THE DAILY EVENING TELEGRAPH-PHILADELPHIA, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1869.

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

E ditorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

THE CAPITALISTS OF CRIME. From the N. Y. Tribune.

The contest between those who work and those who plunder is nearly as old as the world itself. Nor is there much ground to hope for its speedy termination. We suggest the inquiry whether society may not have made a mistake in its mode of carrying on this contest. Has it not failed to recognize the fact that habitual criminality is a craft, not carried on by isolated individuals, but by a virtual organization comprehending various grades and divisions of work, and especially requiring the combined action of capital and labor precisely as other crafts do, and like them, too, being wholly dependent for its continued existence on this union? There are two well-defined classes enlisted in criminal operations, the capitalists and the operatives, those who furnish the means, and those who work the machinery; and the former are absolutely essential to the latter. There are four kinds of criminal capitalists; 1. The owners of houses or dens affording shelter to depredators, and places for their congregation and enjoyment-concert saloons, dancehouse, and houses of prostitution. 2. The receivers or buyers of stolen property. 3. The pawnbrokers who lend money upon such property. 4. The makers of burglarious and other instruments used in criminal operations. It is the practical impunity of these capitalists which supports the breed of thieves and burglars. As the law now stands, a man possessed of some capital may, with absolute inpunity, use it in providing homes for triminals, arranged, if so he pleases, for concealing the thieves and their plunder, and for billing the pursuit of the police; or such a person may, with equal impunity, engage in the manufacture of burglars' and thieves' instruments, some of which are of the most elaborate construction. It is true that, as regards those who cash the stolen property, either by purchase or by loan-receivers and pawnbrokers-the law does provide for their panishment; but the requirements as to evidence are such as to make detection and conviction, in ordinary cases, all but impossible. In New York, the number of daily receptions of stolen property probably amounts to some thousands; yet the conviction of a receiver is so rare that there is scarcely one to ten thousand offenses; and the conviction of a pawnbroker for receiving such property in pledge we have never heard of. Compared to the swarms of operative plunderers, the several classes of criminal capitalists constitute but a small body. Being much more sensitive to the terrors of the law and more confined to given localities, they offer by far the fairest mark for successful criminal legislation. The mere "laborer" of the criminal class, if we may so name the thief and the burglar, has neither reputation to hazard nor property to lose; he can hide himself or ran away. Not so, however, the man who has invested his capital in aid of the predatory class; he cannot conceal himself; and if he run away, he must leave his houses, his shop, or his stock behind him. These criminal capitalists present a vital and exceedingly vulnerable part of the organization. If it were made absolutely unsafe for owners of property to afford shelter to habitual criminals—the stern rule "No houseroom to the dishonest" being rigidly enforced-and if it were also made absolutely unsafe either to purchase stolen property or to advance money upon it, the class that now lives by plunder would per force be driven either to honesty or starvation. Some years ago, in the town of Kidderminster, England, it was noticed that while household property, shop goods, valuables carried about the person, etc. etc., were perfectly secure from depredation, the thread and silk used in bombazine and carpet weaving were constantly stolen. Now, what was the cause of this strange anomaly ? Kidderminster was not large enough to conceal and support a trader in stolen goods of the ordinary kind, but it contained many small weavers, some of whom had both means and inclination to buy the stolen silk and thread. Circumstances enabled capital and labor-the capital of the small weaver and the labor of the thief-to act jointly against the silk and thread, while they did not admit of such joint action against other kinds of property. There is a world of instruction in all this It says to society: Strike at the criminal capi talists in your warfare against crime; make the cities too hot to hold them; destroy opportunity in the large towns as well as in the small; and then evil inclination will remain dormant and undeveloped in the former no less than in the latter; but so long as, through ignorance or fear, you fail to adopt this method of attack, you will be obliged to maintain an army of watchers to check evil inclination as it ripens into crime; your property will be exposed to plunder and your persons to injury; and thousands upon thousands of children, who might be saved by a law as inexorable as that which makes the magnetic needle obey the loadstone, will be doomed to grow up under influences which will compel them to become the criminal army of the future.

