him.

"We don't keep fairy glasses here, my boy," said the man, "but you can buy a pair of spectacles, and when you see a pair of spectacles, you will find Fairyland."

Alfred looked all about him, and saw, sitting on a stool, a bright-eyed little fellow with a pair of spectacles on his nose, and a pair of spectacles on his nose, and a pair of spectacles on his nose.

"I won't hurt your pony," said Alfred; "but if you are a fairy, madam, as I think you are, I should like you to tell me how to get to Fairyland."

"You must earn it," answered the fairy, "and you must earn it by doing good and kind deeds. Here is a little box of fairy glass, and when you see a pair of spectacles, you will find Fairyland."

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THE WORK OF AN OLD MAN OF EIGHTY-ONE.

New York Correspondent Detroit News.

Mr. Bryant, at the age of eighty-one, assisted by Sidney Howard Gray, who was formerly on the Post, and who was selected by him as his aid, has undertaken to write a history of the United States.

It will be comprised in four large volumes of 600 pages each, and will cost \$100.00. The first volume is already under way, and contains much of his writings. This work will probably be his last one of any magnitude, and will contain the efforts of his riper years, which he will leave as his heritage to posterity.

It is remarkable that so great a man should begin an enterprise of so great moment, but Mr. Bryant is a man of the greatest ambition. His history will deal at length with some parts of American history, which have been less discussed by previous writers, and will thus have an interest beyond that which will pass from its literary excellence.

In person, Mr. Bryant is of medium size, and slightly bent with age. There is nothing in his appearance to attract particular attention, as some people think there must be in the men of genius. His hair, beard and eyes, however, are long, and give him a very venerable expression. His features are agreeable and kindly. He is always cheerful and pleasant in conversation, and laughs at a joke. When in his country house he visits the office about once a week, and sits and reads the papers without glasses. He is vigorous for so old a man, and now and then indulges in such games as chess, and he is very fond of the dog, by his name.

He always walks down from his house when he visits the office during his residence in town. He has one of the editorial rooms of the Post. It is the sanctum sanctorum, but is seldom occupied, as he rarely works in it.

The post resides, during the summer, at his country house at Rosby, Long Island. He will be in the city in a week or two for the winter. His place at Rosby is old and beautiful, with its wealth of trees and vines. It is a fit home for a man of his age and his position. The most distinguished men of the time feel honored when, at his invitation, they enjoy his hospitality. He is a mental autocrat, and his invitations are springing green compartments in the minds of his friends.

"Mr. Bryant is the proudest man I ever saw, and yet he isn't ashamed to work."

Archduke Maximilian, of Bavaria, was invited to visit his daughter, the Empress of Austria. He always travels quietly, and was mistaken for a business man by a native Austrian tradesman, who occupied the same compartment in the train, and who, after telling all about his own affairs, asked the Archduke where he was going.

"Going to Vienna," "On business?" "No, to visit my daughter, who is married to an Austrian king, and who is in good business." "Well, tolerable good, but troublesome at times." "What is he?" "The Emperor." The tradesman was covered with confusion, and, notwithstanding the laughing protestations of the Archduke, he darted from the carriage at the very first stopping place.

They came to her and kissed her, and she was very much pleased.

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THEM TO THE SICK BOY.

He had kindly done it, when chink! chink! came two little fairy bits more into his box.

But now he began to fancy getting fairy money an easy thing, and the next day, when he found \$2000 in his box, he grew exceedingly angry, and, calling out, "You naughty girl!" struck her on the cheek. Chink! went something in his box; and, looking in, Alfred saw, to his sorrow, that two more pretty shining pieces had gone.

In short, it was a long, long time, and through a great many such "chink" and "chink," that Alfred at last got the box filled with fairy money. But that time he went out into the forest, a proud and happy boy enough.

He had not gone far, when he met an old man, who was crying fairy carpets for sale.

"You can take your seat and wish you were in China, and what you are there," said the old man. "I'll give you one for your box, Master Alfred. I can't get across the fairy river, but still he said that he wanted spangled, not birds, and traveled on till he found an old man begging by the road.

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