The Press.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 1858.

STATE CONVENTION.

At a meeting of the Democratic State Committee, held at Bunkle's Hotel, Harrisburg, January 19, 1858, it was

Resolved, That the next Democratic State Convention be held at Harrisburg, on the 4th day of March next.

Pursuant to said resolution, delegates from the several Senatorial and Representative districts of the State will convene in the Hall of the House of Representatives, at the Capitol, on THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1858, at 10 o'clock A. M., to nominate candidates for Judge of the Supreme Court and Canal Commissioner, and for the transaction of such other business as pertains to the authority of such Convention.

O. H. BUCKALEW, Chairman.
J. N. RUCKMAN, } Secretaries.
R. M. HALDEMAN, }

FIRST PAGE.—Prison Agent's Report; The Will of the Majority—Speech of WILLIAM A. STROBEL, Esq., at Greensburg; The Courts—Fine Page Selections in the case of THOMAS W. SMITH; General News; City Police; FOURTH PAGE.—Marriage of the Princess Royal of England; Private Revenge.

HON. W. A. PORTER.

Governor PACKER has appointed Hon. W. A. Porter Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Justice Knox, who assumes the high position of Attorney General under the new State Administration. Mr. Porter is a gentleman of spotless public and private character, a thorough lawyer, and a consistent and conscientious Democrat.

DIFFICULTY WITH PARAGUAY.

In reference to the relations of the United States with the Republic of Paraguay, President BUCHANAN in his annual message to Congress made this statement:

I regret to inform you that the President of Paraguay has refused to ratify the treaty between the United States and that State as amended by the Senate, the signature of which was mentioned in the message of my predecessor to Congress at the opening of its session in December, 1856. The reasons assigned for this refusal will appear in the correspondence herewith submitted.

It being desirable to ascertain the views of the river La Plata and its tributaries for the navigation by steam, the United States steamer Water Witch was sent thither for that purpose in 1855. This enterprise was successfully carried on until February, 1855, when, while in the peaceful prosecution of her voyage up the Parana river, the steamer was fired upon by a Paraguayan fort. The fire was returned; but as the Water Witch was a small force, and not designed for offensive operations, she retired from the conflict. The pretext upon which the attack was made was a decree of the President of Paraguay, of October, 1854, prohibiting foreign vessels-of-war from navigating the rivers of that State.

As Paraguay, however, was the owner but one bank of the river of that name, the other belonging to Corrientes, a State of the Argentine Confederation, the right of its Government to expect that such a decree would be obeyed cannot be acknowledged. But the Water Witch was not properly speaking a vessel-of-war. She was a small steamer engaged in a scientific enterprise intended for the advantage of commercial States generally. Under these circumstances, I am constrained to consider the attack upon her as unjustifiable, and as calling for satisfaction from the Paraguayan Government.

Citizens of the United States, also, who were established in business in Paraguay, have had their property seized and taken from them, and have otherwise been treated by the authorities if an insulting and arbitrary manner, which requires redress.

A demand for these purposes will be made in a firm but conciliatory spirit. This will the more probably be granted if the Executive shall have authority to use other means in the event of a refusal. This is accordingly recommended.

This subject has been undergoing a scrutinizing investigation on the part of the Committees of Foreign Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives, and as it may ultimately result in the adoption of offensive measures against Paraguay, it will no doubt be interesting to the readers of THE PRESS to show the gist of the correspondence which accompanied the message, and which has just been printed. On June 2d, 1854, Mr. MARCY, then Secretary of State, empowered Lieut. I. J. PAGE, U. S. N., to exchange the ratifications of the treaty concluded on the part of the United States of America, by Mr. PENDLETON, with the Republic of Paraguay on the 4th of March, 1853.

In November, 1854, Lieut. PAGE reported that his letter to the Secretary of State, of Paraguay, announcing his mission had been returned to him, because it was written in the English language. Lieut. PAGE refused to correspond in Spanish, for the double reason that the Government were well supplied with interpreters, and that he conceived the attempt to coerce him into securing the correspondence to be but another instance of the insult and oppression practised towards the American citizens by President LOPEZ and his Government officers. The Lieutenant adds his opinion that the President designs to make this act appear in Paraguay and the adjoining States as an exhibition of his power; and expresses the hope that such measures will be adopted as will convince the President of Paraguay that the United States will not tolerate the indignities it has been his habit to bestow upon other Governments. He suggests as a sure means of accomplishing the object, that the Commodore of the Brazil squadron might be instructed to proceed to Assuncion, on board of the Water Witch, with the brig Bainbridge in tow.

