

THE BLAIR BILL.

A Reply to Hon. John F. House's Argument in the American.

To the Chronicle:

In the Nashville American of Tuesday, December 26th, there appears a communication from Hon. John F. House, of Clarksville, on the subject of National aid to education, or rather on the subject of the Blair bill, which passed the United States Senate last year.

Mr. House's letter is in reply to a speech delivered by Senator Jackson some time since on the same subject, and if the content were simply one between these two distinguished gentlemen, such is the popularity of the former, in this section at least, that many persons would be disposed, without any serious investigation on their own part, to accept his conclusions as correct. But it must be borne in mind that Senator Jackson's speech was but a condensation of the arguments of Lamar, Garland, George and other distinguished Southern Senators who advocated the measure when it was under consideration in the Senate last year, and that Mr. House, in taking the position he does upon the question now, is really straying himself in opposition to the expressed will of a majority of his party. It is a fact that the bill, though introduced by a Republican, was passed by Democratic votes—a majority of all the Democrats in the Senate being in favor of it—and a majority of all the votes it received being Democratic votes. And if we choose to look further, we find that in the eleven Southern States that suffered most from the effects of the war, and which have by far the greater number of illiterates to propitiate to their population were most to be benefited by the act, viz: Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and Tennessee, there were only three votes against it. Surely the measure must have been considered not only constitutional but of vast importance to the people of this section, when it could present in its behalf a well nigh unbroken front of Southern Senators, among them the present Attorney-General of the United States, the law officer of the Government.

I do not by any means intend to say that I consider the measure a party measure, or that any man ought to support it now because a majority of Democratic Senators supported it last year. It was discussed and acted upon in the Senate without much regard to party lines, and I have but little doubt that here in the South, during the coming winter, it will be discussed upon its merits without much regard to party lines. In this connection it may not be amiss to show the immense advantage which the Southern States will have over the Northern in the distribution of the aid under the Blair bill, one main object of the bill being to assist the Southern States in the education of the colored children, a burden which has lain heavily upon those States since the war. If we take seven of the largest Middle and Western States and compare them with seven Southern States having the largest colored population, we find the percentage of those above 10 years of age who cannot read to be as follows:

Table with 2 columns: State and Percentage. New York 4, Louisiana 40, Pennsylvania 10, Alabama 41, Ohio 3, Mississippi 41, Indiana 3, South Carolina 41, Illinois 2, North Carolina 41, Kansas 2, Georgia 41, Iowa 2, Tennessee 41.

It will thus be seen that in the proposed distribution under this bill, the Southern States above named will have the advantage over the Northern in the proportion of about 10 to 1.

What then is it the Blair bill proposes to do, and what are the objections urged to its passage by its opponents? In the first place it does not propose to levy a tax. If it did I should certainly oppose it, and I have no doubt the great majority of the Southern people would oppose it, for whatever advantages might be derived from the distribution of the fund, I would never consent to an arrangement by which the National Government should levy a tax on our people, send it when collected through the circulation office at Washington, and thence back to Tennessee to be devoted at last to the education of our children. I would always prefer that the County Court should levy the tax, the trustee collect it, and the whole business be transacted at home. Besides, what the country needs and must have, is reduction of taxation, and nothing should be allowed to stand in the way of this much desired object.

The Blair bill proceeds upon the idea that there is a surplus in the Treasury at Washington; that this surplus must remain there, even should the tariff reformers control the government, at least eight years; that there is no prospect of its being needed in that time for any of the legitimate expenses of government, and that the best thing to be done with it is to return it to the people of the States in proportion, not to population, but to illiteracy, the States being required to use the fund for educational purposes.

That there is a large surplus in the National Treasury is unquestionable. President Cleveland, in his late message, says: "The ordinary receipts from all sources for the year ending June 30, 1885, were \$222,690,756 28. The total ordinary expenditures of the government for the fiscal year were \$20,229,935 50, leaving a surplus in the Treasury at the close of the year of \$202,460,821 78. The total receipts for the current fiscal year ending June 30, 1886, ascertained to October 1, 1885, and estimated for the remainder of the year, are \$225,000,000. The expenditures, ascertained and estimated for the same time, are \$245,000,000, leaving a surplus at the close of the year estimated at \$79,999,999 99."

