

FORBES RANCE will soon cease to be a virtue, if certain men and papers continue their imprudent and unjustifiable attacks on Judge Merrimon. It is not to be expected that all men will be pleased at the same thing.— But it can certainly do no good to the Conservative party to abuse him now. Our whole party voted for him last August for Governor, and he certainly made a fine impression with the people. We feel very certain the people are for him now too. There is yet no evidence that he has misrepresented the party or changed his principles. Then he is the same noble, able, honest man we all so proudly voted for in August. Now we ask in the name of the Conservative party of North Carolina, why this bitter abuse of Judge Merrimon by the Charlotte Observer and Newbern Liberal? In all seriousness we ask what have these papers done for the Conservative party? Did they really belong to it six months ago? We do not object to bold, independent opinions, but when abuse is continued with no visible object but malice or to gratify anger, it then has no place in our party creed or platform.

Let this useless quarrel stop or at least not be attempted as a party measure. Individuals may quarrel if they wish, but for one, we shall not consent to see such base charges and vile epithets heaped so unjustly on Judge Merrimon or on his friends in the Legislature. We do not offer nor decline a quarrel on this subject, but for the good of all, we ask that such abusive language be at once discontinued. The matter is over with now, and we will bet our bottom dollar that the Conservative party of the State would to day sustain the election of Merrimon. None of us hate Vance, but we like Merrimon better, and sure enough we have got him, too. Then hush, before you bring yourselves into ridicule.

TELEGRAPH.—We again urge that renewed effort be made for telegraph line from here to Raleigh. Not a day passes but that our business men lose by not having prompt and latest information of the markets. The line will pay. Times are not like they used to be. This is emphatically an age of progress. We are satisfied that if \$2,500 or \$3,000 of stock be raised in Fayetteville, the line will be put up. Let us have a meeting, make up a subscription and appoint a committee to communicate with the railroad officers and the Western Union Telegraph Company. A fair and business move has not yet been made for it. We need the telegraph, can have it, must have it.

HESITATING.—People very often hesitate about a thing when they have doubts about it. Recently our former friend Neill McKay, the solicitor, told us he was "hesitating" whether to accept the place as Judge in Buxton's place, as it was thought Buxton would be appointed to the Supreme court by his Radical friend, Gov. Caldwell. It turns out that neither Buxton nor McKay was appointed, but both have ample time for "hesitating". When Neill ran for Congress last summer and got beaten, he "hesitated" about resigning the solicitor's office. A man by the name of Guthrie was so certain of this solicitor's office that he resigned his Bankrupt office to get it. But Neill "hesitated" so long that poor Guthrie got disgusted, and at once recalled his resignation and got Judge Brooks to put him back in Bankruptcy. Neill just gave a shrewd glance towards Guthrie with those blue eyes, and "hesitated."

WASHINGTON, Dec. 10. SENATE.—Cole offered a joint resolution to amend the constitution so as to elect President, Vice-President and Senators by direct vote of the people. One hour's Cabinet session. It is stated on the street that the Cabinet decided to support Pinchback as Governor pro. tem. of Louisiana.

THE END OF THE YEAR is near by and what have you done or what have you got to show for 1872? We are in the habit of talking much about the impoverishment of the South, and of the schools, the money, the energy so greatly needed by our people. We yearn for rail roads, fine farms, thrill and plenty.

Have we done all we could, or all that we could reasonably do, in 1872 for these objects or for any one of them? If we have, then we have done our duty, but if not, then another long, ventful and propitious year has been wasted. How is your business?

Have you made or lost money at turpentine? We think it will puzzle you to answer this question. Has your farm yielded your necessary provisions for next year, and a few hundred dollars of clear money from cotton besides? If not, your year's work has done you but little good.

The signs of the times look just now like money is getting tighter and scarcer. Business here and elsewhere South is duller than usual at this season. There is more and more neglect of farming and all heavy work, and increased effort to traffic or get a living or fortune by lighter duties. There are more stores, more agents, clerks, conductors, and irregular day laborers.

