

Port Tobacco Times

Friday Morning, December 21, 1883.

Col. Milton Y. Kidd, who has heretofore so ably and acceptably filled the office of Chief Clerk of the House of Delegates is again a candidate for the position. No better guarantee of Col. Kidd's usefulness and efficiency in that position can be afforded than his past official record, and the House can not go wrong in again honoring this tried and true public servant with the position for which he has proved his high qualifications.

Just exactly how the Baltimore Sun and other enterprising morning papers of this country managed to publish their edition of Monday last, which was printed and issued about 4 o'clock in the morning a detailed account of the execution of O'Donnell, the slayer of Carey, in London at 8 o'clock on the same morning, is one of those interesting philosophical facts which our county school teachers would do well to explain to their pupils. It reminds one of the story of the Dutchman's horse, which traveling in a westerly direction, "outrun de time, already like dot."

It is certainly a matter of very little concern to the "editor of the Times" what "some people" may assert in regard to their belief that he has "some personal as well as political interest in making out a case against the commissioners." We do not expect those who are associated with the commissioners in the grand scheme of negro domination to be able or willing to comprehend the true motives which actuate the conduct of this paper. But as this is the season of "peace on earth" and of "good will to men" we will not quarrel with them in regard to their belief. We would be much pleased, however, if the Maryland Independent would kindly point out what "misrepresentation" occurred in our local headed "That Investigating Committee" to which it refers. We await patiently for it to do so.

Of the new projects to swell the pension roll, the most startling is that of Mr. Peters of Kansas, who proposes to grant pensions to Union soldiers who served in the war of the rebellion, even if never wounded or disabled by sickness, when they reach the age of 55 years. What virtue there is in this particular time of life to make the person who reaches it a fit subject for support by his fellow citizens, although not so at the age of 54, is a mystery that perhaps Mr. Peters may be able to explain. That he has taken the trouble before introducing a measure so prodigiously costly to find out approximately how many billions it is likely to demand, first and last, from the people of the United States, we need not suppose. Precise calculations of that sort are not greatly in favor with statesmen who frame pension legislation.

This week Congress will add to the mass of bills already presented for its consideration. The House has thus far received 1,760 bills and 62 joint resolutions; the Senate, 695 bills and 15 resolutions. In this aggregate of 2,322 measures of legislation there are no doubt many duplicates and many others that can be grouped and decided together. Nevertheless, the volume is overwhelming, and when Congress adjourns, toward the end of the week, for the holidays, it will probably have increased its stock of bills to between 4,000 and 5,000, and perhaps without having acted finally on one. Of course the necessity of making up the new committees, to whom the various measures must be respectively referred, partly accounts for the sluggishness of business in the House; but the month of December is always wasted, and there is a striking contrast between the legislative laziness at the outset of a session and the feverish stress and strain of its closing nights and days.

"Virulent and prejudiced newspaper" is good. We wonder if it has never dawned upon the bright intellect of the Maryland Independent that it is just such things as this the Times and its intelligent readers expect the Maryland Independent to say about us; and that if it were to say that the Times is a moderate and just journal, that we should at once begin to examine our journalistic conscience to see where in we had been derelict in our true duty or recreant to the trust and confidence imposed in us as journalists by the constituency we represent. We do not expect the beneficiaries of negro domination in this country to look upon it in the same odious aspect that it presents to interested people of intelligence, and while we would avoid if we could the enmity of every one we expect them to harbor feelings of malice and resentment toward us and express them with more or less impropriety and indecorum whenever occasion serves. But we guess we can stand this if they can.