It will thus be seen that in addition to the large surplus on hand June 30, 1884, the revenues are now exceeding the expenditures at the rate of about sixty million dollars per annum.

But why not reduce taxation at once so as at least to prevent the accumulation of any further surplus in the Treasury? Because our tariff is in the main a protective tariff. Our people pay about eight hundred millions a year to get two hundred millions in the Treasury. When you begin to reduce the tariff the drain will come for a long time from the six hundred millions outside of the Treasury before it reaches and diminishes the surplus in the Treasury. The Morrison bill, which was defeated in the House last year, would not, it was admitted, have reduced the revenue a cent, though it would have reduced taxation a hundred millions. When Congress began to reduce taxes in 1852, it took ten years to return from a protective basis to a revenue basis. We might wipe out the Internal Revenue tax, which no good Democrat wants to do, or reduce the tariff on the few articles that are now taxed solely for revenue. But the Democratic fight is on protection. We want to stop this fearful drain from the pockets of the people. Worse than the surplus in the Treasury is the surplus that is plus in our pockets and never reaches the Treasury. We must cut down taxation on the protected articles, and the work must be done in ten years. To reduce taxation at less than ten years, to reduce the point would bankrupt the country.

Why not pay the surplus on the National debt? We can at least do that? No; the Na-

tional bonds are not redeemable at the option of the Government. Something least a hundred millions may be called now, and they are being paid off at the rate of about fifty millions a year. In 1872, two hundred and fifty millions more may be called. It will take about six years, with the sinking fund, to wipe them out, and then the Government must wait until 1877 before she can reduce the great bulk of her debt, more than seven hundred millions of dollars.

Mr. Tilden was quite right when he said, a short time ago, that we were paying off our bonds too fast. In four years, at the present rate, we shall have an ever-growing surplus in the Treasury and no bonds subject to call. The Government might, of course, go on the market to buy its own bonds, but those maturing in 1877 are already at 21 per cent. premium, and the Government would have to give the bondholders a bonus of one hundred and fifty millions of dollars for the privilege of taking up her own paper. Besides, if the Government went on the market, the premium would be greatly increased, and the additional premium donated to the bondholders each year would far exceed the amount which, under the Blair bill, is to be distributed among the children of the States. Mr. House's illustration of the man that owed \$50,000 is not a case in point. This man, it seems, could pay his debt whenever he got the money—the United States can not.

The problem is certainly a serious one. A large and increasing surplus in the Federal Treasury which cannot be speedily got rid of by reduction of taxation, and which can not be paid out on the National debt without donating to the bondholders millions of dollars in excess of the amount due them—what shall be done with it? Shall the surplus remain in the Treasury and grow until 1877. President Jackson, in his Eighth Annual Message to Congress, on an occasion somewhat similar to the present, said: "It is against the genius of our free institutions to look up to our vaults for the reason of the nation. To take from the people the rights of bearing arms and put their weapons of defense in the hands of a standing army, would scarcely be more dangerous to their liberties than to permit the Government to accumulate immense amounts of treasure beyond the supplies necessary to its legitimate wants."

What shall we do then with our surplus? Fortunately we have a precedent by which we can be guided. In 1856 there was a surplus of some twenty-eight million in the Federal Treasury. True there was no debt then; but Congress might easily have left it there for a rainy day. There was no billing what was going to arise in the near future, or what the needs of the Government would be a few years off; but sufficient for the day was the evil thereof. Congress did not choose to keep that large corruption fund on hand, so by a vote of 19 to 6 in the Senate, and 155 to 38 in the House, the money was distributed among the States. It was called a loan without interest, but in the course of more than fifty years no member of Congress has ever moved that it be returned. Should gentlemen who are choice of phrases desire that the distribution under the Blair bill be called a loan without interest, I presume there would be no objection—"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

In the Senate at that time, for Tennessee, were Hugh Lawson White and Felix Grundy. In the House were such men as Cave Johnson, Abram P. Maury, Failla Peyton and James K. Polk—names which are household words in the State to-day. At that time, as at this, it was insisted by the few opponents of the measure that it was but a protective hedge to prevent the further reduction of the tariff, but the people of the States, having their attention forcibly called by the distribution of the surplus to the fact that the revenues were in excess of the needs of the Government, became all the more determined to cut down taxes until no further surplus should accumulate. In the language of Andrew Jackson, they believed that the safe plan was "to collect only revenue enough to meet the wants of the Government and let the people keep the balance of their property in their own hands, to be used for their own profit." So the reduction of taxation continued until the country was brought to a strictly revenue system, which continued until the opening of the civil war.