**Richmond and Danville R. R.**

At meeting of stockholders of this road in Richmond 11th inst., President A. S. Buford made his annual report from which we extract the following to which is appended part of the proceedings:

THE ROANOKE VALLEY RAILROAD.  
This property, comprising an entire length of fifty-two miles, of which thirty-one miles have the grading and masonry complete, as heretofore reported to the stockholders, was during last year purchased by parties in friendly relations to this company, and placed at our disposal. Subsequently to that period it has been transferred entire to this company upon arrangements made with the communities locally interested in it, to provide in aid of its construction, chiefly by donation, the amount of about \$90,000. This company undertaking to effect the completion on or before the 1st of January, 1874, of the line from Keysville, on this company's road to Clarksville, on the Roanoke river, a distance of thirty-one miles, of which ten miles were constructed ready for the rail, and large and valuable work done at other points. During the past summer the company has been regularly reorganized according to law, under the former style and designation of the Roanoke Valley Railroad Company, and under the official direction of the same persons who are now president and directors of this company, and arrangements made for commencing the work of construction, with a view to its prompt completion in accordance with the agreement above referred to. During the past fall about three miles of track have been laid, and recently a contract has been entered into on satisfactory terms with Robert Harvey, Esq., a well-known and experienced contractor, for the construction and completion of the entire unfinished work of graduation, masonry, and trestling, between Keysville and Clarksville, on or before the 15th day of November, 1873. This road, when completed to Clarksville only, in affording transportation and its consequent development to one of the most productive and desirable districts of this State and of North Carolina, will unquestionably bring within reach very valuable accessions of business to this company's road, as well as to the commercial community at its eastern terminus. When built, being almost exclusively the property of this company, and connecting directly with its main line, its operation may be greatly economized, and its contributed business made a reasonable source of profit to this company on the cost of completing it.

THE NORTHWESTERN NORTH CAROLINA R. R.  
This work leaves the company's main line at Greensboro', N. C., and extends westward through one of the most fertile and productive districts of that State to Salem, thence the company's franchises extend west and southwest as largely as any probable future demands will require.

From Greensboro' to Salem the work of graduation, masonry, and supplying cross-ties had been about finished during the year 1870. During the year 1871, the company being unable to continue the work to completion, made proposals for its transfer in effect to this company, upon terms deemed reasonable, and

on our undertaking to have it fully completed and put in operation within a reasonable period. The value of the line itself, as a new contributor of traffic, together with our then unsettled relations with other roads south of Greensboro', commended the usefulness and value of this connection strongly to the management, and the arrangement was substantially agreed on during that year.

On the 29th day of March, 1872, a final contract was entered into between the two companies, by which this company undertook to complete and put in operation the road from Greensboro' to Salem, a distance of twenty-nine miles, in consideration of the issue and delivery to this company of 1,600 shares, being a majority of the whole of its capital stock, and also \$500,000, being the whole issue of the first mortgage bonds of the North-western North Carolina Railroad Company which had been theretofore duly authorized by law. In accordance therewith the stock and bonds have been issued and delivered to this company, and the work of its completion commenced during the past fall. About one-half of the track is now laid, and the work continuing as actively as practicable and will doubtless shortly be complete. Two of the depot buildings required are finished, and the remaining one (at Salem) can be completed in a few weeks.

A copy of the agreement referred to is herewith submitted for information and reference. The value of this property to this company, on these terms and the circumstances under which its acquisition was made, render it an important addition to this company's resources, and an essential protection against certain contingent competitions in that direction heretofore and possibly still contemplated.

**NORTH CAROLINA RAILROAD.**

This road is being successfully operated under the contract of lease of September 11th, 1871, fully reported to the stockholders at their annual meeting of last year as a division of this company's line, under an efficient and economical organization, adapted to its practical relations, with this company as the controlling operator, as well as with the several other lines with which it has valuable business connections. To promote its usefulness to the communities it serves, and to secure its continued prosperity and value to them, and this company as lessee, the tariff rates prevailing at the time of its lease have been carefully revised, made more uniform, and materially modified—passenger rates being reduced about twenty per cent., and the average of freights very nearly as much. Its business, although not fully sustained during some periods of the past year, has produced results that verify amply the anticipations heretofore expressed that the property is and will be self-sustaining, and with a full and successful development of all its legitimate connections, as existing and contemplated, will become and continue reasonably remunerative for the cost and risks of its control, and eminently useful to that and the adjacent States north, south, and west, of it as a public highway and artery of commerce.