The Senate on Tuesday elected for its officers the candidates who were recently nominated in the republican caucus. The sincerity of the votes cast for the civil service act by some members of the Senate at the last session of that body was made rather questionable by the action of the republicans in ousting tried and experienced employes, simply because they were democrats, and substituting for them new men, simply because they were republicans. The principle of permanency of tenure was thus wounded in the house of its professed friends. Senator Sanbury called attention to the regard the republicans were paying to the civil service act which they have so highly praised, and for which they would like to claim all the credit, in taking not only all the offices having good salaries attached, but even the chaplaincy. Even the chaplaincy they were willing to capture by a strict party vote, Senators Mahone and Riddleberger acting with the republicans. Mr. Beck protested against the displacement of the sergeant-at-arms, "a man of conspicuous ability and faithfulness," and declared that the civil service idea "was considered by the republicans to be a mere humbug when it interfered with them."—*Balt. Sun.*

CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

Next Tuesday, being the 25th of December, will be the festival of Christmas.—This feast is generally observed throughout christendom, for with all the minor variations of creed and doctrine which distinguish the various sects and denominations of Christians, all agree upon one fundamental doctrine, that salvation to the world was derived through the birth of Christ, the Savior. Hence all denominations of Christians concur in the celebration, with varying pomp and ceremony, of the feast which commemorates the nativity of Christ.

This festival dates back to the first century of the christian era, having been established, according to the decree of letters by Pope Telephorus who died A. D. 138. There was at one time some confusion as to the proper anniversary of the nativity of Christ, but by an investigation made by a number of learned theologians in the fourth century, the 25th of December was ascertained to be the day upon which the Savior was born. This day which has since that time uniformly recognized and celebrated as the proper feast of the nativity.

The common custom of decorating the houses and churches of Christians with evergreens is derived from ancient druid practices. It was an old belief that Sylvan spirits might flock to the evergreens and remain untripped by frosts till spring.—The holy, ivy, rosemary, laurel and mistletoe were formerly the favorite trimming in England, and some of them are still used in that country and the United States. The custom of "Christmas trees" originated with the Germans, and was imported by them into this country, where it is now pretty generally recognized, especially in the larger cities. "Santa Claus" (St. Nicholas) originally introduced by the Dutch settlers of New York, is the American representation of the German "Knecht Ruprecht." He is made to do the important part in the good work of delighting the little ones' hearts at this season, in which he seems to be indefatigable and omnipresent.

From the earlier ages Christmas has been as much a social as a religious festival. In addition to the religious ceremonies which commemorate the birth of the Savior, the most pious Christians have been accustomed on this occasion to join with the more worldly sinners in much revelry and merriment. In England and in the earlier ages the revels used to begin on Christmas eve and continue until Candlemas day, every day being a holiday until twelfth night. In the homes of the nobles a "lord of misrule" used to be appointed, whose office was "to make the rude pastimes to delight the beholder." At the present day, however, the Christmas celebrations in England have lost much of the primitive boisterous character, the gambols and carols are disused, and family reunions and evergreen trimmings are nearly all that remain of the various rough merriments that used to mark the festival.

In this country Christmas is in most of the States a legal holiday. Business is generally suspended, and the feast universally celebrated by all classes and religious denominations. The giving of "Christmas presents" at this season obtains more generally in this country than anywhere else, and is a pretty and appropriate custom when not carried to excess.

The Times sends its most kindly greetings to all its patrons and friends and wishes them all manner of good things and every pleasure and enjoyment during the festive season.

The Maryland Independent is high authority upon relevancy of testimony, as well as upon all other matters; and when it overruled the court, as it modestly does in respect to the county commissioners case, we are inclined to admit that the court was wrong and the independent is right. It seems, however, that the aide editor's observation has been singularly oblique in respect to this case. The Cecil Democrat was not offered in evidence by the prosecution at all. It was after the close of the evidence in the case and during the summing up, while counsel for the defense were contending that it was utterly impracticable to comply literally with the act requiring a detailed statement because the newspapers would not be able to publish it, that a copy of the Cecil paper containing the last statement in that county (in which, owing to its greater wealth and more diversified affairs, a larger sum was expended than in this county) was shown, with the statement properly itemized published on one page. The Court, recognizing the force of this practical refutation of the plausible theory of the defense was maintaining, of his own volition sent for the paper and examined it. We are of opinion also that Mr. Mudd was a truthful witness, and, being such, we feel sure that he would not have testified to a fact which he did not know to be true. Our very distinct recollection is that in answer to the question propounded to him by the defense as to whether the statements he published were in accordance with newspaper statements, he said that he presumed they were, as Mr. Brent, their former counsel, had found no fault with them. An effort was also made to show that the present attorney to the commissioners had also approved their statement, but this, being present, vociferously and energetically disclaimed. It is true that the Court in his opinion did refer as a mitigating circumstance, to the fact that the malfeasance of the late board was not without precedent, but at the same time he admitted that no proof of such precedents had been adduced. He said that he knew this of his own knowledge, and referred to the circumstance that our neighbor dwells upon that Major Stone had some thirty years ago complained of the action of the county commissioners in publishing in their statement a contingent fund of \$10,000. His honor's recollection, however, must have been slightly at fault in respect to this matter, as no statements at all were published by the commissioners at that day. The law requiring a publication of the statement first went into operation in 1860. It is probable that what Major Stone then complained of was the exercise of the power, then rarely resorted to, of leaving the sum of \$10,000 in advance, by estimate, for some contemplated work. This power, as we have heretofore pointed out, especially when the board of commissioners give no bond to guard against misappropriation ought to be only exercised when absolute necessity, and the two free exercise of it would give rise to just complaint.

