The Press.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1859.

THE WEEKLY PRESS,

For Saturday the 24th, is now out. The contents of this number are of a varied character. Besides its usual attractions, it contains the LATEST FOREIGN NEWS; interesting on the popular topics of the day; choice Literary reading, original and selected; Domestic and Foreign Markets, &c. Read the list of

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THE WEEKLY PRESS is furnished to subscribers at $2 per year, in advance, for the single copy, and to Clubs of Twenty, when sent to one address, $20, in advance. Single copies for sale at the counter of THE PRESS Office, in wrappers, ready for mailing.

FIRST PAGE.—Our Holiday Directory; Personal and Political. FOURTH PAGE.—Fugitive Negroes in Canada; News Items; Marine Intelligence.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22, 1859.

It requires no great sagacity to foresee that some great changes are fermenting in American parties, and that the Presidential contest next year will, in all probability, be decided, if not upon new issues, at least by considerations that six months ago would have been scouted by most of the politicians. I think I may claim for THE PRESS the credit of having predicted that no organization could succeed in 1860 that did not recognise in its creed a large element of nation faith. Events have been rapidly tending to this contingency, and it needed only the John Brown raid to unveil the fact to the public gaze. The triumph of Popular Sovereignty in Kansas has made so profound an impression on the public conscience that all other theories for the adjustment of the Territorial question have been discarded, or made contemptible by the contrast. INTERVENTION, whether for the protection or prohibition of slavery, is an obsolete idea, however leaders may advocate its application. President Buchanan's policy has, it is true, done much to sectionalize our parties. His early surrender to the fire-eaters on the Kansas question organized against the Democratic party, or rather against his Administration, a solid Northern antagonism; and his subsequent course has greatly inflamed and strengthened this opposition. In the meanwhile the Republicans were rather preparing for what seemed to be the approach of an easy victory than for the assertion of certain clear and acceptable principles. John Brown has come (and gone) to remind them, as well as all others, that it is impossible for any party to succeed that does not meet living issues in a flat-footed and sensible manner. They ought, for this reason, to take the accusations of the Administration with the greatest philosophy. It is so easy and so cheap a business to say to a great party that a great national calamity may be charged to their doctrines, that it is not to be wondered that Mr. Buchanan and his organs should have seized upon the Harper's Ferry tragedy as a good weapon to damage the Republicans. That was not only according to their tastes, but in harmony with the expectations of the extreme South; and both will make it their especial shibboleth for the coming year. The other side of the argument has yet to be made. The Republicans are silent enough under the indictment preferred against them. They sit like statues before the assaults of their enemies in the House. It would be advisable for those who are misunderstanding this silence to wait for the rejoinder. It may serve to clear up and complete the troubled history of these most troublous times. These are the days of mutations and repentances in politics. To forgive offences is the prevailing virtue or vice of our reigning politicians. Those who are now so eager and so fierce in their criminations of the Republicans have in turn taken to their bosoms far more offensive foes of the South than most of the leaders of that party. What men ever did more to sow the seeds of hostility between the two sections than John Van Buren, or his father, or John Cochrane, or John A. Dix, or Samuel Tilden, of New York, when with the Wilmot Proviso in their hands, they helped to defeat General Cass, and to fill the Northern mind with passionate hatred of the South? *There never was any great organized party in the free States against slavery till that day.* The Republican party is the natural offspring of the Van Buren revenge. And yet, all these malcontents have been forgiven and taken to the embrace of Mr. Buchanan and his fire-eating friends. Now, let us suppose the Republicans to make a short cut to the Presidency. Suppose they, like the Van Burens, make "a virtue of necessity," and become first-class conservatives of the existing school. They have not nearly as much to recant as the Van Burens, and if they canget the votes to back them in the work, they will be consecrated in the affections of those who now delight to assail them. Mark it!

