PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

The Controversy with the Two Congregational Churches Closed.

REPLY OF PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

Mr. Beecher's Statement of the Ecclesiastical Attitude of the Church—A Strong and Emphatic Statement—A Reconsideration of the Bowen Case in the Light of the Protest.

The usual Plymouth Church Friday evening prayer meeting, which was opened by Mr. Beecher, was shortened of its usual length in consequence of the extended business of the adjourned business meeting of the church, which was held immediately afterwards. Mr. Edgerton was appointed chairman. After the reception of the names of a number of persons who were candidates for membership, Mr. Sherman, the clerk of the church, said that before he read a letter which had been received by Plymouth church from Clinton avenue and church of the Pilgrims, Congregational churches, he desired to say that he had communicated by letter with the clerk of the Clinton avenue Congregational church in reference to this letter, in which he had drawn the clerk's attention to rules in the manual of that church which required that notice of regular and special meetings of the church should be given from the pulpit on the Sunday previous to the meeting, and asking the clerk to forward to him certificated proof that this requirement had been complied with. He had delivered that letter himself to the clerk, and though he had not received from the latter any written acknowledgment, the clerk had said to him (Mr. Sherman) that he might say unofficially that there had not been any notice of any of the meetings to which the letter he was about to read had reference to read or announced from the pulpit of the Clinton avenue Congregational church. Mr. Sherman then read the letter of these two churches, which has been already published. The meeting received it by a unanimous vote, and it was placed on the minutes of the church.

ANSWER OF PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

Mr. Beecher said that the letter that the clerk, Mr. Sherman, had read had been received by him, and on it coming into his hands he thought that it demanded the consideration of the brotherhood of the church. He had had the form of a reply drawn up, and he thought that not only his own thought, but also that of others should be sought, and therefore he asked several brethren to communicate to him their opinions in writing. From these he had drawn up a reply. He would move that the reply, should the meeting adopt it, be signed by the chairman and the clerk of the church, and forwarded to the respective churches. He then asked Professor R. R. Raymond to read this reply:—

THE REPLY.

To Rev. Richard S. Storrs, D. D.; Rev. William Ives Buddington, D. D., and Messrs. Richard P. Buck, Archibald Baxter, Dwight Johnson, Joshua M. Van Cott, Eli Mygatt, Jr.; Walter T. Hatch, Lucien Birdseye, Alfred S. Barnes, James W. Elwell, Harvey B. Sperman, Thomas S. Thorp, Augustus F. Libby, Flamen B. Candlee, Calvin C. Woolworth, Committee:—

Dear Brethren—Your letter of December 15 has been received and read to this church. It is largely occupied with explicit or implied comparisons between the Congregationalism of Plymouth church and that of the churches you represent. That there is a difference we admit, and since this may be our last reply to you, we feel that the time has arrived for a statement on our part, setting forth the principles which have constituted the inspiration of our history.

Plymouth church was founded at a time when the domination of ministers in newly formed Congregational churches in the city of New York had excited profound indignation; and its members were determined from the beginning to vindicate the rights of the brotherhood.

They refused to allow a council to organize them, protesting, in the midst of the service, and obliging the officiating minister to recognize the fact that of their own sole right and authority they organized themselves into a church.

They refused to allow their minister to preside *ex officio* at any meeting; and there never has been a formal business meeting of the church at which he has presided, unless elected by vote of the church.

They even went so far, in the earlier years, as to refuse to allow him to preside, except by special appointment, at the prayer meeting of the church, lest he might take advantage of that position to call, by virtue of a careless general consent, indifference or ignorance, irregular business meetings.

According to our rules, no business (with a single definite exception) can be conducted at any meeting of the church, of which previous notice has not been given from the pulpit; and in the 26 years of our history there has never been a case in which business of importance has been transacted by the pastor, or any officer or any committee, except as specifically determined by a vote of a called meeting of the whole church.

It is in view of this history and uniform practice that we declare ourselves to represent the Congregational polity more truly than either of the two churches in whose name you have called us to account. It is this history and constitutional policy of our Church which should be known by those who would fully understand the steps we have taken since your interference in our domestic affairs. It is this inbred and unalterable spirit of Plymouth church that is ignored by those who charge us with a change of ground in the interpretation of the rules of our manual given at our recent meeting. It is our adherence to this principle, that the authority of the church does not reside in the pastor, nor in any standing committee, but in the whole brotherhood itself, which constitutes our peculiar difficulty in dealing with committees professing to represent two churches of our near neighbors.

For it is well known that in neither of those churches has ever been heard the voice of the brotherhood in open and called assembly pronouncing upon the subjects alleged to be at issue between them and us. Your committees are but a pastoral emanation, authenticated by nothing better than a church meeting, the residuum of a prayer meeting, gathered without public call or notice.