On the 4th of February, 1855, Lieutenant PAGE reported to Secretary DOBBIN that, in the performance of duty assigned him, he proceeded to ascend the Salado river, taking a small steamer and two boats, leaving Lieutenant JEFFERS in command of the Water Witch, with instructions to ascend the Parana river as far as her draught would allow. Lieut. JEFFERS sailed on the 1st of February, but had not gone more than three miles from where the river forms the common boundary between Corrientes (one of the provinces of the Argentine Confederation) and Paraguay, when the Water Witch was fired into from a fort on the Paraguay side of the river. Lieutenant PAGE says:

The Water Witch was in the act of exploring a river which is the common boundary between these two countries. The right of such to navigate this river up to the limit of the province of Corrientes has never been questioned by either, and I had never heard that Paraguay presumed to exercise the power of preventing its navigation.

To the exploration of this portion of the Parana I had not only obtained the permission of the Argentine Confederation, and especially of the province of Corrientes, but an expression of earnest solicitude on the part of both the President of the Confederation and the Governor of Corrientes had been made that I should establish the fact that the river is navigable to a much greater extent than that to which it is now known to be, of which they had some hope, but not the means of proving.

The navigation of this river to the extent of the territory of Corrientes is already secured to the flag of the United States by treaty with the Argentine Confederation. That Government, so far from objecting to the Water Witch's ascending the river, had furnished me with an order, enjoining upon every province the whole way, whose rulers I should have the obligation to afford me every facility.

At the time of the firing, the Water Witch was in a channel way on the Corrientes side of the river, where she had been run aground by the pilot. This was seen from the fort, where it was also well known that she had a reduced complement of officers and men. They had no reason to anticipate an attack from her; and the act of firing was a wanton outrage—the act of a Government beyond the pale of civilization.

SAMUEL CHANEY, quartermaster, was killed by this firing, dying in two hours from the effects of wounds received from a ball and splinters. Others were slightly wounded. The vessel was hulled ten times.

It is a well-established principle of the law of nations, that where a navigable river forms the boundary of conterminous States, the middle of the channel is taken as the line of separation between the two States, the right of navigation being common to both. Thus, according to Wheaton's Law of Nations:

"By the treaty of Vienna, in 1815, the commercial navigation of rivers, which separate different States, or flow through their respective territories, was declared to be entirely free in their whole course, from the point where each river becomes navigable to its mouth," &c.

In August, 1856, Mr. FITZPATRICK was commissioned to exchange the ratifications of the treaty. NICOLAS VASQUEZ, the Secretary of the State of Paraguay, informs this special Commissioner, after making the silly objection that the Senate of the United States have striken out the words in the original draft of the treaty "United States of North America," and inserted in their stead "United States of America," which latter, in fact, is our national designation in all treaties and compacts, "that his Excellency the President of the Republic cannot consent to an exchange of a plain and full ratification of said treaty of the 4th of March, 1853, with the ratification which his Excellency the President of the United States has given to the said treaty, with the amendments of the United States Senate. At this point of the negotiations halt, with every evidence of bad feeling on the part of Paraguay against this Government. Such harshness has been dealt upon American citizens in that territory since, that the measure to be adopted by the Administration must be prompt and efficient, not only for the protection of the rights of our citizens, but for the maintenance of our own dignity as a nation.

HENRY WARD BEECHER AT MUSICAL FUND HALL LAST EVENING.

We can compare the immense audience that attended the lecture of Rev. Mr. BEECHER, at Musical Fund Hall last evening, to nothing else than a great flood of human beings.

Thirty minutes before the hour of commencing had arrived, the hall, including the aisles and platform, were densely packed with ladies and gentlemen, and the waving, turbulent commotion of the mass in endeavoring to find seats for the former presented a scene from the platform at once picturesque and amusing.

Mr. Beecher's usual walking room was necessarily greatly abridged on this occasion by the platform auditors that were wedged in thick around him. At half-past seven the doors were closed, and from that time until the lecture was commenced the hall was vocal with the buzz of the anxious spectators, who, to judge from their delighted faces, seemed to be all as happy as the inspiration of being on the eve of partaking of a rare intellectual feast could possibly have made them.

At the appointed hour Mr. Beecher appeared upon the stand, and was generously, though not enthusiastically received, showing great evidence on the part of the audience that it was not so much the man, as what he had to say, that had attracted them.

The lecturer, on taking his stand at the platform, said that the subject upon which he was about to address his hearers was, *Human weakness and strength*.

As it appears to be a recognised fact that great things are always subject to great irregularities, we presume it is no unfair inference to suppose that the same will hold good of the performances of great lecturers; and we must therefore be allowed to say that the lecture last evening was by no means up to his usual standard in point of popular interest. The lecture was evidently written with the view of making certain popular theories and truisms the more conspicuous of the real object he had in view; and, so far as it concerned us as an individual auditor, we should have been better pleased with the performance had the performer come out boldly and sailed under his true colors.

It was certainly his right to do so if he chose; and as for employing any sugaring-over process to administer a wee bit of an anti-slavery pill, we confess ourselves surprised that a man of his independent position, before so liberal a minded audience as was assembled in Musical Fund Hall last evening, should think worth his while to attempt it.

