EVENING BULLETIN.

Tuesday, December 7, 1869.

THE FIRST MESSAGE OF PRESIDENT GRANT.

The eloquence of fact is more impressive than the eloquence of style. President Grant's first annual message is a capital one in point of fact, but only a moderate one in point of style. Under certain circumstances we knew, long before Bulwer put it into a play, that the pen was mightier than the sword. In General Grant's hand, the pen is strong; but it is not as polished as it would be in the hand of a practised literary man, or even an average newspaper correspondent, whose style of speech would wield the sword as Grant has done. Reading the message with all the inaccuracies of language, punctuation and paragraphing that the telegraph imposes, much allowance must be made for its style. There were blunders in the telegraphic manuscript (much more than the editor saw that appeared in the hurriedly printed message that appeared in yesterday's BULLETIN). If the fact is borne in mind that there are nearly ten thousand words in the document, and that from the time the first word was received at the BULLETIN office until the whole message was printed and circulated in the city, in less than two hours had elapsed, it will seem remarkable that so few errors occurred. There were errors of copying, of typography and of "making up," which might have been corrected if we had taken another half hour for publishing the message. But by this delay, many agents in the country, who had to catch early trains that wait for nothing, would have lost their papers; and the town subscribers would have complained, not unreasonably, of the late delivery of their papers on the next day of all days in the year, when they were most anxious to receive them early. This much we are bound to say by way of apology for so many inaccuracies in yesterday's copy of the message, such as are unavoidable in the hurried printing of every long document. Let it be remembered that the ten thousand words of the message were telegraphed, copied, printed, corrected and put into circulation, in less than two hours—or about eighty words in a minute—and there need be no fastidiousness about their typographical accuracy. Still, we are bound to admit that a little delay would have enabled us to present the document in better form than it was from the faults that are apt to strike the hypercritical.

Leaving then all consideration of literary elegance and typographical accuracy out of the question, we may say distinctly and truly that the message is a most excellent one. It is candid in its statement of our national affairs; it is not boastful of what has been done by the present administration; it is generous, without being cringing, to the Southern States lately reconstructed; it is manly, without being bluster, in its allusions to our foreign relations; it recognizes, with a full sense of the magnitude of the burden, the debt contracted by the patriotic men preserving the Union; but it also recognizes the encouraging and growing resources of the country, which make the burden a light one to bear. It shows what no other great government can show, viz.: that the revenue exceeds the expenditures by from twelve to twenty per cent.; that each year this excess grows with the growth of the country's industry; that there is every hope of the diminution of debt that is caused by this redundance. An average arithmetician, calculating the growth of population, in people and in riches, and the reduction of the debt on the basis of one hundred millions in the first year since the war of an honest Republican administration, could form a pretty accurate idea of the time when the debt would cease to be worth considering. To pay one hundred millions of debt in a year, as Grant's administration is doing, is a wonderful feature. We let it be borne in mind that this nation will soon be able to pay two hundred millions in a year, and that its riches, so long as peace continues, grow faster than its debt diminishes, and the extinction of its once alarming debt seems to be almost alarmingly imminent.

This article is not meant to be in any degree critical analysis or abstract of President Grant's message. The importance of the document is such that every reader of this paper—or who feels any solicitude about the peace of his country, or the policy of his government, domestic or foreign, will have already read it. An abstract or an analysis is, moreover, not always fair, or truthfully representative of its original. The message under consideration is the first from the pen of the man whose sword was almost omnipotent in the victory over the rebellion, and it is entitled to be read in full, without any gloss from partisan press, friendly or hostile. Every reasonable and intelligent man can form his own opinions concerning it, and without demanding or expecting that all readers shall agree with us, we declare that it is a fair-sense message. It gives sound, sober advice about reconstruction; about the resumption of specie payments; about the revolution in Cuba and her claim to our recognition of her rights as a belligerent power; about our claims against England for her wrongs done during the rebellion; about the protection due to our many manufacturing interests, now so happily prosperous under the existing tariff; about our relations with China and Japan; about the condition of immigrants from those countries; about the Indians; about the Army and Navy, and about the Post Office Department. All these subjects and the recommendations concerning them will be discussed and acted upon by Congress during the session, and each one will be the subject of comment in these columns, as each one may give to it a special interest. At present there is no immediate occasion for considering them. But it would be wrong to exclude this commentary on President Grant's first message to Congress without inviting a comparison between it and the several messages of Andrew Johnson. There is not a sentence in Grant's message that savors of egotism. There could not be a message more modest, and at the same time more manly. The insolent defiance with which Andrew Johnson addressed Congress was only insolence by some foolish people; but it disgusted the judicious and those who had a proper respect for the authority of Congress and for the personal dignity of the Executive. Grant is manly without being conceited, and his first message, while it naturally receives the condemnation of the vulgar who applauded the messages of Johnson, is recognized by all others as an admirable State paper.