While the whole spirit and temperament of Plymouth church, resulting from its origin and its management, on principles equally applicable to all Congregational churches, renders it averse to interference in its domestic affairs on the part of any other churches, it had this course been taken kindly and fairly by the whole brotherhood of both or either of the churches to which we have referred there would have been every disposition on our part to afford them all the light and knowledge that they reasonably could have asked. This we said, in substance, in our first reply; but it seems to have been unnoticed or forgotten. Instead of being thus approached, Plymouth church has been arraigned, catechized, conditionally judged and threatened, and all the questions of fact, of our independency, of our responsibility, of our relation to Congregationalism, of our competency to join in calling a council or to take part in one when called, have been determined for our instruction. Under the plea of a desire to be enlightened, a persistent attempt has been made to enlighten us. And this treatment, to which the self-respect of our church and its sense of the influence of its example and testimony would not allow it to submit, has proceeded from a joint committee which, whether technically irregular as respects both churches represented or not, was at least, in its origin and authority, so foreign to the habits of this church as to render it almost impossible for us to transact business with it.

We do not complain, brethren, of the phraseology of your letters. It is of the substance of the thing covered by that language that we complain. You have assumed, from the beginning to the end of your correspondence, an unwarrantable attitude towards this church.

We have hitherto waived these considerations and many others in the hope of an amicable adjustment. We have not used the material in our hands for an offensive warfare; and we hope to be spared the necessity of a course that could not be otherwise than injurious to the peace of the commonwealth of Congregational churches. And we do now again waive all these just and natural scruples in replying to your last letter.

But we wish it now to be distinctly understood that we must hereafter decline to receive from you documents which are not accompanied by proof of the authority of the whole brotherhood of your churches, regularly and deliberately conferred, and that we must decline to receive in any case, from them or from you, letters containing covert insinuations against the character of any of the members of this church.

With these reservations, we now proceed to answer your letter of December 15. In the first part of it you enumerate the points which you would probably have desired to bring before a mutual advisory council. But after this enumeration you proceed to say that the most recent declarations of this church have completely altered the whole case, and that, if these declarations are adhered to, you do not see how we could enter any council. We infer that you mean to withdraw your invitation, and we shall therefore postpone any discussion of its terms until it shall have been renewed by your churches. We do not decline to join in calling a mutual council; it is you who seem to us to have first offered an invitation, under dubious authority, and then withdrawn it.

In the second part of your letter you argue that the recent declaration of this church, quoting and interpreting its ancient and unaltered rules, constitutes a change in its position equivalent to a voluntary disavowal of Congregational fellowship. This is not the case; for Congregationalism is the conduct of the affairs of the church by the whole brotherhood, not embarrassed by the unasked interference of other churches. This view of it is, at least, as old as Plymouth church; it is as old as many Congregational writers who have expounded the principles which Dexter sums up in the following statement:—

"Christ, by his own voice and through that of His apostles, placed upon the local church the sole and final responsibility of its affairs—under himself."—Page 55.

"Not only did the individual churches, in obedience to apostolic counsel and under the apostolic eye, perform untrammelled all the functions of their church life, but the sole responsibility of their life and labors was laid and left upon them by Christ and the apostles, who everywhere recognized the right and duty of the brethren to make final decision upon all matters."—Page 47.

This view we also believe to be as old as the apostolic churches. The position of Plymouth church, deliberately taken at the beginning and never changed, is Congregationalism, as we understand it, hold it, and are determined to maintain it.

That it does not prevent a church from giving or receiving fellowship, advice and assistance is sufficiently proved by the whole history of this church and of hundreds of other Congregational churches. That we have not now suddenly invented, or discovered or remembered it may appear from the remarks made in the pulpit of this church last June, on the occasion of a collection for the Congregational Union, a copy of which, as phonographically reported, is appended to this letter.

We have no desire to interfere with the churches you represent in any course they may feel constrained to take. If they choose to withdraw from a truly Congregational fellowship it is their right so to do. But we have not withdrawn, and we will not withdraw. Nor can we surrender, for their accommodation, the fundamental principle by virtue of which we exist as a church—the principle of our solemn and sole responsibility to the Master for the management of our own affairs.

Wishing you the enlightenment of the Spirit upon your path of duty, and praying that you may be led to continue in that mutually independent fellowship and mutually voluntary and cordial co-operation which we have for so many years enjoyed, and which we have done nothing to disturb, we are

Yours in Christian liberty and love.

REMARKS OF MR. BEECHER,

June 29, 1873, in Plymouth church, on the occasion of a collection for the Congregational Union:—

Congregationalism is an independency of local churches. It asserts, as its prime idea, that each particular church is a perfect church, and that so far as discipline and government are concerned it stands without necessary allegiance or subjection either to any neighboring church or to any collection of churches. Congregationalism organizes itself just as the family organizes itself, each family standing on its own proper independent basis.

But then, as all families find themselves strengthened and comforted by instituting a relation of good neighborhood with near families, so Congregational churches enter into alliance with neighboring churches, and accept and render kind voluntary offices.

