Evening Telegraph Some official correspondence between Prest-

PUBLISHED EVERY AFTERNOON

(SUNDAYS EXCEPTED), AT THE EVINING TELLGRAPH BUILDING.

No. 108 S. Third Street. Price, Three Cents Per Copy (Double Sheet), or Fighteen Cen s Fer Wees, payable to the Carrier and mailed to Suiscribers out of the city at Kine Dollars Ter Approm; One Dodor and Fifty Cents for Two Mon ha, invariably in advance for the period ordered.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1866.

Constitutional Reforms Proposed in New

York. THE Constitution of the State of New York provides that once every twenty years the question shall be submitted to the qualified electors of the State, whether a Convention for the revision of the Constitution shall be called. This is the twentieth year since the adoption of the present Constitution, and consequently the question of calling a Convention for its revision is to be voted upon by the people this fail. We observe that the press of that State seems generally to favor the calling of the Convention. The chief feature of the present Constitution animadverted upon is the elective judiciary. Previous to the adoption of the Constitution of 1846, the judiciary in New York was appointed by the Governor and the Senate.

That Constitution made radical and wide spread changes, throwing the bench into the arena of direct popular election. This plan bas been tried now for twenty years, and it is but candid to say that many of the wisest and best men of the State regard it as a failure, when compared with the old plan of appointment. They think that it has degraded the independence of the judges, and placed, in many instances, men of interior talents and attainments on the bench. It has made judicial positions dependent on the machinery of party politics, and converted them into prizes for the dishonorable scrambles of caucus nominations. In the rural districts the system has not worked so badly as in the cities. and especially in New York, where the judiciary has become a byword and a reproach.

Some of the papers, as the Herald, propose a complete return to the old system of appointment by the Governor and the Senate, and that the term of office shall be for life or during good behavior. Others would retain the elective system for the country and minor cities, but would aboli h it in New York city. All seem to be agreed that the plan of electing Judges in that city is a tailure. It is estimated by the "Citizens' Association" that not less than sixty thousand votes there are controlled by parties directly interested in the breach of the laws-a number sufficient at almost any time to control the elections. As a consequence, the bench has become notoriously corrupt; the laws are violated with impunity; life and property are insecure; and justice is not done between man and man.

Indeed, not only is the electing of judges declared to be a failure in New York, but the very capacity of the city for municipal selfgovernment is denied. So vast and powerful are the elements of evil there, that her best citizens are ready to place the government of the city in the hands of the State at large, Things have been tending towards this end for some time. The control of the police was long ago taken out of the hands of the Mayor and city authorities, and placed in the hands of a board appointed by the Governor and Senate. More recently the Fire Department and the Bealth Department have been likewise placed in the hands of Metropolitan Boards. And it is now urged that a Board of Control be added, having entire supervision of the finances of the city, and directing all its expenditures. This seems to be the only refuge from bankruptcy, as the expenses of the city, through the peculations o cocrupt "rings," have run up from three or four millions to twenty millions a year.

This reaction towards a less purely popular form of government in our neighboring State is, we apprehend, more apparent than real. The Convention of 1846 went to great lengths, and many of its measures were doubtless unwise. In the matter of the Judiciary not only was the elective element introduced, but the terms of office were made far too brief. It is quite probable that these will be lengthened, and that the constitution of the courts will be somewhat changed; but we do not apprehend that the elective system will be given up as to the State at large. So far as New York city is concerned, its capacity for local self-government seems to have tailed. But this only confirms what has always been maintained by the wisest friends of popular institutions, v'z., that successful self-government is only possible to intelligent and virtuous communities.

Wherever vice and crime and ignorance come to preponderate over virtue and order and intelligence, there self-government is an absurdity and a failure. But in New York the remedy is simple, and in accordance with Republican principles, and that is, to increase the constituency. The city is part of the State at large; and if it shows its incapacity for local self-government, the duty devolves upon the State to extend protection over it. The idea of local independence finds no place in our system. Cities are but corporations created by the State, and whenever they show an incapacity to fulfil the ends for which they were created, the State, as the sovereign power, must necessarily intervene.

THE details of the loss of the steamship Evening Star, and of the escape of the lew survivors, are full of those harrowing incidents so characteristic of such awful calami-

dent Johnson and Attorney-General Stanbery, respecting the trial of Jeff. Davis, has been made public. From it we learn that Davis is held as a prisoner to await trial by the civil courts. He is indicted for treason in the United States Court for the district of Virginia, and the District Attorney for that district has been notified that he will be delivered into the custody of the Marshal upon a capias under the indictment. This the District Attorney declines to have issued, on the ground that he has no place so safe and comfortable for the keeping of the prisoner. as his present quarters. There is also some uncertainty about the holding of the Courts, owing to changes made in the districts by an act of Congress passed last winter. The Attorney General says that no application has been made by Davis' counsel for his transfer to civil custody, although they have asked that he should be transferred from Fortress Monroe to Fort Lafayette-a request which was not granted on account of an adverse report of a board of surgeons, to whom it was referred.