The quintessence of his lecture, reduced down to its briefest compressible limits, was simply this:

A nation was strong, or it was weak, just in proportion as it moved on in harmony with the violation of law—i. e., law physical, natural, moral, and divine—but that this country, nor any other, could expect anything but destruction at the hands of an avenging God, if it persisted in hugging to its bosom the great canker that is preying with such special vigor upon the vitals of our country south of Mason and Dixon's line!

The lecture was sufficiently Beecherish to create periodic spells of laughter, but those who have been in the habit of hearing this eloquent man could not but have noticed a great falling off in the hearty applause with which he is usually greeted.

The whole lecture was redolent with flights, dripping with the dews of his impulsive genius, and to say that the lecture was void of interest would be doing its author great injustice; yet, what we have said we must adhere to, and we think any fears that the truthfulness of the verdict rendered will be borne out by the majority of his impartial hearers.

In opening his lecture, he said that man was living in the midst of a complex system of forces; he came into the world at this age with vast advantages surrounding him in the fields of science, from which those who had lived in former times were deprived. God had originally stocked the world, and man had stocked it over again; and the race was hence surrounded with secondary influences, which were, in too many instances, considered as primary. Viewed in one light man seemed to be marvellously strong, and yet in another he was as marvellously weak. He was a creature that vibrated like a pendulum between conceit and despair. His first experience in life was that of weakness.

The lion's whelp came into the world a better thing than man.

The lamb that came into the world in April was in May-frisking about the fields with the vigor of its dam.

The progress in knowledge had been great; the achievements of the mechanic arts had been wonderful, and yet, the achievements of mind and spirit had been still more wonderful.

In many respects the world had advanced further in the past than it ever could in the future. There were no more continents to be discovered by some future Columbus. The world was so completely taken up by man that even here, from the [illegible] there was not a spot of earth man could go to to escape the vigilance of officers, and but few, indeed, where he could go to and not be living under a form of government. Utah and Central Ethiopia might be said to be the only places left for rogues and rascals to run away to with any certainty of not being overhauled.

At this point the lecturer paid a fine tribute to the self-sacrificing exertions of that gifted and lamented son of Philadelphia, Elisha Kent Kane, in having gone North and demanded her brilliant battlements of ice to give up what the South had not withheld; and the example of this remarkable man was held up to the young men in the audience to emulate.

A rapid review of the progress of physical science was here introduced, in which it was said that all the branches of scientific investigation had been explored, save that of mind, which, he was sorry to say, still remained *terra incognita*. There was an age coming, however, in which the science of mind would be successfully prosecuted. The crystal lens had touched the heavens, numbered the stars and fixed their places. The power of steam had been made to overcome the necessity for the wind and the sail, and so a thousand other inventions had been developed and introduced to facilitate the labor of man.

In his opinion machinery was to be the great emancipator. He rejoiced to think that the day was coming when iron hands would be employed to do man's work. He regarded the sewing-machine as the peculiar emancipator of woman, as he believed the needle had slain more victims than the sword.

The efficacy and power of the combined agency of men, when acting in concert with the laws of the universe, were here spoken of before our vision with all the grace and power of a master. For an instant he seemed to turn humanity into a mighty instrument for the sweeping of harmonious sounds, and then, at a signal, he summoned the hand of Jehovah's power to wave the mighty lyre, and peal forth to the universe the modulations of heaven-created orchestra. No description can do justice to some of the bold, and, we may say, sublime flights which were introduced at intervals during the delivery of the lecture.

But he had now come to where it was necessary to take up the other side, and consider man's relative weakness. He said there were no forces in man's skill which could withstand the silent forces of nature. One earthquake could set the world in motion. The element of fire which, when kept in subjection, ministered so much of our domestic comfort, as an invaluable servant, when left to assume the ascendancy, became a ravaging and a devouring master. Now and then, however, Nature took pains to teach man that her ministrations to the service of man were voluntary, and could as easily be withheld as they are bestowed.

We were too apt to forget the agency of Nature while basking in the benefits to which she contributes. The wealth of a single shower of rain was of priceless value, as when the products of the field were drooping for the want of moisture, man's labor would be applied to no effect unless aided by this fertilizer from above. Indeed, it was not extravagant to say that, in some cases, every drop of rain which fell upon withering vegetation added more to the wealth of a country than if every drop had been a gold dollar.

The present season afforded an instance of the wealth God poured upon the world from the treasure of his bounteous providence, and it was no unreasonable estimate to say that the mildness of the present winter, up to this point, had been of more real value to the city of Philadelphia than if God had placed in the hands of her citizens five millions of dollars for gratuitous distribution.

There was sufficient evidence of man's power to stimulate his hope and enterprise, but there was not enough to justify his arrogance in affecting to be independent of Providence.

It was natural for the strong to oppress the weak; and if there was anything that a strong man had more contempt for than another it was a weak man. The same was true of nations, and he supposed that was the reason why we in our strength as a nation felt it to be our peculiar prerogative to oppress and make foot rugs of our brethren of a weaker race.

