The Press.

VOL. 4.—NO. 131. PHILADELPHIA, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, 1861. TWO CENTS.

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PUBLISHED DAILY, (SUNDAYS EXCEPTED,)
BY JOHN W. FORNEY.
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THE WEEKLY PRESS
taken established on a secure and permanent foundation, but it is, in reality, a marvellous example of the degree of favor which a rightly-conducted
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can receive at the hands of a liberal and enlightened reading public. Our most grateful thanks are tendered for the patronage already bestowed upon us, and we shall spare no efforts which may serve to render the paper even more attractive, useful, and popular in the future.
The POLITICAL course of THE WEEKLY PRESS need not be changed upon here. Independent, steady and fearless, it has battled, unreservedly and zealously, in defence of the
RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE
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ALL SNOWED UP!

ALL SNOWED UP!

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THE PEDLERS' AND PILGRIMS' REST,
THE PEDLERS' AND PILGRIMS' REST,

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Some cases worth more than the money.
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AT AND BELOW COST!
We are determined to close
OUR ENTIRE STOCK OF CLOAKS,
and will offer extra inducements to purchasers until January 1.
Cloaks sold for
LESS THAN THE VALUE OF THE CLOTH!
Our extensive variety of
SHAWLS
we will also offer at greatly reduced rates.
DRESS GOODS IN EVERY DESCRIPTION
AT COST,
rather than carry them over to another season.
DRY GOODS FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS.
What is a more useful present than
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A handsome Collar? or
A handsome Shirt bosom?
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MEN'S AND BOYS' WEAR!!!
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And have now on hand a few superb, finished with "MOORE & CAMPION'S IMPROVED CUSHIONS," which are pronounced, by all who have used them, to be a superior to all others.
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H. J. HUBBS,
No. 45 SOUTH SECOND Street,
Four doors above Chestnut street,
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A large assortment of FURNITURE of every description constantly on hand, at the lowest cash prices.
oct 24

The Press.
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, 1861.

American Historians.

Best known in Europe as the Americans who have written history well are Bancroft, Prescott, and Motley. Of these, Mr. Bancroft has eminently distinguished himself as the Tacitus of his own country's annals. His History of America, now advanced to the great period when the Declaration of Independence was signed, is a work upon which the best criticism, because the truest, is to say that it is worthy of its glorious theme. It is the wish of all who admire it that its writer may live to complete it, and survive, long after that consummation, to enjoy the gratitude of his own country and the admiration of mankind.

It is greatly to Mr. Bancroft's credit that, from the time he published the first volume of his History of the United States, until now, when the work is advanced into the relation of our struggle for Independence, he has not allowed himself to be seduced, by any Delilahs of the imagination, into authorship of any other description. He made, as it were, a compact with the public to devote his life to the composition of his *magnum opus*, and he has steadily worked at it, for a period of over twenty-seven years. In that interval, it is true, he accepted the office of Minister to England, but employed himself there, thanks to the opportunities liberally afforded him by liberality of the British Government and of distinguished individuals, in examining the historical documents preserved in the State Paper Office, and in the archives of political families, some of whose members had taken part in the great events which he had to record. Had Lord Macaulay been as conscientious an author as Mr. Bancroft is, we probably should have had *his* history less of a literary torso than it is. He frittered away his time, during the last two years of his life, in writing biographies for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. We read them as they appeared in that work, and we re-read them, the other day, in that superb work of Macaulay's Critical, Historical, and Miscellaneous Essays, lately published by Sheldon and Company, at New York. Nothing can be more readable than these biographic sketches of Bishop Atterbury, John Bunyan, Oliver Goldsmith, Samuel Johnson, and William Pitt, but the last three, almost equal in extent to half a volume of the history of England, diverted him from the prosecution of that work, to which he was in a manner pledged. The two years they occupied him may actually have robbed the public of two more volumes of the History. Authors incur a great responsibility when they publish parts of works. For example, of Alibone's Dictionary of British and American Authors, the first volume has appeared, and the author, we hope, is deeply impressed with the conscientious conviction that, resisting all temptations to other work, he must steadily proceed to complete *this*. His *first* volume, the utility and accuracy of which we have almost daily experience of, (it is the book nearest our hand and oftenest referred to,) was in itself a promise and pledge to the public that he would advance as rapidly as he could towards the completion of the *second*.

