

VIRGINIAN-PILOT.

—BY THE— VIRGINIAN AND PILOT PUBLISHING COMPANY.

LOFOLK VIRGINIAN AND DAILY PILOT. (Consolidated March, 1898.)

Entered at the Postoffice at Norfolk, Va., as second-class matter.

OFFICE: PILOT BUILDING, CITY HALL AVENUE, NORFOLK, VA.

OFFICERS: A. H. GRANDY, President; M. GLENNAN, Vice-President; W. S. WILKINSON, Treasurer; JAMES E. ALLEN, Secretary.

THREE CENTS PER COPY.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: The VIRGINIAN-PILOT is delivered to subscribers by carriers in Norfolk and vicinity, Portsmouth, Berkley, Suffolk, West Norfolk, Newport News, for 10 cents per week, payable to the carrier.

DAILY, one year - \$5.00; six months - \$3.00; three months - \$1.50; one month - .50.

ADVERTISING RATES: Advertisements inserted at the rate of 75 cents a Square, first insertion; each subsequent insertion 40 cents, or 50 cents, when inserted every other day.

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TWELVE PAGES

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 1899.

THE HILL BILL ENLARGED—PROLIFIC OF CALAMITY.

The Hill bill to retire the Greenbacks in accordance with the views the President expressed in his message (referred to the House Committee on Coins, Weights and Measures) has been speedily reported back, amended and amplified beyond all recognition, as if another bill had been lying perdu in committee, ready to usurp the name and privileges of the original bill, as soon as referred. The 'ill bill—ill enough as first introduced—is now tenfold worse than at first; for then it proposed only to retire the Greenbacks, whereas it now embraces the whole circle of evils known among the totally depraved as "currency reform," as Satan said, "evil, be thou my good!"

It purposes and proposes to complete the crime so sneakily and covertly begun in 1873 under the falsest pretences. It makes the gold-dollar the standard of value and the basis of all United States currency—all to be redeemable in this, although the Treasury has only \$140,000,000 of gold at this moment, in these unusually feast times of gold! That sum in gold is all the real money on hand (if the bill pass) this great government has for its own wants, to redeem about \$2,000,000,000 of Treasury notes, bank-notes and silver dollars that compose our currency and to supply the demands of forty-five States and 75,000,000 of people in their multiplied and multiplying business, public and private. No more silver dollars are to be coined, except from bullion already in the Treasury; and all silver coin is to be subsidiary. A bureau of issue and redemption is to be established in the Treasury. The Secretary, at his discretion, is to be empowered to coin silver subsidiary coin, unrestricted by the limit of \$50,000,000. The Greenbacks and other Treasury notes are to be withdrawn, and gold bills, or certificates issued to replace them; Greenbacks to cease to be legal-tenders at the end of ten years. Banks may issue notes to the full value of bonds deposited; entire circulation to be untaxed; and a tax of only one-tenth of one per cent. is to be laid on capital, surplus and undivided profits. Banks with a capital of \$25,000 may be established in any town of 3,000 inhabitants, and branch banks may be created under regulations of the Comptroller of Currency. The redemption reserve (gold coin) is to be 25 per cent. of outstanding Treasury notes, and 5 per cent. of (in gold) the whole sum of silver dollars,—which is to be a general fund for the redemption of the

the States and people but such gold coin as can be obtained in the general scramble for it of all nations and peoples, no redemption for any currency, save in gold, and that reserved in the Treasury; no legal-tender after ten years but gold coin; no issue of notes, by Treasury, save gold bills or certificates, not legal-tender; untaxed and unlimited issue of so-called national bank-notes, without a competitor, as the gold-bills will no more circulate among the people than gold coin itself, as they will be surely snatched up and held for gold raids on the Treasury; unlimited banks of the grade of \$25,000, and of less under the guise of branches; the issue of bonds to buy gold to establish the Treasury reserves and increase the interest-bearing Standing National Debt; and, under pretence of establishing a single gold basis and standard of currency, utterly demonetizing the silver coin, and practically destroying specie payment basis and standard by a single coin wholly inadequate in volume, wholly impracticable because of too great value and easy abrasion, and more variable in value than any other commodity on account of its steady enhancement through the enforced competition for it as the only real money among all nations and peoples for hoarding.