The power of sovereigns was humorously portrayed, and in which it was said that princes, while they were in the raw, ruled by a sceptre; but, by-and-by, after he became sufficiently schooled by the devil, the sovereign breathed his poison into what he called law, and ruled by it. In his opinion, a bad law was the most infernal thing in the world. To illustrate the fluctuating and unstable character of the power of earthly potentates, or their weakness, which amounts to the same thing, he referred to the various revolutions in Europe that had suddenly overturned those who had considered themselves most securely established in their power.

Any power on earth that sought to establish itself on the foundation of its own inherent strength was like a man's building his house and planting his orchards and vineyards on the side of a volcano, which were at any moment liable to be overwhelmed by the bursting forth of the hidden element beneath. Respecting the agencies of power among men, the lecturer said he was much more a worshipper of commerce than of statesmanship, because he believed our merchants, as a whole, possessed a degree of sound sense to which statesmen were too often strangers.

Commerce subsidized the elements of the earth and all its powers; the world's blood circulated through its channels. Not could the influence of this class be questioned. It was not unfrequent that the sentiments of the priest in the pulpit were but the echo of the merchant in the pew. A few lines from the Rothschilds were sufficient to inaugurate a revolution in Europe. The power of the ship at sea was a felicitous type of the great weakness that attaches to the greatest supposed earthly power.

How the speaker went through the performance of sending a powerful merchantman to the bottom of the ocean with much dramatic skill. The recent troubles in financial matters were next introduced as illustrative of the utter weakness of even the strongest. That cloud which had risen in the monetary firmament no larger than a man's hand, how rapidly it had developed into a frightful storm, before which the weak grew, first pale, and then dark with despair! Nor were we prepared to predict what might yet be the result before all the rapids and Niagaras were encountered that were still hidden in the future. Nationally, there was probably nothing which had so much tended to make us forget the weakness of our strength as our past uniform prosperity.

He thought, and had long thought, that there was nothing in the wide world which the American nation so much ached to receive as a good whipping. [Laughter.] And he doubted not that angels had looked with pleasure on the spanking to which we had just been subjected in the money troubles that had swept across the country. These chastisements of our vanity should at least teach us our dependence upon Divinity.

He did not mean to take advantage of the platform by introducing matters of a party character, but he was not to be overawed from doing what he felt to be his duty as a man and a Christian. He would not disguise the fact that in our commercial transactions we had been *thoroughly infidel*; and he closed by saying, that so sure as there was an avenging God in the heavens, the nation who continued to hug sin to its bosom would not escape his righteous wrath.

In this hurried synopsis we have, of course, only aimed to present a few of the principal points made by the lecturer. Many others, however, than we have here referred to, occur to us as we write, and which the want of space alone prevents our giving to the reader.

PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENTS.

Mr. Ullman's operatic season commences thi evening, and will extend for no more than a fort night, it is announced. Afterwards, Mr. Ullmann will proceed with the *troupe* to Boston. The present announcements are The Barber of Seville, this evening, with de la Grange as *Rosina*; Semiramis to-morrow evening, and the new opera of "Rigoletto" on Monday evening. The new system of having two places for securing seats, which is done without any extra charge, is said to work well. The offices are at the Academy of Music, and at Lee & Walker's music store, in Chestnut street. The Academy will undoubtedly be filled this evening.

"Fraud and its Victims," produced at Arch street Theatre on Saturday evening, with new local scenery, continues highly attractive. It has filled the house each night of its representation, and promises to be a sure card for some time.

The Harmonia Sacred Music Society announces, for their first concert, on Monday, the production, for the first time in this city, of Mendelssohn's last and greatest work, the Oratorio of "Elijah." Mendelssohn came over expressly from Germany, to preside over the first performance of "Elijah," at the Birmingham Musical Festival, in August, 1846. It was subsequently performed at Exeter Hall, London, in April, 1847, and, later in the same year, at Gloucester Musical Festival. Mendelssohn died in November, 1847. The performers at Concert Hall, on Monday evening, will be the ladies and gentlemen, amateurs and members of the Harmonia Sacred Music Society, assisted by Mr. Rudolphsen, basso, and Mr. T. Bishop, tenor, under the direction of Leopold Meignen, D. M., conductor, and Mr. W. H. Gross, organist.

THE RETURN OF MR. E. A. MARSHALL.

We had the pleasure yesterday of taking by the hand, and welcoming back to his home, our esteemed friend Mr. E. A. MARSHALL, the justly popular lessee of the Academy of Music. His large circle of friends and acquaintances will be gratified to learn that he is in excellent health and spirits, as he might well be, after the remarkable success that has attended the Philadelphia Opera Troupe in Havana. Their popularity here was only equalled by their triumph in that farfamed city, where the enthusiasm of the people keeps pace with the highest cultivation of the musical art, and the most liberal appreciation of its professors. GAZZANIGA—the peerless GAZZANIGA—at once installed herself as a favorite, and the judgment of the refined and educated audiences of Havana, not less severe than that through which she had reputation, and city, fully [illegible] every lyric and tragic [illegible] Philadelphia may justly be proud that, under the liberal and self-sacrificing spirit which actuated Mr. MARSHALL, our people were the first to give this estimable lady her just rank among the living celebrities of the opera, and we think we may add, that she need never fear that any rival will ever replace her in the hold that she now possesses on the affections of those who were the first to discern and the loudest to applaud her eminent talents and great artistic skill.

