

AGENCY.

V. B. PALMER Esq. is authorized to act as Agent for the 'COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT' and receipt all monies for Subscription and Advertising at his Agencies in Philadelphia No. 59 Pine-street. New York " 160 Nassau-street. Boston " 16 State-street. Baltimore S. E. cor. Balt. and Calvert-sts.

FRS. R. SHUNK EXECUTIVE CHAMBER, Harrisburg, January 6, 1847.

ARMY CORRESPONDENCE. OF THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT. LETTER III. PITTSBURG, January 6, 1847.

COL. WEBB: We are now in this place, and have been since Sunday afternoon. When I last wrote we were at Summitville. The next night we reached Amagh, and Saturday night we were at New Salem, which is twenty-four miles from here.

I have seen many things since we left Danville that I shall never forget. Through all the towns and villages which we passed, we received the most hearty congratulations, and often have the inhabitants of the country gathered in clusters upon the roadside to cheer us on our way.

But amid all this cheering, I saw many whose eyes were wet with weeping, and men and women whom I never saw, and never expect to see again, shook our hands while the big tear of paternal affection stood in the eye.

Since we have been in Pittsburg, I have had but little time to look about; however, I saw Mr. Henry Spaul, formerly of Columbia county, and Samuel Staddon of Robesburg. Pittsburg wears rather a gloomy appearance. There is a continual cloud of black smoke hanging over the place, which gives the buildings the appearance of age and decay while they are still new.

The progress of our age in civilization, has been distinguished in Pennsylvania, by the amelioration of the penal code, and her improved prison discipline. The organization of her penitentiaries, their domestic economy, and the care and attention to the support, cleanliness, industry, and moral instruction of their inmates; have secured the general approbation and confidence of our own citizens, and have excited the admiration of other States and nations.

The Philadelphia society for alleviating the miseries of public prisons, has exercised an efficient agency in producing these valuable results. In order that all the benefits of experience may be had and improved, they submit the propriety of making provision by law for obtaining annually, accurate information relative to the convictions for crime and character of the criminals, the condition and expenses of the penitentiaries and prisons of the Commonwealth, and the cost of supporting the convicts.

The motives of this society are so dignified, and the reasons they assign for collecting the information required are so conclusive, and ably represented in a communication which I have received from them, that I take great pleasure in transmitting copies of it herewith, in order that the philanthropic views of the society, and the importance of the subject may receive that early attention of the General Assembly which they so richly merit.

The government of Pennsylvania, and her literary, charitable and benevolent institutions, are among the first and best. The people are industrious, intelligent and enterprising. In time of peace, quiet and unobtrusive—in war, firm and decided. Blessed in her physical resources and institutions, and animated by the spirit of her holy religion, her onward course in improving her social condition is rapid. The great elements preserving, enlarging and perpetuating her greatness, is the universal education of her youth. In this, too, she has for a number of years advanced with the vigor by which all her great efforts are distinguished. The able report of the Superintendent, presents the steady and uniform progress of the system of com-

mon instruction. That it is yet imperfect, to some extent is true, may be freely admitted; but, who can doubt that the wisdom and energy which commenced, will mature and perfect it.

In conclusion, gentlemen, accept assurances of my hearty co-operation with you in all measures for advancing the welfare of our citizens, and uniting the honor and dignity of our beloved Commonwealth.

Yours, CHARLES W. FORTNER.

The latest accounts from Tampico, represent, that advices had been received there that the Mexican Congress had decreed that they will not tuck or treat of peace until every hostile foot has cleared Mexican soil, and every vessel that lines her coast is withdrawn. If this be true this war has but just commenced.

A Donation party will be held at the house of Rev. D. J. WALLER, on Thursday the 21st inst. in the afternoon.

Appointment by Hon. BENJ. CHAMBERS, Attorney General of Pennsylvania.

CHARLES R. BECKALEW Esq., to be Deputy Attorney General fourth County of Columbia.

The several Courts of this county commence their January term in Danville on Monday next.

John Yeager has been appointed Postmaster at Numidia, in the room of A. Dengler, resigned.

John Schmeck has been appointed Postmaster, at Cattawissa in the place of P. R. Baldy.

CIRCULAR.

The Democratic citizens of Pennsylvania who have not already appointed, are requested to meet at the usual places of holding their township and county meetings and select delegates equal in number of their Senators and Representatives in the State Legislature to represent them in the State Convention to be held at Harrisburg on Thursday the 4th day of March next for the purpose of nominating candidates for the offices of Governor and Canal Commissioner, and of performing such other duties as may pertain to them in accordance with the usages of the party.

