

NEWS OF THE DAY.

Bernard Bailey committed suicide to St. Louis on Saturday by shooting himself through the heart. He left a letter describing "for the benefit of medical men and religious and moral philosophers, the physical, mental and moral feelings of a suicide," and also intimating that he had been impelled to kill himself.

A meeting of members of the Butter and Egg Association was held in Baltimore, on Saturday, to take some action in reference to the introduction in that market of a substitute for butter known to the trade as "oleo-margarine."

It is probably that the Treasury officials will soon make some changes in the issuing of silver, owing to the general inclination of the people to hold on to the fractional currency in anticipation of its scarcity.

At St. Hedwige, Dorchester county, Canada, Thursday last, a girl named Labouliere, a seamstress by vocation, shot and killed Mrs. Murphy, a lady for whom she was working.

Richard M. Corwin, formerly of Ohio; and an eminent practitioner of law before courts in Washington, died there Saturday night, in the 64th year of his age.

VIRGINIA NEWS.

The Manassas Gazette says: Mr. R. R. Reeves who lives about two miles from the city should do all in their power to prevent the city from sharing the odium that attaches to the Legislature for passing such a foolish bill, and to save themselves from the annoyance that would ensue upon its adoption.

Senator Morton's friends, like those of Mr. Blaine, say they are confident that when that Senator rises to explain the charge that he retained \$250,000 of the \$2,000,000 appropriation for arming the truly loyal of the seceded States will vanish into thin air.

The Petersburg Index, says: The report of Mr. G. W. Carter's returning to the ministry has been denied; but there is no question of the fact that he has recently remarried, and to a widow with two children, as correctly stated in this paper, in advance of all other journals in the world.

The Staunton correspondent of the Richmond Dispatch, says: Mr. Lewis Duff-abaugh, a farmer on Spring Springs road, near Staunton, heard a striding-roan which he had placed in his chicken-house explode, and also heard some excited conversation between some men.

It is now said in Washington that the Real Estate Pool Committee will again summon Hallett Kilbourn as a witness before it, and that he will again refuse to answer the questions propounded to him the same course taken previously in his case will be repeated.

It is now generally believed that the impeachment of ex-Secretary Belknap will fail, because the Radical Senate, with Mr. Conkling as assistant counsel for the defense, in order to relieve the administration of the odium that would attach to conviction, will decide that his resignation barred such action, and as it is not probable that the grand jury will find a bill against him, he will go scot free.

Some of the former Independents of Richmond are dissatisfied with the action of the Conservative Committee in deciding that negroes shall not take part in the primary election to be held in that city, and have called a meeting to determine what course to pursue.

The assumption of the title of Empress by Queen Victoria is not approved by some of her subjects, but they evidently belong to the class of chronic discontents whom nothing will please.

The Secretary of the Centennial Commission says that Commission has "no intention of employing Virginia negroes on the Centennial grounds."

The decision of Speaker Kerr, that nothing but what is germane to an appropriation bill can be tacked on to it, will, in future, prevent the passage of such "job" bills as have heretofore been pushed through Congress at the end of the session, by being incorporated with those bills.

The charges against Secretary Bristow for bribery in the case of the bark Mary Merritt, have not been sustained. The country wishes the same could be said about the charges that have been made against some of the other members of the President's Cabinet.

The Norfolk Virginia says: "To-night the sovereigns of the Fourth Ward met at Tennis, enjoy pecking house, on Gosport Bridge, and enjoy a political oyster roast."

Strange as it may seem, white men are even yet put on the block in North Carolina, and sold by public auction, and in some instances, lately, the purchasers have been negroes.

Roger A. Pryor is one of the delegates from New York to the National Democratic Convention.

FOREIGN NEWS.

The Turks have achieved a triumph over the Christian insurgents by raising the siege of Nisic and detaching them in a preliminary battle. The orders to the Serbian militia to be ready to march at twenty-four hours notice indicate an extension of the war.