Our currency, already constricted, if not strangled, for the people, is to be rapidly contracted still further to the amount of about \$1,000,000,000 (think of it!) by the retirement of legal tender Greenbacks and other Treasury notes and the demonetizing and reduction of the silver dollars (notes and silver of our own public issues and all legal-tender), and our sole resource is the so-called national banks—mere private institutions for profit—from which, if we can furnish satisfactory security, we can borrow notes supplied in absolutely unlimited quantity to these banks. FREE, from and by our own Treasury, on a simple deposit of United States bonds upon which full interest is still paid to them,—while we have not only to give good security for repayment of the borrowed notes (our own in effect), and interest at the rate of at least 6 per cent. per annum, if not much more in many cases.

But see at once, if we are forced to resort to the banks for relief from this further turn of the screw of pressure and contraction,—see what an annual interest charge we have fastened upon us by Congress through this Hill act—by a Congress whose duty it is to furnish the States and people, free, with abundant coin, money, legal-tender and currency. The interest to be paid the banks annually, at 6 per cent. on \$1,000,000,000, is \$60,000,000! No wonder the banks and their owners are eager to gobble this immense additional income on notes supplied them free, gratis and for nothing by the public Treasury that exacts all it can from the people by every device of taxation, and returns them nothing,—not even providing the money and currency to pay their taxes! Closing its vaults against the people, but throwing them wide open to the banks, and others who have the "Open Sesame!"

The bill gives the associated banks, or money-trusts, the substantial monopoly and control of money and currency, of prices, wages, values, credits and all business of every kind at all dependent on these. Illimitable power! Incalculable wealth! For what? All cast freely into the laps of the banks and their affiliated capitalists and trusts for love and affection! through deep-seated awe, admiration and worship of money and its possessors! For the banks and their lobbies are not doing these things. They are done by Congress; and would Congress dare do them, if the business-men and people should vigorously object and protest? Never! Of course, the banks are also implicated in getting up the schemes, coloring them, lobbying them, and accepting the spoils. But all this is expected of them; for this is "business," and that, like charity, covers much!

BE WISE IN TIME!

Pope has said: "For forms of government let fools contest: That which is best administered is best;" but for all that, and even in accord with it, it has been supposed that some forms of government are better than others to secure the best administration. Even that delusion vanishes in the results of our form of government, which gives us such administrations as the present one of Hanna. That our form of a constitutional, free, popular self-government is the best and wisest ever devised, is conceded by the most competent judges of human institutions; and yet it has come to be the worst administered of all existing forms. Perhaps this Hanna administration is no more Republican than Cleveland's two terms of misrule were. Demonstrate all three maladministrations being utterly without the true consent of the governed, utterly adverse to the people in all things, subversive alike of Democracy and Republicanism.

Yet for any honest administration our fathers wrought well, and for any brave and intelligent people they provided all the appliances necessary to choose a good administration; but, unfortunately, there were no efficient safeguards against the power of money and its bribery and corruption, as heaven, in its providence, evidently permits that to go on from bad to worse and worse. Hence our present and inappreciable wrath as shown in the repeated bloody revolutions that illuminate history

with their fiery and sanguinary spectacles of havoc and destruction. As Bishop Potter defends saloons for the people because nothing better is provided for them, so these awful revolutions are justified because the people are deprived of all their lawful means of defence and are forced to this last awful resort.

Still, as Pope's couplet expresses a truth in our own experience, are the American citizens, or any portion of them, to be satisfied by a firm whose promises of general welfare and the blessings of liberty are broken and falsified by an administration elected and ruled by a Hanna, a Congress dominated by a Lobby, and by a Judiciary whose majority are trained, drilled and mustered into service as their machines by corporations and trusts? There is no use appealing to constitution and law; none, to principles; none, to common right and decency; none, to morality and religion; and none, to conscience. The case has passed beyond the reach of any those remedies. There is nothing on which to found the slightest hope but that prudence, or discretion (applauded by Falstaff as "the better part of valor"), born of danger and the fear of it: the fear of the loss of money, property, life and all. Halt! halt in time to save what you have got! You are gambling at a rouge et noir sure to result in your ruin, unless you stop in time! Another turn of the wheel may destroy you! Another stake may beggar and wreck you and all your hopes!

