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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1870.

The earliest regular edition of THE EVENING TELEGRAPH goes to press at 11 p'clock, and the subsequent regular editions at 2½, 3½, and 4½. Whenever there is important news of the progress of the European war, extra editions will be issued after this hour, and before the regular time for the early edition.

## THE FATE OF FRANCE. THE CUP of humiliation and disaster offered

to unhappy France seems to be not yet filled. All her losses and sufferings have not forced her authorities to seriously consider the necessity for making peace, while they fail lamentably in their efforts to wage effective war. In view of recent events the question becomes more pertinent than ever whether the Provisional Government possesses the confidence of the country. If it does not, the continued failure of its efforts to hold check the invaders, or to invigorate the attempts to resist the all-conquering Germans, can be easily explained. The necessity of exacting obedience to the laws which exists in time of peace is fearfully intensified by the onerous demands of war. We can readily imagine what would have been the result of our own conflict if the right of Lincoln's administration to govern the nation had not been generally acknowledged in the North; and if loyal States and cities had felt free to obey or disobey, as they pleased, laws and orders issued at Washington.

France is in a large degree in this chaotic condition to-day. The members of the different parties by which she is divided all feel that no official or proper test of their strength or their respective right to govern has been made, and they know that, although the empire has fallen, a republic has not yet been established. Half a dozen men have assumed supreme power, having no better claim to it than the approval of a Parisian mob, which was made partially good for the time by the inability of rival aspirants to command to openly contest these pretensions; and this Government is, as might justly have been anticipated from the outset, laboring under the great disadvantage of inability to exercise authoritative command over the population and resources of France. Generals are doing pretty much as they please, soldiers fight after their own fashion, and local authorities reserve the right to exercise their private judgment. In such a state of things effective defense against a victorious army of three-quarters of a million, which moves on its deadly errand with the precision of a machine, is a sheer impossibility, and it is a mere question of time when the Prussians will take whatever they may think worth having.

The best remedy for this chaos is the election of members of a Constituent Assembly. It is high time that the voice of the whole French people should be heard, and that they should be permitted to become, as far as possible, the arbiters of their own destiny. If the war is to go on, such a body would infuse into the conflict a degree of vigor which can never be derived from the edicts of unauthorized rulers, while if peace is to be sought. the immediate representatives of the people could best decide what terms are admissible. It is a curious feature of the cable news that, while the Paris Government is said to be opposed to an election, the Prussians insist that if an armistice is granted an election must be held. Can it be that it is the mission of Germany to not only destroy the French empire, but to give the French people lessons in true republicanism?

THE HOUSE OF CORRECTION. THE committee of Councils having the superintendence of the erection of the House of Correction visited the proposed site of this much needed municipal institution yesterday, and selected the spot upon which the buildings are to be erected. As the difference between the competing contractors has now been definitely settled by a legal decision, there ought to be no further delay in putting up the necessary structures for the House of Correction. It is acknowledged on all sides that this institution is an imperative necessity, and after all the discussion that has taken place on the subject it is certainly high time that something definite was done to make it an established fact. County Prison and the Almshouse are both crowded to overflowing with outcasts of both sexes who do not properly belong there, but who cannot be cared for in a suitable manner until they are lodged in a House of Correction and obliged to do some honest labor for the food they eat and the clothing they wear. Independently of those who are thus directly thrown upon the public, our streets are swarming with paupers, and it is utterly impossible to institute any measures for their benefit or for the protection of the public from them until a House of Correction is built and in operation. It is not creditable to a great and wealthy city like this that such a long delay should have occurred in putting into practical execution the idea of a House of Correction, but now that the first definite

steps have been taken, and the project seems

to be in a fair way to be carried out in a proper manner, we hope sincerely that the members of Councils, and all others who are in a position to exert a direct influence in the progress of the work, will endeavor to have it pushed forward as rapidly as possible.

REVISION OF THE CIVIL CODE OF PENNSYL VANIA.

A commission has been engaged for several years in this State in the arduous and important task of condensing and revising all the public acts and statutes relating to the civil code of Pennsylvania. It has also exercised the power of stating not merely what the laws are, but what, in their judgment, they should be, and as a final report of the results of these labors is to be made at the next ses sion of the Legislature, the people of the State may soon and suddenly be subjected to a civil code radically different in some important respects from that by which they are now governed. The commission consisted of Hon. David Derrickson, of Meadville, William M. Hall, of Bedford, and Wayne McVeigh, of West Chester, but the last-named gentleman has merely figured as an ornamental member of the commission, and he seems to have drawn a salary by virtue of his relationship to Senator Cameron rather than as a reward for actual service. A committee, composed of three members of the Senate and three members of the lower branch of the Legislature of 1870, was appointed at the last session to examine the labors of the working members of the Code Commission, and to report at the next session, so that the whole subject will soon come up for consideration. As changes have been made in the system of taxation, the forms of legal proceedings, and in the number of judges in some districts, the people apparently on the point of having a substantially new system of laws imposed upon them. As a large proportion of the men sent to the Legislature are totally incompetent to judge of the merits or demerits of the proposed innovations, and as neither the Code Commissioners nor the legislative committees appointed possess in as complete a degree as is desirable the confidence of the Commonwealth, it is to be hoped that judges and intelligent members of the bar, in various sections of the State, will revise the work of the revisers, and if it is found objectionable or defective make known the results of their investigations. It is highly desirable that the innumerable laws which lumber the statute-books should be condensed and codified, and it may be useful to change them in many respects, yet there is obvious danger in permitting a few appointees to remodel the entire civil code of the Commonwealth, and little dependence can be placed upon either the ability or the disposition of the Legislature to espy errors or to act as careful guardians of the public interest. The most prudent course will probably be to publish the report of the commissioners after it is finished and revised in 1871, and postpone final action until the session of 1872. The people should have ample notice of the character of the proposed changes in the laws, and of the fact that the men they nomi-

OUR despatches from Washington state that the President was very much surprised at the publication of the correspondence between himself and ex-Secretary Cox, and that he proposes to give the public a statement of his side of the case that will place his conduct in a more favorable light than it is at present. As the matter now stands the President is certainly not in a very enviable position before the country, and if he really has any good reasons for his recent conduct the sooner he lets the public know what they are the better it will be for his reputation. We very much fear, however, that the President will find it impossible to present such a version of the why and wherefore of Mr. Cox's exit from the Cabinet as will be satisfactory to the right-minded men of the country, and unless he can make a really satisfactory defense the best thing he can do is to say nothing, for a lame defense will only have the effect of intensifying the disgust of those who look upon his acceptance of Mr. Cox's resignation as a shameful surrender to some of the most corrupt influences that disgrace our national politics.

HENRY BUMM, Esq., was yesterday nominated by the Republican caucus of Select Council for a member of the Board of Trustees of the Philadelphia Gas Works. As this nomination is equivalent to an election, the citizens of Philadelphia are to be congratulated upon having a gentleman of Mr. Bumm's character and standing upon the Board of Trustees of the Gas Works. Mr. Bumm filled the post of City Treasurer for several terms with eminent ability, and to the satisfaction of all classes of citizens. He is an earnest Republican, and neither upon personal nor political grounds could the caucus have made a better choice.

THE name of Washington College, over which Robert E. Lee formerly presided, has been changed to Washington-Lee University, and G. W. C. Lee, second son of the late President, has been elected as the successor of his father. The trustees of this institution are evidently determined to lavish honors upon the military leader of the Rebellion; and while the addition to the name of the college is perhaps fitting in view of their special purposes, it would be shockingly inappropriate if they were influenced by broad American motives.

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