Mr. House begins his constitutional argument with a two column attack on Alexander Hamilton. Not liking the nature of the evidence, he assails the character of the witness Hamilton, he says, is not to be listened to, and his opinion upon a constitutional question is to go for naught because, in addition to many naughty things which he did at divers and sundry other times, in the convention which met at Philadelphia in 1787 to frame a constitution, he favored a form of Government stronger than the one adopted, and offered a plan which was destructive of State rights. Mr. House takes Senator Jackson roundly to task for insinuating that Madison also at one time, like Hamilton favored a plan of government stronger than the one adopted. He repels with scorn the insinuation that Madison was ever found in such bad company. And yet it is certainly a fact that Madison did at one time, in common with Washington, Hamilton, Jay, Adams and other distinguished men of his day, favor a much stronger plan of government than was adopted. He was abreast with Hamilton if he did not go beyond him. In a letter to General Washington, written just before the assembling of the convention, and giving his plan for the new government, Madison says: "I would propose next that in addition to the present Federal powers, the National Government should be armed with positive and complete authority in all cases which require uniformity, such as regulation of trade, etc., including the right of taxing both exports and imports. Over and above this positive power, a negative in all cases whatever (the italics are Madison's) on the legislative acts of the States as heretofore exercised by the kingly prerogative, appears to me to be absolutely necessary, and to be the least possible encroachment on the State jurisdictions." And again: "An article should be inserted expressly guaranteeing the tranquillity of the States against internal as well as external dangers. In like manner the right of coercion should be expressly declared." (Life and Writings of Washington, vol. 9, p. 517.)

Did Hamilton ever go further than to seek to give the General Government the kingly prerogative of a negative in all cases upon State legislation, and to have the right of coercion plainly expressed in the constitution? Hamilton did not desert the convention in disgust after failing to have his plan adopted as Mr. House supposes; on the contrary he remained and represented his State alone after his two colleagues from New York had bolted. He advocated and signed the present constitution, against a different plan offered from New Jersey, and when that work was done and the more difficult task remained of inducing the States to ratify, Hamilton and Madison, through the columns of the "Federalist," addressed to the people of the country a series of remarkable letters which made a profound impression at the time—and an impression which has not yet died away—and undoubtedly went far toward obtaining the ratification of the necessary number of States. Of these letters Madison wrote fourteen, he and Hamilton jointly three, and Hamilton alone wrote sixty-three—so that Mr. House is in the singular attitude of being as silly to

debt for the constitution under which he lives to the very man whom he now derides and abuses, and whose voice he refuses to hear in the construction of that instrument. Mr. House publishes Jefferson's opinion of Hamilton. He quotes from a letter written by Jefferson to Washington in which he (Jefferson) charges that Hamilton's system "flowed from principles adverse to liberty." Hamilton and Jefferson were both members of Washington's cabinet. Having no precedent to guide them, they at once disagreed, radically, as to the construction of the new constitution, and the country has not yet decided who was right and who was wrong. They differed widely in temperament and habits of thought, and unfortunately became personal enemies. Had Mr. House published Washington's calm and rather reproachful reply to Jefferson's angry letter, he would have given to his readers what I believe to be the deliberate judgment of posterity upon the quarrel of the two men.

"I regret, deeply regret," wrote President Washington, "the difference in opinions which have arisen and divided you and another principal officer of the Government, and I wish devoutly there could be an accommodation of them by mutual yieldings. A measure of this sort would produce harmony and consequent good in our public councils. The contrary will inevitably introduce confusion and serious mischiefs, and for what? Because mankind can not think alike, but would adopt different means to attain the same ends. For I will frankly and solemnly declare that I believe the views of both of you to be pure and well meant, and that experience only will decide with respect to the salutariness of the measures which are the subjects of dispute." (Life and Writings of Washington, vol. 19, pp. 399-307.)