AMODIO, BRIGNOLI, and the rest of the company, were likewise very popular in Havana. It is reported that they never sang better or executed their parts more satisfactorily. Night after night they were greeted with unbounded applause, while crowded houses testified both to their merit and success. Mr. MARSHALL gives a very favorable report as to the generally healthy condition of the city of Havana. All the statements heretofore published on that subject have been greatly exaggerated, while those concerning AMODIO, BRIGNOLI, and other members of the troupe, have been *altogether unfounded*. Our readers will remember that some of the New York papers announced a rumor that at least two of the company had died of yellow fever. We doubt whether any such rumor ever, in point of fact, obtained circulation, and we are disposed to attribute all such gross fabrications to sinister motives. We feel well assured that if they were invented to injure Mr. MARSHALL, they will fail in accomplishing their object.

The Philadelphia Opera Troupe are expected to open here about the 20th of February. RONCONI, the greatest tenor now living, will inaugurate their advent, and we may expect a *furore* on his appearance such as has not been witnessed in Philadelphia for years. With RONCONI, AMODIO, BRIGNOLI, GAZZANIGA and RAMOS we will have the best Opera Troupe that has ever appeared in Philadelphia, and we hope to see them received in the most liberal spirit, and in a manner worthy our city and of the Temple of the Muses in which they will appear. They will produce several new operas with an unapproachable cast, and a bountiful treasury should be the reward of Mr. MARSHALL's outlay of money, time, and labor.

THE BANK OF PENNSYLVANIA.

[For The Press.]

Mr. Allibone has returned to this country, and published a very plausible letter, protesting his innocence of the various charges made against him during his absence. The day for reliance on general good character has gone by, and mere generalities will not satisfy the creditor, who has lost part of his claim on the stockholder who has lost all his investment. The alleged speculations in cotton, sugar, &c., are matters which concern neither the stockholder nor the public. Where has the capital of the bank gone? What are the items of the sterling account? Why was that account opened in the individual, instead of the general, ledger? Why was it transferred to the latter after the failure of the bank? Why was the key of the President's safe withheld till the morning of his departure from Philadelphia? If the present directors have been "put on a wrong scent," why not put them on a right one?

By whom were the bills receivable of the bank sold, and what disposition was made of the proceeds? Who are the guilty parties who reek to cover their own infamy by exciting prejudice against an innocent man in his absence? Mr. Allibone, in all human probability Mr. Allibone alone, can answer these questions. He owes it to his own once spotless reputation, to the deeply-injured stockholders of the Bank of Pennsylvania, and to the fair fame of his native city, never before tarnished as it has been by the wholesale plunder of this bank, to tell the whole truth, without fear, favor, or affection. If he has had accomplices in wrong-doing, let him expose them. If the guilt of this foul crime rests exclusively on others, let him drag them into daylight, and clear his own skirts.

Public opinion, long suspended in deference to the appeal of his friends for charity toward an absent and, perhaps, a dying man, is now steadily settling against him. Solemn asservations of innocence and a tone of bravado will scarcely pass current much longer. He must trace the assets of the bank, and aid in the recovery. If he cannot do this, let him give such information as will bring all the parties to this atrocious fraud to condign punishment, or serve himself to abide the issue alone.

A GUARDIAN.

Fire in Second Street.—The alarm of fire about ten o'clock last night, was caused by the partial burning of the millinery and trimming store of Mrs. Potts, on the west side of Second street, above Spruce. The promptitude of the firemen prevented any considerable damage being done. The loss will not exceed $300. The fire originated from a stove which was in close proximity to some combustible materials.

I. O. S. M.—The Minne-ha-ha Lodge of the Sons of Malta have secured as a place for their regular meetings an elegant room in the Assembly Buildings, at Tenth and Chestnut streets.

BY MIDNIGHT MAIL.

FROM WASHINGTON.

Kansas Affairs—Hon. Nathan Clifford sworn as a Justice of the Supreme Court.

[Correspondence of The Press.]

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21, 1858.

Lately there has been a palpable falling off from the ranks of the Locomptonites. Even the Administration, I learn, hesitate to give any sanction to the present posture of affairs in Kansas, so far as it has been produced by the glaring frauds for a third time repeated at Oxford and McGhee. Secretary Touucey begins to evince a wholesome regard for public opinion in the North, and in the stand which he is now understood to take, of at least some show of accord of legislative action here with the will of the majority in the Territory, he is not, I am led to believe, unsupported by General Cass and the President himself.

