

Declination of Chief Justice Lewis.

We give below, the letter of Chief Justice

Lewis, addressed to the Chairman of the State

Central Committee, declining the re-nomina-

tion recently given to him by the Democratic

State Convention. This determination of

Judge Lewis will be a matter of the most

sincere regret to every sound lawyer in Pen-

sylvania. No man within our Commonwealth,

has had the judicial experience of the present

Chief Justice, and no Judge has labored more

zealously to free the docket of the Supreme

Court of the accumulated litigation of ages.

The whole legal fraternity have had the ut-

most confidence in the soundness of his op-

inions, and have looked to him for the settled

law of the State. We doubt much whether

Judge Lewis has ever been equalled in indus-

try on the Bench. With him, it seemed to

be a conscientious duty promptly to decide all

cases argued before him, even at the loss of

his own bodily comfort, by divesting himself

of the hours which should have been devoted

to rest or recreation. No litigant ever had

cause to complain of delay where Judge

Lewis had the trial of his cause, and few ever

murmured at his decisions. The clearness of

his head, in all his conclusions, was equalled

by the integrity of his heart, and it may be

said of him, as of LORD TAYLOR, that he had

a head of crystal with nerves of brass,

which nothing could shake from the line of

conviction and duty.

But it is not the legal profession only, that

will regret the step Judge Lewis has taken.—

The people with whom he has always been

a great favorite, because they knew him to be

an upright and learned judicial magistrate, will

regret painful sensations at the loss of so en-

lightened a jurist and so valued a friend.—

Another Judge, whose mind may be filled

with the lore of the law, may be called to his

seat on the Supreme Bench; but it will re-

quire many years of practical experience as a

Justice of the Court of last resort, before a

new man can attain to the position which

Judge Lewis has reached in the confidence of

the Bar and the people. We look upon the

declination of the Chief Justice as little short

of a public calamity, as he is lost to the Bench

at a time when the ripeness of his intellect is

of untold value. Although the patriarch of

the Judiciary, so far as length of service is

concerned, he is still at the very zenith of his

mental power, and might continue to impress

upon our legal code, the clear light of his own

lucid mind. As the Judge is a man of great

degree of character, we presume that his

present determination not to be a candidate is

a finality.

In parting with him, we can only say in

addition, that if a resolute performance of a

duty conscientiously—if great legal knowl-

edge, combined with untiring industry—if a

determination to rescue legal decisions from

having a double voice—if an inflexible integ-

erity which nothing could shake, sustained by

a courage that admitted of no faltering—can

entitle a Judge to a lofty place in the niche of

fame, no judicial officer within the present

quarter of a century has earned it with more

intelligent labors than Chief Justice ELLIS

LEWIS has done during his long legal career.

The thanks of the citizens of Pennsylvania

will follow him into his retirement, and his-

tory will enroll his name among the honored

names of our noble Commonwealth. If the

Chief Justice should ever again be induced

to exercise judicial functions, we trust that he

may be called to a seat on the Supreme Bench

of the United States, that the nation may

possess what our State has lost by his decli-

nation. Here is his letter:—[*Pennsylvaniaian*.

WEST PERRY, Pa.,

Philadelphia, March 25th, 1857.

TO CHARLES B. BOYD, Chairman of the Democratic

State Convention.

Dear Sir:—As the late Democratic State Convention,

held at Harrisburg, on the 23d inst., has nomi-

nated me for Governor, and has also nomi-

nated a number of other gentlemen for the

other offices of the State, I have the honor to

acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the

25th inst., and to inform you that I have

declined the nomination of the Convention,

and have no objection to my name being

Chief Justice Taney.

A contemporary, in noticing the venerable

Chief Justice, says: It is an interesting co-

incidence that the ablest speech in Congress,

and the most unanswerable judicial decision

ever rendered against the constitutionality of

the Missouri Compromise, were delivered by

Maryland lawyers—William Pinckney, in

his speech in the Senate, in 1822, in reply to

Rufus King, of New York, and Chief Justice

Taney, in the opinion in the case of Dred

Scott, in 1857.

And a correspondent of the Cincinnati En-

quirer, in defending Judge Taney from Black

Republican abuse, gives the readers of that

journal the following:

"Within the last few weeks the various

hireslings of the Republican press—partly

through ignorance and malignity and partly

at the solicitation of the frightened leaders of

their expiring party—have been striving to

escape the fatal effects of the recent Supreme

Court decision, not by constitutional argu-

ment, but by that last resort of dying fana-

ticism, *argumentum ad hominem*. They are as

superstitiously afraid of the Constitution as the

Hindoo of their invisible Deity, and its re-

quirements are only known to them through

the crafty oracles uttered by their false and

reckless high priests. And thus the decree

of the highest tribunal upon earth is sought

to be combated by an indiscriminate and

rabid abuse of its members, among the re-

st, exposed by his very eminence, Roger B.

Taney has received their fiercest assaults.

"We do not propose to defend his private

character, for its purity and sacredness render

it invulnerable. Nor do we presume to stand

as the advocate of his lofty abilities and legal

learning, for few, even of his contemporaries,

are equal to the task. History is his defence

and his eulogy. Her testimony is, that never

has there existed in this gifted land a mind

more endowed with comprehensiveness and

discrimination, or a heart more full of honor

and nobility, than that of Roger B. Taney.—

The mantle of Chief Justice Marshall has fallen

upon him with all its adorning virtues, in-

creased by time and polished by experience.

"The master spirits of the last half cen-

tury have done homage to him, and it is related

that when a young man, as the death of Wil-

liam Pinckney, when some one exclaimed,

"Alas! the Goliath of the bar has gone," old

Justice DORSEY, of Maryland, a man of able

judgment, exclaimed, "Aye, but we have the

David left in Roger B. Taney." Many rich

tributes, both to his talents and character,

could be mentioned if time would permit.—

And yet this is the man that is reviled by

these upstart slanderers as weak, venal, feck-

less and unprincipled. He is charged as being

the tool of Jackson, and the case of the re-

moval of the deposits called up as evidence. The

history of that matter is just this: He was

the friend of Jackson, and one upon whom the

President relied as competent and worthy.—

As Attorney General in the Cabinet, he

strongly advised the removal of the U. S. Bank

deposits, (an opinion fully sustained by the

subsequent corruption and rottenness of that

concern,) and, therefore, when afterward

called upon to accept the control of said de-

posits, and carry out his own judgment, honor

and consistency alone required his consent.

"His course has always been thus unim-

peachable, and Henry Clay himself, in his

highest partisan excitement, never dared to

impugn the honesty and purity of the motives

of the noble old Democratic Justice. But he

is charged with being the advocate of slavery

and its propagandism, and that only because

of his acting in accordance with his oath, and

expounding the Constitution by its true letter

and spirit. Let the decision speak for itself.

But Mr. Taney personally is opposed to sla-

very, in principle and practice. Forty years

ago, although never wealthy, he freed every

negro in his possession, and has paid servants

wages ever since. They were all valuable,

and one, his body servant, has been the head

water of the largest hotel in Baltimore for