Prescott, so recently taken from us, established a world-wide reputation by the brilliancy as well as the fidelity of his writing. His Histories of the Conquests of Mexico and Peru at once superseded Dr. Robertson's American Annals, and there surely is as much history as biography in his Lives of Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles the Fifth, and Philip the Second.

Mr. Motley is the latest of this trinity of great American historians. We well remember how completely the world was taken by surprise by his first work of note, "The Rise of the Dutch Republic: a History," in three volumes, published in 1856. His antecedents had not led the world to expect such a work as this. Born in 1814, he graduated at Harvard in 1831, and continued his studies at the Universities of Gottingen and Berlin, successively. Admitted to the bar on his return from a few years' residence and rather extensive travelling in Europe, Mr. Motley did not practice as a lawyer. His first works were historical romances, of mediocre merit, upon American subjects. He wrote a few critical articles for the Reviews, and little more was subsequently heard of him, until, after a lapse of over ten years, he "broke out twenty thousand strong, like an Irish rebellion," with his Dutch history, the merits of which were at once acknowledged, at home and abroad. The article in Vol XI. of the *New American Cyclopædia* upon Mr. Motley, says of this great work: "It was published in London in 1856 (3 vols. 8vo), and was at once reproduced in New York. It was also reprinted in English at Amsterdam, besides being translated into Dutch under the supervision of the historian, M. Bakhuyzen vander Brink, who prefixed an introductory chapter. A German translation was published at Leipsic and Dresden; and the first volume of a French translation, with an introduction by Guizot, was published in 1859. The sale of the work in England, to November, 1857, had reached 15,000 copies; and in America, up to June, 1860, 7,500 copies had been printed." Mr. Motley is LL. D. of Harvard, and D. C. L. of Oxford.

There have just appeared in London two new volumes, by Dr. Motley, entitled "History of the United Netherlands from the Death of William the Silent to the Synod of Dort. With a Full View of the English-Dutch Struggle against Spain, and of the Origin and Destruction of the Spanish Armada." This is a continuation of the History published in 1856, and we may look for its immediate republication here, by Messrs. Harper, of New York. Meanwhile, we are gratified in being able to give a few extracts, which will show what manner of book this is.

The London *Athenæum* is a critical journal of large circulation and some influence, which rarely praises even an English author until he has "won his spurs" without such aid, and seldom eulogizes an American book without as many "buts" and "ifs" as nullify the approval. The last received number (of December 15th) devotes nearly three pages to a review of Dr. Motley's new book.

It condemns it on the following grounds: First. That it devotes 1,100 pages to the history of the Netherlands for five years—forgetful that Macaulay expended four volumes, the same bulk as Motley's, upon ten years of the English Revolution. Secondly. That Dr Motley's is not a continuous narrative, but ebbs and flows, shifts and changes, from one country to another, knowing no unity of time or place. Thirdly. That "there is overmuch of detail in the dry and fruitless correspondence of Queen Elizabeth, King Philip, and Prince Alexander." Lastly. That he represents the English so unprepared for the Spanish Armada, that, but for certain accidents of wind and weather, of time and place, the Prince of Parma might have gained a victory over four million countrymen of gallant Dick Tomson." Who *he* was, we shall presently show.

On the other hand, the fault-seeking *Athenæum* says: "In the large labors of Dr. Motley's 'History of the United Netherlands' are combined an original study of events and characters—travels in many lands—inspection of the scenories of siege and battle—and researches among incdited letters and despatches in divers tongues. The historian has read the books of partisan writers. He has burrowed in the State Papers of St. James' Park, and has made his home in the archives of Paris, Brussels, and the Hague. He has also lived in the cities, traversed the sands, glided over the rivers and lakes and canals of the country, whose tangled and brilliant story he has undertaken to recount, for the express instruction of American and English readers. The results are in some respects splendid. Dr. Motley had a noble drama to produce—great actors to endow with life—great lessons in practical politics to enforce; and the few who may object to his work, on the ground of literary art, as well as the far greater number who will most strongly and conscientiously reject his views of the contemporary action of England, and of England's Queen, in the events which he describes, must give him credit for the full possession and constant exhibition of an uncommon amount of industry, ability, and fire."