When I state this, I only express what this morning is the general impression in town on Kansas affairs. It cannot be disguised that Southern politicians are tired of bolstering up the contrivance of Calhoun and his associates, and that—for they look North for help to elevate them upon the ladder of preferment—they are not altogether satisfied with the damaging effect to their hopes of the impolitic conduct of a few rash, thoughtless, and careless men in Kansas. In this view, when defection is, if not winked at, not assaulted with the usual Southern fire, it is not to be wondered at if Northern Democrats, who have permitted them selves unwarily to go too far, should at once hurry to get upon safe ground, where they can give signs of recognition of the wishes of their constituents.

For Governor Walker, Douglas, and the men who took the side of popular sovereignty from the beginning, and for the peace and prosperity of Kansas, there is a fine prospect ahead.

It is stated, I know, that the Houses of Congress have been canvassed, and that the Senate certainly, and the House of Representatives probably, will sustain the Lecompton Constitution; but the statement must be unfounded, for it is a matter of which those who are brought into contact with members cannot be ignorant that they are cautious of what they say in the way of committing themselves on this question.

Those who favor the animating principle of the Nebraska bill, however, are open in the expression of that position; but the remaining members, with the exception, of course, of ultra pro-slavery men, do not say they favor Lecompton or anything else, but that "nobody can tell how I shall vote." If nobody can tell, and the fact is apparent that they consult their constituents, who resolution them to advocate the views of Walker and Douglas, the guess is not a wild one to conclude that the chances are rather against Lecompton.

Hon. Nathan Clifford was, at the opening of the Supreme Court this morning, sworn as one of its justices. There was a large attendance to witness the ceremony which, though brief, was a very impressive and imposing one. On such occasions one cannot help being struck with the quiet dignity of the simple forms imposed by the Constitution of the United States.

The Senate yesterday confirmed the action of the President on the reports of the Naval Courts of Inquiry. Those who are thus put upon the active list will be commissioned immediately.

On the admission of Minnesota as a State, the question will arise whether Mr. Kingsbury, the delegate to the House from Minnesota Territory, shall vacate his seat. He was elected, not only by the people of the inchoate State, but also by the people of the contemplated Territory of Dacotah. Mr. Fuller was subsequently elected by the people of Dacotah, but it is a question whether he can take his seat until a territorial organization has been extended over them by act of Congress. Either he must be admitted, on the admission of Minnesota as a State, as a delegate from Dacotah, or Mr. Kingsbury must retain his seat until the organic act for Dacotah is passed, for it is not probable that anybody will consent to a lapse of representation.

The Secretary of the Treasury has appointed Albert Blandell, Esq., superintendent of construction for the new custom-house at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, vice Jno. M. Weare. X. Y.

FROM HARRISBURG.

[Correspondence of The Press.]

HARRISBURG, Jan. 21, 1858.

A feat was performed here last evening that rivals some of the famed horsemanship of Col. Frémont and his California mustangs. Col. Forney, editor of THE PRESS, was advertised to deliver a lecture in Lancaster, on Wednesday evening, and for that purpose left here at 12 o'clock noon, but upon arriving at his destination found he had left his manuscript of the discourse in his room, at the Jones House.

He immediately telegraphed that, if possible, it should be sent him either by chartering a locomotive or by a horse express. To get the locomotive it was found impossible, when his friend, Bartram A. Schaffer, Senator from Lancaster, started in a buggy at precisely 4 P. M. At ten minutes of 7 o'clock they telegraphed back his arrival at Lancaster, having made the distance of *thirty-seven miles in two hours and fifty minutes!* This, I think, cannot be beaten, when it is considered that the roads are now in bad condition, and most of the derivers are recture to an overflowing house.

This morning a large number of petitions, numerously signed, were presented from Philadelphia, Northampton, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, &c., &c., asking for a repeal and alteration of the present license law. They were referred to the Committee on Vice and Immorality, of which Mr. Ramsey is chairman. Something most probably will be done, as the present net is, comparatively speaking, a dead letter, especially in the cities of the Commonwealth; but in this case, to "be well done when it is done, there was *never not* done too quickly." Plenty of time should be taken to prepare a bill that will not only prevent irresponsible parties from engaging in an illegal traffic, but also protect those who are licensed according to law from the competition of such parties.

A petition from Thomas Washington Smith, praying for a divorce from Elizabeth G. McCauley, his wife, was read by Mr. Yearsley for Mr. Dohnert, who was necessarily absent. It sets forth:

That he is a citizen of Pennsylvania, and has resided therein for more than a year past; that he married Elizabeth G. McCauley, a daughter of Jno. McCauley, of Wilkesbarre, on the 16th of December, 1850, in the city of Philadelphia; that at the time of his marriage with Elizabeth, she was a pupil in the Wesleyan Female Institute, in Wilmington, Delaware, which she had been placed a few months previously by one Richard Carter, formerly of Tamaqua, Pennsylvania, who had taken her from her father's house, under a guardian, or foster-father, to be educated, and assumed the position of a guardian, or foster-father, to her, he being at that time a man of about forty-eight years of age.

