

Lancaster Intelligencer.

FRIDAY EVENING, DEC. 29, 1883.

Is Jail Punishment?

A man has just been convicted in Philadelphia for complicity in the robbery of the Kensington bank away back in 1871, at which time he was a policeman of the city. He was identified by the watchman of the bank; and made no defense beyond declaring that he was not guilty. He has just been released from the penitentiary, where he had been confined for eight years for a robbery subsequently committed in Montgomery county. When asked why he had not availed himself of the service of counsel and tried to defend himself from a charge of which he declared his innocence, he replied: "Why should I? I have no money, and no friends. I am better off in prison."

We notice the case, because it furnishes good grounds for doubting the efficacy of imprisonment as a punishment for crime. We are very familiar with the fact that there is a numerous class who prefer imprisonment to liberty for a short period, because they are assured of maintenance without the labor and worry of providing it for themselves. During the winter time our jails are filled with vagrants who regard their confinement as a privilege rather than a punishment. This Philadelphia case shows us a man who having been for a long term in prison prefers to return to it rather than enter into a struggle for subsistence in freedom. The case is not an isolated one at all, for we not seldom have occasion to believe that crimes are committed for the sole purpose of obtaining public support, and that there are many persons who have even less fibre than the ordinary tramp, and who are contented with a life in jail all the year around and for years together. This ex-Philadelphia policeman, in his willingness to pile decade upon decade of imprisonment, affords but a striking exemplification of the feeling of a class. That men who accept imprisonment with such willingness should not be given imprisonment as a punishment, since it is not a punishment, is proved by the statement.

What then should be done with them? It will not do to make their imprisonment less comfortable than it is, for it is already as uncomfortable as humanity will allow. There is, to be sure, no corporal punishment in Pennsylvania prisons. Probably if there was they would be less popular. But such punishment if given, should be part of the sentence properly awarded. At present public sentiment is opposed to the corporal punishment of criminals; so that simple imprisonment seems to be the only available penalty of crime. Its conditions need to be greatly amended to make it effective. It certainly should not be an inducement to crime; and the discharged criminal should not want to return to it. If the state would find employment for those who are discharged from jails, so that they could honestly earn their livelihood, it is reasonable to suppose that they would rather work in liberty than in confinement. Something should be done to this end. It is a cruel and impolitic thing to turn men out of jail to provide for themselves with all the avenues of honest employment closed to them. The labor that is to earn their honest bread should in some way be shown to them.

Chandler and Morse. There was no little mirth, mingled with considerable indignation at the boorishness of Secretary Chandler in presiding upon the occasion of the recent lecture by Matthew Arnold in the federal capital. He improved his position to publicly bewail the election of Carlisle, and after the lecture plunged the audience into painful embarrassment by calling in turn upon a half dozen distinguished gentlemen who were present to criticize the sentiments of the distinguished English guest of the evening. His conduct as reported could be explained only upon the ground that he was drunk or utterly lacking good breeding. In either event it was a scandal by which the respectable portion of the American people was put to the blush. But this performance of Chandler was not singular in him. Those who were present will never forget the scene at a dinner party in Washington when the secretary of the navy insulted Representative Morse, of Massachusetts, by expressing his surprise that a cultured and refined Boston constituency could repeatedly send "a foreigner and a Jew" to represent them in Congress. Morse drew himself up with dignity and turning with withering scorn upon the Jew-baiter, said, in full hearing of the entire company: "When the president of the United States can stoop so low as to appoint Bill Chandler secretary of the navy, there is no occasion to wonder that a Boston constituency can rise to the level of sending a foreigner and a Jew to Congress."

In the turn of affairs Mr. Morse has been appointed chairman of the House committee on the expenditures in Chandler's department. It may be presumed that they will have his close supervision.