At the recent conference between representatives of European Powers and some of the Cardinals allusion was made to the possibility, in the event of a vacancy occurring in the Holy See, of the election of a Pope favorable to a conciliatory policy.

The Spanish Government is proceeding towards the abrogation of the free constitution of the Basque provinces, and the Congress has refused to repeal the guarantee of religious toleration in Spain.

At supplementary elections in Paris and Bordeaux, yesterday, moderate Republicans were elected to the Legislative Assembly over the Radical and Bonapartist candidates.

The German Government has issued a decree restoring the right of suffrage to inhabitants of Alsace and Lorraine who retain their French nationality.

Heavy frauds on the revenue by smuggling has been discovered at Cardenas, Cuba. The troubles in Barbadoes continue undiminished.

The Coal Trade.

A writer in the Cumberland News of Saturday says: "The Borden company closed operations on Wednesday indefinitely. The Franklin and P. & O. resumed work a few days ago at old rates, to supply certain pressing but limited orders, proposing to stop again as soon as they shall have shipped four or five thousand tons."

The New Central company, having some important steamship supplies to furnish, will resume work for a limited time on Monday next. The Hamburg and Louisa lines of steamships have turned their consumption to the Clearfield region. These lines were always furnished from our region.

The high rates of freight imposed by the Consolidation company and the high wages paid the miners are direct causes of this most serious blow to the Cumberland trade.

The situation intensifies. A bad outlook is the only one we now see. The Annapolis correspondent of the Baltimore Sun says: "Mr. John P. Poe, counsel for the Consolidation Coal Company and the Cumberland and Piedmont Railroad Company, lately the Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and transferred to the Consolidation company, made an argument before the court on the 23rd inst. for the purpose of inducing him to instruct the attorney general to withhold the proposed suit of the State against the company, which has been commenced to deprive it of its charter for alleged evasion of the law passed at the recent session of the Legislature, fixing the rate of freight for coal at two cents per ton per mile."

The new Catholic Cathedral at Savannah, was dedicated with imposing ceremonies yesterday morning. There was an immense attendance from other cities. Archbishop Bayley, of Baltimore; Bishops Quinn, of Mobile; Lynch, of Charleston; and St. Augustine; Gibbons, of Richmond, and about thirty other prelates from all parts of the country were present. The High Pontifical Mass was grand, and also the first production in this country of Carol Greth's grand mass, with organ and orchestra of twenty-eight instruments and chorus of sixty voices.

The Finance Committee of the City Council of Columbus Ohio, having failed to make provision for the payment of the police, the Police Commissioners issued an order directing the Superintendent to disband his force this morning.

Shipments of coal from Cumberland, Md., for the week ended April 29, amounted to 12,529 tons 3 cwt. by the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, being an increase of 7,419 tons 15 cwt. as compared with the previous week, and an increase of 2,255 tons 12 cwt. as compared with the corresponding period of 1875.

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COMMUNICATED.

The Majority Question.

The fact that, under the charter, our present worthy and efficient Mayor is eligible for reelection, is so indisputable that it would seem to be a waste of time, and the doing of an unnecessary thing to reply to the assaults made by Dr. J. B. Johnson upon that position.

The 34th section of the act of 1870-71, page 132, amending the charter of the city of Alexandria, is as follows:

"The Mayor of the city of Alexandria shall be annually elected by the qualified voters at the times and places and in the manner that members of the City Council are elected; provided that the present incumbent of said office shall hold his office for the time for which he was elected under the existing laws. He shall hold his office for one year, and until a successor is chosen and qualified in his stead, at the expiration of which period he may be re-elected for two terms successively, and no longer until he shall have been out of office for one year."