I am not of those who believe that there is any immediate danger of a dissolution of this Union. Mr. Buchanan and his friends are of course anxious to create the impression that the dissolution is at hand. His party is in fact the party of disunion. Every step he has taken has been directly in the path to the overthrow of the Union. There is not an enemy of the bond that unites these States together, in the Southern States, that is not in a great degree his organ or his supporter—his confidant or his champion. There is not a Northern interest that he has not for them deserted or sacrificed in cold blood. There is not a Northern man that he has not pursued, if that man failed to come up to all the requirements of the South. And if ever we are sectionalized, the present Administration will have done the deed. Harper's Ferry has been a providence to James Buchanan, and if he can induce the people of the South to trust him for another four years, and can *again* cheat the people of the North with a declaration of devotion to Northern principles, his ambition will be gratified. In his blind infatuation he thinks the great Union meetings in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston so many tributes to *him*; and when a Southern Representative threats a dissolution in a torrent of invective against the Harper's Ferry insurgents, Mr. Buchanan causes himself to be set forward as the very man to stay the storm, which he, more than any other in this country, assisted to raise. Unless I greatly misapprehend the Union spirit now prevailing in our happy country, it contains no one ingredient of ordinary respect for his Administration, unless, indeed, those may be included who, like Mr. William B. Reed, force themselves into these meetings, only for the purpose of perverting them to the base uses of a treacherous and heartless Chief Magistrate. I look in vain for any such feeling in any of these assemblages. But this does not seem to be known at headquarters here. The patriotic action of the Ingersolls of Pennsylvania and Connecticut, of the Bridys and Bethunes of New York, of the Everetts at Boston, is so coolly appropriated by the President and his satellites as if that action was not participated in by men who are known to be openly opposed to the Administration from the beginning of its career. And when it is recollected that in anything that Charleston may do, from present appearances, the Disunionists and the Administration must control, or that they will bolt its action, the idea of a Northern Union sentiment being made to bear the appearance of sympathy with Mr. Buchanan and his policy is as wicked as it is absurd.

The response to these Union demonstrations on the part of the Southern secessionists, in Congress and elsewhere, has not been cordial. They have failed to awaken a reciprocal feeling in that quarter. Otherwise, they have produced the happiest effects. They have not been managed by the leaders only, and, apart from all other motives, they reflect the real feeling of the people in favor of the union of the States, however the people may think of slavery in the abstract. They speak not only for Democrats of all shades of opinion, but for the mass of the Republicans and the Americans. That such manifestation should not be agreeable to the Southern fire-eaters is to be expected. These agitators want disunion for the sake of disunion. They choose to misunderstand any expression of conservatism in our quarter of the Union. They declare all Northern Democrats as unsound or "rotten," as Mr. Senator Iverson said a few days ago. They say all the Republicans are responsible for the John Brown raid, and they are ready to unite with any party, however odious, that goes the length of their exactions. Those are the authors of the expulsion of Northern merchants and mechanics from the slave States; of the embargo against Northern manufactures in those States; of the dismissal of such school-teachers from Southern families as happen to have been born on our side of Mason and Dixon. And these are the men who will go to Charleston, if they cannot break up the Union before then, and demand to control the National Convention by insisting upon the adoption of resolutions putting slavery in the Territories *above the law*, and who urge the sacrifice of Judge Douglas—failing in either of which, they will go out of the Convention, and run on a Disunion issue against the Democracy. Nothing could give such men more satisfaction than the late exodus of students from our two ancient medical institutions—hardly excelled in the world, and presided over by national men and profound scholars and practitioners. They will greet the hot-headed young gentlemen who left these noble schools with rapture, and will hail their secession as a happy answer to the late great heartfelt outburst of popular reprehension of the John Brown raid, headed by our most eminent citizens. But though these influences seem to control the South just at this time, they will not muzzle and master it always—unless, indeed, the South should have resolved to go out of the Union under their counsel. Now, it is precisely such madmen as use a Northern President against Northern interests, Northern feelings, Northern men, and that upright, loyal, and conservative sentiment which put him where he is. Nothing compensated them for their failure to defeat him at Cincinnati, after he was elected, but an abject surrender to them; and nothing will gratify or satisfy them now, unless the men of the free States elevate slavery into an infallible good—sanctioned by history and sanctified by Christianity. Are we quite ready for this new appeal to our generosity?