The New York Tribune, with that partisan unfairness which has long given it bad repute, has tried to excite sectional fears over the appointment of a Southern member of Congress to the chairmanship of the pension committee. As a matter of fact the so-called "pension" committee has nothing to do with anything pertaining to the late war, as the rules provide that everything relating to pensions of the late civil war shall go to the committee on invalid pensions, while to the committee on "pensions" shall go all pension matters arising from the wars of the United States other than the civil war. The committee which has entire jurisdiction over the pensions of the civil war has for its chairman Mr. Watson, of Indiana, a union soldier, who won his way up from a private to the rank of colonel by gallant service in the field. A majority of its members served in the union army and of its only two members from

Southern states one of them was in the union army. How the vipers do enjoy gnawing at a file!

The unusual glow in the western sky, continuing with such beauty long after sunset for many nights of the past few months, is not confined to this latitude and longitude; but, as the reports we print to day show, the phenomenon has been observed and admired in all quarters of the globe. The theories offered to explain it are various and do not illuminate the subject very much. The widely remote points at which the extraordinary manifestations are witnessed seem to discredit most of the local explanations offered, such, for instance, as the argument of the English astronomer, Mr. Norman Lockyer, who states that the aurora is due to the presence of vast quantities of dust and ashes ejected during the August eruption in Java, and transported thence by the trade wind currents into the high northern latitudes. Much more likely to find popular credence are the theories that relate to celestial disturbances, or the sudden presence of the earth in some vast volume of cosmic dust. In a more superstitious age these signs of the skies would be ominous, and, in any event, they present a spectacle which for continuing grandeur is seldom equaled between the parallels which bound our continent.

The heavy snow falls of the past ten days have brought home to many cities the serious question of what is the best way to deal with this obstruction to free passage over the municipal highways. In this city, while property owners were compelled to clear their pavements, the conditions of the crossings were such as to occasion incalculable inconvenience and serious danger to the pedestrians with whom the streets were thronged during the days of Christmas shopping. The easy answer to the indignation of citizens at this condition of affairs was that there was neither money nor other provision for the city authorities to have the slight work done which would have accommodated thousands; the street committee having already spent all its appropriation for the fiscal year and a good deal more, besides grabbing for everything lying around loose. A fortuitous event, however, it was the case to include in the fiscal budget an appropriation for cleaning the crossings of snow. It was a custom honored in the observance; let it be returned to when the appropriations for the next year are made up.

It is refreshing to hear a good, strong clear voice, like that of Supt. Apar, of the New Jersey public schools raised in ringing protest against the scheme advocated by Senator Blair and other intellectual light weights, of raising federal revenues to distribute among the states for educational purposes. Mr. Apar first shows that the figures of illiteracy given by these people are unreliable and inaccurate, and then argues strongly and forcibly the true position for the people of every commonwealth to take, that the education of the young is a matter for each state to regulate and provide for, and the federal government should be rigorously excluded from all participation in it.

The Paducah Evening Telegraph hopes that it will not be possible to make that old villain lying Bloody Shirt the issue of the presidential contest of 1884.

The Paducah Evening Telegraph declares that "Legislators may enact laws donating the bodies of paupers to medical colleges in the interest of science, but they have no authority to do so."

The New Era calls for the punishment of physicians who discharge a noble profession by concealing cases of smallpox; it also advises that the Northern market should be rebuilt upon a site further north than the present location.

The Little Record says that the time may soon come when birthdays will be remembered with less lavishness and more sense, and marriage ceremonies will be performed without the bride and her attendants waddering, as the preacher speaks, who gave the oodiest and handsomest gift.

The House committee, we are told, have been examining the composition of the House committee, and now that they have been announced, it is engaged in producing coming legislation.

The eagerness of the average American for political place is seen in the statement that before the body of the late Congressman Haskell, of Kansas, had been buried there were eight candidates in the field for the place.

REPRESENTATIVE DANCING MASTERS of the country in convention assembled in Philadelphia have issued the ukase that the most fashionable steps now and for the ensuing season are lawn tennis, the Saratoga lancers, the glide and schotischo.

DIOGENES would not have to go around with a lantern in Idaho. The object of his early search stands fully revealed as in the glare of an electric light. John N. Irwin, Governor of Idaho, has refused to accept his salary for the last six months. He says that "he has been unable to attend to the duties of the office since July 1st, and cannot conscientiously accept the pay."