HIGHWAYMEN.

In the single issue of the BULLETIN, yesterday, were recorded no less than four daring highway robberies, some of them perpetrated in broad daylight and all of them in well-populated parts of the city. This was in addition to all the other branches of street rascalities, such as pocket-picking, burglaries, shop-lifting and till-tapping. Such a report for a single day in Philadelphia is enough to make people very careful in protecting their own property and persons, and to renew and strengthen the conviction in the popular mind that the funds by which a Democratic police government was fastened, for a time, on Philadelphia, are bearing their natural fruit in breaking down the restraints of law, and leaving the community very much at the mercy of its worst classes. From the moment that it was seen that the police force of Philadelphia was being disbanded to make way for a mixed medley of the rough, inexperienced, ignorant and often vicious retainers of Mr. Fox, the sense of security began to pass away, while the dangerous classes who need to be held in check and crushed down by the strong arm of the law rejoiced at the coming anarchy and its harvest of plunder and outrage and every license.

That this would be the result of Democratic sway in Philadelphia was plainly pressed upon the people before the election of 1868, by the Republican press, and the majority of the people believed the warning, and did their duty at the polls, in order to avert the evil of Democratic misrule. But their voice was silenced by the organized frauds of the Democratic managers, and the streets of Philadelphia are traversed to-day by prowling highwaymen who first placed Mr. Fox in the Mayoralty, and then forced their fellows upon his police force, and are now enjoying the fruits of their political services and labors.

Our criminal courts have shown cowardly to the resene, in this juncture, and the assassins, highwaymen, and other outlaws whom they have been able to reach, are having dealt out to them such a full measure of just severity, that an important check is being placed by our judges on the commission of the flagrant outrages that have shocked and outraged the people. There has evidently been a united purpose reached by the several judges of our criminal courts to stamp all legal points and all judicial perquisites in the direction of suppressing and punishing crime. This is manifested in the refusal to allow prisoners to slip through the hands of legal technicalities and technical pleas; the stricter accountability to which the officers of the law are held; the firm tone of the charges and opinions of the bench, and in the proper severity of the sentences inflicted upon offenders.

All this is imposing a timely check upon the spread of crime, but it is not enough by itself. If we would root out the present state of lawlessness in Philadelphia, we must go back to the source of it and begin the reform there. There is no doubt that the evil-disposed classes in this city felt that a great pressure and hindrance were taken off from them by the installation of a Democratic Mayor and police. There is certainly nothing about amiable Mr. Fox, personally, to incite assassination or highway robbery, but it was everywhere felt that his inauguration would be followed by such a demoralization of the police force as would offer greatly increased facilities and encouragements to crime.

We must abolish this whole state of affairs, and the remedy is plainly before us in the creation of a good Metropolitan Police. New York has had its tremendous mob element held in check, and its peace wonderfully preserved by its Republican Metropolitan Police, for years past, and Philadelphia must have the same protection. We do not hesitate to say that the government of Philadelphia ought to be wholly Republican. It is only catering to a false and dangerous sentimentality to prate about "representing all parties" in the management and promotion of departments of the city. Philadelphia is a Republican city, and as such is entitled to bright and clear and glorious. The Democracy have now, at last, proved their unfitness to control its affairs, but that once was at the most fateful time of our history. Could the Democracy have ruled Philadelphia in 1861, or in the following years, this city would have been a second Baltimore in the path of the Government, and the consequences of its defection from the cause of the Union no one can fully estimate. The individuals of the Democracy who would not be partakers in their party's sympathy with the Rebellion nobly came out from their political associations and cast in their lot with the friends of the Union, but the party, as such, was utterly false, faithless and corrupt, and so unfit for the high purpose of governing, or influencing the government of a great city like this. The Democracy was put into its trial then, and it was condemned; and there has never been any reason why the sentence should be reversed. The Republican party was tried, too, and it so bore the burden and heat of the great struggle for the Union that it fairly won the right to rule in this great citadel of the Union.