There is no ecclesiastical government between church and church. If a church needs counsel it asks it; if it does not want counsel it does not ask it. Every church is understood to be competent to the jurisdiction of its own affairs. If it be not, it goes for help where it thinks it can best get it.

I think the Congregational form is the best, though other forms are good. It is more in accordance with the Anglo-Saxon spirit and with our political institutions than any other form. Congregationalism is very much like our household independency.

We Congregationalists, because our churches are independent and separate, need, more than any others, to have voluntary fellowship; and, therefore, we call conventions from time to time. These conventions, however, have no authority; they simply have influence. We believe in influence, but not in authority, in such matters.

The reply was unanimously adopted by the meeting, and on the motion of Mr. S. B. Halliday, the name of the pastor, Henry Ward Beecher, was added to the signatures appended.

THE BOWEN PROTEST.

Mr. Sherman, the Clerk, read the following report, which was unanimously adopted:—

The committee to whom was referred the protest of Brother Henry C. Bowen respectfully submit the following report:—

In considering this protest it is necessary first of all to inquire what was the end designed to be gained by it? This end, he informs us, was to effect a change in the action of this church, by passing the following resolutions:—

"Resolved, That the action taken by this church in accepting a report of the Examining Committee and in dismissing certain charges against Henry C. Bowen be and it is hereby reconsidered.

"Resolved, That, as no evidence has been found to convict Henry C. Bowen of the charges made against him by Mr. West, such charges be and they are hereby dismissed."

The facts of the case are that the charges were dismissed by the committee for reasons asigned by them, and which they have stated in their report to the church.

This leads us to inquire whether the objections of the protestant are valid against that action. The duties of said committee as prescribed by the Church Manual are threefold, namely:—

"1. They are to examine candidates for admission to the church.

"2. They are to examine or investigate all complaints made to them against any member of the church, and to decide whether there is ground for trial.

"3. If they so determine they are to sit as a judicial body for the trial of members against whom charges are made."

Was Mr. Bowen tried before the Committee of Discipline in the exercise of their judicial power? If he was, then he could rightfully claim all the rights and privileges incident to such a trial. But such was not the fact. There was no regular trial of Brother Bowen before the committee.

What, then, was done? Simply this: The committee took cognizance of the complaint and of the facts of the case in order to decide whether there should be a trial or not. They are entrusted with powers to act thus, as a kind of grand jury, and they did not transcend these powers, but used them with wisdom and discretion.

They conferred with Brother Bowen by an official subcommittee, from whom he could learn all that was involved in the complaint before the committee. He was also called on by Brother Halliday, from whom he could obtain full information as to any charges against him. To the sub-committee and to Mr. Halliday he made statements which were reported to the main committee, and it was upon the ground of these statements that they resolved to dismiss the charges and not proceed to a trial.

This is the result which they reported to the church, and as it was regarded necessary, owing to peculiar circumstances, to make this report, it was necessary to make the charges and also the statements of Brother Bowen intelligible. The charges in substance were that Brother Bowen had violated a certain statement and agreement as to the pastor. They therefore reported what that agreement was, and also the statements of Brother Bowen in view of which they dismissed the charges. This statement was not needless. On the other hand it was indispensable to a just understanding of their action.

In view of this statement of facts it is obvious that all of brother Bowen's alleged causes of protest disappear. As he was not tried he could not claim an official notice of charges nor an interview with the person making the charges, nor a copy of the charges, nor a citation to appear, nor official notice of steps taken, nor opportunity of refuting testimony, nor an observance of the directions in Matt. xviii., 15-18. And yet the spirit of this passage was fulfilled in the appointment and visit of the sub-committee.

The protestant states that he had never thought of authorizing anything that should convey even the impression of a confession or an apology. No such charge or statement was made by the committee. But certainly the complainant did authorize the statement "that if on his part there has seemed to have been any departure from the letter or spirit of that agreement he regrets it exceedingly."

Reference is here made to the agreement with the pastor before mentioned, in which he says:—"I disavow all the charges and imputations that have been attributed to me as having been made by me against Henry Ward Beecher." And again:—"I sincerely regret having made any imputations, charges or innuendoes unfavorable to the Christian character of Mr. Beecher."

The protestant complains that a private agreement was dragged into the report of the Examining Committee. But the document had been widely published in the newspapers and had become public property, and was used by the committee as matter honorable to Mr. Bowen and just to the pastor. It was also essential to a proper understanding of their action.

It is not the rule of the Examining Committee to report to the church the result of inquiries which do not terminate in judicial action. But the ostentatious publicity which had been given to their proceedings, and the extraordinary and exceptional interest that had been awakened in the case, rendered it proper, both for the good name of the protestant and for the reputation of the church, that in this instance the results of their action, which was in the nature of an inquest or an inquiry whether there was cause for trial, should be reported to the church.