but he thinks that "he must be a fastidious person who complains of climates in which, while the eagle delights to soar, the humming bird does not disdain to flutter." He says, too, that "not only have these skies been sufficiently bright and serene to give me a perfect view, under the sixtieth parallel, of the total eclipse of the sun, and of the evening star at the time of the sun's obscuration, but I have also enjoyed more clear than there have been cloudy days in the early mornings and late evenings peculiar to the season." And if they have fewer unclouded sunrisings and settings in Alaska than in more southern latitudes. they have more frequent and more magnificent displays of the rainbow and the aurora. "And of all the moonlights in the world commend me to those which light up the archipelago of the North Pacific Ocean." "The thermometer tells the whole case when it reports that the summer is cooler and the winter is warmer in Alaska than in New York and Washington." The country, too, must be healthy, for Mr. Seward says that he has mingled freely with its mixed population, the Tonguss, the Stickeens, the Cakes, the Hydahs, the Sitkas, the Kootsnoos, and the Chilcats, and with the traders, soldiers, seamen-English, Russian, Swedish, and Americanand he has found them all in robust and exuberant health. Manhood, up there, is active and energetic; infancy seems exempt from disease and age from pain. Could anything more be asked in the matter of climate?

Secondly, the Alaskan rivers are broad, shallow, and rapid, and the seas deep and tranquil. And such marine treasures! The whale therein abounds: and the sea otter, the fur seal, hair seal, and the walrus; and those waters swarm with salmon, cod, and other delicious fishes. From what he has seen he is almost a convert to the theory that the water produces more for the sustenance of animal life than the land. And the cloudcapped towers, domes, castles, and minarets, and snow-covered cones and ridges of those mountains are wonderful to behold; and those glorious forests of pines, cedars, cypresses, firs and larches are a sight to see. Even the cotton-wood tree (the balm of Gilead) there grows to such a size that from a single trunk a canoe is often made capable of bearing a phalanx of sixty warriors. Think of that. And no beam, or spar, or mast, or plank is ever required in any land which the fragrant cedars of Alaska cannot furnish. And the native grasses up there are first rate for cattle and horses. Such is the island and coast section of Alaska: and from all that is known of the great inland Yukon valley, it is much the same.

In the third place, the land animals of this new purchase are worth something. They include the elk and the deer in profusion -the bear, the black, the grizzly, the cinnamon, and other varieties: mountain sheep, enormous fellows, with rich fleeces; the wolf and the fox, in several varieties; the beaver, the otter, the mink, the raccoon, the marten, the ermine, the squirrel-grey, black, brown, and flying. It is from these fur-bearing animals flying. that the Hudson Bay Company have become so rich that no combination of capital has yet been found competent to buy them out.

Next, with regard to the Alaskan ice crop. It has been a failure in the coast ponds this season; but in the glaciers (if that ice will do) there is a liberal supply. In minerals, too, Alaska is well supplied. Its copper mines are an old story, and it has whole ranges of mountains of iron, the very dust of which adheres to the magnet. It has beds of coal on the Kootsnoo; and in other places placer and gold fear of an honest, independent Democratic quartz mining is carried on. With such re- press. In the city of New York it is easy for sources in the land and the water, with a climate singularly salubrious, and with scenery surpassing in sublimity that of the Alps, the Apennines, the Alleghanies, or the Rocky Mountains, Mr. Seward expects a glorious future for Alaska in its settlement and development. The summer season in those high latitudes is too short for much in the way of farming and gardening; but for fishermen, hunters, lumbermen, miners, and dealers in ice, Alaska is the Promised Land. We have given the substance of Mr. Seward's report to the citizens of Sitka of the results of his observations as to the material resources of Alaska. His political reflections thereon are full of enthusiasm. From all that he says, we are inclined to think that Alaska is a good bargain. Mr. Seward, how-ever, in his detour hardly touched the main continental body of Alaska. Therefore we hope that among the recommendations of General Grant's regular December message to Congress he will recommend a liberal appropriation for a scientific exploring expedition next summer of this prodigious terra incog-nita by land and water. Mr. Seward's glances along the coast will increase the public desire to know all about the vast interior of Alaska.

among the seaboard islands, and up to Mount | to this view, that, here in the city of New Fairweather, he proceeds to give his impres-sions of the country. First, he tells of the climate. Of course, in regions so vast the climate must be variable, the city patronage has supplied it with the ordinary motives of vulgar politicians. So far as this may be true, or is even believed to be true, it operates to the disadvantage of the Democratic party. Dexterous Democratic politicians in the city, seeing that they had little to hope in a broader sphere, have been under a strong temptation to act from narrow, local views, and to disregard the general interests of the party in the pursuit of selfish aims. The other party would have adopted a similar course in the same circumstances; and, indeed, one of the chief sources of demoralization in our State politics has been the bait presented by the city offices to the cupidity of the Republican Legislature at Albany. The State Constitution has been repeatedly violated to create all sorts of commissions for transferring large portions of the city patronage to the party that could never have gained it through the local elections. The Albany politicians are no better than the Tammany ring; but we must concede that the city government of New York has not exemplified the disinterested purity and steady devotion to principle which may be justly claimed for the Democratic party in the rural districts of the State and throughout the country. The baleful influence of the Tammany ring

