

PERISHED DAILY, SEMI-WEEKLY AND WEEKLY, AT No. 212 1/2 MAIN STREET, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA.

EDWARD DANIELS, Editor and Manager. TERMS: DAILY, \$1.00 per month; \$10.00 per year.

SEMI-WEEKLY. One year, \$2.50; Three months, \$1.00; Six months, \$1.50.

WEEKLY. One year, \$1.00; Three months, \$0.50; Six months, \$0.75.

CLUB RATES FOR SEMI-WEEKLY: One Year, \$5.00; Three Months, \$2.00; Six Months, \$3.00.

THURSDAY EVEN'G, APRIL 18, 1872.

THE SECRET BALLOT.

The opposition to the secret ballot in this State can be accounted for on no other reason than that the tendency of the human mind is to run in old grooves and channels; and one of the most difficult things in the world is to get a mind thus rutted in its course out of its old way of thinking and acting.

The reason why the secret ballot has been so persistently adhered to in this State is that there always existed in Virginia a state of society similar to that in the feudal ages.

With the secret ballot this could not be done, and hence the necessity of compelling the voter or retainor to show his hand, that the feudal lord might not be cheated out of what he deemed his rightful suffrage.

The reason why the secret ballot has been so persistently adhered to in this State is that there always existed in Virginia a state of society similar to that in the feudal ages.

With this history of the secret ballot, it is surprising that we should find any Republican, and especially the colored men of Virginia, clamoring for it, since it is, in point of fact, a vestige of slavery.

THE INDICTED MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE.

We publish to-day the correspondence between Messrs. Douglas and Ramsdell and Colonel Hughes, United States District Attorney for the Western District, upon the indictments recently found in that court against certain parties disabled from holding office by reason of participation in the rebellion.

HOUSE OF DELEGATES.

DEAR SIR—The grand jury of the United States Circuit Court for the Eastern District, has just been discharged. No presentments were made against sitting members of the General Assembly.

IMPORTANT CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR SIR—The grand jury of the United States Circuit Court for the Eastern District, has just been discharged. No presentments were made against sitting members of the General Assembly.

"POINT OF ORDER."

One of the most provoking things in the world, either to a man of sense or one at all accustomed to parliamentary usage, is to see a dozen men at once jumping to their feet in a public meeting, and screaming out to the presiding officer that they "rise to a point of order," when not one in ten of them can tell the difference between a "point of order" and a motion "to lay on the table."

GENERAL GRANT, at the beginning of his term of office, did everything in his power to conciliate the leaders of the rebellion.

On the one hand, the mourners over the "Lost Cause" were encouraged to cherish loyalty to the government; and on the other hand, the administration was denounced for keeping alive animosities

engendered by the war. Such diabolical double dealing was expected from the baffled and whipped Democratic party. They loaded with bitter contumely any of the Confederate leaders who did not preserve an attitude of defiance and hate.

At the same time they charged to the account of a Republican administration the very evil which they did their best to conserve. Their tactics have been understood, and we have fought out the political battle with them on that line to the bitter end.

But when Senator Trumbull comes forward and bids for Democratic support by a contemptibly feeble echo of their own exhausted political thunder, he not only stultifies his own records but provokes sarcastic laughter from the very men who have become disgusted with their own state trick.

Trumbull's denunciation of the President in his Cooper Institute speech, for keeping alive Southern hatred of the Union, is the most ludicrous brag that any mortal has listened to during the last decade.

By all means, let the hero of a feeble second-hand calumny be nominated by the Cincinnati Convention.

The disaffected, anti-Republican, with no certain following of their own and with very conditional promises of aid from the Democrats, have before them no very brilliant prospect.

It looks as though the cunning leaders of the "unaffiliated" might be luring Trumbull, Greeley & Co. to their destruction. Look out for political will-o-the-wisps around the Morgie.

Phosphorus emanations abound in the midst of decay.

ACCORDING to the notion of the News, the present tariff is a very singular affair, as, to use its language, "it robs almost everybody for the benefit of almost nobody."

It is singular that a system so unjust should be maintained in defiance of the will of "almost everybody."