Your committee recommend the adoption of the following resolution:—

Resolved, That the protest of H. C. Bowen and the answer of the committee to whom it was referred be placed upon the records of the church.

EDWARD BEECHER,
WALLACE E. CALDWELL,
F. M. EDGERTON.

THE HALLIDAY STATEMENT.

A statement read by the Rev. S. B. Halliday, at a former meeting, in reference to an interview with Mr. Bowen, Mr. R. W. Raymond moved should be placed on the minutes of the church. Mr. H. B. White and Mr. West opposed this, and after some skirmishing, which seemed likely, if persisted in, to interfere with the general harmony, the matter was, on motion of Mr. Raymond, adjourned to the next business meeting of the church.

ROBBED AND ROASTED.

A Kansas City Man Brutally Murdered at Wichita—His Partner and Roommate Found Bleeding and Unconscious.

A Wichita correspondent of the Kansas City *Times*, writing from Wichita, Kansas, December 30, reports a horrible murder and roasting in that town on Christmas morning:—

Two young men named McNutt and Winner, recently from Kansas City, were engaged in the sign painting business, and had by their quiet energy and gentlemanly conduct secured quite a patronage. Christmas night they retired to their room about twelve o'clock. Their shop and sleeping room were over a millinery establishment on the west side of Main street, occupied by Misses Hanley & Farley. During the day before McNutt had received $500, which he had about his person when he retired. He also had an insurance on his life for $5,000. McNutt's wife lives in Kansas City. He was married about six months before coming down here, but his matrimonial life was not pleasant. Winner states that after they had retired McNutt got up and went out and looked out of the front window. He thinks it was about three o'clock when McNutt got up; that he put on his shoes, but no other clothing; that he returned to bed with his shoes on, and laid there uncovered; that he (Winner) talked with him awhile, and then seemingly dropped off to sleep; that he was awakened by a heavy blow on the side; that he sprang out of bed and called to Joe to look out, and ran for the door in the partition, and as he was passing through received a heavy blow on the head that seemed to go all through him. This all occurred after McNutt had gone to the window. About four o'clock the citizens were startled by the fearful cry of fire, and rushing from their houses they saw the lurid flames bursting out of this building, No. 73, west side of Main street. Among them they found this man Winner lying at the foot of the stairs, which were on the outside in the rear of the building, in a semi-unconscious condition,

WOUNDED AND BLEEDING.

They carried him to a drug store, when it was found that he had received a flesh wound in the left side and also a scalp wound. He was bruised about the forehead, badly scratched on the back of the neck and had a severe contusion on the left arm near the shoulder. When resuscitated he could give no account of the origin of the fire, or who assaulted him or what had become of McNutt, but those who were bravely battling the fire were

HORRIFIED

when the floor of the second story fell in to see, amid the curling, crisping flames, the white and ghastly face and head of a corpse, that fell with a dull, heavy thud, into the glowing embers below. Then it flashed upon them that murder, foul and damning, had been committed, and that the fire was started to wipe out all traces of

THE HELLISH DEED.

The body was horribly burned and past recognition. This is supposed to be the body of McNutt, who was foully murdered for his money and policy. There is a deep and damning plot that is yet to be unathomed.

DEATH OF A CENTENARIAN.

[From the Cleveland Herald.]

We are informed that Mr. John DeFord died on Christmas Eve, near Augusta, Carroll county, Ohio, at the advanced age of 105 years. He was born in the year 1768, seven years before the beginning of the revolutionary war. He removed from Maryland to Pennsylvania in 1792, in which State he served as one of the volunteers against the famous "whiskey rebellion." A few years later he removed to Ohio, and was one of the early settlers of Carroll county. He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church for more than 70 years and often sat under the ministry of Bishops Asbury, Bascom and other pioneers of Methodism in the United States. He was a farmer, and during all the years of his extreme old age enjoyed excellent health. His first vote for President was cast for Thomas Jefferson.

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS.

BOARD OF ALDERMEN.

An adjourned meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held yesterday afternoon, Mr. Vance, the President, in the chair. The newly elected Alderman, Mr. Edward Gilon, was present, and on motion of Alderman Kehr, seconded by Alderman Billings, Mr. Gilon's name was called, and after the reading by the clerk of the oath of office, Mr. Gilon answered to the call and took the seat formerly occupied by Alderman Clausen.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and adopted.

Alderman Monheimer proposed the following preamble and resolution eulogistic of Alderman Henry Clausen, whose term of office had expired:—

Whereas the period for which Henry Clausen was appointed as an Alderman of the city of New York, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Peter Gilsey, having expired and he is about to sever his official relation with the Board, be it therefore

Resolved, That in the retirement of Henry Clausen from the Board of Aldermen, by the expiration of the term for which he was appointed, the Board desire to express to him individually and collectively the high sense they entertain of his integrity and ability, and the fidelity with which he performed the duties of his office, and to convey to him their best wishes for his future well being and happiness.