"PROSPERITY."

There is a charity in New York City which dispenses nightly, at Fleischmann's Bakery, on Broadway, half loaves of bread to needy men who apply. Mayor Jones, of Toledo, Ohio, says that the first time he saw the line of applicants was three years ago, when there were 273 men in line. Recently in New York City again, he went to see this bread line once more. He says:

It is the most pathetic thing I have ever seen. I saw it first two years and a half ago, accidentally, and it shocked me. There were 273 men in line. I remarked then that nowhere in the poorest parts of Europe had I seen so suggestive a sight.

I came here again last Monday. It was a nasty night, with a cold, drizzling rain. I went out at a few minutes after midnight, and there were more than 200 men in line. They were silent, sullen, sad. Two-thirds of them had no overcoats, and most of them had their light coats pinned under their chins. I could easily think it covered a lack of shirt in many cases.

Such a sight and such a condition are unworthy of a great people. They are inconsistent with our claims to be considered an advanced nation.

Commenting on this line, which, Mr. Fleischmann so charitably feeds, the N. Y. Journal says:

It is a sore upon the body of the nation, and every physician will tell you that a sore upon the body is one of Nature's ways of proclaiming that there is something wrong with that body, and that the treatment should be directed, not to the sore, but to the body. Upon our body politic there are, unfortunately, many sores. We have strong men who are eager to work, and who cannot find employment. We have children crying for food who cannot afford the means of relieving their pain. We have young people yearning to be taught who must slave in factories for their bare existence.

On the other hand we have men who hold in the palm of their hands the complete control of many of those things that civilization has taught us to look upon as necessities of life, such as food products, oil, gas, and means of communication and transit, and who hold at their mercy, the millions of human beings created, as the Bible tells us, "in the image of their Maker."

People and newspapers that will see nothing but the prosperity of the prosperous, should some time look at the victims of this prosperity and of the system society fosters.

FEWER ELECTIONS.

In some of the counties, the people and candidates are already bestirring themselves about the general election on the fourth Thursday of next May, when the election of many county officers occurs. In November next we shall have another general election for members of the House of Delegates and half the members of the Senate. And thus we have two general elections in Virginia every year, with no intermission or rest, as the intervals between the elections are filled with electioneering.

Do not our people grow weary under this constant political turmoil? Do they ever count the costs in time and money to themselves, the candidates and the State? Why will they permit this perpetual subjection to this strain of elections, that petty politicians and venal partisans,—professional patriots,—may have continual demand for their dirty work?

If ever there was a reason for so many elections, in their separation, it no longer exists, and all the reasons are now for as few elections as possible, even if constitutional amendments be necessary to reduce their number. A general election—only one—every two years, is sufficient for all county, city, State and Federal purposes, and Virginia should come to that as speedily as possible.

He that rideth a high horse shall be thrown far and hard. When wisdom dons gown, wig and cap, she competes with folly on his own ground; but cannot rival him successfully until she also wears bells, and more of them, or louder ones.

THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT, early in December, while depreciating an extra session, expressed the opinion that one could hardly be averted or avoided. The matters then obviously pressing to the point for speedy action, are now actually at the front, and the pressure for action is strong. The probabilities seem in favor of the extra session; but McKinley, though an essential and decisive factor in the problem, is a very indecisive and incalculable quantity.

The blindness of the Richmond Times is incontestably shown in its efforts to persuade the Democratic party to follow Croker, to heed the advice of him and his like, adapt their motives, and employ their methods. Of course, the Times is too upright, conscientious, honest and honorable to do this knowingly; but it does not see what it is doing, being struck with judicial blindness by getting too much gold-dust in its eyes. It sees not at all in many things, sees aright rarely, and is continually subject to optical illusions and delusions. Pity!

A contraction of currency which makes money so scarce in this country as to largely destroy our home capacity to buy and consume home products, as well as imported commodities, is not a desirable state of affairs, nor a matter for rejoicing. But that that is and has been, for some time, our case, is proved by the falling off of our imports and the large increase of exports, particularly of our farm products. Lacking money, we have been unable to consume our usual supply of imported articles; and equally unable to consume home products liberally, for the same reason, the large surplus of these have fallen in demand and price here so that immense quantities have been sent out of the country and sold abroad, in competition with the products of foreign pauper labor, at a handsome profit to speculators and exporters, though at a loss to our farmers.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

NICHOLAS AND TOLSTOI.