We have no fear of placing too much power in the hands of the Republican party. It is a party of peculiar elements, and like the great ocean, it has within it the power to purge itself from whatever corruptions may be poured into it. If its politicians become corrupt, or even suspected of being so, it will cast them out. If its public servants aspire to too much power, it will put an iron control upon them. If its offices are filled inefficiently or wrongly, it will reform them by that pressure of public opinion against which no politician or official can hope to stand. We have no fear of a Metropolitan police, established under the carefully considered legislation of a Republican Government. If a bad Police Bill is proposed, it will have to be amended. If bad appointments are made under it, they will have to be changed. If Philadelphia has a police force in any respect inferior to the best police in the United States, it will have to be amended and improved until no such comparison can be made. And all this will be done, because the Republican sentiment of this community is a great Higher Law in favor of peace, law, good order, and the fair fame of Philadelphia.

THE SCHOEPPE CASE.

While it is natural that the German population of the country should feel a special interest in the case of their countryman, Dr. Schoeppe, now under sentence of death, there is a very strong kindred sentiment felt and expressed by large numbers of the best and most intelligent Americans, and we are glad to learn that proper movements are on foot to bring out the expression of this sentiment on their part. Much of the testimony in favor of this unfortunate young man comes from those upon whom he has no claim of nationality. The evidence of the highest American authorities in medicine and chemistry has been freely given in his behalf, and it is of a character which cannot be set aside with indifference or neglect. There appears to be an almost unanimous opinion, not only here, but in all parts of the country, that the conviction and sentence of Dr. Schoeppe are not in accordance with the weight of the evidence, and that the medical evidence of the Commonwealth, without which there can be no pretence for conviction, is weak, unreliable and worthless on its own face, and as confronted by such a mass of scientific testimony as has been adduced since the trial.

Some of the speeches made and articles written in behalf of Dr. Schoeppe have been foolishly ill-tempered and unjust, and they are strongly repudiated by all intelligent advocates of Executive interference in the case, both German and American. We are sure, however, much as such intemperate folly is to be deprecated, that it will not be permitted to prejudice Governor Geary against this victim of the blunders of the law and of the passions of a small community inflamed to madness against one whom they were willing to hang whether his guilt were proved or not. The truth is that it has never been proved that Miss Stinecke died otherwise than from natural causes, and upon this all-sufficient ground it is that the appeals of all classes of the people, and from all quarters of the country, are going up to Governor Geary in his behalf.

THE POPE AND THE PRESS.

We learn that the Pope has forbidden the entrance to the Papal dominions of a correspondent of the London *Times*, who was commissioned to furnish reports of the doings of the Œcumenical Council and of events in Rome during the session. This is an exhibition of bigotted and arbitrary power that is strongly characteristic of the conservatism and bigotry of the Roman Government, and it is consistent with that hatred of publicity and of the press, of newspaper reporters from the Council, that would be very much better for the Catholic Church if the Pope and his colleagues would recognize the existence of the free press and its function for which she has wonderful capacity. This is a story of womanly sacrifice and devotion, from first to last, and it is filled with deepest, darkest, most unutterable woe. The woman, in the faithfulness of her love for her husband, must face the world in shame, and pain, and disgrace; and to this is added the anguish that must inevitably come from belief that he for whom she crucified herself does not appreciate her heroism and is unworthy of it. It is the agony of love that finds itself on fire on an object that deserves only contempt. With all its faults the drama appeals to the sympathies, because every one feels that its subject is a woman, and that that of "Mary Warner" happily is not common. But women have suffered as deeply, and do suffer daily in the same direction, and with such fierce, ceaseless, unmitigated misery.

Of Miss Bateman's performance we cannot speak too warmly. Like Jefferson, in *Rip Van Winkle*, she triumphs over scripts of her dramatists blunders and stupidities. She takes the raw, bungled, half developed character, and fills it up with the finish of a Raphael, unlike it, gives it individuality, force, naturalness, beauty, humanity. Her sweet face, not less than her brilliant intelligence, made of "Mary Warner" a gentle woman, who first excites our interest by her kindliness and sweetness, and then commands our sympathy by her patient magnanimity and her indomitable courage. In the earlier scenes of the drama she is a woman, and she has and grace; with the delightful absence of artifice in her management of language and of commonplace, in the later passages she displayed a power of pathos which was marvelous. Its really simple and natural expression was touched with the slimiest materials. What other emotional actresses do with rant and fury and violence, she does better and more effectively by the tremulous tones of her voice, with her expressive face, with a movement of her hands. This is the perfection of art: to express great and true emotions, and to express them so that the attention of the humanitarians. It would be much wiser to attempt reformation of the penal laws in that benighted State, where there is little chance of escape from ferocious punishment, than to undertake the same task in Pennsylvania, where humane laws are too often violated with impunity. Why cannot Mr. Stove—the Governor Dover—be sent as a special missionary to convert Delaware?