"He shall, before he enters upon the duties of his office, take an oath or affirmation in the presence of the City Council faithfully to execute his said office, which shall be recorded in its book of proceedings. He shall see that the laws of the Corporation be duly executed; and in the event of the removal of any officer by his order, he shall communicate the fact with his reasons therefor to the City Council without delay, that the vacancy may be filled. He shall have power to convene the City Council whenever, in his opinion, the good of the community may require it; and he shall lay before the City Council from time to time, in writing, such alterations in the laws of the Corporation as he shall deem necessary or proper. He shall have and exercise all the powers of a justice of the peace within the said city, and shall receive for his services, annually, a just and reasonable compensation, to be allowed and fixed by the City Council, which shall not be increased or diminished during the period for which he shall have been elected. The election of Mayor and members of the Board of Aldermen and Common Council shall be held on the fourth Thursday in May, 1871, and on the fourth Thursday in every succeeding year thereafter, at such places and by such persons as the City Council shall see fit."

Before proceeding to analyze this section and state what it does mean, let us keep these two facts prominently before us, viz: 1st That when the law, of which the above is a part, was passed, the then incumbent was Hugh Latham, esq., a gentleman exceedingly tenacious of his rights.

2d That Mr. Latham had, previous to the passage of that law, been elected Mayor for the term of two years, and at the time of its passage his term had not yet expired. These two things have been overlooked in all previous discussions of this question, and yet they have a most important bearing upon it, and enable us to find the meaning of the law without difficulty.

Now let us take up the case, sentence by sentence, and see if its meaning is not so plain that the way runs may read: "The Mayor of the city of Alexandria shall be annually elected by the qualified voters, at the times and places and in the manner that members of the City Council are elected."

There is nothing ambiguous about that—it refers to all future Mayors of Alexandria, not to Mr. Latham merely, but to all that may come after him until time shall be no more, or the Legislature changes its mind. It is the only law now in existence authorizing us to elect a Mayor.

Provided, that the present incumbent of said office shall hold his office for the time for which he was elected, under the existing laws. The present incumbent, as we have already said, was Mr. Latham. At the time he was elected "the existing laws" fixed the Mayor's term of office at two years, and he had a right to serve during that period. In 1871, some of the people, it matters not whom nor why, wanted the charter amended in several particulars, and among others to change the Mayor's term of office to one year with the privilege or right to be re-elected for two successive terms. A bill was prepared containing that provision, and naturally and rightfully Mr. Latham became alarmed. He represented to those who favored the bill that if it was passed as it stood the effect would be to legislate him out of nearly, or quite half the term for which he had been lawfully elected.

Recognizing the justice of his claim, they, at his instance, as we are informed, inserted the above proviso in the draft of the bill, and it means nothing more than if the Legislature had said, "We will let Mr. Latham serve out the term for which he was elected, and go into operation until he steps down at the expiration of that term, and then the term of the whole section that relates exclusively to Mr. Latham, and it is inserted to quiet his apprehensions. The entire remainder of the section refers to the Mayor, whoever he may be, and not to Mr. Latham solely, and we will prove it:

"He shall hold his office for one year and until a successor is chosen and qualified in his stead, at the expiration of which period he may be re-elected for two terms successively, and no longer, until he shall have been out of office for one year."

Who is meant by "He?" Not Mr. Latham alone, surely, for the Legislature had settled his case by giving him his full term. They cut into the thread of the section for the purpose of legislating for him, and having finished that part of the business, they began at the point where they had left off, and resumed the consideration of the real subject of the section, viz: the Mayor generally, and not Mr. Latham in particular. The Legislature did not mean that Mr. Latham should "hold his office for one year," for they had just provided that he should hold it for his full term, viz: two years, or such part thereof as might then have remained. One must, in construing a statute, endeavor to harmonize apparent conflicts, and not give it a meaning which will cause the Legislature to appear to contradict itself. Clearly, therefore when the Legislature said, "He shall hold his office for one year," &c., they were referring back to what they had begun to legislate about, to wit: The Mayor of the city generally. The "He" they meant was he whom the qualified voters should annually elect for Mayor.