Atlanta Constitution. The story of the Czar's meeting with Count Tolstoi presents the Russian monarch in a new light. The sensation created by the Czar's movement for a reduction of armament will be fully equalled by this latest announcement of his reception of a peasant without any formalities which the strict etiquette of his court demands. It is the first time in history that a czar of Russia has been known to meet a peasant familiarly and to accord to him such freedom of reply. Not even the Queen of England, who represents the most democratic form of monarchy, has ever so far condescended as to stop off at a country railway station and send for a neighboring farmer in order that she might talk to him about matters of state.

The incident but illustrates the trend of history. The freest republics often veer to the other extreme, and become the most autocratic of despotisms, while the despotism, apparently tired of its loneliness, courts the freedom and the familiarity of Republican manners. Thus it may be that in time to come Russia, the least advanced and the most absolute of empires, may take the place of Republican simplicity and freedom.

TURNING THE RASCALS OUT.

The Washington correspondent of the New York Herald telegraphs to his paper that the prevailing feeling in that city, as expressed by friends of good government, is that the President cannot act too quickly and too vigorously in purging the government of the tainted men responsible for the tainted money.

No doubt of it. And this feeling is not confined to the friends of good government in Washington. It prevails among the friends of good government throughout the land. Everywhere there is a rising tide of indignation over the revelations that have been made. From all parts of the country come the cry of "turn the rascals out" and the demand that the administration act quickly and vigorously.

WHAT THE SHIPS COST. New Orleans States. We doubt if the American people will ever know the amount of money this government expended in the conduct of the war with Spain, but it is enormous, as vast sums were squandered in the purchase of supplies and equipment; at fabulous prices. The Army and Navy Journal discloses that more money was spent by the United States in purchasing auxiliary vessels to serve as cruisers than is usually required for the support of the entire naval establishment for a year. The sum total paid for ships added to the navy from the merchant service, including cruisers, yachts, colliers, tugs, and all other types, was \$21,431,196, and to put them into condition for service \$5,000,000 more was expended at ship-yards. The most expensive group bought was the five Morgan liners, for which the government paid \$75,000 each. The hospital ship So-

lace, however, cost \$800,000, and next to the New Orleans was the most costly of all newly acquired ships. For the Merrimac the government paid \$342,000, and with her 3,000 tons of coal on board when she was blown up she represented nearly \$500,000. The Supply and Van can cost \$375,000 each, the refrigerating ship \$247,000, the Scorpion \$300,000, Gloucester \$225,000, Viven \$150,000, and the Mayflower \$450,000, the latter being the largest of the yacht class bought. The English-built ships were more expensive than were generally realized, but it was understood at the time that the government was paying a good price for them. The New Orleans cost, delivered to the naval attaché at London, \$1,428,215.51, and the Albany, when she is completed and delivered, will represent about the same sum. To secure the vessel the government paid down cash \$250,000. The Topica, which came across just as war was declared, cost the country \$170,327, and the little torpedo boat Somers \$72,837.

CAT SMOKES CIGARS.

(Philadelphia Inquirer.) William Thompson, of Glenwood, Pa., has the most remarkable cat in Pennsylvania. The cat came to Mr. Thompson's home one stormy night a year ago. He locked so ferociously that he was taken into the house. The cat was so affectionate that he was adopted. After a while the cat betrayed a strange fondness for the smoke that Mr. Thompson puffed from his cigars. It became so noticeable that Mr. Thompson's foster father regularly shared his after dinner cigars with the cat, giving him the smoke. For a joke a cigar was put into the cat's mouth one day, and, to Mr. Thompson's surprise, the cat set up on his hind legs and puffed away complacently. There was only one drawback to his success. His teeth were so sharp that they bit off the end of the cigar. To remove this Mr. Thompson had a wooden cigar-holder made for Thomas, and now he is able to indulge his taste for tobacco. Another accomplishment of the cat is his ability to drink beer without disagreeable effects. Beer now forms one of the chief articles of the cat's diet.

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