The friends of fair-dealing with the hard-working women in our public schools are working actively to present to Councils a petition signed by all the female teachers in favor of the increase of salaries recommended by the Board of Controllers. There is no objection to the presentation of this petition, especially as they seem to think it is a more forcet taken by the people in this measure. But we imagine that they are not needed to influence the action of Councils. There can be no reasonable doubt that the great majority of both branches of Councils recognize the justice of the action of the Controllers, and know that, in making this increase of salaries to the women who reflect so much credit upon our public school system, they are spending money in a way most acceptable to their constituents.

The Associated Press deserves credit for its enterprise in transmitting the President's Message, yesterday. Eight wires were used for the purpose, and, although the rain-storm was most unfavorable for the working of the instruments, the whole document, amounting to nearly ten thousand words, was telegraphed, written out and delivered to the office in an hour and a half. This was excellent time, and speaks well for the activity both of the agents of the Associated Press and the operators of the Telegraph Company.

We reprint President Grant's message to-day, because it did not appear in all our editions of yesterday. In reprinting it, we have taken occasion to correct the errors that appeared in yesterday's impression.

DRAMATIC.

MISS BATEMAN'S "MARY WARNER."—At the Walnut Street Theatre, last night, Miss Kate Bateman appeared in *Mary Warner*—a drama of which the following is a brief synopsis:

George Warner is a workman; Mary is his wife. They are accused of a theft under circumstances that would seem unmistakably to point out one or the other as guilty. Each is conscious of innocence, and fears that the other is guilty. The wife, in a sudden impulse of generosity, and from a desire to save her husband from the consequences of a crime she supposes he has committed, declares herself guilty of the theft. Five years' imprisonment is the consequence. George Warner visits his wife at the prison, where their mutual misunderstanding causes antagonism and differences. The husband, amazed and horrified at the crime he thinks his wife has committed, is cold; the wife, wounded and indignant at the want of feeling exhibited by the husband for whom she has suffered so much, breaks out in angry denunciation. Out of this mutual misunderstanding arises the action of the play. When Mary's term of imprisonment is over she refuses to return to her husband, who does beg her to forgive him, in the extremes of poverty; but in the end they are fortunately thrown together, when explanations ensue, and a happy reconciliation closes the drama.

This play is not by any means a good one. The plot is weak and without interest, and the audience foresee every leading incident that occurs, and the only mystery about the piece is, that a man of honest feeling should endure such awful misery for years without ever seeking the natural word that would make them all happy again. "Leavitt" theft of the money is accomplished in a clearly impossible manner. The character of Mrs. Warner's room, likewise is unnatural, and both are so clumsy as to offend the common sense of the spectator. The unfortunate prisoner, whom they were willing to hang whether his guilt were proved or not. The truth is that it has never been proved that Miss Stinecke died otherwise than from natural causes, and upon this all-sufficient ground it is that the appeals of all classes of the people, and from all quarters of the country, are going up to Governor Geary in his behalf.

CLOTHING.

SECOND EDITION

THE GALLOWS IN LYCOMING COUNTY.

Execution of John Fields at Williamsport.

FULL ACCOUNT OF HIS CRIME AND TRIAL.

The Last Hours of the Condemned.

STATEMENT FROM HIS SPIRITUAL ADVISER.

[Special Dispatch to the Phila. Evening Bulletin.]

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa., Dec. 7.—This was the day appointed for the execution, in the jail yard of this city, of John Fields, the man convicted at the August term of the Court of Oyer and Terminer, for Lycoming county, of the murder of George Mathews, his brother-in-law.

THE MURDERER.

John Fields was born in London, England, February 29, 1821; he is consequently nearly forty-nine years old. He was married in Bristol, England, in 1844, to Mary Ann Fields, nee Elizabeth Mathews, the sister of the murdered man. In April, 1852, he emigrated to this country, leaving his wife in Bristol. Having been a coal-miner in the old country, he found employment in the mines of Schuylkill and Luzerne counties. In April, 1853, he sent for his family, who came over and joined him at Hazleton, Luzerne county, where he was then residing. In November, 1857, he removed to Lycoming county, where he has resided ever since, working at his trade, as a miner, in the coal mines. In 1863, he sent for his family, who came over and joined him at Jersey Shore, in Lycoming county, where he was then residing.

THE TRIAL AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDE.