That your petitioner never had any carnal knowledge of said Elizabeth prior to the marriage, and never saw her from the month of May, 1850, to the month of October in the same year. That he married her in the city of Philadelphia, and with the full knowledge, consent, and approbation of her guardian, or foster-father, and in the fullest confidence and belief in her virtue and chastity; and in such confidence and belief continued to live happily with her up to about the 10th day of April, 1857, when she gave birth to a female child of the full period of nine months' gestation, of which child his wife soon confessed Richard Carter was the father, and Richard Carter also acknowledged the child to be of his begetting.

That, immediately after the discovery of this great wrong and fraud practised upon him in his marriage, he left his wife, and has never seen her since, nor in any way confirmed the marriage. Your petitioner respectfully submits that the marriage, under the circumstances, was a great wrong and fraud practised upon him, for which he has no relief in any court of law; and that the love and confidence which ought to be inseparable from the marriage relation was utterly destroyed for the reasons aforesaid. He therefore respectfully submits that your honorable bodies will be graciously pleased to pass a bill divorcing him from the bonds of matrimony from his wife, with the same legal effect in all respects as if he had never been married.

THOMAS WASHINGTON SMITH.

This is the entire petition, save the "ands," "aforesaids," and other legal redundancies, which was sworn to before Alderman Allen, on the 19th of January, 1858. There is a good deal of sympathy felt here for the petitioner by those who have read the full report of the trial given in *The Press*.

Clifton Barrett, of the *Keystone*, was to-day nominated by the Governor, and confirmed by the Senate, as State Printer. Mr. Barrett is a very gentlemanly man, a practical printer, and in every way qualified for his position.

Mr. Evans (of the House) offered the following resolution, which passed its several readings:

Resolved, That the Auditor General and State Treasurer be authorized to appoint an auditor to examine the accounts of F. Knox Morton, late City Treasurer of Philadelphia, and report to the present Legislature.

Mr. J. Herron Foster, of Pittsburgh, presented a remonstrance from Keystone Lodge, No. 1, Sons of Malta, of that city, against chartering Minnehaha Lodge, of Philadelphia, as the Supreme Council of the order in the State of Pennsylvania. It appears the brethren in the Iron City compose the oldest lodge in the State, and therefore object to being shorn of the honor accruing from that fact, by making a younger lodge the Grand Council, without so much as even making one of her members one of the incorporators.

Both houses at 12 o'clock left their hall, headed by the speakers, and escorted Ex-Governor Pollock to the cars. A shaking of hands then took place, and many good wishes were expressed for Mr. Pollock's future welfare. *

Sunday School Exercises.—The pupils attached to the Sunday school of the Second Universalist Church, Eighth and Noble streets, gave an entertainment, consisting of recitations and singing, in December last, and so much satisfaction was given to the large audience in attendance, that a repetition has been decided on, and will be given this evening. The song of the "Star" will be sung by a lady attached to the choir, aided by a large chorus of the scholars. The proceeds of the exhibition are to be devoted to increasing the library of the school.

Coroner Fenner was sent for to hold an inquest upon the body of a man who was found drowned in the Schuylkill, at Chestnut-street wharf, about noon yesterday.

The Next Session of the Philadelphia Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church will be held at Easton, Pa., in March next.

THE LATEST NEWS BY TELEGRAPH.

THIRTY-FIFTH CONGRESS,
First Session.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21.

SENATE.

On motion of Mr. YULEE, of Florida, a resolution was adopted, requesting the Secretary of War to furnish such estimates of the amount of appropriation necessary for such parts of the volunteer force operating in Florida during the past year as have not been paid for want of appropriations applicable to the purpose.

Mr. JOHNSON, of Tennessee, from the Committee on Public Lands, reported back the "Homestead bill," recommending its passage.

The consideration of the bill was made the special order for the second Monday in February.

Mr. DAVIS, from the Committee on Military Affairs, reported a bill to increase the military establishment.

The consideration of the bill was made the special order of Monday next.

Mr. BAYARD, of Delaware, from the Committee on the Judiciary, reported a resolution, that Messrs. Jesse D. Bright and Graham N. Fitch, whose election as Senators from Indiana is contested, and all persons protesting against their election, or any of them, by themselves, or agents, or attorneys, be permitted to take testimony on the allegations of the protestants and the sitting members, touching all matters therein contained, before any judge of the District Court of the United States, or any Judge of the Superior or Circuit Court of Indiana, by first giving ten days' notice of time and place of the proceedings, in some public gazette printed at Indianapolis.

The resolution was laid over for future consideration.

The Senate took up the joint resolution authorizing the President to present a medal, with suitable devices, to Commodore Paulding, commander of the home squadron, as a testimonial of the high sense entertained by Congress of his gallant and judicious conduct in arresting a lawless Cuban expedition, and preventing the same from carrying on actual war against Nicaragua.