In McMaster's admirable "History of the American People," a work which has not yet been completed, the author thus sums up the character of Hamilton (Vol. 1, p. 125): "Of all the men who in the judgment of posterity are ranked high among the founders of the Republic and the framers and defenders of the constitution, by far the most brilliant and versatile was Hamilton. His temper was gentle; his manner engaging; his spirit, high and resolute, was raised above the influence both of enmity and fear; his parts were quick; his industry unwearying; his attainments varied. He was at once a skillful officer, a brilliant pamphleteer, an active political leader, an impressive debater, a wise Statesman, an able financier, a political economist of rare sagacity."

Such is the judgment of the impartial historian upon the character of Hamilton. It is this "framer and defender of the constitution" whose testimony Mr. House finds it necessary to set aside before he can establish the correctness of his position as to the Blair bill, even viewed from the stand point from which he regards it.

A careful reading of his argument, however, and a reference to all the authorities cited by him, will show that he has sought throughout to prove that Congress could not under our constitution levy a tax to be used for educational purposes in the States. The Blair bill, he says, "is a measure which proposes to raise money by taxation from the people in order that it may be paid back to them." If that is so then we will all unite with him in opposition to the Blair bill. If that is not so then all his authorities are inapplicable and his whole argument falls to the ground. The question between Mr. House and many of his brother Democrats, is more a question of fact than anything else. He opposes what he considers to be a proposition to levy a tax. We endorse what we consider to be a proposition to distribute a surplus. With it, seems to me, singular inconsistency, he insists that the bill is not one to distribute a surplus because the word surplus is not in it, while he claims it is a bill to levy a tax, though the word taxation is not in it, and no tax can be levied without an express enactment to that effect.

The bill certainly is not a bill to levy a tax. Taxation will be none the higher if it becomes a law, and none the lower if it fails. There is nowhere in it any proposition to increase taxation—it proceeds upon the idea that taxation is already too high. It is based upon the undoubted fact that our revenues are already far in excess of the needs of the Government. Should any unexpected accident greatly increase our expenses or decrease our revenues within the next eight years, the bill would simply fall as to the undistributed portion of the seventy millions proposed to be turned over to the States. The surplus in 1836 was distributed by installments. The financial crash which unexpectedly came upon us after so diminished the revenues that the needs of the Government consumed it all, and the last installment was never paid to the States. The Treasurer could not distribute a surplus when there was no surplus to distribute. Men, even Congressmen, are human, and must act with the lights before them. A great surplus in the National Treasury is a dangerous evil, and one that ought to be promptly dealt with. This evil, I firmly believe, can be changed into a blessing by simply transferring the surplus cash from a place where it is not needed, to points where it is needed, and sadly needed—by the distribution of a heavy surplus, which so high an authority as the President of the United States tells us is now in the National Treasury and is rapidly accumulating.

It is strange to me that any objection to a measure like this should come from the South. I know that a few able and pure gentlemen at the South do oppose it, but I am at a loss to understand by what process of reasoning they persuade themselves that their course is either right in itself or just to their people. As one of the results of the war slavery was abolished. Of course we all accept the results of the war cheerfully, and I have no doubt but that in time the abolition of slavery will prove a great blessing to both races; but certain it is that the National Government, acting by and for the whole people of the United States, lifted suddenly from servitude to freedom four millions of people in our midst, and threw upon us the burden and responsibility of their education. This burden is one with which the people of the South—themselves impoverished by war and its attendant evils—have struggled for twenty years, and in many sections have struggled in vain. Now the people of the whole country, speaking through Congress, offer to bear a portion of the burden which they themselves have imposed on us. We all admit that the welfare of the whole country demanded the abolition of slavery (or whether we admit it or not, it is so decided), and that the act of the General Government in emancipating the colored people has placed upon our shoulders a heavy burden, which would not otherwise have rested there. How then can we object when that General Government comes, and as a measure of simple justice, offers to help us bear a portion of the burden? Shall we say to the Nation's representatives, "we do not object to having a great load placed upon our shoulders by you, but we do object to being relieved of any part of it." "We are willing to be knocked down, but not willing to be helped up!" This is curious logic it seems to me, and yet it is the position of those gentlemen who loudly insist that the Federal Government shall hands off now, when the Government is only proposing to render us a little assistance in a work which the Government has imposed upon us.