By order of the Democratic State Central Committee,

JOHN C. BUCHER, HENRY BUEHLER Sec'y, Chairman. Harrisburg, Nov 28 1846.

Gov. Shunk's message which we publish this week, is one that does him credit, and it should be carefully read by every citizen of the State. He pays a becoming tribute to the Volunteers who have gone out from among us, to fight the battles of their country in a distant region, and recommends that provision be made by law for remunerating them for their sacrifices.

His exposition of our financial affairs, is, on the whole, of a cheering character, and the recommendation of a prospective sinking fund for the payment of the state debt, is well-timed and should be acted upon.

Gov. Shunk came into office at a dark period in the history of our state. A bankrupt treasury and a large and accumulating debt, constituted the facts of our financial position. Distrust of our ability to meet even the annual interest upon the state debt was general.—But, there was a confidence among the people that the Governor elect was thoroughly honest, that he had a good knowledge of public business, and that his administration would be economical, prudent and pure.

This confidence was not misplaced. The same and evil of reputation have been avoided. The state credit has been maintained amid all difficulties, and established upon a permanent foundation. The state expenditures have been moderate and the administration in all its branches has been pure and irreproachable. Political opponents too have been almost silent, for the simple reason that the administration, has been even in their apprehension, honest in its purposes and acts.

This message of Governor Shunk will add sensibly to his reputation, as it is an additional guaranty of the soundness of his sentiments; and its perusal will, in particular, be a source of gratification to those who cast their suffrages for him in 1844.

The Election for Regimental officers, of the second Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers, resulted in the Election of J. H. Broughton, Colonel, J. W. Geary, Lieut. Colonel, William Brindle, Major.

The War—The Washington Union makes the following remark in correcting one of the numerous rumors in circulation: "We have no idea that our troops will be withdrawn from the territory of Mexico, or our squadrons from her waters, of the preliminary and conditions of a negotiation. We had supposed that the President had defined his position in this respect too clearly to be mistaken."

of duty on imports is a topic that continues to divide public sentiment. In my message of the 7th of January last I took occasion to express the views which I then entertained regarding it, and to those views I continue to adhere. I can entertain no doubt of the constitutional power of the Federal government, to make such discriminations in the rates of duties on imports, as may afford reasonable encouragement to domestic manufactures and productions which may be injuriously affected by foreign competition. This is a power incident to every sovereign State, and as the separate States of this Union are by the express terms of the constitution prohibited from its exercise it follows, that unless it resides in the federal government, the United States are without this essential attribute of National sovereignty.

The extent of these discriminations, bearing, as they do, upon conflicting interests, and in some degree arraying those of one portion of the Union against another, can only be adjusted under the influence of the spirit of concession and compromise, which prevailed in the adoption of the Constitution itself. The history of our legislation on this subject, demonstrates most conclusively, that a tariff, to be permanent, which is so essential to the manufacturing, as well as all the other great interests of the Country must be reasonable and equitable, and that all attempts to establish a rate of ultra protective, to low horizontal duties, have only tended to keep the question in a state of constant agitation; than which nothing can be more prejudicial to the interests of the business community. I am, therefore, in favor of such just discriminating duties as may be sufficient to sustain all our great National interests against injurious competition from abroad; such as will give to the home manufacturer, and producer, reasonable profits on his capital, enable him to pay his workmen fair wages, without unnecessarily taxing the consumer.

Pennsylvania, possessing as she does, such vast agricultural, manufacturing and mineral resources, and commercial advantages, has a peculiar interest in the adjustment of this question, upon a permanent basis. Should the changes made in the rate of duties by the tariff act of 1846, affect injuriously any of the great interests of the country, we must unite our efforts to induce Congress, to whose care and discretion the subject is committed by the Constitution, and on whose wisdom and justice we may safely rely, to make all just and reasonable amendments.

From all the reflection I have been able to give this vexed and complicated subject, I am thoroughly convinced, that reasonable discriminating duties, such as can be permanently maintained, in connection with the operations of the Constitutional Treasury, and a sound currency, will do more to promote the permanent and general prosperity of all the great interests of the Country, than any other system of policy which can be adopted.—High duties, with the employment of banks as the depositories of the public moneys, and a consequent inflation of paper currency, by which the advantage of the duty to the home manufacturer and producer is destroyed, are as certain to hasten and aggravate those commercial revulsions, to which all nations are exposed, as profligacy and vice are to produce want and misery.

