

EDITORS.

S. W. ALVORD. NOBLE N. ALVORD

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There was a time when the death of John W. Forney would have made a wide gap in Republican politics and journalism, but that time was many years ago. Of late Colonel Forney has not been a conspicuous figure in public affairs. His literary activities were narrowed down to his weekly paper, and the political eccentricity, arising largely from personal friendship, which took him out of the Republican ranks last year and caused him to support General Hancock, ended his influence in party controversies. The fruitful period of his life began when he cut loose from the Slave Democracy, in 1855, and became a vigorous champion of the cause of freedom. He was a friend and adviser of Lincoln and of most of the statesmen of the war period, and did excellent service with his pen for the cause of the Union. Though he lost his grasp on public affairs in his later career, he never loosed his hold on the hearts of a large circle of friends. He was a delightful talker and a charming companion and he will no doubt be longer remembered in Philadelphia for his anecdotes and reminiscences, his after-dinner speeches and his genial personality, than for his political labors. When he controlled the *Press*, his editorial room, with its big bay window, used to be pointed out as one of the sights of the city. It saw a deal of good company in the course of twenty years. Few men of note visited Philadelphia without spending half an hour in one of its easy chairs, listening to Colonel Forney's cordial and entertaining conversation.—*Tribune*

The estimated loss of life in the Vienna theater has reached the appalling limit of 700. The mortality was increased by a terrible blunder. Some irresponsible person, with a view of preventing an explosion, ordered the gas to be turned out, and thus left the audience to struggle in the dark through the blind passages of the opera house. The exits were deficient in number and size and these were radical defects in construction. But doors will not insure the safety of an audience unless they can be instantaneously opened in a critical emergency. Mme. Hauk remarked to one of our reporters on Friday that she did not believe that the doors of our own Academy would be of much use in case of a panic or fire, as she had tried them during a rehearsal and found them all locked, with no keys in sight. What is needed in every place of amusement is a special patrol of watchers in front and in rear who will know precisely what to do in an emergency and who will have the means at hand of extinguishing fire and repressing alarm. Such a body of theater firemen and police should be thoroughly drilled by a competent captain.—*Tribune*.

Congressman Speer's declaration that he will never go into another Democratic caucus is exhilarating. He commands the support of his own constituency and finds himself in a position where he can dispense with his party associations. He perceives that the Virginia situation is repeated in Georgia with the debt issue left out, and believes that an independent movement will be started next year and a full State ticket nominated. His confidence may be overwrought, but there can be no doubt that it is a real vista that opens before his prophetic eyes, although his perspective may be slightly at fault. In any event, Mr. Speer will be an admirable leader for the independent movement in Georgia, whenever it may be successfully organized. The Solid South is a snell which may be cracked and punctured almost anywhere.

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