The resolution was adopted and unanimous consent given to the ex-member, who replied in a feeling manner, alluding to the harmony existing in this Board, notwithstanding the diversified political opinions of the members, and at the same time condemning the various heads of departments for the limited patronage bestowed not only on him while a member of the Board, but on the whole Common Council. A few unimportant resolutions were then passed and the Board adjourned.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.

At half-past four o'clock yesterday afternoon this Board met—His Honor Mayor Havemeyer presiding—Recorder Hackett and all the members present.

Supervisor Van Schaick offered a resolution directing the Commissioners of Accounts to investigate the financial condition of the county, and that for that purpose they be empowered to employ clerical assistance, for which an appropriation not to exceed $5,000 was made. Referred to the Committee on Accounts.

Supervisor McCafferty proposed a resolution that the Corporation Attorney be directed to commence action against any and all parties who have defrauded the city out of any moneys. Considerable debate occurred on this resolution, in which Supervisors Monheimer, His Honor Recorder Hackett and Koch participated. On calling the yeas and nays to lay on the table, Supervisor Gilon made his maiden speech, deeming the resolution of Supervisor McCafferty of so much importance to the city that he hoped the motion to lay on the table would not be adopted, and he would vote no. The resolution was carried.

Premises Nos. 37 and 39 Bowery were, on motion, assigned as an armory to the Fifty-fifth regiment, N. G. S. N. Y.

The Board then adjourned to Monday, January 12.

PARK DEPARTMENT REAPPOINTMENTS.

The Commissioners of the Department of Public Parks made the following reappointments:—Frederick Law Olmstead, landscape architect, $6,500 per annum; J. Wray Mould, associate architect, $5,200 per annum; Julius Munepeirtz, superintending architect, $4,500 per annum; John Bogert, engineer, $5,200 per annum; Frederick L. Underhill and Charles M. Harris, assistant engineers, $1,800 per annum; Howard A. Martin and George H. Harrison, clerks, $1,500 per annum; Samuel T. Houghton, bookkeeper, $2,200 per annum; A. C. Pratt, assistant bookkeeper, $1,800 per annum; Frank A. Calkins and Max L. Thompson, surveyors, $900 and $1,200 per year; Otto Siebeth, draughtsman, $1,500 per year; A. Holengren, draughtsman, $1,200; Arthur Krause and Ed. M. Kemp, draughtsmen, $1,200; H. Hermans, P. J. Mahoney, Daniel Campbell and Edward A. Miller, rodmen; Charles S. Millard, Edward Van Valkenburg, Michael J. Kelley, chainmen; Patrick Phillips, Joseph K. Choate, W. A. Jeffers, M. G. Robinson, Frank Odell, John Gleason and Cortlandt E. Palmer, axemen; W. H. Salmon, tapman; Jonathan Gaddis, laborer. Appointments—William E. Beames, property clerk, $2,500 per annum; Carnot Meeker and Christopher Smith, foremen.

COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE.

Mr. Walsh, the new County Clerk, yesterday made the following appointments:—John Von Glahn, Clerk of the Third Part, Supreme Court, Circuit, in place of Thomas F. Gilroy, removed; Hugh F. Dolan and Thomas F. Grady, Recording Clerks in County Clerk's Office.

CITY AND COUNTY TREASURY.

Comptroller Green reports the following disbursements and receipts of the Treasury yesterday:—

Claims paid—Number of warrants, 14, amounting to	$175,804
Pay rolls—Number of warrants, 327, amounting to	94,176
Total	$269,980

RECEIPTS.

From taxes of 1873 and interest	$8,137
From arrears of taxes, assessments and interest	3,936
From collection of assessments and interest	2,448
From market rents and fees	275
From water rents	3,081
From permits to tap water pipes	23
From Bureau of Permits, Mayor's office	500
From fees and fines, District Courts	93
Total	$18,494

BROOKLYN TAXES AND ASSESSMENTS.

The taxes received in Brooklyn the month of December amounted to $3,830,744, against $3,998,874 received in the same month last year. The receipts of the year 1873 were as follows:—

January	$1,012,356	July	$528,909
February	700,321	August	307,645
March	400,115	September	147,012
April	332,314	October	134,613
May	446,572	November	178,224
June	320,310	December	3,830,744
Total			$8,403,211

In 1872 the amount aggregated $7,971,991.

THE BROOKLYN CHARITY CORRUPTIONS.

A meeting of citizens was held yesterday morning, at No. 325 Washington street, in response to an invitation issued by Supervisors Prentice, Fisher and Harman, to bring the charges preferred by the Committee of Supervisors against the Commissioners of Charities before the Governor. The following gentlemen were appointed such committee:—John T. Runcie, Thirteenth ward; E. B. Hale, Twentieth ward; T. C. Cronin, Sixth ward; Chauncey Perry, Seventeenth ward; ex-Alderman Douglas, Eleventh ward; George B. Farrington, Sixth ward; Dwight Johnson, Third ward. The committee will meet again in conjunction with the Mayor this evening.