is, however, subject to two powerful checks; and when the Democratic party of the country regains its old ascendancy, it will be subject to a third. The first, and perhaps the most important of the present checks, is the necessity which the Tammany organization is under of meeting with the Democracy of the State every year in the Democratic State Convention. In that convocation of Democrats, every Assembly district is represented; and the Democrats of the interior who have been trained in the school of adversity, have the majority of the convention. and control its action. The consequence is, that our candidates for State offices are always able and reputable men, men whose character is above reproach, and whose integrity is never questioned. The Democracy of the interior feel a distrust of Tamm iny, and never put in nomination any of the candidates it proposes, unless their character and record have been such as to command universal confidence. The shining career of Mr. Hoffman, both as Recorder and Mayor, made him a most acceptable candidate for Governor: for, although he was supported by Tammany, his credit and reputation were as great in the rural districts as among all classes and parties in the city. Whatever may be thought of some of the persons nomin ited and elected in the city for judges, the Domocratic State Convention has never asked the suffrages of the people for any man as Judge of the Court of Appeals against whose standing and qualifications even the Republican press could find anything to say. The Democratic State officers elected two years ago are so able, upright, and faithful that it is universally conceded that the party cannot do better than to nominate them all for re-election. The sound feeling and rectifying good sense of the Democracy of the State confine the influence of the Tammany ring within the sphere of local politics. The Democracy of the interior have a cordial fellow-feeling with the honest Democratic masses in the city; but not with the ring, which they regard with distrust, and whose influence they always think it safe to restrain.

Besides the salutary check of the rural Democracy, exerted through the State Conventions, the Ring is subject to the wholesome a vigorous, enterprising newspaper to be honest and independent, because it can live and prosper in defiance of any clique. Readers are so numerous, and the legitimate advertising business of a first-class newspaper in a great commercial metropolis is so large, that party journals feel no dependence on party leaders, and dare to reflect the sentiments of the honest masses without minding the hostility of rings or juntas, or currying for the patronage which they control. When the general interests of the party require that the misdoings of a clique shall be exposed and scourged, a prosperous journal in a great commercial city can always afford to do it, and is sure to gain popularity for its pluck and courage in proportion as the squirming of corrupt leaders betrays their dread of the lash. The more they kick and cry out, the more certain the public feels that the press w! ich castigates them is neither timid nor servile, and that they fear and abuse what they cannot bribe or control. The masses of the Democratic party are honest, in the city as everywhere; and an organ which is true to their interests and reflects their sentiments, may confidently rely upon their support. Another influence which will in time operate as a restraint upon local rings, is a Democratic administration at Washington. The leaders of local cliques will then be more subject to party discipline than they are at present; and as they will wish to stand well with the party at large when the party at large has patronage at its disposal, they will not dare to compromise the general reputation of the Democratic organization.

stirred up the whole community. For social reasons, his relations procured his confinement, and he was detained for sixty days, notwithstanding the fact that active efforts for his release were made by several persons acquainted with the circumstances. When finally these latter managed to get him brought before the Supreme Court, Judge Sutherland at once pronounced him in sound mind, ordered his release, and declared that he had been incarcerated in violation of law and justice. It was but last month that the release of a respectable old lady, also from the Bloomingdale Asylum, was obtained through legal proceedings; and it was shown on the trial that she also, though of perfectly sound mind, had been confined at the instance of

certain relations, for their own purposes. She was released the day after the service of the writ of habeas corpus, and the points of law involved in the case have not yet been decided by the Court. Still another case is awaiting decision in this city, of an elderly lady confined as a lunatic, the evidences of which are alleged to consist only of her ritualistic practices, and her determination to dispose of her property according to her own will. Nor are such cases confined to this city. A lady was incarcerated in the Trenton Lunatic Asylum, a short time ago, who had given evidence of unsound mind only by the fact of marrying the man she loved. She was spirited away from her husband, who had great difficulty, some time after, in discovering her whereabouts: but, on doing so, and bringing her case before the Court, he promptly procured her release. We had also an account, not long since, from Philadelphia, by which it appeared that an entirely sane widow lady had, for pecuniary reasons, been shut up as a lunatic, and it was only after the greatest trouble that she succeeded in getting the case brought before the Court and securing her freedom.