MOCK MAY. Into the land, leaf-forest and bare, Whipped unawares a soft and sunny day, Who woke a heart to beat to sweet and wild Illusions of a dawning love-it May; And which awoke and wooed from the frost, A bee, that sought a field for summer's food.

THE TEMPERANCE people in Massachusetts are organizing to secure a prohibitory constitutional amendment; and the liquor dealers of Ohio propose to unite the brewers, distillers and wholesale and retail dealers all in one perfect state organization, with auxiliaries in each county, "to begin an aggressive campaign for the fullest rights of personal liberty."

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FOREIGN HORRORS.

THE HORRIBLE FATE—A heroic and sublime deed and dying of Cool and Hot—A tale of 1878.

Another harrowing tale of suffering comes from the Russian provinces, which, sentenced in 1872 to 20 years' penal servitude in the mines of Siberia, he never departed to Siberia, but he was 11 years of his imprisonment on the Pacific coast of Alaska, where he lived in the fortress of St. Paul and St. Peter and the Troubetzkoi Bastion, the buildings in which the prisoners are confined are below the water level of the adjoining river, and are built upon a rocky and sandy and frightfully slippery shore.

A new horror has been added to the gloomy annals of Siberia, and women confined there are kept in dark cells and confined from their own people, and are formerly allowed for one hour in the twenty-four, having long ago been sentenced since the assassination of the late Emperor Alexander the Second, to a life of imprisonment in the mines of Siberia, and in the case of the women, they are confined in a separate wing, and in the case of the men, they are confined in a separate wing, and in the case of the women, they are confined in a separate wing, and in the case of the men, they are confined in a separate wing.

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G. A. R.

ORGANIZATION OF A NEW POST. The Grand Army of the Republic has been organized in Lancaster, Pa., under the leadership of Major J. W. Miller.

FOR SOME TIME past the organization in this city of a new post of the order of the Grand Army of the Republic has been discussed by many of the most active members of the order and soldiers who never belonged to the order. The agitation of the subject finally resulted in an application being made to the department of Pennsylvania for a charter.

The charter members will meet on Tuesday evening in the rooms of Weidler's commercial college for the purpose of electing officers. On Wednesday evening they will meet for the purpose of organizing the department of Pennsylvania, and will be in Lancaster to muster the new post, which will be known as Post 405. Nearly one hundred applications for membership have been made, so that the new post starts off under the most auspicious circumstances.

MEASURES are being taken for the organization of another new post in Strasburg, Pa., and will meet in Mount Joy, Pa., on Tuesday evening, January 2, 1884. It is expected to be very largely attended, and the officers of the new post will be elected.

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A CHRISTIAN ENTERTAINMENT.

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MATHONIAN.

THE GAVIN-MALONE SUPPER LAST EVENING. The marriage of Mr. Thomas F. Gavin to Miss Alice R. Malone was solemnized at St. Mary's Cathedral last night in the presence of the usual number of intimate friends of the contracting parties.

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PERSONAL.

GLADSTONE will be 74 to-morrow.

THE BURNING DIVA.

AN INDIGNANT protest from Brother Bert Martin Buzard was made long before the burning of the Buzard family, which cheerfully accedes to his request to excuse his "bad spelling" and is not so bad, by the way, as a good deal that is submitted to this journal by voluntary contributors.

THE MENSTRUATOR.

THE LANCASTER and Philadelphia subscribers will be invited to attend the ball of the Reading Suburban in February next.

DIED OF HIS INJURIES.

THE UNKNOWN man who was struck yesterday afternoon near Delaware by one of the Erie Electric accommodation train on the Pennsylvania road, died at the county hospital at 6 o'clock last evening. He never spoke after the accident, and there were no papers or other effects on his person by which he could be identified. This morning Coroner Shiffer empaneled a jury, proceeded to the hospital and viewed the remains and then adjourned until to-morrow morning, when the employees of the train by which the man was killed will give their testimony.