THE STEAMER ETHIOPIA IN TROUBLE.

The new British steamer Ethiopia, which arrived off Staten Island on the 1st inst. from Glasgow, went ashore yesterday morning at high water while getting under way for this city, after colliding with the pilot boat E. F. Williams (No. 14). She lay grounded on the mud flat off Vanderbilt landing, distant about 150 yards from the shore. The pilot boat had three planks and plankshear in starboard side stove in, also covering board, two stanchions and part of rail. Efforts to haul the Ethiopia off were made by a tug and a Staten Island ferryboat, but unsuccessfully. Her cargo was partially discharged, and the vessel being lightened finally floated off and arrived at her dock during the evening.

ARRIVAL OF TORPEDOES.

The British steamship International, Captain Hayward, which arrived at this port on the 1st inst. from London, brings 614 miles of torpedo cable, weighing 750 tons, and some 20 or 30 torpedoes, ordered by the government, and designed for harbor and coast defence. It also brings a number of electric batteries, to connect with the torpedoes from the shore. The cable and torpedoes (the latter uncharged) were manufactured by the India Rubber Company of London, under an order given some six months ago, and in the ordinary course of preparation for any emergency which might arise. They are of an egg shape and constructed with conveniences for attaching them to the cable. The International is a telegraph ship, being especially arranged for the carrying and laying of cable, and her experience in this work has been extensive. She is now lying at Willett's Point, where her cargo will be discharged.

FIRE AT WILKESBARRE.

Destruction of an Opera House—Flames Raging Beneath a Crowded Assemblage.

WILKESBARRE, PA., Jan. 2, 1874.

Frauenthal's Opera House was burned last night, the fire originating in the explosion of a coal oil lamp in the basement, which was occupied by John Lynn as a restaurant. The first floor was occupied by Mr. Frauenthal as a boot and shoe store and by Mrs. Lengfield's dry goods and millinery store; the other portion of the building was fitted up as an opera house, and a large audience was assembled to witness the performance of a variety troupe when the alarm was sounded. The smoke rose so thick and fast that some persons were nearly suffocated before they could get out. The utmost efforts failed to stay the progress of the fire. At half-past ten o'clock the flames burst through the roof, and at half-past eleven the walls fell with a great crash. Fears were entertained that the flames would spread to the old wooden dwellings on the public square, but renewed efforts by the firemen, assisted by the snow on the housetops, prevented any further destruction. Frauenthal's loss is $60,000; insured for $10,000. Mrs. Lengfield's loss is $25,000; insured for $20,000. John Lynn's loss is $3,000; uninsured.

THE BUCHU CHIEF JUSTICE.

Pity the Sorrows of the Poor Buchu Chief Justice.

[From the Pottsville (Pa.) Standard, Dec. 30.]

Attorney General Williams still clings to the idea that he is destined to be the Chief Justice of the United States, and he has sent to Oregon for certificates of good character. We hope, for the sake of poor George, that some of them may not prove of the kind that Marryat's midshipmen used to write in the books of the bumboat men in Madras—for, if authentic, we deem it not unlikely that a few may prove more of a curse than a blessing. Williams deserves well of Fish & Co., for he gave his decision in the Virginius case just as he was directed by the powers that be; but we very much fear that the voice of popular opinion is too strong to admit of the Senate Judiciary Committee confirming the President's pet, for, if they do, their names will become as familiar as household words in the mouths of men. Anyhow we pity Williams; "hope deferred maketh the heart sick"—nearly as sick as we are of Presidential nominations.

The Appointment of a Buchu Chief Justice Belittles the Supreme Court.

[From the Lynchburg Virginian, Dec. 30.]

It was bad enough to appoint associate justices, as General Grant did Bradley and Strong, on partisan grounds, and pledged, as they were, to reverse a righteous decision rendered by a majority of the Court, headed by its Chief Justice; but it is worse, if possible, to have the head of the highest judicatory in the land—the man who is to preside at the trial, on impeachment of the President—selected by a party President because of personal obsequiousness or partisan services. It is monstrous.

There can be no doubt that, in the estimation of the country, it is belittling the Court which contains men who have served for years in that high position to place a new and inexperienced man over them, and especially such a man as Mr. Williams, of Oregon, is conceded to be.

George H. Williams a Demagogue.

[From the Sacramento (Cal.) Union, Dec. 23.]