Mr. CLAY, of Alabama, said it would seem like prejudging the question to discuss it at the present time, as the Committee on Foreign Relations had not yet made its report on the President's message, in reference to the arrest of Walker. The resolution should take that direction.

Mr. DOOLITTLE, of Wisconsin, could not foresee what might be the final disposition of the resolution, but he desired to state the grounds on which he deemed it his duty to introduce it. He wished to address himself calmly and dispassionately to the judgment of the Senate, because by appealing to any partisan prejudice or passion, he would not advance the object in view. He would speak frankly, for he felt deeply the importance of the proposition in the present juncture of affairs, which involved not only the character and conduct of a high and gallant officer of the Navy, but the policy of the present Administration on the neutrality laws, the law of nations, our relations toward the feeble Republics of Central America, and perhaps more than all other things, the honor, integrity, and good faith of the Government of the United States.

He referred to the history of Walker, who was first heard of as a military adventurer in Sonora, where, with a handful of his misguided followers, he was completely repulsed and defeated. He held, or seemed to hold, the power of the Government there, but he lost it by the same means that he acquired it—namely, by the sword. At Sonora he was rescued from inevitable destruction by the officers of the United States Government. Whatever power Walker had in Nicaragua was ceded upon his surrender at Rivas, whether it was *de jure* or *de facto*.

He read extracts of letters from Yrissari and Molina to the Secretary of State, to show their opinion of Commodore Paulding for arresting Walker and his men, and quoted from Wheaton and Vattel to sustain his positions. There are cases when it becomes the duty of officers to exceed the letter of their instructions for the purpose of more fully carrying out their spirit. Had Commodore Paulding quietly looked on, and made no attempt to interfere with the lawless proceedings of Walker, it might have been justly inferred that this Government was in collusion with him, and not acting in good faith toward Nicaragua.

He repudiated such an idea, and thought that all the power which Government possessed in the premises was centred in Commodore Paulding in good faith, and it would have been a fatal act for that officer to have neglected, upon a mere technical objection, to carry out the clearly expressed wishes of his Government. He argued that Government might justly be held responsible, not only for what they do, but for what they fail to do; not only for what is done by the Government itself, but for what is done by its citizens with the knowledge of the Government, when they had the power to prevent it.

Hence the neglect of this Government to prevent an expedition against Nicaragua being organized and set on foot within its limits, when that occurrence was notorious, and Government had full power to hinder it, would have been a just cause for a declaration of war by Nicaragua against this country, had it not been interrupted before the commencement of its execution. He might complain that the tiger had been let loose, but she could never complain that we had again chained him up. She might, indeed, complain that Walker had been allowed to remain in Nicaraguan territory, but not that our officers had entered her territory to remove him. The only regret that he had in this case was that, instead of sending a message of censure and half of apology, the present Administration had not fully and frankly avowed and justified the act of Com. Paulding.

Mr. BROWN, of Mississippi, moved a substitute for the resolution, declaring that the arrest of Gen. Walker and his followers was a violation of the territorial sovereignty of a friendly Power, and not being sanctioned by any existing law, Congress disavows the act, and expresses condemnation of Commodore Paulding for the outrage committed.

Mr. BROWN, in explaining his substitute, said that the territory certainly did not belong to the United States, and as we are not at war with Nicaragua, it was a violation of her territorial sovereignty that was invaded by Commodore Paulding. He had listened attentively to the remarks of the Senator from Illinois, to hear by what laws the act of Paulding was to be justified. The President said it was a grave offence, and although the President did not attempt to palliate it, he did not pretend to justify it upon any legal ground. If there ever was a fair election in Nicaragua, it was when General Walker was elected. Yet he had been called a pirate. If so, what right had the Executive to turn a pirate loose in the streets of Washington? But this was a mere pretext.

Then these facts being so, relative to the act of Commodore Paulding, all he asked was that Congress should disavow and condemn it, and the condemnation was placed on the ground that the act was disavowed by the Administration. If the act had been avowed by the Executive, he should have asked Congress to pass a vote of censure against the President, the Secretary of the Navy, or whoever gave the order. We have, indeed, fallen on strange times, when Paulding could say to the Secretary of the Navy, "you old fogy, you nincompoop, you are meddling with matters you know nothing about!"

The Secretary of the Navy, in reply, instead of reprimanding Paulding, said he rather thought he had a right to disperse of the naval forces as he pleased. If such a letter had been addressed by Porter, Elliott, or any of the old captains, to such Secretaries of the Navy as Smith, Thompson, and Southard, he would have forthwith been rebuked and punished. If the present Secretary does not think it proper to vindicate his official conduct, he can let it alone. The resolution the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. Doolittle) proposed, gives a medal to Commodore Paulding for his gallant conduct! Great God! Commodore Paulding, commanding one hundred guns, with five or six hundred men, captured General Walker and a handful of followers, who laid down their arms at the first