

Lancaster Intelligencer.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, JAN. 9, 1884.

The Law's Lament.

The Philadelphia ex-policeman, who was summarily convicted the other day of complicity in the Kensington bank robbery of ten years ago, on the testimony of the octogenarian witness who was then one of the watchmen, has been acquitted at a new trial which was given him. It was shown that the old witness had identified various policemen as the robbers, and it was clear enough that his memory was very unreliable, and the probability was that he was "erected." The assistant district attorney, who had drawn up the indictment against the man years ago, testified that it was only done as a matter of precaution and that the testimony of the old watchman was not then credited.

The case shows very remarkable deficiencies in Philadelphia methods of administering justice, and probably there is equal carelessness elsewhere. The fact is that a man who was entirely innocent was convicted of robbing a bank many years previous, and that the evidence was entirely insufficient. The judge neglected his duty in permitting the verdict upon such evidence. The district attorney violated his duty in asking for it. The prisoner was given no counsel because he desired none; he was willing to go to the jail from which he had just been released because, as he said, it was the best place for him, since he had no money and no friends. It seems that a man who wants to be convicted is very readily accommodated; negligent judges and careless district attorneys are ready to make the road very easy.

This man should have been tried on the indictments as soon as they were found against him, to have justice properly done. But when they were found he was already in jail under sentence for another offense. The law strangely prevents the trial of a prisoner who is under sentence. That law seems to need amendment sorely. There is no good reason to be alleged why a convict should not be tried as well during the term of his sentence as afterwards. It is nonsense to say that his testimony would be of worse quality while his sentence was running. To pigeon hole an indictment awaiting the termination of a long term of imprisonment is shown by this case to be wrong, and the slightest attention to the subject only is required to make it clear that the law needs amendment which postpones a trial until the witnesses are scattered and the evidence forgotten. A statute of limitations should run against indicted as well as undicted offenses; and judges and district attorneys should understand that it is their duty to detect innocence as well as guilt, and that the state does not propose to support men in its penitentiaries who seek them as houses of refuge, and do not regard them as places of punishment.

The time is nearly at hand again for the yearly meeting of the board of county auditors, and yet the labors of this body for last year have never been furnished nor their report made. How ever good their intentions and to some degree healthful the work done by the present board, the beneficial results of it are almost entirely lost by the long drawn out and tedious system of investigations which the board engaged in; and the public has very naturally come to regard them as a farce. Moreover, the surcharges by the board two years ago against derelict county commissioners, have never been pressed in the courts; commissioners and county solicitors come and go, but the legal assertion of the county's rights is never made, and its delinquent officials escape responsibility. There are some items in the county statement of the past year which deserve special attention, notably the allowance by the court of pay to court house officers for arranging the records and papers of their offices which it is the court's duty at the end of every official term to see are in good order; but we despair of the present board of auditors ever getting through with the business assigned them, and even the surcharges seem to be idle when the proper authorities do not press them to judgment. All the more, however, is the necessity plain of the people in this year of grace exercising the greatest care in the selection of county commissioners and auditors.

The Ohio Democratic Legislature nominated Payne a senator in place of Pendleton. They have done wrong in the judgment of their fellow Democrats in the country, who will accept the opinion of Judge Thurman as of more weight than the decision of the legislators. Mr. Payne was presented by his sons, one of whom is the head of the Standard oil company. Another supporter was Mr. Bookwalter, manufacturer of water wheels, who has achieved a place in Ohio politics by pecuniary expenditure. The third backer was McLean, of the Cincinnati Enquirer, which is a constant thorn in the Democratic flesh by reason of its wild wanderings from decent paths. Mr. Payne is a very respectable old gentleman, and of quite sufficient ability to adorn the Senate. Having reached three score and ten years, and being blessed with great wealth, he will have every inducement to make a good senatorial record. But the demonstration that the party in Ohio gives that it has fallen under the dominion of a disreputable element, is not pleasant to Democrats outside of Ohio. Still, we remember that it is Ohio, and that modifies the impression considerably, since we are so accustomed to Ohio waywardness and folly.

Mr. LUCIEN ROGERS, a local politician of the regulation Cameron type, and who has done good service to the State, has returned to the editorial management of the McKean county Miner, and simultaneously that journal discovers that Don Cameron will not be a candidate for reelection, and that John Stewart would admirably fit in that place. "Will you walk into my parlor, said the spider to the fly."

HEAVY SNOW STORMS.

SEVERITY OF THIS WINTER WEATHER.

Deep snowfall in Pittsburg and Terrible Gale Elsewhere—Trains Blocked, Cattle Starved—Labor Interfered With.

Snow fell incessantly at Pittsburg for 17 hours, and at 11 o'clock Tuesday night there was no indication of clearing weather. The snow is nearly two feet deep and the streets are almost blocked. The street railways, with the aid of sweepers and by placing four horses to each car, succeeded in keeping their cars running, but a number of the companies were compelled to stop at night, and it is quite probable that by morning travel will be entirely suspended. The street railways have suffered severely. Trains on the roads are several hours behind time, and in one or two instances the trains have been stopped by the snow. A passenger train became snow bound a few miles from the city and the passengers were forced to get out and walk to town in snow knee deep. A number of accidents have been reported by roads breaking, and if the storm continues a few hours longer the damage that will result to flat roof houses cannot be estimated.