The man Williams, whose name is now before the Senate for confirmation, is not the kind of person for Chief Justice. He is a politician with a blotched record, a creature of a railway company, an apologist for and an ally of election frauds. The *Union* never had any confidence in Williams since he, some two or three years ago, made a demagogue speech in San Francisco, intended to inflame the prejudices of the inconsiderate classes against the Chinese, and since he exerted himself, through such friends as ex-Governor Wood, of Oregon, in favor of the election of Gorham as Governor of California in 1867. He has never seemed to us to be anything better than a mere partisan politician, and his appointment to the Attorney Generalship, though we made no protest against it, because that would have been useless, has always appeared to us a mistake of the President. He came into the office by the aid of the railway corporations, over that honest man, Akerman, of Georgia, who justly insisted that the Pacific railways should be compelled to pay the interest on the second mortgage bonds of the United States, as the said interest falls due. Williams was put where he is by this railway power, and it would be an outrage to the country to promote him to the Supreme Bench as long as he is under reasonable suspicion of belonging to this power. The Judiciary Committee of the Senate refuses to recommend his confirmation. The Senate, so far, declines to confirm him. We are told by a despatch from Washington that the two Senators from Connecticut are opposed to him because, having closely watched the case, they have found him out as a weak advocate of the rights of the government in the Crédit Mobilier suit. This is in keeping with his antecedents and with his conduct in dismissing United States District Attorney Gibbs from office in Oregon because he did his whole duty in prosecuting the violators of the election law. The Chief Justice of the United States should be a great lawyer and a man above reproach. He should not be a partisan, nor under suspicion of corruption, nor trailing in the track of the railway oligarchy. Evarts, Cushing, Curtis, Pierrepont may be such men, but it is certain that George H. Williams is not. He should be compelled to resign the office he now holds, or, failing to resign, he should be superseded by another and a better man.

Uncomplimentary to the Buchu Chief Justice.

The Vicksburg (Miss.) *Herald* calls Attorney General Williams the judicial imbecile and Oregon ballot stuffer and corruptionist.

The Buchu Chief Justice a Petty Politician.

[From the Davenport (Iowa) Democrat, Dec. 27.]

We did, we own, think that Grant would have chosen some great lawyer, not some petty politician; some man known, respected and proved, popular with the whole people, and with a legal reputation above quibble, instead of a political nobody, whose continuous self-trumpetings are the only evidences of his existence; but, no. Grant goes his own way, picks public officials from amidst private friends, and the people of the United States must be thankful for what they get, and not anticipate miracles until a new dispensation.

The Buchu Chief Justice's Friends Deserting Him.

[From the Sacramento (Cal.) Union, Dec. 25.]

By recent advices from Oregon it appears that among those who were Williams' best friends a short time ago, and who were proud to hear of his nomination for the high office to which he aspires, there are but few now who wish to see him confirmed.

The Buchu Chief Justice Is the Last Straw on the Camel's Back.

[From the Portland (Oregon) News, Dec. 17.]

Consider the alarming and astounding spectacle of Judge Williams, the man who is accused of complicity with the corrupt rings that paralyze the energies of the country and disgrace its administration, and who is known to have sold a contract of surveying for $2,000, occupying the seat that Marshall and Taney have occupied! If this bitter cup shall be drained by the American people, then the lowest depths of their degradation have been reached. What further calamities to alarm the safety of the people or degrade their government can remain?

Another Mistake of the Buchu Chief Justice.

[From the Ogdensburg (N. Y.) Journal, Dec. 29.]

The nomination of Attorney General Williams is evidently distasteful to a majority of the Senate. On what ground we are unable to say. If it is because the Senate thinks his legal ability is not up to the standard which the duties of the office require, we think the majority is correct. His opinion in regard to the status of the Virginius, wherein, upon *ex parte* evidence introduced by one side to the controversy, he decides the conduct of the Treasury officers, who acted upon their oath in granting that vessel a register, a fraud, it seems to us is hasty and immature. It is strange that this vessel should be permitted to run on a bogus American register during these very years we have been holding Great Britain to account for misconduct in the Alabama matter, and that one of our armed ships should be twice ordered to convoy her safely beyond the reach of a Spanish gunboat. There is a very generally expressed opinion that Mr. Williams is not the proper man for Chief Justice.

How Has the Buchu Chief Justice Managed To Become So Wealthy?

[From the Syracuse (N. Y.) Courier, Dec. 29.]

The nation is to be disgraced by having such a man as Williams Chief Justice. Coming from the West to Washington a poor man, Williams has saved enough out of his small salary to purchase several hundred thousand dollars' worth of real estate in Washington and vicinity and elsewhere. How he has managed to do it is one of those things that "a fellah can never find out." If he has acquired all his movables and real estate in the same manner that Mrs. Williams secured her $1,600 landaulet—by coolly charging them to the Department of Justice or some other department—who will be the wiser? Williams will prove a valuable man to Grant. His powers of acquisition are special recommends to the good opinion of Grant, for he knows how it is himself. He will be a servile tool of his master, but an open disgrace to the country. Grant declared in his inaugural that he had no policy to enforce against the will of the people; and yet in defiance of the popular will, in contempt of the opinions and warnings of the independent republican press, and, notably, *Harper's Weekly*, the Albany *Journal*, Rochester *Democrat*, of this State, he cracks the whip over the heads of doubting Senators and forces the confirmation of Williams. Sad enough it is to behold such a spectacle.