The repeal, or modification of the British Corn Laws, by which our agricultural produce are admitted into British ports, while it was a measure dictated alike by sound policy, and humanity, toward the suffering population of the United Kingdom, has had a most happy influence upon our farming interests. This measure has already augmented the demand for our bread-stuffs, at enhanced prices, and there is reason to believe, it will continue to increase permanently our agricultural exports, which cannot fail to add to the general wealth and prosperity of the State and Nation.

In my last annual message I expressed my views at length, in regard to the policy of the banking system, to which I respectfully refer. To the opinions therein contained, I continue to adhere. At present there is reason to believe that our banks are in a comparatively sound condition. Without ascribing this creditable and healthy state of things entirely to the policy which has been adopted, of limiting the amount of the banking capital, and making bankers individually liable for the payment of their debts, I am persuaded that it has a salutary influence in preserving the soundness of the currency, and that it should be adhered to indefinitely.

I refer you, with great pleasure, to the able report of the Canal Commissioners, for a detailed statement of the operations upon the public improvements, during the past year.

The economy, skill and integrity, with which they have been managed, for a few years past, have greatly tended to restore public confidence, and re-establish the credit of the State, and justly entitles every member of the respective Boards of Canal Commissioners, who has had an agency in producing this great reformation, to the gratitude and confidence of the whole community. I refer to the fact, with no ordinary satisfaction, that during the last three years there has not occurred, among all the officers and agents employed on the several lines of improvements, a single case of delinquency.

The improvement of the Ohio river, from its mouth to the city of Pittsburg, has heretofore been deemed an object of sufficient national importance, to claim the attention of the federal government. Numerous appropriations have been made for this purpose, but not sufficient to carry out any efficient and useful system. Many of the Western and South-Western States of the Union, are interested in this improvement. The connection, however, of the main line of our canals and railroads, at the city of Pittsburg, renders its improvement an object of the greatest interest to this State. If it were made navigable during all seasons of the year (except when ice-bound) for steamboats of a large class, it would add to the commerce of Philadelphia and Pittsburg and to the carrying trade upon the public works, an amount of business that cannot be readily estimated. I therefore suggest to the members of the General Assembly, the propriety of memorializing Congress on this subject, and pressing it upon the attention of the general government, unincumbered with any minor projects, as a worthy its special consideration and favor.

I refer with much satisfaction, to the reports of the Auditor General and State Treasurer. They exhibit in detail the condition of the finances of the State, and shew the laudable industry and intelligent care which these officers have employed in the discharge of their important and laborious duties.

Before the passage of the act of Assembly of last session, which transferred to the county in which the crime may have been committed, payment of expenses for arresting fugitives from justice, the State had become liable to various agents, duly authorized, to an inconsiderable amount. This liability could not be met, because no appropriation was made for that purpose. The individuals interested in this matter are justly entitled to remuneration, and I respectfully recommend that an appropriation be made to liquidate their claims. The amount will be laid before you by the Auditor General.

In consequence of the engagements of the Adjutant General in the organization of the volunteers for the service of the United States in the war with Mexico, his annual report upon our military affairs has not yet been received, as soon as it comes to hand it will be transmitted to the General Assembly.

The Act of the 20th of March, 1836, provided for the appointment and compensation of a State Geologist and his assistants, and a competent practical, analytical, and experimental chemist, for the purpose of making an accurate geological survey of the State, with a view to determine the order, succession, arrangement, relative position, and the dip or inclination, and the comparative magnitude of the several geological formations within the State, and to discover and examine all deposits of ores, coals, clays, marles and such other mineral substances as may be deemed useful or valuable. The State Geologist was required to make annual reports of the progress of the survey—to cause to be represented on the map of the Commonwealth, by colors and other appropriate means, the various areas occupied by the different geological formations in the State, and to mark thereon the localities of the respective deposits of the various mineral substances discovered. It was made the duty of the chemist, to make full and complete examinations, assays and analyses of all such rocks, ores, soils, mineral substances and mineral waters, as may be submitted to him by the geologist, and to furnish him with a detailed and complete account of the results so obtained. It was also made the duty, among other things, of the State Geologist upon the completion of the survey, to compile a memoir of the geology and mineralogy of the State, comprising a complete account of the subjects and discoveries embraced in the survey.

In pursuance of this act, a State Geologist and his assistants, &c., were appointed, who proceeded with the work, and the State expended upon it the sum of \$76,657.87. A number of annual reports were made, as provided by law; but the main object of the legislature, the publication of a complete memoir of the survey, exhibiting the results of the examinations, and embodying for the use of the public the vast sum of information, for which so large an amount of public money was expended, has not yet been accomplished. It appears to me that this subject is of sufficient importance to secure Legislative consideration.