These are facts at once disgraceful and alarming; and when we see such incidents occurring immediately around us-when we see men and women of perfectly sound mind seized and incarcerated in madhouses, in order that the persons procuring their confinement may carry out some nefarious purpose-it is time that we demanded the adoption of means for inquiring into the management of our lunatic asylums.

There is little difficulty in wicked and de signing persons procuring the confinement of a victim on the charge of lunacy. It is only necessary that they should procure the order of a magistrate and the certificate of lunacy from two physicians. It is a terrible thing to think that we have magistrates in this city so unprincipled that there is no trouble in inducing them to take action in such matters, without the slightest regard to conscience or justice; and it is no less terrible to think how easy it is to find "doctors" who have no scruples whatever about giving certificates of insanity in cases where it is made their interest to do so. But that we have magistrates and doctors of this kind there is, unhappily, not the least doubt. We have also another class of magistrates-men of careless and negligent habits-and another class of doctors-men who are ignorant, and incapable of properly investigating cases of this nature -who are hardly less to be dreaded than the unprincipled and mercenary.

We must have some changes in the law providing for commitments for lunacy. When a man is accused of a criminal or a civil offense, he is regularly tried before a court of proper jurisdiction; he is permitted to pro-duce witnesses in his own behalf, and to furnish all the exculpatory evidence he is able to find. Surely, there ought also to be some effective legal means for guarding the rights of men and women accused of lunacy. It is not necessary that the means should be of a kind similar to those provided for the defense of persons charged with violating the law; but they should assuredly be sufficient to provide for self-vindication, and to secure a safe defense against false charges. It is so terrible to learn of such cases as we have recited-it is so appalling to think of sound-minded people confined in madhouses-that every

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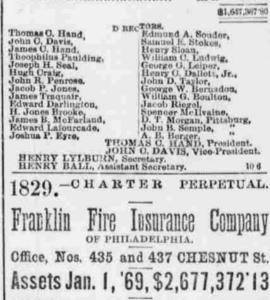
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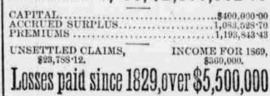
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THE GLORIOUS LAND OF ALASKA. From the N. Y. Herald.

Let skeptics doubt no longer. Alaska is a great and glorious country, incalculable in its riches and cheap as dirt for the trifle of money paid for it. Our venerable statesman, W. H. Seward, who bought it at a venture, has seen it and he is more than satisfied-he is delighted. As the Queen of Sheba, attracted by the reports of the grandeur and glory of King Solomon, found on visiting him in his royal city of Jerusalem that not one-half the story of his surpassing splendors had been told, even so the Sage of Auburn is entranced with the splendors of Alaska. In the Portland Oregonian we find a full report of a speech delivered by Mr. Seward, on the 12th day of August last, at Sitka, the chief sea-port and only city of Alaska (population say five hundred), and from this can of rich arctic milk we propose to skim off the delicious cream in this article. First, in answer to the inquiry, "You have looked on Alaska, what do you think of it?" he says:-

"Unhappily, I have seen too little of Alaska to an-swer the question satisfactorily. The entire coast line of the United States, exclusive of Alaska, is 10,000 miles, while the coast line of Alaska alone, in-cluding the islands, is 26,000 miles. The portion of the Territory which lies east of the peninsula, in-cluding the slands, is 20 miles wide; the western por-tion, including the Aleutian Islands, expands to a breadth of 2200 miles. The entire land area, inclu-ding island, is 507,300 statute square miles. We should think a foreigner very presumptions of the whole of the United States of America after he had merely looked in from his steamer at Plymouth and Boston harbor, or had run up the Hudson river to the Highlands, ser had ascended the Delaware to Trenton, or the James river to Richmond, or the Mississippi no further than Memphis. My observa-tion of Alaska thus far has hardly been more com-prehensive." "Unhappily, I have seen too little of Alaska to an

Then, after describing his explorations

PURITY OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY. From the N. Y. World.