The trial of John Fields for murder was arranged for trial. The indictment was read to the prisoner, who pleaded "Not guilty—I am not provided with counsel, the Court assigned me to defend me." The Court assigned the member of Congress for this district, and Geo. W. Rutan, Esq., one of the most prominent members of the Williamsport bar. All through the trial Fields seemed to have been very faithfully on the prisoner's behalf, bringing to his counsel all the aid in his power, and extensive practice could give. No stone was left unturned by Mr. Osborne to defend every advantage allowed him by the law, and he was urged by some to allege that he was overpowering as to preclude any idea of such a conviction. The trial continued for one week. On Saturday, Dec. 4, the jury brought in a verdict of "guilty of murder in the first degree." The prisoner, during the second day of the trial, the jailor proceeded to the cell of Fields to carry him his breakfast, when he found him lying on the floor in a pool of coagulated blood, in blood. During the night he had drawn one of the hooks from which his bed-sack was fastened to the wall of the cell, and with it he proceeded to stab himself in his neck, and when discovered he had almost bled to death. The hook was used and this first attempt at suicide frustrated.

ATTEMPTED ESCAPE, ETC.

At the adjournment of Court for the adjournment of court for dinner, as the prisoner was taken out of the Court House, he broke loose from the officers and started to run down the street, hoping probably to reach the river and swim to the opposite shore. John Platt, Esq., Deputy Sheriff, fired at him with his pistol, but owing to the crowd and excitement, he failed in his attempt to succeed in making a fresh wound in his neck or arm. The prisoner was soon knocked down and secured, and taken back to the jail, he was taken, he was angry crowd, cursing and shouting with rage, that he had escaped the ignominious death of suicide by choking himself with his towel in his cell, he also failed. On Wednesday the 8th of September, the sentence of death was pronounced upon the prisoner by the President Judge. During the whole trial the prisoner was very quiet and gentlemanly, chiefly towards reducing the grade of his crime, from that of murder in the second degree. The theory of insanity, which was urged in his behalf at the trial, before, was also started but could not be sustained. The prisoner was convicted, Governor Geary signed the death warrant, fixing the day for his execution, on Tuesday, November 9th, the warrant was read to the prisoner by Sheriff Grant, in the presence of several persons, including some members of the press. Fields did not seem to realize the fact, he was in the same careless, stolid demeanor which had marked his bearing during the trial.

FIELDS'S RELATION IN PRISON.

Ever since the trial, Fields has been faithfully attended at the prison by Rev. Dr. Parl, the pastor of Christ Church, Williamsport, who has spent a portion of every day in his religious teaching and advising of the prisoner. Fields has seemed to realize that he has been very good, and has given his jailors no trouble. He says that he was convicted because he was an Englishman, and the prejudice of the jury was against him. On Friday last he "Alabama Claims." On Friday last his wife and children. On that occasion he exclaimed, "I have done everything for this my brother; I went up right away to the prisoner's room, I knew he was there, I saw George Mathews lying covered with blood, and his hands up to his head, I said to him, 'O! John, what in the world did you that for?' He said, 'I don't know, I don't know, I would serve me the same; when I came up stairs I found my wife and my children all in well-box and the house, with his feet towards the hatch door and the hatch door open in the box; he was lying on his face with one hand over his head, I said to him, 'John, he was just inside the back door, cutting potatoes.' I ran down stairs, I ran to the house of George Mathews's foot, I found a large cut in the side of Mr. Mathews's head, and he was all over covered with blood; I picked him up and carried him into the house, I laid him down; after I got him there I called for Mary Ann to bring the clothes to wash and tie up his head; by Mary Ann I mean Mrs. Mathews, daughter-in-law, just over the fence in the potato field planting potatoes; she was about twenty yards away. Fields was standing just outside the door at that time; he heard me when I called Mary Ann; he said if the girls stopped their work he would kill their children; he ran off; some of the other children were with her planting potatoes; during all this time John Fields offered me no assistance in carrying the wounded man; I didn't get any cloth at first to tie up his head; I had to run out of that; I had been there about a half an hour up to the time I left the house; when John Fields was cutting potatoes; Fields was standing in the door when I left; I was there; Mathews was the only person there that I saw; my wife was in the house; I left; I said "take the bloody——out of that;" I did not have hold of Mathews; I did not hear that, but stood close by him; he looked up into my face and said 'O! Alf, O! Alf, take me out of this;' this was after Fields had spoken; then I carried Mathews to the house; Mathews was twelve or fourteen yards from the house.

Question—What did Fields say? Objected to by counsel for defence. Objection sustained.

Answer—Mathews said "I shall die! Oh, by gosh, I shall die!" I said, "I do not expect the wound closely; I should think he was about five inches long; I could not tell the size of it on account of the long hair; also the wound; I examined the wound sufficiently to know that it was made by a sharp instrument; after I got to the bars Fields saw his wife coming up the hill, and he spoke to me first; she said "O! is he dead?" I said not quite; Fields said to his wife, "Come in, you bloody——, and tell me what George Mathews said;" I'll chop your bloody head off!" She did not go in, but came up to the bars and said, "he said he would give you 12 cents for No. 2's and 15 cents for No. 1's for hoeing, and that Fields was to have half the cord wood for hauling;" this was a report of what Mathews had said to Mrs. Fields; nothing more was then said, but we got Mathews into a wagon and took him to his own house.