But it is not necessary to rely on arguments solely to show that the pronoun "He" as there used refers to all Mayors of this city, for it is conclusively shown by the connection in which it is subsequently used in this same section 34, viz: "He shall see that the laws of the Corporation be duly executed," "He shall have power to convene the City Council," &c. "He shall have and exercise all the powers of a justice of the peace," &c.

Do all these "He's" refer only to Hugh Latham, the then "present incumbent," or "strict construction" would have us believe? Certainly not. They refer to and are commanded by the Legislature to all incumbents, and constitute the rules for their guidance—the chart for every Mayor of Alexandria.

What, then, does this whole clause mean? Simply this and nothing more nor less than that he who is elected Mayor by the qualified voters for one year, may at the end of that year be re-elected twice in succession, so as to make in all three years of continuous service under election by the qualified voters before he becomes disqualified.

Any Alexandrian, therefore, who is a suffragan, may be elected Mayor three times consecutively by the qualified voters of the city. Mr. Kemper has been elected but twice through that agency. The Legislature has not said that everybody but Mr. Kemper may be re-elected. He is consequently eligible for one more term.

In answer to the meaning of the law. "But Mr. Kemper, just previous to his first election by the qualified voters, was elected by the City Council to fill Mr. Berkeley's unexpired term. He has, therefore, had his three terms, and should give way to Dr. J. B. Johnson." This is an utter absurdity. Suppose the City Council had elected him not only on one but on forty different occasions to fill as many unexpired terms, does not the act plainly say that he may, nevertheless, be elected three times in succession by the qualified voters? Is there anything in the act which says or can be construed to mean that an election by the City Council to fill a three months' vacancy shall have the same disqualifying effect as an election by the people for one year? When the Legislature uses the words "qualified voters" does it refer to the twenty-four Councilmen of the city, or does it refer to the great voting population of the city?

The answers to these questions suggest themselves immediately to every unbiased mind, and they render Dr. Johnson's position not only untenable, but as he is a sensible man they must be unpleasant to him. We will present to Mr. Kemper's opponents a hypothetical case. Suppose the Legislature had enacted that the term of office of the Mayor of Alexandria should be one year, and that the same person could be elected to office by the qualified voters but once, and suppose that Mr. Berkeley had resigned five days before his term expired, and Mr. Kemper had been elected by the City Council to fill the vacancy, do you mean to assert, either as a proposition of law or of common sense, that Mr. Kemper would not at the end of those five days be eligible for election by the qualified voters of the city for the term of one year?

You could not say that, and yet it is but carrying your arguments against his eligibility for a third term to their legitimate result, and is a forcible illustration of the absurdity of your present position. But, they add, Mr. Kemper has been in the office a long time, and he ought to be satisfied. Probably he is, but the people are not. They have tried him and he has not been found wanting. The principle of rapid rotation in office is a humbug, and the cause of more mismanagement and bad government than any other of the many false political doctrines so often referred to. To turn an officer out because he has been a long time in, is like dismissing master workmen and hiring apprentices. The duties of every office must be learned, and when a person has held it long enough to learn them, is it not the part of discretion and sound judgment to keep him there, rather than supply his place with one, who, he never so capable, cannot become perfectly familiar with his duties before his term has expired?

People who undertake the writing of history (even in scraps) are expected to study their subject, and give facts rather than guesses and hearsay. "Rotation" is singularly unfortunate in both its dates and deductions. The late Edgar Snowden became Mayor of Alexandria, by election of Council, in 1849, and was re-elected in 1841 and 1842; Alexandria was re-elected to Virginia in 1846-7, four years after he had gone out of office.

It is true that the election of Mayor having been given to the people by Congress, Mr. Snowden, who was always a great favorite with our people, was strongly urged to continue in office, in 1843, it being held that the amendment of the charter allowed him a new series of three more terms, and that, being doubtful about that construction of it, he refused to allow the use of his name; but he did not give way to the late Robert G. Violett, in the sense that the present incumbent is asked to give way for "rotation," for Mr. V. not only did not seek the office, but it was thrust upon him, and after holding it a single week, he resigned.