There is little immediate prospect of an organization of the House. The South Americans will not go for an Administration man for Speaker, while the Administration leaders are denouncing them—and particularly in view of the pledge of the former to assist in exposing the corruptions of the President and his agents. Nor will the Administration men or Republicans go for a South American. Sherman comes within a few votes of being elected every day, but from present appearances he cannot be elected; unless Messrs. Adrain, Riggs, Clarke, J. G. Davis, Reynolds, (all of them elected by Republicans,) vote for him, as I think they should do, against *any* Administration man, and as they could do without parting with a single one of their Democratic principles. Mr. Sherman is a Republican, but I believe that if he is chosen Speaker he will be so fair to the South that he will take much of the wind out of the sails of the fire-eaters. And this is really what many of the disunionists fear.

Such, at all events, is the result of my ten days' experience in Washington. Home to-morrow.

J. W. F.

The Expulsion of Free Negroes from Tennessee.

A bill is now before the Legislature of Tennessee to expel all the *free negroes from that* State, on penalty of being sold into slavery. It provides that all free negroes found in Tennessee after the first day of May next shall be seized and sold if they are adults, and that the children shall be bound out. If the adults agree to emigrate to Africa some slight assistance *is to be afforded to them to reach that* country; or they may seek a master and go into slavery. The Nashville *Union* of the 8th contains an editorial advocating the removal of the free negroes, on the ground that they are an "objectionable class" and of "serious detriment to slave property." The same paper, however, contains a communication from Hon. JOHN CATRON strongly opposing the project. He presents the following arguments against it:

"My objection to the bill is that it proposes to commit an outrage, to perpetrate an oppression and cruelty. This is the plain truth, and it behoves us to mince words to soften the fact. Let us look the *proposition boldly in the face. This depressed* and helpless portion of our population is designed to be driven out, or to be enslaved for life, and their property forfeited, as no slave can hold property. The mothers are to be sold, or driven away from their children, many of them infants. The children are to be bound out until they are twenty-one years of age, and then to leave the State, or be sold; which means that they are to be made slaves for life, in fact. Now, of these women and children, there is hardly one in ten that is of unmixed negro blood. Some are half white; many have half-white mothers and white fathers, making a scale of 37½-100ths of white blood; many have a third crop, in whom the negro blood is almost extinct. Such is the unfortunate truth.

"This description of people who was born free, and lived as free persons, are to be introduced as slaves into our families, or into our negro-quarters, there to be under an overseer, or they are to be sold to the negro-traders and sent South, there to be whipped by *overseers, and to preach rebellion* in the negro-quarters, as they will *preach* rebellion everywhere that they may be driven to by this unjust law, whether it be amongst us here in Tennessee, or South of us, on the cotton and sugar plantations, or in the Abolition meetings in the free States. Nor will the women be the least effective in preaching a crusade, when begging *money in the North to relieve their children, left* behind in this State, in bondage.

"We are told that this 'free negro bill' is a politic, popular measure. Where is it popular? In what nook or corner of the State are the principles of humanity so deplorably deficient that a majority of the white inhabitants would commit an outrage, not committed in a Christian country of which history gives any account. In what country is it this side of Africa that the majority have enslaved the minority—sold the weak to the strong, and applied the proceeds of the sale to educate the children of the stronger side, as this bill proposes? It is an open assertion that 'might makes right.' It is re-opening the African slave trade in fact. In that trade, the strong capture the weak and sell them, and so it will be here if this policy is carried out.

"All over the State, those who are responsible for passing the bill will have to contend with fearful public opinion, made up of all the *women* who have moral characters and religious feelings; backed by the clergy, and assuredly by a very large majority of the members of all the churches; for we must carry along with us the important fact that numbers of the people sought to be enslaved, or driven out, belong to, and are members of our various churches and in full communion. Thus these great bodies of Christian men and women will quietly stand by and see their humble co-workers sold on the block to the negro-trader, is not to be expected; nor will any set of men be supported morally or politically, who are the authors of such a law."

The San Juan Affair.

