

The Thibodaux Sentinel

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Pay Your Poll Tax.

All persons desiring to retain their right to vote for the next two years will have to pay their poll tax before January 1st.

Hereafter no person will be allowed to vote at any election in this state unless he can show his poll tax receipt for two years previous to the time at which he presents himself as a voter.

A great many of our people do not pay their taxes until after January the first, and usually pay the poll tax at the same time. But this tax must be paid before January the first in order to preserve the right of franchise. All good citizens irrespective of party should come at once and get their poll tax receipt, not only for the purpose of preserving the right to participate in all elections, but also for the purpose of helping our public schools. If you cannot come yourself, send your dollar by some friend, but by all means pay your poll tax and pay it at once.

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A Bad Year, And A Poor Prospect.

It is the custom among progressive and prudent merchants and business men to sum up at the end of the year the year's business, so as to determine the result of the year's operations, whether there is a gain or loss, and to establish the amount thereof.

Following this custom, it is well for us to pause a little at the close of this last year of the present century to take into account the results of this year's general business in our parish, which is but a reflex of the conditions prevailing in other parishes of the sugar section. As the parish is strictly an agricultural parish, we shall have to deal principally with the general results based on the outcome of the various crops, for the business transacted rests in the main on that basis.

The crop prospects were bright at the beginning of the year, and planters and business men were very hopeful of a good harvest. Soon, however, the incessant rains in the spring and summer gave rise to serious forebodings which were unfortunately fully realized in the general outcome of the crops.

The spring rains totally ruined the Irish potato crop and seriously injured the onion crop. All hopes were then centered on the cane crop, injured as it was by the spring and summer rains.

But the cane crop also proved a sore disappointment, being every where very short in its returns. The shortage is variously estimated from thirty to fifty per cent, and as a consequence of such shortage of a crop of which much had been expected, there is great stringency felt to a certain extent by all in the community.

The small farmer who lost his all from the failure of his little crop; the cane seller whose cane lacked tonnage and who suffered again from lowered prices; the large planter who suffered also from short tonnage; the field laborer, from the lack of labor due to rains in spring and summer and short grinding in the fall; the mechanics and artisans; the merchants and the business and professional men; all felt throughout the year, feel now and will feel for some time to come the stringency arising from the partial failure of the crops.

In a strictly agricultural country, such a condition of things always follows as a natural result of a partial failure of crops, and it is ever more serious in those communities

where there is little diversity of crops. This stringency operates, however, more seriously against certain classes in the community than others. The laboring man who depends upon his daily labor for the subsistence of himself and family, of course, is the first to suffer; the small farmer and cane raiser, mechanics and artisans, perhaps, come next in order, and then merchants, business and professional men.

The plantation laborers this year suffered most from the unpropitious conditions which we have described. Unable to work during the rainy season, they had to be advanced provisions by the planters, and their grinding wages were absorbed in the payment of these advances. In many instances they came out with out a cent and still in debt to the plantation. The labor contract law but serves to accentuate the evil, for it encourages some planters to make advances to laborers too liberally just to keep them in their debt, thus virtually making slaves of them, as they cannot leave the plantation without paying. The plantation store, where the laborer is forced to trade at any price is another evil from which he suffers serious injury.

Bad as the year has been the prospect for the immediate future is not bright. The country has experienced three consecutive bad crop years, and it feels the effects thereof; so that, even with the prospect of a good crop this coming year, business may not be over bright. Should, however, the crop prospect be bad, we may expect much harder times than we are now suffering from. Let us hope for the best.

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What Will Be Done With Cuba?

Mr. Walter Wellman, the accomplished newspaper correspondent, has contributed to the Review of Reviews an interesting article on the subject of this country's future relations toward Cuba. He is firmly convinced that the time will never come when the United States will regard Cuba as a foreign nation, as it does other countries with which it has nothing to do.

It is quite certain, he maintains, that while Cuba will have independence in a local sense, there will be restrictions imposed as to the relations of the island with foreign nations. On this subject Mr. Wellman says Cuba will have no foreign ministers abroad, but will speak through the State Department of the United States. Foreign governments having business with Cuba will address the Secretary of State, Washington, and he will communicate with the island government at Havana. Inwardly Cuba is to be a sovereign nation; internationally it is to be an American State. In other words, the Republic of Cuba is to be to the United States almost precisely what the Dominion of Canada is to England, save that Cuba will choose a President and not have a nominal governor-general appointed by the paramount power.