And the colored people themselves—is there no debt which the Government owes them? Having been brought suddenly, like the Israelites, out of the house of bondage, shall they be left to wander always in the wilderness of ignorance, and that Government, which has made them citizens, lend no helping hand to make them intelligent citizens? To what better use can we apply that surplus in our Treasury, to retain which would, in the language of Andrew Jackson, be contrary to the genius of our institutions, than to distribute it among the States to be expended for the benefit of the children of the land, to be employed in the noble effort to make useful men and women of the little boys and girls now growing up around us.

DEMOCRAT.

Clarksville, Tenn., January 4, 1886.

MR. ISAAC ROSENFELD'S family arrived last night, and are occupying their residence near the corner of Franklin and Fifth streets.

THE Intermediate Examinations at the University commence on the 15th of January, and continue ten days. Boys, do your best.

At a recent election in Washington Society, Jno. R. Herndon was elected valedictorian for '86.

THERE was a pleasant masquerade party given at the residence of Mr. E. B. Ely, Thursday night.

MR. G. N. BYERS has his insurance office over J. G. Joseph's clothing store.

MR. DUNCAN MARR received a letter recently telling of the death of Mr. Ossian Young, which occurred at Lake City, Colorado, on the 23d inst. Mr. Young once lived in Clarksville, and has many friends here who regret to hear of his demise.

MEMPHIS Sunday Times: Miss Sallie Howard and Miss Ellen M. Henry, of Clarksville, Tenn., are visiting Mrs. W. W. Schoolfield.

DR. B. W. USSERY and Mr. Wm. USSERY of the Southside, were in the city Monday.

MISS KATIE P. WILKERSON of Memphis, and Miss Lizzie Lyle of Haywood county, are visiting Mrs. Jno. S. Neblett. They will return Thursday.

MISSES WILLIE and Minnie Smith and Misses Lula and Lee Whitlock, a bevy of pretty and charming young ladies from Christian county, Ky., have been the guests of Miss Fannie Smith, in New Providence, the past week.

MR. H. N. LEECH, SR., has gone to house-keeping in residence he recently purchased on Commerce street.

MR. JAMES HENRATY, while at the Market-house Saturday morning, purchased some chickens which, when he took home, he discovered were his own fowls that had been surreptitiously raised from their roost a night or so previous. This afforded a clue which led to the arrest of John Jackson and Henry Hill, colored, for the theft, and the police succeeded in securing adequate proof of their guilt.

MRS. GEORGE CASTNER of Memphis, visited Mrs. Matt Gracey last week.

MISS FANNY PATCH who is teaching school in Christian county, spent Christmas at home.

MR. G. N. BYERS and family, have broken up house-keeping, and board with Mrs. Major on Fifth street.

MARRIED Dec. 23, 1885, at the residence of the brides father, Jas. C. Trotter Esq., by the Rev. Lewis Lowe, Mr. Robt. H. Batson, to Miss Sallie L. Trotter, all of Montgomery county.

MISS CLARA STACKER is visiting friends in Hopkinsville.

REV. W. F. DONALDSON returned from Eminence, Ky., Saturday night.

MISS EVA BAILEY, of the public schools, spent the holidays at her home in Nashville, and returned to this city Saturday night.

I HAVE a new Sewing Machine with the latest improvements, which I will sell at a bargain in cash. Can be seen at the Gallery. W. J. MACCORMAC.

MRS. DUNLOP and Mrs. Hopkins, of Louisville, are visiting at Mr. John F. Couts'.

A NUMBER of boys and girls enjoyed a pleasant party at the residence of Mr. George Alwell on Main street, Saturday night.

MR. ROBT. BAILEY, who has been in business in Memphis for several years, has returned to this city and taken a position as salesman in the furniture store of C. H. & C. D. Bailey.

MARRIED in Milledgeville, Georgia, on the 17 inst., by the Rev. Donald McQueen, of the Presbyterian church, Mr. Gny McKinley to Miss Forrest Lee Carrington.

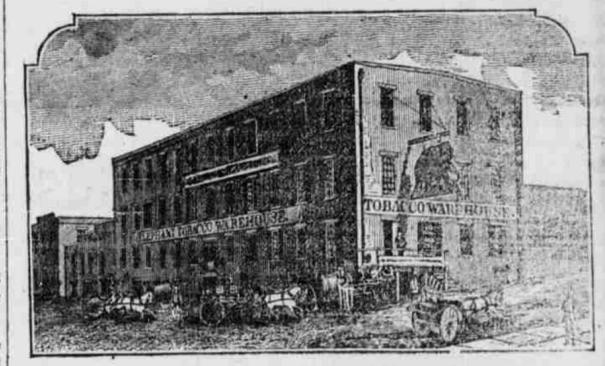
At the residence of the bride, Dec. 30, 1885, by the Rev. J. W. Gwynn, Mr. J. H. Bowling was united in marriage to Mrs. Della M. Wilcox, all of Montgomery county.