A highly-respectable paper, published at Edinburgh, and called the *Scotsman*, declares that Lord JOHN RUSSELL had strongly intimated to the United States Government that under no circumstances could England agree to give up the island of San Juan. It adds:

"Some years ago, it seems, the American Government sent officially to the Geographical Society a chart of the boundaries under the Oregon treaty, with San Juan defined as belonging to Great Britain; and this is but one of many proofs of the entire groundlessness and wantonness of the American claim."

This is a bold charge, but the fact is that no chart officially issued in this country contains a boundary line giving San Juan to Great Britain. We have ascertained this by strict inquiry, and therefore set down the *Scotsman's* assertion as "a bold invention of the enemy." It is more than bold; it is reckless and unwise.

MR. HENKELS' SALE OF ELEGANT FURNITURE, at his warerooms, No. 524 Walnut street, takes place this morning. See Thomas & Sons' advertisements.

☞ Purser Smith, of the steamship Keystone State, which arrived yesterday, in forty-six hours from Charleston, will accept our thanks for files of papers in advance of the mails.

THE LATEST NEWS BY TELEGRAPH.

TWO DAYS LATER FROM EUROPE.

THE ASIA AT NEW YORK.

RUMORED TROUBLE BETWEEN RUSSIA AND CHINA.

THE PEACE CONGRESS.

RECOVERY OF GOLD FROM THE WRECK OF THE ROYAL CHARTER.

SPANISH AND TURKISH AFFAIRS.

NEW YORK, December 22

The royal mail steamship ASIA, Captain Lott, which sailed from Liverpool at 9.30 on the morning of the 10th inst., arrived here this morning.

The steamer New York arrived at Southampton on the 8th inst.

In future the North German Lloyds steamers are to sail from Southampton for New York, on Wednesdays instead of Tuesdays, as hitherto.

The Prince Albert, from Galway for St. John's, was appointed to sail the same day as the Asia.

The news by the Asia, is not quite two days later, as *the North American and City of Washington took out* telegraphic advices via Queenstown, to the afternoon of the 8th inst.

THE CONGRESS.

Additional adhesion to the Congress had been received at Paris.

Le Nord says the exiled sovereigns and the present chiefs of the Governments of Central Italy will plead their cause before the Congress by notes and memorials.

Advices from Rome say that the official invitations to the Papal Government were to be presented simultaneously by the French and Austrian ambassadors. The Vienna invitation was not expected to reach Rome before the 10th instant.

Baron Schleinitz, it is asserted, will sit at the Congress as representative of Prussia.

M. Mon will be the second plenipotentiary of Spain.

It is stated that the English and French Governments were consulting together upon an arrangement of the Italian question, which will not probably satisfy Austria, but which will encounter no serious objections at Berlin and St. Petersburg. Notwithstanding the objections urged against Count Cavour as the representative of Sardinia at the Congress, the report was repeated *in Paris that Cavour would be the plenipotentiary of* the King of Sardinia.

GREAT BRITAIN.

The directors of the steamship company, in view of their embarrassment relative to the Great Eastern, called a meeting of the shareholders for the 15th of December, but the subsequently issued a notice of their intention to postpone the explanations they intended to make for a month. Great dissatisfaction existed among the shareholders at this proceeding, and it was stated that, notwithstanding the action of the directors, a full meeting would be held on the day first named. It is said the directors had resolved to borrow money on the security of the ship.

The London *Times* in its city article draws attention to the injustice of Government to the Liverpool, New York, and Philadelphia Steamship Company, which is the only British line of trans-atlantic steamers without a subsidy, and which suffers great hardships in the absence of those profits and facilities which a mail grant confers.

Great success had attended the efforts of the divers at the wreck of the steamer "Royal Charter." About £180,000 sterling, or nearly half the amount of gold shipped in her, had been recovered, and great hopes were entertained of obtaining the *remainder*. The expenses in the recovery had not exceeded £2,000.

The ship "Belle the Friend," recently reached London with £224,000 of Australian gold on board.

The first letters of Arnstrong's guns had been proved at Woolwich with perfect success. They resisted the shock from the largest amount of powder it was possible to ram into them, and were afterwards packed in cases for transport.