Mr. Wellman declares that the administration at Washington is following a clearly-defined policy in the direction which he indicates, and in view of the vast expenditures made by the United States in behalf of Cuba, the proximity of the island to our shores and the intimate commercial relations existing between the two countries, it would be an absurdity to believe otherwise. There is much reason to believe that Mr. Wellman's views are correct and that it is not and has never been the intention of the party in power at Washington to grant independence to Cuba in the full sense of the word, for it would be contrary to the wishes

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and the plans of the syndicates or ganized in this country to exploit the island. When the Cuban constitutional convention, now in session, completes its work of framing an organic law it will be submitted to Governor-General Wood, who will forward it to President McKinley and the latter will submit it to Congress. Congress will then say whether or not it is acceptable to the United States. If it is not acceptable the question then naturally arises, what is to be done about it. The President, it is safe to assume, will return the document to General Wood so altered as to make it acceptable to this government, but should the Cubans refuse to accept the alterations then there is certain to be a muddle. Such a situation is exactly what the syndicates are hoping for because they will argue that the only way to settle the muddle is to annex the island, even if force is required. Annexation is what they have been scheming for ever since the withdrawal of the Spanish army, and they are not without influence at Washington.

All honest Americans, however, will protest against the slightest violation of the solemn resolution of Congress that "Cuba is, and by right, ought to be free and independent." Cuba, however, will not be independent if she is denied the right to be represented abroad by her own ministers, and compelled to do business with foreign nations through the Department of State at Washington. Instead of being independent she will be nothing more than a dependency of the United States and at the mercy of our guiding strings. Such a condition was not contemplated when Congress recognized Cuban independence and assured the world that we had no intention of making the island a part of our national domain, nor to exercise sovereignty over it. Common honesty, therefore, demands that the American people insist that there shall be no violation of the solemn pledge made by their representatives and that Cuba shall have the fullest measure of independence and be allowed to manage her own governmental affairs in her own way without any interference on the part of the United States. The adoption by us of any other course would be an act of national dishonor.

—States.

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Will Start A Paper.

Wm. Jennings Bryan has decided to enter journalism. In speaking of his plans he says:

"I have had for several years in contemplation the issue of a weekly newspaper and this seems an opportunity time for undertaking it. I intend to devote my life to study and discussion of public questions. I have taken this method because it will best accomplish the purpose which I have in view. Through a paper I will be able to keep in touch with social, economic and political problems. The paper will at the same time, if successful, brovide an

income sufficient for any pecuniary needs, and the work will allow me more time with my family than I have been able to enjoy for several years.

"I expect to lecture occasionally, especially in college towns where I can speak to students, but my principal work will be done with the pen or perhaps I should say with the pencil.

"The paper will be called 'The Commoner' and will defend the principles set forth in the Kansas City platform. I shall be publisher and editor and Lincoln will be the place of publication.

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Bumblebees Prevent a Burial

Bumblebees created consternation at the funeral of James Brackin, who was buried at Bradford the other afternoon. As the funeral cortege neared the grave the horses attached to the hearse stepped into a nest of bumblebees. The bees swarmed out and attacked the invaders of their home. The horses became frantic from the stings and reared and plunged until the hearse was nearly upset. The driver was stung so badly that both eyes were closed in a few minutes, and he was forced to flee. A number of the mourners were stung, but courageously ran to the hearse and unbuckled the horses, which ran away. The greatest excitement prevailed. The horses were squealing in pain, and women and children were screaming from pain and fright. The hearse and corpse were abandoned, while the crowd fled from the grave.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

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Suicide By a Monkey.

"Jerry," an educated monkey owned by G. W. Sipe, of Kokoma, Ind., deliberately committed suicide on Saturday. During a performance "Jerry" ran off the stage, climbed out of a window and ran up to the roof of the house by the fire escape, followed by one of the keepers. He jumped from roof to roof until he reached the Fifth avenue church, and climbed the spire to the topmost peak, where he grinned and tinkled at his pursuers. After much labor a trainer got within a few feet of the rebellious "mook," but as an arm was reached up for him "Jerry" tumbled off into space and was dashed to death on the pavement 100 feet below.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

A Topka girl went to law in order to secure payment of a claim on an accident insurance company. The company brought out the fact that the girl had coitus. This was such a shock to her best fellow that he ceased his visits, and now the girl wonders whether the \$47 she got from the company is sufficient compensation for the loss of her beau.—Ex.

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