We find in this correspondence no allusion to the original charge upon which Jefferson Davis was arrested, viz., complicity in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, late President of the Un'ted States. This charge was promulgated in a special proclamation of President Johnson, dated May 2, 1865, and offering the sum of one hundred thousand dollars for the arrest of Jefferson Davis. It was upon this charge, and this alone, that Davis was originally arrested. And at that time the Attorney-General gave it as his opinion "that the persons implicated in the marder of the late President, Abraham Lincoln," were "subject to the jurisdiction of, and lawfully triable before, a military commission." Why Davis was not so tried the public have never been informed.

Some Democratic Aspersions.

THE Age of Saturday contains an article on the excitement caused by a bogus despatch, in which we find the tollowing significant sentence:-

"Though Mr. Johnson has submitted no questions to the Attorney-General, his must, for the next few months, be an attitude of distrust not, we hope, of defiance. He must be on his guard. His very financial policy, and the accumulation of specie reserves in the Treasury, and other unerring signs, show that he is He must await the movements of his enemies. Let him do so caimly. A wrong step in advance may ruin him, as a step back ward will certainly dis-

We would ask, What does this declaration mean? Why should there be an accumulation of specie reserves in view of the President's dauger? What benefit would such an accumulation be to him in any case, as it is illegal for him to touch one dollar of the funds in the national vaults? Either this sertence means nothing, or else it means that should an impeachment be attempted. the Treasury funds would be used by the Executive in his defense. Such a statement as the organ of the Pennsylvania Democracy publishes is at least peculiar.

The same article says:-"Chief Justice Chase seems now to have before him the prospect of presiding at the trial of two Presidents." As this naturally sounds remarkable, the Age explains that it refers to the President at the White House and the President at Fortress Monroe. We are not surprised at that journal speaking of Davis as though he were equal to the President of the United States. Until within a year it was doubtful which it would adhere to.

A Poser.-The Democrats of New York. pretending to be quite well satisfied with the 'gains" of their party in this State, the Tribune invites them try their hands on a little calculation of this sort :-

"If your friends in Pennsylvania have lost wo of their eight Representatives in Congress, majority against 22,000 last year, how are they likely to come out in this State, where they have eleven Representatives and were beaten last year by 30,000 majority?"

THE Democrats resorted to a characterstic trick in one of the Iowa Congressional Districts, at the late election. They got up a hand-bill, which was circulated on the morning of election day, announcing the death of the Republican candidate, and naming a person to be voted for instead, to which was forged the signature of the Chairman of the Republican Congressional Committee for the district. They did not win, however.

THE nomination of the Hon. "Jack" Rogers for Congress in New Jersey does not give universal satisfaction to the Democrats of his district, the "Young Men's Conservative Club" of Orange, by resolution, denouncing it as an "outrage." This is a poor reward for Jack's services in leading the party on the floor of the House of Representatives.

GENERAL BUILER made a great speech to an immense meeting in St. Louis on the evening of the 13th. Republican prospects are daily growing brighter in Missouri.

The Opera This Evening. As our readers are aware, the Italian Opera Troupe of Mr. Maretzek has been transferred to this city, and will regale us with a season of fifteen nights of admirable music, rendered by artistes whose fame is world-wide, and who have been selected not only for their extraordinary abilities, but also for their fitness for the everlasting and inexorable harmonies of the great masters. The tout-ensemble is as complete

as the talents of the artistes are indisputable. The opera selected for this evening's entertainment is called Orispino e la Comare, which is given for the first time in this city, and presents to us the greatest living buffo-basso, Signor Giorgio Ronconi, in his second best part of "Crispino." His finest role is "Lord Rocburgh," in Fra Diavolo.

The opera of Orispino ella Comare was composed by Luigi and Frederici Ricci, some thirty years age. For a while it was very popular, its

success, however, being confined principally to []. the Italian stage. New operas being produced, and the public taste taking another direction, it was withdrawn in favor of more dramatic works. But an opera containing such gems as this does could not long remain hidden. It was revive! two years ago at the Grand Opera, Paris, and met with unparalleled success. Its next appearance was in New York, where it was brought out last fail under Max Maretzek at the Fourteenth Street Academy, recently destroyed thy fire. It was in this opera that the lamented Rovere made his entree in the role of 'Crispino." It was not till last spring that Crispino was put on the London stage, where it obtained such popularity that it, at Covent Garden Theatre, was made the leading stock piece. Ronconi and Adelina Patti sustaining the parts, respectively. of "Crispino" and "Annetts." During the last eason of Italian opera in New York Signor Bellini assumed the role of 'Crispino," and proved very acceptable, though, having to take the part at short notice, the delicate and finished ecting of his predecessor was wanting.

The cast of the opera to-night will be as fol-. Miss Clara Louise Kellogg a Comare Miss Fanny Stockton Contino del Fiore . . Signor Enrico Testa . SignorAntonucci Mirabolous Crispino Tacchetto . Signer Giorgio Ronconi

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The Commission has appointed the Rev James Boggs as their gent to wair upon our citizens and selicit contributions a money or cothing in behalf of this noble charity, and it is hoped a generous response will be made to his appeals.

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The snnual meeting of the UNION BENEVOLENT AS OCIATION will be held on TUESDAY,
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