AN ATTEMPTED CAPTURE—THE MURDERER WOUNDS THE CONSTABLE WITH AN AXE IN TWO PLACES, AND THEN ESCAPES.

On the day after the murder, Charles Gray, a Constable, complained to Simon Bodine, a Justice of the Peace, and Dr. Ed. Lyon, went out for the purpose of attending the wounded man and taking his statement, and, if possible, to capture the murderer. They went first to Fields's house, the place where Dr. Lyon dressed the wound, which was on the left side of the head, commencing 21 inches above the eye, running back 7 inches and varying from 2 to 3 inches deep. The skull was fractured, and the man evidently a dying man. Before dressing the wound the party proceeded to Fields's house, and Mr. Bodine, as the constable was a little ahead and entered the house first, and Fields, who was sitting in the kitchen, and tapping him on the shoulder, said, "Are you my prisoner?" He instantly arose and seizing an axe, which was conveniently near, he struck the constable a blow on the head with its edge. The officer reeled and staggered to the door, when Fields struck him again, this time with the blunt end of the axe, and then, this time, he drew the axe behind his back and splintering the points of the handle into the back of the driver in the party was in the possession of the Constable, who had fired his pistol through the breast pocket, from whence it had turned down into the lining of his coat, and he was unable to get it out. When he stagger-ed out of the house, he was met by one of the yard with Justice Bodine, shouted to him, "Shoot the d——d rascal!" Bodine, hearing this turned upon the doctor with the intention of shooting him, but the doctor threw a large stone and struck the desperate man on the back of the head, and he fell down. The doctor and the Justice then retreated to the house, and the man, finding that the wounded constable had succeeded in crawling through the fence and was taken up and carried off by his friends, the murderer took to the woods that night.

THE MANNER OF ARREST.

For two weeks the whereabouts of the murderer was unknown, but it was discovered that he was in hiding at the residence of a friend in Muncy Creek township, Lycoming county. On the night of the 30th of May Fields returned to his family, and was secretly, but diately surrounded by a strong force of the citizens, and was taken without any struggle, and sent to Williamsport, to the county jail.

THE TRIAL AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDE.

The trial of John Fields for murder was arranged for trial. The indictment was read to the prisoner, who pleaded "Not guilty—I am not provided with counsel, the Court assigned me to defend me." The Court assigned the member of Congress for this district, and Geo. W. Rutan, Esq., one of the most prominent members of the Williamsport bar. All through the trial Fields seemed to have been very faithfully on the prisoner's behalf, bringing to his counsel all the aid in his power, and extensive practice could give. No stone was left unturned by Mr. Osborne to defend every advantage allowed him by the law, and he was urged by some to allege that he was overpowering as to preclude any idea of such a conviction. The trial continued for one week. On Saturday, Dec. 4, the jury brought in a verdict of "guilty of murder in the first degree." The prisoner, during the second day of the trial, the jailor proceeded to the cell of Fields to carry him his breakfast, when he found him lying on the floor in a pool of coagulated blood, in blood. During the night he had drawn one of the hooks from which his bed-sack was fastened to the wall of the cell, and with it he proceeded to stab himself in his neck, and when discovered he had almost bled to death. The hook was used and this first attempt at suicide frustrated.

THE VICTIM.

George Mathews, the murdered man, was the brother of Fields's wife, and a hardworking, observing man, living about two miles from where Fields lived. He was born in Somerset county, England, in 1833, and was consequently 36 years of age at the time of murder, at which time his family consisted of a wife and three children, who now reside at Williamsport. At the time of his death, at Williamsport, on the N. C. R. W. Mathews was generally esteemed by all who knew him, and the brutal murder caused a great feeling of indignation and regret in the neighborhood where he lived.

THE CIRCUMSTANCE LEADING TO THE CRIME.

During the Spring of 1869 Fields and Mathews were engaged in cutting cord wood for the N. C. R. W. Co. Mathews cut the ties in the woods, and Fields hauled them to the railroad. After a time, it was found Mathews (the murdered man) received from the Company the pay for the job. Fields sent to Mathews for his share of the money, on Saturday, the day on her return with part of the money, Fields was dissatisfied, and sent Mathews word that he would come over and see him about it. Mathews went over, and during his visit he received his death-blow.

THE MURDER.