Tuesday night, while a boy named A. Four aged 14, was shoveling snow off a four story house in Pittsburg, he fell from the roof and was so terribly mangled that his death is only a question of a few hours. About seven o'clock in the evening another accident happened, which may result fatally. A young girl named Annie Dunn was on her way to school, when she knocked from a roof with some snow struck her on the head and fractured her skull. She was removed to her home, where the physicians pronounced her injuries fatal.

A great storm on the Chesapeake—ton Weather, Snow and Ice.

A dispatch from Baltimore, Md., says: The cold weather which has prevailed since Friday night has almost entirely checked navigation in the Chesapeake bay, and the ice is fast in places. Tuesday, with higher temperature, a terrible northeast storm prevailed, with snow up to 9 o'clock a. m. and rain since. All the tributaries of the Chesapeake as far down as the mouth of the Potomac are blocked with ice. Several large steamboats which went into them on Saturday have not yet been able to get out. In the Susquehanna the ice is reported ten inches thick. In the Choptank navigation is entirely obstructed, and at Cambridge Bay, where a number of employes in the oyster packing houses are thrown out of employment. The suffering of those employed on the smaller class of vessels has been very severe. The harbor of Baltimore is kept open by the ice boats, but the river and bay are frozen as far down as Sandy Spring, a distance of nearly thirty miles. The heavy storm continues and may break up the ice in the bay, but will have little effect upon the rivers, which generally are well protected.

The greatest storm on record and twenty inches of snow fell in the city of Baltimore. At Wheeling, heavy snow fell until three o'clock Tuesday morning, an average depth of twenty inches being now on the ground. Trains on the Pittsburg division of the Baltimore and Ohio road and the Pittsburg, West Virginia, and Kentucky division of the Pittsburg, Cincinnati and St. Louis road are almost abandoned and trains on all the roads are badly delayed. Street car traffic was suspended early in the day one line substituting sleds in the place of cars. It is the heaviest and continuous snow storm on record at Wheeling.

Terrific Storm at Reading.

At Reading snow began falling about five o'clock Tuesday morning. A strong northeast wind drove the snow into drifts in the country roads, making travel very difficult. About noon the snow became very fine and soon turned into rain, accompanied by a roaring wind. The storm was terrific, the rain pouring down in perfect torrents. The snow in the city and portion of the city are flooded, and unless a change takes place soon, there will be danger from the river. Houses were unroofed and signs torn from their hangings. Part of the roof of the postoffice was blown off, and it is almost impossible for citizens to go out. The wind is blowing round the city and the storm is the severest known in ten years.

Snow fell continuously all day at Oil City. More than a foot has fallen, which, if it continues, will prevent travel on the ground, effectually blocks travel. A few trains which have arrived Tuesday have been late and brought in by two or three locomotives. Several have been unable to get through at all. Some are snowed along the route and cannot be reached by wire. It has been snowing constantly at Washington, Pa., since early Tuesday morning and the snow is about eighteen inches deep, the deepest it has been for many years. The night threatens to crush in the roofs of houses and people are engaged in removing it. A three snow storm prevailed at Wilkesbarre all day Tuesday. The terrible velocity of the wind, with the air full of fine snow, interfered with business generally and caused a suspension of work at many of the collieries.

WALLACE TALKS.

HIS VIEWS ON THE EXTRA SESSION.

Relations With the Administration—The Future Leadership of the Party—Wallace's Views on the Extra Session.

Yates reporter of the Philadelphia Record, yesterday, State Senator W. A. Wallace expressed himself freely with regard to the charges that he was responsible in any degree for the failure of appointment at the extra session of the Legislature. He said: "It was the interest of the people immediately represented, as it was of myself and of the Democratic party, to obtain appointment of the state in accordance with the constitution; and neither by vote nor by any other means could I have my full duty to bring that about. At the regular session I charged the Republicans in a public speech with a deliberate purpose to prevent appointment. I charged them, and subsequent events have confirmed me in my charge. The party with which I was connected in the Legislature met in caucus late in the regular session. In that meeting I affirmatively stated the proposition that they intended to prevent appointment, and that I was going to consider whether the offer of ten congressmen was not better than the law as it stood. For as the law stood, at a strictly partisan election we would get but eight members of Congress, whilst under their proposed bill we would get ten. It was not rejected without a vote. It was not intended by me to press it to a vote, but simply to suggest whether we should not stop and think of it. My effort was to suggest the thought, if it was not better than the law as it stood, than to be thrown over without appointment. The question was asked me whether I advised a bill. My reply was: 'I want its consideration by our people in the Legislature, for I fear we are to get no bill.'"

When asked how he advised the extra session Mr. Wallace said: "I thought that the Legislature ought to be called together, if at all, in January, 1884, for appointment and revenue bills together. I did not know the day before the adjournment of the regular session the succeeding day."

"How did you come to protract the length of the extra session?" "That was the result of circumstances beyond my control. I was placed upon the judicial appointment committee in the regular session. I was in favor of the passage of a judicial bill, and many members of the House said that but for my objection that bill would not have passed. When the Republicans made their ultimatum and refused to discuss the subject, I was constrained to believe in the policy of going to the people—not upon the issue of two congressmen or too few senators, but upon the broad ground that the Republican Senate had closed its doors against the representatives of the people and nullified the orderly processes of government. I believed that there was a broad issue upon which we could have won before the people, and that we would have thus escaped the charge of remaining at Harriburg upon our salaries. 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