The Democratic party of the United States, for the last seven or eight years, has exhibited a more steady and disinterested adherence to a more steady and disinterested adherence to principle than any party that has ever existed in this country. When political parties are pretty evenly balanced, and either has tolerably fair chances of gaining the control of the Government and disposing of its patronage, sordid motives have free play, and the hope of office and emolument is a potent influence in political action. But, for the last eight years, the Democratic party has had no san-guine expectation of "the spoils," and no other motive than honest patriotism could have made it so firm, steady, and resolute as it has shown itself to be in the vigorous contests against mighty odds in which the chances of early success were so slender. The Democratic masses, and their true and tried leaders. have breasted a malignant tide of obloquy and vituperation, without the expectation of any other reward than the satisfaction of discharging their duty to their country.

One consequence of so long a struggle against arrogant and intolerant majorities is, that the party has been sifted, and selfish, sordid spirits have deserted to the winning side. Men like Butler and Sickles, with a quick perception of where their bread was most likely to be buttered, went over, with all convenient haste, into the camp of the Republicans. All political traders, all men of desperate fortunes who sought to thrive upon public plunder, perceived that they could not expect to grow fat by grazing in the Democratic pastures. Like ravenous birds attracted by the scent of carrion, they hovered and fluttered around the party that had contracts to give and offices to bestow. Nearly all the venal politicians of the country went into the Republican party. General Grant, among others, deserted his early political faith when he became convinced that desertion was the road to political promotion. The great mass of those who stayed in the Democratic party stayed from motives of patriotism and disinterested devotion to principle

It may perhaps be said, as a partial offset

THE VICTIMS OF MADHOUSES-A DE-MAND FOR INQUIRY.

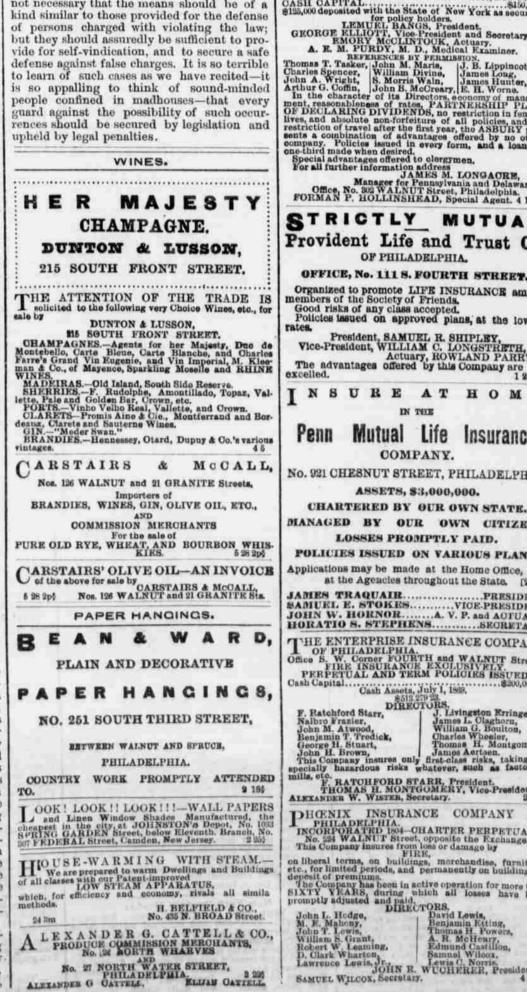
From the N. Y. Times.

There must be some means adopted, with all possible promptitude, for inquiring into the management of our lunatic asylums, and the agencies by which persons are there incarcerated.

Within the past year a very considerable number of cases have come to light in this city and vicinity, in which perfectly sane individuals had been confined, under false pretexts, in these asylums. The latest of such cases, which is at this time undergoing investigation, gives a new interest to the subject. One of our criminal lawyers received some

days ago a letter from an inmate of Bloomingdale Asylum, declaring that he had been sent there by his relations on false charges and asking that measures be taken for his and asking that measures be taken the lawyer release. On going to the asylum the lawyer was denied the opportunity of an interview with his correspondent, but being convinced by inquiries elsewhere that the victim was wrongly confined, he obtained a writ of habeas corpus, which was returnable to-day. On Monday, however, the alleged lunatic made his appearance at the lawyer's office, saying that he had been dismissed from the institution; but the lawyer, convinced that the discharge was given merely as a means by which the making of a return to the writ might be avoided, directed the man to go back to the asylum, in order that the case might be brought before the Court at the proper sea-We now trust it will be thoroughly in-SOD. vestigated.

If the circumstance were without precedent, we should be less earnest in directing attention to the subject. It is but a few months since the case of Commodore Meade, who was incarcerated in this same asylum,



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