It adds: "No one will find the chapter on the siege of Antwerp, or that on the league of Zutphen, or that on the resistance made by England to the Invincible Armada, one word too long. These chapters are, indeed, vivid, galloping, and pictorial in the highest degree. If Dr. Motley would, even now, cut away half the diplomatic correspondence, there would remain for us, with some conspicuous flaws, a noble and brilliant book."

Finally, the critic confesses, "Taking the 'History of the Netherlands,' however, as it stands, with all its merits and defects, it is a very precious gift. The five years covered by its illustrations are the years 1585-89. Of this period, Elizabeth, Philip, and Alexander are the leading figures—the siege of Antwerp, and the destruction of the Armada are the prominent events. The death of Sir Philip Sydney, at Zutphen, and the treachery of Sir William Stanley, at Deventer, are the most interesting of the episodes."

Here is a portrait of Philip II., of Spain, as he sits in his secret chamber at the Escurial:

"A small, dull, elderly, imperfectly-educated, patient, plodding invalid, with white hair and projecting lower jaw, and a dreary vinegar, was sitting day after day, seldom speaking, never smiling, seven or eight hours out of every twenty four, at a writing-table covered with heaps of interminable despatches, in a cabinet far away beyond the seas and mountains, in the very heart of Spain. A clerk or two, noiselessly opening and shutting the door, from time to time, folding fresh bundles of letters and taking away others—all written and composed by secretaries or high functionaries—and all to be scrawled over in the margin by the diligent old man in a big schoolboy's hand—style—if ever schoolboy, even in the sixteenth century, could write so illegibly or express himself so awkwardly; couriers in the court-yard arriving from or departing for the uttermost parts of earth—Asia, Africa, America, Europe—to fetch and carry those interminable epistles which contained the irresponsible commands of this one individual, and were freighted with the doom and destiny of countless millions of the world's inhabitants—such once. In the latter case, it would require no prophet to foretell the result.

It is reported that Mr. Buchanan has received informally the commissioners appointed by the rebels of South Carolina to negotiate for the public property in the harbor of Charleston and for other purposes. It is also reported that the President disapproved of the conduct of Major Anderson, who, being satisfied that he would not be able to defend Fort Moultrie with the few men under his command, wisely took possession of Fort Sumpter, where he could protect himself and the country from the disgrace which might have occurred if he had remained in Fort Moultrie. Being the commander in the harbor, he had the right to occupy Fort Sumpter, an act which the safety of the Union, as well as his own honor demanded. It is likewise stated that apprehensions are entertained that Major Anderson will be required to abandon Fort Sumpter, and reoccupy Fort Moultrie. There can be no foundations for such apprehensions, for surely the President would not surrender the citadel of the harbor of Charleston to rebels. Fort Sumpter commands the entrance, and in a few hours could demolish Fort Moultrie. So long as the United States keeps possession of this fort, the independence of South Carolina will only be in name, and not in fact. If, however, it should be surrendered to South Carolina, which I do not apprehend, *the smothered indignation of the free States would be roused beyond control*. It would not be in the power of any one to restrain it. *In twenty days two hundred thousand men would be in readiness to take vengeance on all who would betray the Union into the hands of its foes*. Be assured that I do not exaggerate the feelings of the people. They are already sufficiently excited at the attempt to dissolve the Union for no other reason than that they constitutionally exercised the most precious right conferred on them, of voting for the person whom they considered the most worthy and best qualified to fill the office of President. Fort Sumpter, therefore, ought not, and I presume will not, be delivered over to South Carolina.

I am not, however, pleading for the free States, for they are not in danger, but for the Union and the preservation of the Cotton States. Those who sow the wind must expect to reap the whirlwind. The leaders of South Carolina could not have noticed that we live in an age of progress, and that all Christendom is making rapid strides in the march of civilization and freedom. If they had, they would have discovered that the announcement of every victory obtained by the friends of the Nineteenth Century—Garibaldi—in favor of the oppressed of Italy, did not fail to electrify every heart with joy and gladness. Mark! "Where liberty dwells there is my country," was the declaration of the illustrious Franklin. This principle is strongly implanted in the heart and mind of every man in the free States, to be unfortunately absent in South Carolina. In order to convince them of this, it is necessary that a few facts should be recapitulated.