At the Newcastle assizes, John Watson Moody, of Portland, Maine, mate of the American ship Mary, was tried for the wilful murder of Daniel Wheatham, an American seaman, on board the Northumberland docks, in August last. It was proved that the prisoner pulled Witham out of his berth, and knocked him down with a "knuckle duster," inflicting injuries from which Witham died in five days afterwards. The prisoner, on a verdict of manslaughter, and Moody was sentenced to penal servitude for life.

The four Liverpool merchants who wrote to the Emperor Napoleon, continued to be objects of reproach and contumely on the part of the Italians, some of whom a prosecution being commenced against them. At a meeting of the Liverpool Law Society, it was resolved that such proceedings would never arrive. *He did not desire a united South nor a united North.* He hoped all sections would be overwhelmed by the Republican party. Republicans would be victorious in the future. The wrong done to the South would be redressed. He would not vote for the repeal of the fugitive slave law, and he would not vote under any circumstances.

Mr. BURNETT. Do you speak for all who voted with you?

Mr. CAMPBELL. I speak for myself alone.

Mr. WARD asked Mr. Campbell if he thought the Democrats unite on Mr. Gilmer I am willing to unite and place him in the chair. [Applause.]

Mr. CAMPBELL said he was friend, said, when some of the Northern vote was the other day cast for Mr. Gilmer he was present when he was nominated by the Democrats and he intended, whatever be the result, to adhere to that position.

Mr. MORRIS, of New Jersey, said that he voted for Mr. Gilmer in good faith, and was ready to do it again.

Mr. MAYNARD said that he was authorized to say that Mr. Gilmer could get as many votes now as he did three days ago.

Mr. BURNETT said he had voted for Mr. Boteler, and would do so again against a sectional candidate, but would not be guilty of Black Republican votes for Mr. G. (laughter) by Thaddeus Stevens.

Mr. CLARK, of New York, remarked that he had put his vote for Mr. Gilmer, which was consistent in the opposition to the Lecompton policy of the Administration, and to the anti-Lecompton Democrat if Mr. Gilmer is again presented as a candidate by the conservative portion of the House he would vote for him. [Applause.]

Mr. BURNETT said if there was no other reason why he did not vote for Mr. Gilmer the gentleman was sustained by some of the most prominent leaders of the Republican party.

Mr. HARRIS, of Maryland, remarked that Mr. Burnett could exercise his own judgment. He was willing to intend to the political wishes of his Democratic friends upon the reason for voting for Mr. Gilmer assisted by Mr. Gilmer. At one time Mr. Gilmer's friends obtained fact that with the Democratic vote Mr. Gilmer can be elected, he put that gentleman in nom nation.

Mr. MILLSON, of Virginia, said that, without any desire of the Northern Democrats, he was ready to do any thing in his power to elect their nominee, even with the aid of the Black Republican. He had his friends were elected in opposition to the Black Republicans and the Buchanan Administration. They could, their force, have prevented the election of a Democratic Speaker, who would so form the committees as to stifle the investigations into the corruptions which they were expected to expose. He would support Mr. Gilmer, of a man who made a fortune by attending to his own business, and who never made a fortune by letting other people's business alone. He asked his colleague (Mr. Ruffin) if he would support Douglas, if nominated by the Charleston Convention.

Mr. BURNETT, of Kentucky, replied that he was not looking for the nomination of any but a contest between the Black Republican and a National conservative candidate, to run in Pennsylvania. At one time last night, under penalty of losing their pecuniary allegiance to party, he would rally under any flag of any man against a Black Republican. He would not be willing to follow. The Congress would have voted for the admission of Kansas under the English bill?

Mr. ANDERSON. I cannot emphatically "No."

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Mr. ANDERSON replied that he did not. He then proceeded to show that the Democrats could not elect their nominee, even with the aid of the Northern Opposition. He and his friends were elected in opposition to the Black Republicans and the Buchanan Administration. They could, their force, have prevented the election of a Democratic Speaker, who would so form the committees as to stifle the investigations into the corruptions which they were expected to expose. He would support Mr. Gilmer, of a man who made a fortune by attending to his own business, and who never made a fortune by letting other people's business alone. He asked his colleague (Mr. Ruffin) if he would support Douglas, if nominated by the Charleston Convention.

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