So much for the facts; now for the moral "Rotation" deduces from them. "Mr. Snowden," he says, "know that his party's success was of more importance to him than the salary of the office," and he infers that he gracefully retired "because a portion of his party demanded it." Now, the first party contest in our municipal affairs took place in March, 1845, two years after Mr. Snowden's retirement, and was caused by the nomination of Col. Shay for Mayor, and a full ticket for Council by the Democrats. Up to that time that party, though in a minority of three to one, as the result of the first party contest showed, had had its full share of office under the city government; or rather good men had been elected without reference to politics, for there were no primary elections then, and those only who had votes to pay could vote. At the very time of which "Rotation" speaks, the late Robert Crocker, as uncompromising a Democrat as ever lived, was President of Council, elected by gentlemen who differed from him *totally*, and that too at a time when politics in Alexandria, and throughout the country, ran much higher than they do now. Are offices created for the service of the people, or for the "emolument" of the holders, as "Rotation" seems to think? or is it not the office seeker, rather than the office holder, whose "greed" is destroying the Conservative party?

Gen. Howard of Whitehall, Beaufort District, South Carolina, left his house in a one-horse carriage on the morning of the 16th of April for the postoffice, eight miles away. On his return, as he was driving along as his custom was, with his head down, allowing his horse to have his own way, a party of negroes who had heard that he expected to receive money by the mail went up to the rear of his carriage, and with a gun placed within a foot of his head literally blew his brains out. Then they dragged him from the carriage and rifled his pockets, in which they found fifty cents.

By Rev. C. A. Joyce, at Fairfax Ct. House, on the 13th of April, Mr. JAS. W. DARR to Miss REBECCA A. LOYD, all of Fairfax co. By the same, at Zion (Episcopal) Church, Mr. ROBERT BRUCE DOUGLASS, of Manassas to Miss MADGE H. RICHARDSON, of Fairfax Court House.

The regular monthly meeting of the Hydro-Union Steam Fire Company will be held on Tuesday, May 21, at 8 o'clock. Punctual attendance is requested. J. J. JAMIESON, Secretary, May 12.

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LOCAL BREVITIES

During the gale of wind yesterday evening, the Maryland ferry steamer Virginia, while endeavoring to make a trip to this city from the opposite shore, was blown around on the flats and remained for over an hour. A number of persons from this city were attending a christening party at Broad Creek Church were on board of the boat, and the ladies of the party were much alarmed by the bumping of the boat on the bar. The steamer was finally gotten afloat and brought to this city by going around the bar near the lower ferry. This morning, owing to the low water she was compelled to make all her trips by that route.

The match game of base ball between the Cadet Club of St. John's Academy and the Resolute Club, which took place near Colross on Saturday, resulted in favor of the former by a score of 15 to 10. This was the first game of the season and will probably be followed by others.

During the month of April there have been issued from the office of the Clerk of the Corporation Court, four marriage licenses, and six hundred and eighty-two divorces. In the Clerk's office of the County Court there were eight marriage licenses and eighteen divorces.

As will be seen by a notice elsewhere, the firm of John J. Jamieson & Co. has been dissolved, and Messrs. Robert M. Lawson and J. J. Jamieson have formed a partnership to carry on the general commission business.

A young gentleman of this city, in attempting to jump from the 10 o'clock local train from Washington, at Porter's B. W. way, this morning, lost his footing and fell to the ground, inflicting a severe wound over his eye.

The services of the month of May, which is especially devoted to the honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, will be held at St. Mary's Church at 7:30 o'clock, this evening, and every evening during the month except Saturdays.

This was May day, but few of the girls of the city got up early enough this morning to tell their fortunes by breaking a freshly laid egg on a glass of water at sunrise, as their mothers did.

The Directors of the Alexandria Library had a meeting on Saturday night, but transacted no business of public interest.

Attention is directed to the change of hours for opening and closing the mails.

