

raising? What admiration must be felt for the interesting process of first adding ten per cent, and then an additional penalty of fifty per cent, on the original tax! What solemn astonishment at the item of fifty cents as penalty on personal property! And what gratitude, that after such an exhibition of ground and lofty revenue acrobatics, only the pitifully modest sum of two dollars should be asked for making the estimate of costs!

We hardly know what kind of comments to make on the incident; but we cannot restrain an expression of relief that the company has come out alive, and of hope that, since they are still alive, they will know enough to keep out forever after.

THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE.

The dispatches have lately brought horrible details of the raids that are still going on in Africa in the interest of the slave trade. As the "dark continent" is becoming better known to the outside world, it transpires that the revolting traffic in human beings is flourishing as bad as ever. A correspondent writing about Colonel Ellis's march against the Sofas, in Sierra Leone, says they found whole towns wiped out by the slave catchers. Among the ruins were found the mutilated bodies of old men and women, while the young ones had been captured and carried off. Like wild beasts these slave hunters steal up to the unsuspecting settlements in the night, set fire to the huts and then, in the wild confusion of the panic-stricken victims, kill whoever offers any resistance, and tie the captives together, insensible to the despair and grief and heart-rending cries of the unfortunate sufferers.

The Moors scattered throughout the continent are credited with being the most cruel slave hunters. The fleetness of their horses, which they guide with skillful hands, gives them a decided advantage over the negro, and they seldom meet the punishment they deserve, until the Europeans confront them with modern weapons. But the slave trade is still profitable, slaves being in demand throughout the Mohammedan world, and it seems that even Europeans have of late been engaged in the trade, defying all laws of civilization and morality.

In the light of the prediction of the post-deluvian progenitor of our race, the condition of the African people becomes most significant. He foretold that the descendants of Canaan should be "servants of servants," different from the children of both Shem and Japhet. And to this day the condition has continued in spite of all efforts to change it. As far back as the history of Africa is known, slavery has existed as a social condition, recognized by the people themselves as well as by their oppressors. A captive taken in war remained the slave of the captor. He could be sold or otherwise disposed of at the will of the master. Parents could mortgage their children and give them as payments for debts, and even their own persons were considered property to be disposed of, so that many sold themselves as slaves to escape death in times of famine. And criminals were some-

times sentenced to slavery. That the African soil should have been singled out above all others as the hunting ground for slaves was no doubt owing to the fact that the condition had legal force among the various tribes themselves, and it is more than probable that the curse cannot be entirely stamped out until the people shall have been educated up to the point of regarding it as an abominable institution.

THE CHRISTIAN AMENDMENT.

A movement is at present vigorously agitated in this country, which, on account of its great importance, deserves the careful attention of every intelligent citizen. It is proposed to amend the preamble of the Constitution so as to acknowledge by that document the supremacy of the Almighty in the affairs of the nation, express gratitude to Him for the liberty enjoyed and recognize the efficacy of prayer in the name of the Mediator Jesus Christ. In case this proposed amendment be adopted by Congress, it will be laid before the citizens of the various states for ratification.

The amended preamble is as follows, the additional clauses being in brackets:

We, the people of the United States, devoutly acknowledging the supreme authority and just government of Almighty God in all the affairs of men and nations; grateful to Him for our civil and religious liberty; and encouraged by the assurances of His Word to invoke His guidance, as a Christian nation, according to His appointed way, through Jesus Christ, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America.

At the convention of the National Reform association in Allegheny, Pa., November 14 to 16, it was resolved to send agents to Washington for the purpose of supporting any measure that might come before Congress in defense of our public schools, for the investigation or suppression of the traffic in drink or in criminal publications, or for divorce or any other Christian reform; and for the enactment of a national Sabbath law and "for the promotion of such an amendment to the national Constitution as will justify beyond all peradventure the declaration of our Supreme Court that 'this is a Christian nation.'" Accordingly, Dr. H. H. George was sent to the capital and the "Christian amendment" was framed. On January 25 it was introduced in the House by Congressman Morse, of Massachusetts, and in the Senate by Senator Frye, of Maine, and referred to the judiciary committees. Its promoters are elated over the success so far achieved.

On February 1st a sub-committee of the House judiciary committee heard the arguments in favor of the amendment, on which occasion Dr. McAllister explained its various points. He contended that the clauses sought to be introduced into the preamble were formulated by the three highest departments of our government on

separate occasions. The first clause was taken from a resolution introduced in the Senate on March 2, 1863, and passed without a dissenting vote the following day. It was adopted when the nation, through its legislature, asked President Lincoln to appoint a day of confession of national as well as individual sins, and the President promptly responded by proclaiming April 30th as a day of fasting and prayer. The second clause was taken from the constitutions of a large number of states, including those of Arkansas, Minnesota, Illinois, Kansas and Rhode Island. The third clause, referring to this as a "Christian nation," the speaker said was according to an expression used by Justice Brewer of the Supreme Court in his decision in a case before the court in 1891. (Holy Trinity Church vs the United States U.S. Reports, Vol. 143, p. 471.) The amendment has the support of the leading men of the Christian denominations, he argued, and cannot be objected to by Unitarians, Hebrews and others who may not believe in the divinity of the great Nazarene.

The hearing for the day was then concluded and the 6th of March appointed for a continuation of the session. It is expected that the amendment will meet much opposition, but its friends are confident of being able both to carry it in Congress and to secure its adoption by the various states of the Union.

THE NEW BOND ISSUE.

As the NEWS has pointed out already, the extension of the city's borrowing capacity by special act of Congress is not an occasion for the municipality going into debt one dollar more than is required by urgent necessity. The fact that we had to get the special permission referred to should be of itself a warning to reduce the existing indebtedness as quickly as is consistent with present conditions, lest the city be drawn further into the vortex by extravagant mismanagement of its financial affairs, and virtual bankruptcy be the result. The people desire that the municipal program should be progressive; they also have given unmistakable expression of their will that it shall be freed from extravagance and jobbery, and be conducted upon lines of strict economy.

It is quite probable, now that the city's indebtedness can be legally augmented, that the Council will give early consideration to the subject of issuing more bonds. That there must be some issue, all who are acquainted with the situation will admit. The question is, How much more must we borrow now? and it would be well if the proposition could be laid before the taxpayers and an expression obtained thereon from them, after free and fair discussion. The municipal Council needs all the light and wisdom it can get on this subject, that its acts may receive the endorsement of the people; for should it happen to go beyond what the public may regard as the proper line in the borrowing business, its members will be held up to everlasting obloquy as having been untrue to the trust reposed in them at a critical time. On the