The following extract from the testimony of Mrs. Mathews, given at the trial, Fields has been faithfully attested at the prison by Rev. Dr. Parl, the pastor of Christ Church, Williamsport, who has spent a portion of every day in his religious teaching and advising of the prisoner. "I reside in Cascade township; I know Fields; I know George Mathews. On the 16th of May I was in the house; I was in the back house; I heard a dreadful shouting for me to go to there, but didn't take any notice of it for some time; I then went to the back door of the house I heard Mrs. Fields shout for me to come out of the house; I went out; I saw my brother; I went up right away to the prisoner's room; I knew he was there; I saw George Mathews lying covered with blood, and his hands up to his head; I said to him, "O! John, what in the world did you that for?" He said, "I don't know, I don't know, I would serve me the same; when I came up stairs I found my wife and children all in well-box and the house, with his feet towards the back door and the hatch door open in the box; he was lying on his face with one hand over his head; I said to him, 'John, he was just inside the back door, cutting potatoes.' Fields was standing just outside the door at that time; he heard me when I called Mary Ann; he said if the girls stopped their work he would kill their children; he ran off; some of the other children were with her planting potatoes; during all this time John Fields offered me no assistance in carrying the wounded man; I didn't get any cloth at first to tie up his head; I had to run out of that; I had been there about a half an hour up to the time I left the house; when John Fields was cutting potatoes; Fields was standing in the door when I left; I was there; Mathews was the only person there that I saw; my wife was in the house; I left; I said "take the bloody——out of that;" I did not have hold of Mathews; I did not hear that, but stood close by him; he looked up into my face and said 'O! Alf, O! Alf, take me out of this;' this was after Fields had spoken; then I carried Mathews to the house; Mathews was twelve or fourteen yards from the house.

Question—What did Fields say? Objected to by counsel for defence. Objection sustained.

Answer—Mathews said "I shall die! Oh, by gosh, I shall die!" I said, "I do not expect the wound closely; I should think he was about five inches long; I could not tell the size of it on account of the long hair; also the wound; I examined the wound sufficiently to know that it was made by a sharp instrument; after I got to the bars Fields saw his wife coming up the hill, and he spoke to me first; she said "O! is he dead?" I said not quite; Fields said to his wife, "Come in, you bloody——, and tell me what George Mathews said; I'll chop your bloody head off!" She did not go in, but came up to the bars and said, "he said he would give you 12 cents for No. 2's and 15 cents for No. 1's for hoeing, and that Fields was to have half the cord wood for hauling;" this was a report of what Mathews had said to Mrs. Fields; nothing more was then said, but we got Mathews into a wagon and took him to his own house.

THE MURDERER'S LAST NIGHT ON EARTH.

The condemned man was very quiet and composed all yesterday, spending the good deal of his time in reading his Bible, and talking with his spiritual adviser, Rev. Dr. Parel was with him until the evening, and he was with him all night the night. The jailer says that he slept during the night, and that he was so quiet he was just about to go to bed, cutting potatoes, when Fields's wife and children came down to the house, and Fields said, "Come in, you bloody——, and tell me what George Mathews said;" I'll chop your bloody head off!" She did not go in, but came up to the bars and said, "he said he would give you 12 cents for No. 2's and 15 cents for No. 1's for hoeing, and that Fields was to have half the cord wood for hauling;" this was a report of what Mathews had said to Mrs. Fields; nothing more was then said, but we got Mathews into a wagon and took him to his own house.

AN ATTEMPTED CAPTURE—THE MURDERER WOUNDS THE CONSTABLE WITH AN AXE IN TWO PLACES, AND THEN ESCAPES.

On the day after the murder, Charles Gray, a Constable, complained to Simon Bodine, a Justice of the Peace, and Dr. Ed. Lyon, went out for the purpose of attending the wounded man and taking his statement, and, if possible, to capture the murderer. They went first to Fields's house, the place where Dr. Lyon dressed the wound, which was on the left side of the head, commencing 21 inches above the eye, running back 7 inches and varying from 2 to 3 inches deep. The skull was fractured, and the man evidently a dying man. Before dressing the wound the party proceeded to Fields's house, and Mr. Bodine, as the constable was a little ahead and entered the house first, and Fields, who was sitting in the kitchen, and tapping him on the shoulder, said, "Are you my prisoner?" He instantly arose and seizing an axe, which was conveniently near, he struck the constable a blow on the head with its edge. The officer reeled and staggered to the door, when Fields struck him again, this time with the blunt end of the axe, and then, this time, he drew the axe behind his back and splintering the points of the handle into the back of the driver in the party was in the possession of the Constable, who had fired his pistol through the breast pocket, from whence it had turned down into the lining of his coat, and he was unable to get it out. When he staggered out of the house, he was met by one of the yard with Justice Bodine, shouted to him, "Shoot the d——d rascal!" Bodine, hearing this turned upon the doctor with the intention of shooting him, but the doctor threw a large stone and struck the desperate man on the back of the head, and he fell down. The doctor and the Justice then retreated to the house, and the man, finding that the wounded constable had succeeded in crawling through the fence and was taken up and carried off by his friends, the murderer took to the woods that night.