The Corporation officers, policemen, &c. were paid off to-day.

TELEGRAPHIC BRIEFS.

A dispatch from Millard, Pa., says last night was the coldest for this season of the year within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. At 5 o'clock this morning the thermometer indicated 27 degrees. Ice formed to the thickness of half an inch. A high wind prevailed. Snow fell at Waterstown, N. Y., last night to the depth of two inches. The storm extended over the northern part of the State, and in some places snow is still falling.

The funeral of the late Brigadier General Henry P. Murdick took place at Pemberton, N. J., to-day. The funeral services were conducted at his residence in Philadelphia this morning, and at 1:15 p. m. a special train left the North Pennsylvania depot bearing the remains to Pemberton for interment.

The opening of the recently constructed wing of the new edifice of the Academy of National Sciences, at 19th and Race streets, Philadelphia, took place to-day. The history of this academy dates back to 1812.

The Ohio Mining Troubles. New York, May 1.—A dispatch from Columbus, Ohio, 30th inst., says: A violent General Strike has broken out here for Massillon to direct the movement of the troops, which have been ordered to the Ohio mining region, the civil authorities having advised Gov. Hayes of their inability to protect the property of operators and the lives of miners who desire to work against the mob who have prevented the working of the mines for some time past. It is thought that work will be resumed to-morrow on the arrival of the militia.

The following committees upon open air work, for the coming season, have been appointed by the President, under the resolution passed at the April meeting, and ordered to be published in the Alexandria Gazette: SABRATH OPEN AIR MEETINGS.

1st Division. E. H. Hoskins, Hoz-Kid Ward, Rev. W. S. P. Nick, W. E. Herbert, Hezekiah Patton, J. J. Lloyd, I. C. O'Neal, Rev. Wm. C. Webb, Jas. E. W. Irwin, Rev. Wm. M. Dame, E. F. Wimer, George Finch, H. W. Barlow, Wm. Hudgens, H. R. Caron, Thos. Lynch, Rev. Dr. Nichols, C. M. Dinsell, T. D. Hodekin, Rev. J. H. Wanch.

WEEK NIGHT SERVICE. H. W. Beadle, I. C. O'Neal, D. R. Stansbury, E. H. Hoskins, Horz Kid Patton, Jas. E. W. Irwin, W. U. Herbert, Rev. Wm. M. Dame, G. H. Hoskins, Jas. Entwistle, Jr., Gen. Sec.

DRY GOODS.

Just received. NEW STYLES OF DRESS GOODS. IN DAMASK, STRIPED, PLAID and PLAIN. Also new styles of PARASOLS AND SUN UMBRELLAS. Cheap at B. DENBENBROS, NO. 112 KING STREET.

Adjoining the Marshal House. DRY GOODS & CLOTHING. The Best Style and Fancy Stock in the City—Great Increase in Business—New Goods—per Express from New York—We Daily Commission—Every Department Full and Complete, and Goods sold at Down Prices. Goods to Country Merchants at Baltimore Prices. CALICOES &c. Cottons &c. Black Goods & Specialty. D. D. H. H. No. 112 King Street, Alexandria, Va. sp 12

144 Pretzfelder & Co. 144. Offer Great Bargains in CASSIMERE for Men and Boys' wear. Cassimere in Black, Blue, Red, Black and Jet Colors, at extremely low prices. BLACK SILKS! BLACK SILKS! Bought at the late New York auction, and which we will sell at AUCTION PRICES. UNLAWFUL SHIRTS AT REDUCED PRICES. A small lot of double width POPLIN ALPACAS in new spring shades at 25c—worth double. A line of newest styles DRESS GOODS—8 1/2 to 10—worth selling at 1/2 price. A full line of WHITE GOODS, EMBROIDERIES, &c. PRETZFELDER & CO. No. 141 King Street. mh 15-17

COFFEES—A full line at reduced rates just received by GEO. McBURNEY & SON, mh 23