With all christianized Europe and nearly all the civilized world opposed to slavery, are the Southern States prepared to set aside the barriers which shield and protect their institutions under the United States Government? Would the separation of the South from the North give greater security to slavery than it has now under the Constitution of the Union? What security would they have for the return of runaway slaves? I apprehend none, as the number of runaways would be greatly augmented, and the difficulties which slaveholders complain would be increased tenfold. However much individuals might condemn slavery, the free States are pledged to sustain and defend it as guaranteed by the Constitution.

In conclusion, I would avoid the bloody and desolating example of the Mexican States. I am now and forever in favor of the Union, its preservation, and the rigid maintenance of the rights and interests of the States, individually as well as collectively. Yours, &c., JOHN E. WOOL.

GENERAL WOOL TO GENERAL CASS.
[Private.]
TROY, Dec. 6, 1860.

MY DEAR GENERAL: Old associations and former friendship induce me to venture to address to you a few words on the crisis of the country. My letter is headed *private*, because I am not authorized to address you officially.

I have had the pleasure the President's message. South Carolina says she intends to leave the Union. Her Representatives in Congress say she has already left the Union. It would seem that she believes herself to be constituted her own Union. Her Representatives in Congress say she has already left the Union. It would seem that she believes herself to be constituted her own Union. I command the Eastern Department, which includes South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi. I know me well. I have ever been a firm, decided, faithful, and devoted friend of my country. If I can aid the President to preserve the Union, I hope he will command my services. I have been, for over two years, prepared to leave Washington without every star in this Union is in its place. Therefore, no time should be lost in adopting measures to defeat those who are conspiring against the Union. Hesitancy or delay may be no less fatal to the Union than to the President, or your own high standing as a statesman.

Orders should be sent to Charleston to man the forts in that harbor. You have eight companies at Fort Monroe, Va. Three of four of them should be sent without a moment's delay to Fort Moultrie. It will save the Union and the President much trouble. It is said that to send at this time troops to that harbor would produce great excitement among the people. That is nonsense, when the people are as much excited as they can be, and their leaders are determined to execute their long-meditated purpose of separating the State from the Union. So long as you command the entrance to the city of Charleston, South Carolina cannot separate herself from the Union. Your presence will be found in no condition to induce an attempt to take possession of them. It might easily be done at this time. If you should not reinforce them it might, as she anticipates, induce other States to join her.

Permit me to entreat you to urge the President to send at once three or four companies of artillery to Fort Moultrie. The Union can be preserved, but it requires firm, decided, prompt, and energetic measures on the part of the President. He possesses ample power conferred on him by the Constitution and laws of Congress, and all will be safe, and he will prevent a civil war, which never fails to call forth all the baser passions of the human heart. If a separation should take place, you may rest assured blood would flow in torrents, followed by pestilence, famine, and desolation, and Senator Seward's irrepressible conflict will be brought to a conclusion much sooner than he could possibly have anticipated. Let me conjure you to save the Union, and thereby avoid the bloody and desolating example of the States of Mexico.

A separation of the States will bring with it the desolation of the Cotton States, which are unprepared for such a catastrophe. Their weakness will be found in the number of their slaves, with but few of the essentials to carry on war, while the free States have all the elements and materials for war, and are independent than any other people on the face of the globe.

Think of these things, my dear General, and save the country, and save the prosperous South from pestilence, famine, and desolation. Peaceable secession is not to be thought of. Even if it should take place, in three months we would have a bloody war on our hands.

Very truly your friend,
JOHN E. WOOL.

The Hon. LEWIS CASS, Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.

DUCK SHOOTING IN MARYLAND.—Shooting canvas-backs in the waters of Gunpowder river, Maryland, is esteemed rare sport. In the ducking season the birds frequent the river in large flocks, covering acres upon acres of the surface, and when they rise make a noise almost akin to thunder. The manner of shooting them is to erect "blinds," covered with sedge and seaweed, upon the shore, behind which the sportsman cautiously cre