Frequent complaints have for years been made by the people, of the time consumed in the Legislature by the passage of private and local bills, which greatly increase the business, and create subjects for repeal and amendment. Many laws are thus enacted which appear to be regarded as of little consequence or value, for of the acts of the last session, 43 remain in the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth which have neither been enrolled nor printed, because of the small amount of tax to which they are subject by the act of the 16th of April, 1845, has not been paid into the State Treasury. Thus, after the time in preparing and passing these bills has been consumed, and the cost of printing and transcribing them has been incurred; they are suffered to remain in the office, useless and neglected. This proves that much private legislation could be profitably dispensed with, and the time it occupies devoted to subjects of general legislation, by which the duration of the session would be shortened; and the expenses of government greatly diminished.

The progressive increase of the number of divorces granted by the Legislature, forces this subject upon the consideration of the General Assembly. It appears to be the settled policy of this State, to provide by law for the dissolution of the marriage contract, for other causes than adultery. These causes are enumerated in the Act of 13th of March, 1815. They embrace a wide range, and seem to provide for all the grievances that may arise in the matrimonial relation, which require legal interposition. Special acts of the Legislature for dissolving the contract between husband and wife, are calculated to arrest the attention of every good citizen, when it is remembered that the disregard of marriage vows, and facilities for releasing parties from their obligation, are justly regarded as strong indications of degeneracy in public virtue and public morals, and that a high regard of marital rights, and a sacred observance of marriage contracts, are among the strongest proofs of the progress of civilization, and of the influence of true religion.

The preamble of the act of 1815, commends itself to our approval by the wisdom and aptness for which it is distinguished. The Legislature there says: "Whereas the divine precepts of the Christian religion—the promotion of the best interests of human happiness, the design of marriage, and the object of parties entering into the marriage state, require that it should continue during their joint lives."

These salutary truths, so well expressed, present, in imposing terms, the duty of extreme caution in interfering with the sanctity of the marriage contract.

It may be true that cases occasionally arise of such extreme hardship; as to warrant the passage of special acts, of divorce; but such as require legislative interposition can but seldom occur, unless the wide range of the act of 1815 is extended beyond reasonable limits.

The signing of bills for dissolving the bonds of matrimony has always been to me a perplexing duty. I have hitherto given my assent to them, confiding in the judgment and discretion of the representatives of the people, to whom and not to the Executive, the facts of each case are submitted. But upon a review of the special divorces granted since the enactment of the act of 1815, it appears that there has been an alarming increase of them, which should, in my opinion, be arrested. During the first period of ten years after the passage of the said act, laws were passed for divorcing the

parties to *stare* marriage contracts; during the next ten years, *forty two*, and during the last ten years, *ninety* were passed.

I know of no change in the habits, manners, or condition of the citizens of the State, in their social relations, or in the increase of their number, that accounts for, or warrants this increase of divorces. It is possible that the cause of it may in a degree be found in the facility of obtaining legislation on the subject. Without further inquiry into the cause, the effect is, in my judgment, injurious to the public welfare, and should be strictly guarded against in future.

Whatever doubts may have been, or are now entertained, of the power of the Legislature to pass divorce laws, for any other cause than adultery, or to pass them under the provisions of the Constitution of the United States, that no State shall pass any law impairing the obligation of contracts, it seems to be conceded, against the opinions of many wise and good men, that the power may be constitutionally exercised, but in view of these opinions, the extreme delicacy and responsibility of granting these applications, appear in a strong light.

Under the marriage contract, important and valuable rights are invested in the parties, and heavy responsibilities are assumed which should not be disturbed, even when the power to interfere is unquestionable, without legal notice to the party who is to be affected by the proceeding, and a fair and open trial, the right to which cannot be doubted, and can only be secured by referring the parties to the judicial tribunals.

In every view I can take of his interesting subject, I am persuaded that these special legislative divorces, have a dangerous tendency, and that if the power to grant them is exercised at all, a proper regard for the public welfare requires that it should be limited to cases of extreme hardship and unquestionable propriety.

The progress of our age in civilization, has been distinguished in Pennsylvania, by the amelioration of the penal code, and her improved prison discipline. The organization of her penitentiaries, their domestic economy, and the care and attention to the support, cleanliness, industry, and moral instruction of their inmates; have secured the general approbation and confidence of our own citizens, and have excited the admiration of other States and nations.

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