Fretting the President's Stubborn Nature.

[From the Portsmouth (Va.) Enterprise.]

Any other President but General Grant would, ere now, have withdrawn the nomination of Mr. Williams for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, on account of the dissatisfaction which it has produced among all parties and the manifest unwillingness on the part of the Senate to confirm it. But General Grant has been so used to issuing orders and having them obeyed that the present opposition of the Senate has the effect of fretting his stubborn nature, and instead of listening to reason he persists in his unsuitable nomination and will endeavor to force the Senate to confirm it.

It is somewhat amusing that President Grant should retain in his Cabinet a man who, in the opinion of the Senate Judiciary Committee, ought to be in the penitentiary, and stranger still that he should seek to advance him to the highest position in the country, even higher than the Presidential chair itself—the Chief Justice of the nation. But different qualifications for the office are required now from those required in the days of Marshall and Taney, and a woman's influence has been sufficient to induce the President to forget what is due to the country of which he is Chief Magistrate.

BROOKLYN NAVY YARD.

The Arapiles Afloat Once More—Vessels Fitting Out—Three Hundred Men Discharged on New Year's Eve.

The Spanish iron-clad Arapiles was floated out into the stream from the dry dock at the Brooklyn Navy Yard about nine o'clock yesterday morning, the hated coal barge blockade having been raised the day previous. The greatest enthusiasm prevailed among the officers and crew as the splendid war vessel made her way into the channel. The men threw up their caps, danced and cheered wildly with the prospect of the voyage in store. An untoward mishap, however, marred their pleasure for a few hours. As the Arapiles was moving slowly along in the direction of the saluting battery, the cob dock facing the river, she grounded on the mud bank just astern of the receiving ship Vermont. There she was compelled to remain until the return of high tide last evening when she floated off. To-day she will take her armament on board from the dock, where the guns are now parked. She will sail on Monday.

The United States monitor Dictator, Captain Jouett, will not go in commission before Tuesday or Wednesday. She will carry a crew of 180 men; her destination is Key West.

The triple turreted monitor Roanoke, Captain George H. Cooper, will not be ready for commission until about the 15th inst.

The sloop of war Ossipee, which arrived at the Navy Yard yesterday morning from the Battery buoy, hauled into the dock at the foot of the avenue leading from the York street entrance. The sloop of war Florida has been removed to the cob dock, where she is moored, awaiting a coat of paint and the completion of some repairs now under way. She will be ready for commission in a few days. The engines of the Swatara, which are building in Washington, will shortly be ready to be placed in position on that handsome sloop of war.

The Tennessee will be towed over from Roche's dock, East River, next week, and be taken in hand by the Construction Department for completion.

The steam frigate Minnesota, which is almost ready to go in commission, and which was originally intended to reinforce the North Atlantic fleet, while the Cuban war cloud lowered over this nation, will, it is said, be ordered to the Mediterranean, there to relieve the flagship Wabash, of the European squadron. Several of the officers who were assigned for duty to this frigate, but who were detached when she was not required in Cuban waters, have applied to the department for reassignment, in event of her destination being as set forth—the European fleet.

About 300 workmen were discharged from the Navy Yard on Wednesday evening last, and a further reduction of the force is looked for next week. Notwithstanding the reduction of the numbers at the yard there is ample work remaining undone at this station for twice the present force of workmen.

EXECUTION DEFERRED.

Two More Weeks of Life Allowed to Joseph Baker, the North Carolina Murderer.

CHARLOTTE, N. C., Jan. 2, 1874.

The final preparations for the execution of Joseph Baker, convicted of the murder of Newton Wilfong, in March last, had long been completed, and to-day he was to have paid the penalty of his terrible crime, when a further respite till the 16th inst. arrived from the Governor at Raleigh. Baker, after repeated trials, was sentenced to be executed on the 12th of December last, but this he evaded by an escape under the most desperate circumstances, and while at liberty he made his way to within 16 miles of the Tennessee line, where he was recaptured by two North Carolinians for the consideration of $600, the amount of a reward offered for his apprehension. At the same time the Governor offered this reward he respited Baker until to-day, when he would have been executed but for the interposition of his wife and mother, both of whom visited Raleigh, where they succeeded by the most heartrending appeals for mercy in gaining this further respite. They arrived here this morning bearing the precious document, which once more suspended sentence of the law and revived another lingering hope of life and liberty in the breast of the prisoner.

There is more than ordinary interest felt in this case, the condemned being a white man while his victim was a negro, the race of the latter generally insisting that Baker would never be hanged, because "'Twas a nigger he killed." To-day the streets were thronged with negroes patiently awaiting the hanging, and when the news came of its postponement they slowly dispersed with decided expressions of indignation, and grumbling such expressions as "I knew it," "I tole you so," "I tell you dey aint gwine to hang dat ar white man," &c.

A FALSE TOCSIN OF ALARM.

**Shark