

THE PINE KNOT.

LIGHTED FOR THE ILLUMINATION OF TAR HEELS, BOTH NATIVE AND ADOPTED.

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Yes, sir, we can write 1887 now, every time.

A New York Anarchist has blown himself to pieces attempting to manufacture a bomb. We congratulate him—and the public. He couldn't have made a better beginning of the New Year.

Better not take the tax off of tobacco and whiskey. If the revenue from these villainous drugs tends to make our too big surplus bigger, it might be applied to pensioning the wives and daughters of the users of them. That would be some compensation for the suffering they occasion.

There's a spice of pleasing uncertainty about horse-car riding on the new line in Raleigh. Those little mules may proceed soberly on their way or they may take a notion to jump over each other's backs, or the car even, if that would serve their purpose better. But there's this to console the timid, the animals are so small that they won't be likely to do any serious harm.

If Lord Tennyson isn't careful he'll earn the sobriquet of Sour Old Man. Perhaps if he would emulate Gladstone's healthful swinging of an ax he might get brighter views of life. His latest production, "Lockley Hall, Sixty Years After", is neither good poetry nor enlightened philosophy.

John T. Patrick, Commissioner of Immigration, has issued a circular letter to farmers, urging them to attend the joint meeting of planters and the Agricultural Board, Jan. 18th. He offers to secure reduced rates of transportation and board for all who attend. Write to him.

The editor of the Wilmington Star has been having a birthday lately. Once upon a time he and the New Year came in together. He won't tell us how old he is, so we can't say which New Year that was. Never mind. We know it wasn't so long ago that the editorial hand has lost any of its grip. We extend our congratulations.

Doesn't it seem a trifle cold-blooded for us Americans to be hugging ourselves and grinning over the prospect of a great European war? Rather too strong a resemblance to a company of ghouls gloating over the prospect of a rich corpse banquet. Supposing the war comes and creates a great demand for American products, we mustn't forget that the price of such prosperity is the lives of our fellow men.

RECLAIMING STATE LANDS.

The Commissioner of Immigration, in his annual report says, "People of capital have been induced to enter North Carolina, who are opening up swamp lands that have for years yielded no tax to the State, but have been an eyesore and health destroyer." That is all right as far as it goes, but the State ought not to allow an eyesore and a health destroyer within its borders. It ought not to wait for private enterprise to do the work. Something has been done already, but more is necessary. Below is an interesting account of what Russia is doing with her waste lands, which we reprint from the *Scientific American*.

The Russian Government is engaged in one of the most extensive drainage enterprises ever undertaken in any portion of the world. The location is what is known as the Pinsk Marshes, in the southwest of Russia, near the borders of Galicia. The region is so extensive as to secure special designation in the ordinary map of Europe, and, in point of area, is very much larger than Ireland. The marshes have become famous in Russian history as a refuge of all manner of romantic characters, and have remained an irreclaimable wilderness up to within the last two or three years.

In 1870 the Russian Government first took in hand seriously the abolition of this wild expanse, owing to its being perpetually more or less submerged and covered with a jungle growth of forest, preventing not only communication between the Russian districts on either side, but also between Russia and Austro-Germany. A large staff of engineering officers and several thousand troops were draughted into the region, and these have been engaged upon the undertaking since. Up to the present time, about 4,000,000 acres have been reclaimed by means of the construction of several thousand miles of ditches and canals, so broad as to be navigable for barges of several hundred tons burden. Just now the engineers are drawing up the programme for next year, which comprises the drainage of 350,000 acres by means of the construction of 120 miles more of ditches and canals.

Of the 4,000,000 acres already reclaimed, 600,000 acres consisted of sheer bog, which has been prepared for timber purposes by cutting down the underwood and thinning the trees; 500,000 acres of good forest land, forest oases in the middle of marshes, hitherto inaccessible, but which have been connected more or less by navigable canals, and thereby with the distant markets; and finally, 2,000,000 acres have been thrown open to cultivation, 120,000 acres of which have already been actually occupied. Besides making the canals and ditches, the engineers have built 179 bridges, bored 577 wells from 20 ft. to 80 ft deep, and have made a survey of 20,000 square

miles of country hitherto unmapped. When the task is finished, Russia will have effaced from the map of Europe one of the oldest and toughest bits of savage nature on the Continent. From an engineering, geological, and scientific point of view generally, the work is one of special interest.

THE STATE'S FINANCES.

The biennial report of State Treasurer Bain, now in the hands of the Governor, shows that the balance on hand Nov. 30th, 1884, was \$947,068.56, and on Nov. 30th, 1885, \$532,521.32. The receipts for the fiscal year ending Nov. 30th, 1886, were from all sources \$843,047.28; the disbursements for all purposes, \$1,180,018.16, and the balance on hand Nov. 30th, 1886, \$195,550.44, made up as follows: Educational fund, \$23,223.38; public fund, \$106,402.84; four per cent. interest fund, \$65,924.22.

The total receipts for the school fund during the two fiscal years have been upwards of \$14,000; the total expenditures have been upwards of \$12,000. The available assets of the Educational fund are \$99,250 of four per cent. coupon bond, which sustain a par value in the markets.

The receipts from the tax on fertilizers for the two years have been \$82,500 and from dividends on State stock in the N. C. R. R. Co., \$269,310.

The ordinary revenues during 1885 were \$209,917.62; during 1886, \$650,601.03, the large increase of revenues being due to the suspension of the collection of the State tax on property in the year 1884, in consequence of the payment of of \$600,000 by the authorities of the Western North Carolina railroad on May 1st, 1884, which amount was applied to the payment of the expenses of the year 1885.

The expenditures during the years 1885 and 1886 for the Agricultural Department were \$82,500. for interest on bonds \$279,435; for the executive mansion \$2,068.36, and for investment in four per cent. State bonds \$7,81245.98.

The estimates of the treasurer for future expenses during each of the ensuing two years amount to \$697,650, including \$57,000 for the General Assembly and the estimates for State institutions elsewhere given. In summary they are: For the support of the government, 269,750; charitable and penal institutions, 313,900; interest on four per cent debt, 114,000

The estimated resources amount to 792,997.06, at a tax rate of 23 cents, which reduction from the present rate the treasurer recommends: "A further reduction," Mr. Bain says, "which was desired, is rendered impracticable by the large decrease in the valuation of property, in the last four years, causing considerable loss to the treasury annually, the necessarily increased appropriations to some of the institutions and the uncertain results of the reassessment of property, which, under existing law, will be made the present year."