The report of the committee of the grand jury appointed to examine the books of the county commissioners was made to that body upon its reassembling yesterday and was adopted. The report is written on nine pages of cap paper. We regret that at the late hour it reached us we are unable to find room for it in this issue.—From the hasty examination we have given it, it appears to be a rather mixed up document. The committee comes to the conclusion that they are satisfied that the money levied by the commissioners in 1882 was properly expended during the fiscal year then ensuing, and they exonerate the commissioners from any blame. The report admits that at the threshold of the examination of the road fund they were met with a claim of a deficiency of \$1,288.62 from the preceding year, to be deducted from the \$8,000. In regard to this deficiency they took the showing of the books of the county commissioners as conclusive evidence. They admit, too, "that in many items of expenditure made by the commissioners they have failed to take vouchers for the same;" but say "that your committee has tested the accuracy of the books and accounts by the entries on the stubs of the check and order books kept by the clerk." Now the question will arise do these "stubs," which the committee have so competently received as vouchers for the payment of money, include the numerous due bills by which the road corps have been paid during the past year many of which are known to be now outstanding and unpaid in the hands of merchants and others to whom they have been negotiated at a discount by the road men? It will readily be seen that with the \$1,288 "deficiency" which with the committee started into the investigation of the road fund, for which they took only book entries and with the amount of outstanding "due bills" for which they have taken stubs there is room for irregularities. We say this in all fairness and deference, not by way of insinuating the culpability of the commissioners but merely to show the unsatisfactory and inconclusive nature of the investigation which has been made. Even if we have said from the first that no satisfactory examination could be made in one day, we are more than ever convinced of it by the report of the committee. General dissatisfaction with the inconclusive nature of the report was expressed by all with whom we conversed yesterday, and there is talk of taking steps for a further and more thorough investigation. We shall publish the report in full next week such comments as are suggested by it.

The acquaintance of the people of the United States with the sources of their natural wealth regarding the cereals and cotton, the mines, the fisheries, and other products of our soil and coast is very general. But when we speak of the very importance of the timber supply and the necessity of its preservation, there is a great deal of ignorance both as to the limit of that supply and the rapidity with which it is being destroyed. An estimate, based on the statistics of the last two years, puts the value of the timber supply every year in the United States at over eight hundred million dollars. To supply a demand represented by this enormous sum there must of necessity be a destruction of the timber supply at the rate of one mile of timber for every mile of the United States. We find this to be the case. In 1870 the total area of the supply of merchantable timber was put by the census at 200,000,000 acres. More than a third of this probably one half, has been cut over in the years that have since elapsed. At the same time the cut is over 15,000,000 acres annually. Under such circumstances, the supply of timber is rapidly being exhausted, and there will be a dearth of wood for all manufacturing purposes. Even if we then draw for a time from Canada, it is known that her woods are also being rapidly cut over, and that the timber now being taken to endeavor to preserve her valuable yellow pine. President Arthur drew attention to this subject in his message to Congress, and it is a matter which has become a topic of discussion in many of our most prominent and thoughtful men. From a geological, north, west and south, from personal observation and local statistics, the one conclusion is that wood products are increasing in scarcity and price, and that, generally, the preservation of our forests is now being taken to endeavor to preserve her valuable yellow pine. 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