**THE ATLANTIC AND RICHMOND AIR LINE RAILWAY.**

This great work, now fully recognized as essentially important and valuable to this company and its connections, and of almost paramount necessity to their future prosperity and protection, is being rapidly completed. Casual and unavoidable causes of delay, inseparably incident to a work of this magnitude, have prevented the opening of the entire line by the end of the current year, as anticipated. It is not now doubted that its entire completion can be effected in the spring of the ensuing year.—At present, eighty miles on the southern or Atlantic end of the line have been completed and opened for traffic, and about sixty miles on the northern or Charlotte end. From Greenville and Spartanburg, S. C., points on the middle division accessible by rail, track has been completed, ready for use, to the aggregate extent of thirty-five miles. The residue of the line is either completed as to graduation and masonry, or so far advanced as to offer no interruption or detention to the work of erecting bridge-structures and of track-laying, which is now progressing with all the dispatch that the most energetic supervision and direction can effect. The indications of development of local tariff, agricultural, manufacturing and mineral, on this road, promise better returns than have been heretofore anticipated, and with its almost unrivalled advantages for a connection business, must, when opened and organized, establish promptly a commanding position as an integral part of the Piedmont-Atlantic thoroughfare, which it is the interest and purpose of this company to establish and maintain. To carry out

this purpose, and in such manner as to avoid the hazard of losses by delays, both of the business to be derived and of the capital already embarked in the enterprise, the Board have considered it necessary to accept a transfer to this company of the contract for the completion of the road to Charlotte, originally made with P. P. Dickinson and afterwards assigned by him to R. D. Barclay; and thus to undertake to secure both its early and economical completion and its future control as proprietor. This was done by contract of the 25th of May, 1872, between this company and the other parties interested, under which the work is now being prosecuted and will be completed. Under this agreement it became necessary for this company to extend its credit and employ its resources of machinery and material in pushing this work of construction and equipment, which has been done to such extent and in such manner as was considered essential to the best interests of both companies. A copy of said contract is filed in the office of the company for information and reference.

**THE GENERAL OUTLOOK.**

The present year has been the most abundant in all the productions that contribute largely to the business that has occurred for several years past.—From a point fifty miles south and southwest of Richmond, thence throughout the entire Piedmont region penetrated by your lines, and beyond, the harvest has been a generous one, and the rewards of labor compensating and encouraging. In the distribution of these increased productions your roads will share correspondingly with the producers in the profits and relief which they must afford. A healthy immigration, composed chiefly of a sturdy, independent, and industrious class of agriculturalists, drawn from the Middle and Eastern States, Canada, and Europe, is beginning steadily but effectively to occupy the vacant fields and homesteads that war and poverty and despondency had so largely created among us. Mineral deposits and manufacturing facilities of great value hitherto unknown or unused, within reach of your lines of road, are attracting the attention, capital, and enterprise of those who are accustomed to create private and public wealth from even an inferior material. From these resources and the tide of connoctional business which, left without constraint, must soon concentrate upon your line as its natural channel, is to be expected, without excess of hopeful ardor, that the work and usefulness of the improvements you control will be rapidly and profitably magnified, and with an increasing ratio for generations to come. These results are not to be attained or expected, however, without patient and persistent labor, intelligent enterprise, unremitting energy, and pluck that perseveres to the end.

This company, for several years past, has been boldly prosecuting a policy of development. A necessity—the necessity of self-preservation, and of fulfilling faithfully its highest duties to its own interests as well as to the public—required it. Extraordinary difficulties surrounded its inception, and unnecessary ones have been since superadded. Most of them have been surmounted, and all of them must and will be. The result will be that which always follows well meant and well directed labor and enterprise faithfully and honestly and manfully adhered to—success! And if the measure of it be small at first, and its progress slow, its continuance is the more assured, and the benefits and blessings to those who have labored and waited for it only the more permanent.

The officers and employees of the company have, almost without exception, co-operated faithfully with the President and Directors in an efficient and successful discharge of their respective duties.

Reports from the Engineer and Superintendent for the Richmond and Danville railroad and the North Carolina division, Examining Committee, and Auditor, were submitted.