A HOOSIER never exclaimed to a fish-bait: "Don't touch that dough-nut, Sal; there's something dead in it." That is all the comment we have to make at present on Chase's Parkerburg Convention.

We have received the very able and exhaustive speech of the Hon. J. H. Platt, delivered in the House of Representatives on the 6th instant, on the subject of Virginia politics, and shall publish extended extracts from the same at an early day.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE MISON POEMS OF HOMER. Published by A. Denham & Co., 17 Murray street, New York, 1872.

This is a beautifully printed volume of some two hundred pages, containing the minor poems of the greatest bard that ever struck the strings of mortal harp—the son of Critheis, named Melesigenes, and who, after he became blind, was called Homer, or the blind.

It embraces the Battle of the Frogs and Mice, a mock-heroic poem which has a lively dramatic personae, and which is as palpably a burlesque of the first order as anything that has been written in modern times.

It is so lively, in fact, that the more audacious critics insist upon giving it an Athenian percentage not much farther back than the time of Aristophanes. In addition to the "Battle," the volume contains the Hymns and Epigrams of Homer, translated by Parnell, Chapman, Shelley, Congreve and Hole, with an introduction by Henry Nelson Coleridge, and a translation of the Life of Homer attributed to Herodotus.

The translations are all very fine, and the volume is one that every classical scholar should have in his library. Indeed, his library would be incomplete without it.

HOUSE OF DELEGATES.

DEAR SIR—The grand jury of the United States Circuit Court for the Eastern District, has just been discharged. No presentments were made against sitting members of the General Assembly.

I cannot but believe as a matter of policy that prosecutions will result detrimental to liberal sentiments in our State. I think it would be interpreted as emanating through unkindness, perhaps persecution, hate and revenge.

It is not unkind of the delicate official duties devolved upon you, nor am I doubtful as to the elevated moral and legal standpoint from which you will view this whole subject. Trusting that the ends of justice may best be subserved through a policy of leniency and liberality, and that at the next election Virginia will range herself, rank and file, with the progressive, liberal principles of our noble civilization, I am

Very truly, &c., C. P. RAMSDHELL.

There is nothing more dangerous than the common axiom—the spirit of the law is to be considered. To adopt it, is to give way to the torrent of opinion. Every man has his own particular point of view; and, at different times, sees the same objects in different lights.

The spirit of the laws will be the good or bad logic of the age; and this good or bad logic will be the digestion of the violence of his passions; or on the rank of the accused, and on all those little circumstances which change the appearance of objects in the fluctuating mind of man.

The disorders which arise from a vigorous observance of the letter of penal laws are not to be compared with those produced by the loose enforcement of them. The first are temporary inconveniences, which will oblige the legislator to correct the letter of the law.

When the code of laws is once fixed, it should be enforced in the literal sense, and nothing more is left to the legal officer, than to determine whether an action be or be not conformable to the written code.

When the rule of right is a matter of controversy, not of fact, the people are slaves to the magistrates.

What could be more just than these reflections of Beccaria? Subjection to the law is no degradation, but is the essence of true civil liberty. Subjection to the caprice of the officers of the law, is the very degradation, the most abject slavery.

The idea is not to be entertained of preserving laws upon the statute book, which the officer may enforce or not according to his individual or partisan opinion.

If the laws are bad, the best way of procuring their repeal is to enforce them; that is the philosophic judgment of Beccaria; it is the practical judgment expressed by General Grant in his Inaugural; it is the popular judgment in this land where public opinion gives law to legislators.

If the persons against whom the indictments to which you allude come to grief, their fate will hasten and insure the enactment of general amnesty; and they will enjoy the consolation of being martyrs for the good cause.

If the candid judgment of the good people of Virginia shall disapprove the enforcement of the constitution as it is written, in the cases of these persons, who are being treated as criminals, the proceedings, mine will be all the opprobrium;—and this I will accept without regret, murmur or fear.

I am most sincerely and respectfully, Your obedient servant, C. P. RAMSDHELL, Esq.

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APPLETON & CO., NOS. 549 AND 551 BROADWAY, N. Y. City.

FRAGMENTS OF SCIENCE FOR UNSCIENTIFIC PEOPLE. By John Tyndall. Price 12s. 6d.

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