MR. MARTIN CROSS the popular and handsome salesman at Bowling & Willson's, spent Monday in Trenton, Ky. He said he went to visit relatives.

DR. H. M. ACREE of Chattanooga, has spent several days in the city, His many friends here were glad to get a sight of his familiar face.

DR. PRICE'S CREAM BAKING POWDER MOST PERFECT MADE The United States Government Places Dr. Price's at the head of the entire list. (See NATIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH BULLETIN—Supplement No. 6, page 33, Washington, D. C.) The Canadian Government Places Dr. Price's at the head of the entire list. (See report to the COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT, Ottawa (seat of government, Canada, April 3rd, 1885.) It is the purest and strongest. Free from Ammonia, free from Lime, free from Alum, and is recommended for general family use by the Heads of the Great Universities and Public Food Analysts. Persons doubting the truthfulness of this can write any of the Chemists named: Prof. R. OGDEN DOREMUS, M. D., L. D., Bellevue Medical College, New York. Prof. H. C. WHITE, State Chemist, University Georgia, Athens, Ga. Prof. R. C. KEZDIE, Late President State Board of Health, Lansing, Mich. Prof. H. M. SCHEFFER, Analytical Chemist, St. Louis, Mo. Prof. CHARLES E. DWIGHT, Analytical Chemist, Wheeling, W. Va. Prof. JAMES F. BARCOCK, State Assayer, Boston, Mass. Dr. ELIAS H. BARTLEY, B. S., Chemist to the Dept of Health, Brooklyn, N. Y. Prof. CURTIS C. HOWARD, M. Sc., Starling Medical College, Columbus, Ohio. Prof. M. DELFONTAINE, Analytical Chemist, Chicago, Ill. Prof. R. S. G. PATON, Late Chemist Health Department, Chicago, Ill. Prof. JOHN M. ORDWAY, Mass. Institute of Technology, Boston. Prof. R. A. WITTHAUS, A. M., M. D., University of Buffalo, N. Y. Prof. A. H. SABIN State Chemist, Burlington, Vt. Prof. JOHN BOILLANDER, Jr., A. M., M. D., Prof. Chemistry and Toxicology, College Medicine and Surgery, Cincinnati, O. Prof. AUSTEN & WILBER, Prof. Chemistry, Rutgers College, New Brunswick, N. J. Prof. GEORGE E. BARKER, Prof. Chemistry University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa. Prof. PETER COLLIER, Chief Chemist for the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Prof. KEYS & RICE, Prof. Chemistry, Ontario School Pharmacy, Toronto, Canada. Dr. JAMES ALBRECHT, Chemist at the United States Mint, New Orleans, La. Prof. EDGAR EVERHART, Prof. Chemistry, University of Texas, Austin, Texas. Prof. E. W. HILGARD, Prof. Chemistry, University California, Berkeley, Cal.

JAS. S. PARRISH. W. FRANK BUCKNER. D. WALKER WILLIAMS. PARRISH, BUCKNER & CO., Tobacco Salesmen —AND— COMMISSION MERCHANTS,



Elephant Warehouse, CLARKSVILLE, TENN. JAMES T KENNEDY, Book Keeper Unless we have written instructions to the contrary, all Tobacco will be insured until sold. LIBERAL ADVANCE ON CONSIGNMENT.

W. A. SETTLE Has bought out E. H. Wilkinson, and reopened a Grocery Store at his old stand on Franklin Street. A fresh, choice and select stock of

STAPLE AND FANCY GROCERIES Old customers and the public generally are invited to call. The Grocery will be run in connection with the Anchor Mills.

HOUSE OF CORNELIUS DEALERS IN Stoves, Queensware, Roofing, Tinware, Glassware, Guttering, JOB WORK AT LOW PRICES. NEXT DOOR TO CHRONICLE OFFICE. Respectfully, C. MEHIGAN & CO.