THE MANNER OF ARREST.

For two weeks the whereabouts of the murderer was unknown, but it was discovered that he was in hiding at the residence of a friend in Muncy Creek township, Lycoming county. On the night of the 30th of May Fields returned to his family, and was secretly, but diately surrounded by a strong force of the citizens, and was taken without any struggle, and sent to Williamsport, to the county jail.

THE TRIAL AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDE.

The trial of John Fields for murder was arranged for trial. The indictment was read to the prisoner, who pleaded "Not guilty—I am not provided with counsel, the Court assigned me to defend me." The Court assigned the member of Congress for this district, and Geo. W. Rutan, Esq., one of the most prominent members of the Williamsport bar. All through the trial Fields seemed to have been very faithfully on the prisoner's behalf, bringing to his counsel all the aid in his power, and extensive practice could give. No stone was left unturned by Mr. Osborne to defend every advantage allowed him by the law, and he was urged by some to allege that he was overpowering as to preclude any idea of such a conviction. The trial continued for one week. On Saturday, Dec. 4, the jury brought in a verdict of "guilty of murder in the first degree." The prisoner, during the second day of the trial, the jailor proceeded to the cell of Fields to carry him his breakfast, when he found him lying on the floor in a pool of coagulated blood, in blood. During the night he had drawn one of the hooks from which his bed-sack was fastened to the wall of the cell, and with it he proceeded to stab himself in his neck, and when discovered he had almost bled to death. The hook was used and this first attempt at suicide frustrated.

ATTEMPTED ESCAPE, ETC.

At the adjournment of Court for the adjournment of court for dinner, as the prisoner was taken out of the Court House, he broke loose from the officers and started to run down the street, hoping probably to reach the river and swim to the opposite shore. John Platt, Esq., Deputy Sheriff, fired at him with his pistol, but owing to the crowd and excitement, he failed in his attempt to succeed in making a fresh wound in his neck or arm. The prisoner was soon knocked down and secured, and taken back to the jail, he was taken, he was angry crowd, cursing and shouting with rage, that he had escaped the ignominious death of suicide by choking himself with his towel in his cell, he also failed. On Wednesday the 8th of September, the sentence of death was pronounced upon the prisoner by the President Judge. During the whole trial the prisoner was very quiet and gentlemanly, chiefly towards reducing the grade of his crime, from that of murder in the second degree. The theory of insanity, which was urged in his behalf at the trial, before, was also started but could not be sustained. The prisoner was convicted, Governor Geary signed the death warrant, fixing the day for his execution, on Tuesday, November 9th, the warrant was read to the prisoner by Sheriff Grant, in the presence of several persons, including some members of the press. Fields did not seem to realize the fact, he was in the same careless, stolid demeanor which had marked his bearing during the trial.

FIELDS'S RELATION IN PRISON.

Ever since the trial, Fields has been faithfully attended at the prison by Rev. Dr. Parl, the pastor of Christ Church, Williamsport, who has spent a portion of every day in his religious teaching and advising of the prisoner. Fields has seemed to realize that he has been very good, and has given his jailors no trouble. He says that he was convicted because he was an Englishman, and the prejudice of the jury was against him. On Friday last he "Alabama Claims." On Friday last his wife and children. On that occasion he exclaimed, "I have done everything for this my brother; I went up right away to the prisoner's room, I knew he was there, I saw George Mathews lying covered with blood, and his hands up to his head; I said to him, 'O! John, what in the world did you that for?' He said, 'I don't know, I don't know, I would serve me the same; when I came up stairs I found my wife and my children all in well-box and the house, with his feet towards the back door and the hatch door open in the box; he was lying on his face with one hand over his head; I said to him, 'John, he was just inside the back door, cutting potatoes.' Fields's wife and children came down to the house, and Fields said, "Come in, you bloody——, and tell me what George Mathews said;" I'll chop your bloody head off!" She did not go in, but came up to the bars and said, "he said he would give you 12 cents for No. 2's and 15 cents for No. 1's for hoeing, and that Fields was to have half the cord wood for hauling;" this was a report of what Mathews had said to Mrs. Fields; nothing more was then said, but we got Mathews into a wagon and took him to his own house.

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