The reports were, on motion, referred to a committee consisting of Messrs. Isaac Davenport, Jr., Thomas B. Doe, B. F. Garrett, D. J. Burr, and William H. Simms.

On motion, the meeting took a recess until half past 2 o'clock.

**AFTERNOON SESSION.**

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 2:30 P. M.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REPORTS.**

The committee to whom was referred the President's and other reports unanimously approved of the plans and progress indicated therein, and had no recommendation to make to the stockholders other than an earnest prosecution of the work and its connections as now conducted under the management of the Board. They expressed entire satisfaction with what

has already been done.  
On motion of Colonel W. W. Gordon, the following amendment was offered:

Resolved, That so much of the report of the President and Directors as referred to the Roanoke Valley, the Northwestern North Carolina, the North Carolina, and the Richmond and Atlantic Air-line roads is disapproved by the stockholders; that all contracts heretofore made for equipping and building said roads, or for a transfer of their interest to this company, or this company incurring any obligation on account of said roads, is injudicious and illegal, and the Board shall take such steps as shall conform to the opinion of the stockholders as herein set forth.

On motion of Colonel Gordon a scale vote was called for with the following result: Ayes, 763; noes, 29,916; so the amendment was lost, and the report of the committee was then adopted.

On motion of Colonel Buford, it was resolved that nine directors of this company, instead of five, as at present, with the president, shall constitute themselves a board to have all things done that are proper to be done by the company except otherwise provided by law.

**Destructive Fire at the Fifth-Avenue Hotel, New York.**

New York, December 11.—A fire occurred last night at the Fifth-Avenue Hotel, originating in the elevator leading to the laundry, in the back-loft, occupied by the laundry women and domestics, sixteen bodies have been found burned beyond recognition. The bodies were found near the only window of the room, which was barred. The only means of escape was the stairway, which was in flames; so the victims had to remain in the room and wait for death. It is hoped that many died while asleep.

New York, December 11.—Up to 2 o'clock this morning twenty-two bodies had been recovered. None of the five hundred guests of the hotel are reported injured. The loss by fire and water is estimated at \$100,000. The smoke was suffocating and the floors of the hotel were drenched with water. (The halls were filled with baggage. The clothing of the seventy or eighty servants who escaped is ruined. Fully one-fourth of the furniture, which is valued at \$400,000, is ruined.

**LATER.**

New York, December 11.—Eleven bodies of the victims from Fifth Avenue Hotel are at the Morgue. Only two have been recognized. All give evidence of terrible suffering.

Mary Heany, one of the servants at the hotel, is at Bellevue Hospital, having been injured by falling through a fire escape. She states when the alarm of fire was given she ran and knocked at nearly all the doors of the other servants, and burst open two of them. She then tried to get down stairs but the smoke and flames drove her back, when, with Mary Turner and Bridget Curtis, she broke open a skylight and got on the roof, remaining there until the firemen rescued them.

It is now thought that only eleven girls perished.

Mr. Griswold, one of the proprietors of the hotel, emphatically denies any delay in sounding the alarm. Upon the discovery of the fire three servants were dispatched to wake the girls, and prompt measures were taken to alarm the guests.

An Arab legend gives the following account of the discovery of coffee: Toward the middle of the fifteenth century a poor Arab was traveling in Abyssinia, and finding himself weak and weary from fatigue, he stopped near a grove. Then, being in want of fuel to cook his rice, he cut down a tree which happened to be covered with dead berries. His meal being cooked and eaten, the traveler discovered that the half-burned berries were very fragrant. He collected a number of these, and on crushing them with a stone, he found that their aroma increased to a great extent. While wondering at this, he accidentally let fall the substance in a can which contained his scanty supply of water. Lo, what a miracle! The almost putrid liquid was instantly purified. He brought it to his lips; it was fresh, agreeable, and in a moment after the traveler had so recovered his strength and energy as to be able to resume his journey. The lucky Arab gathered as many berries as he could, and, having arrived at Aden, in Arabia, he informed the mufi of his discovery. That worthy divine was an inveterate opium smoker, who had been suffering for years from the influence of that poisonous drug. He tried an infusion of the roasted berries, and was so delighted at the recovery of his own vigor that in gratitude to the tree he called it cahwah, which in Arabic signifies force.