

tion of government, and laws made in pursuance thereof, whose every principle is indirect opposition to such a prostitution of public trusts to private or partisan aims. That such is its genuine spirit, and fair intent, we know from the essential nature and idea of all government; we know it from what is patent in the documents themselves; we know it from the express declarations and acts of those who representatively framed them.

Had the makers of our General and State Constitutions been asked the question, whether they ever intended that any such principle should have place in the selection and appointment of public officers as is now openly avowed, can there be a doubt as to their prompt and indignant answer? With one voice would they have repelled the insulting thought. We all know this; every one instinctively feels it, the very men who practice this corruption, and attempt to support it on the indefensible grounds of party usages would never think of calling to its aid the original intent of the constitution, or of those who framed it, or of the generation whom they represented. What is it, then, but perjury, and perjury of a blacker dye than any which ordinarily consigns poor wretches to our state prisons in as much as it affects trusts so immensely higher both in rank and value? The neglect or contempt of the oath is truly regarded by the Great Roman historian as the surest sign of national degeneracy. "There had not yet come in," says Livy, speaking of the purer days of the Republic, "that disregard of an oath which now marks the age, or had men yet learned to force laws and institutions into an accommodation to their own selfish ends, instead of adapting their own manners of conduct to the higher aims of government." Such a contempt of religion, as well as of conscience, is involved in this abominable doctrine of "the spoils."

An abuse as impious, although of a different nature, is implied in the fanatical course of some, on the other hand, who would be ranked among the ultra-conscientious, and regard themselves as the very antipodes of the trafficking politician. Extremes here, as in other cases, seem to meet together. There are men who seek and obtain admission to Congress, and when admitted are prepared to take without scruple, an oath to support the Constitution—an oath of course reaching to every clause of the Constitution as much as though each had been verbatim repeated—and yet, with the deliberate intent of trampling under foot one of its most express provisions. They are too conscientious to perform what their very strange consciences will allow them most conscientiously to swear they will perform. This is deliberate, conscious, or conscientious perjury. Others, in vast numbers, take the oath as a farce or a form, without a thought of its real import, or the least intention of making its true spirit the religious guide of their political action. This is reckless, profane, contemptuous perjury—such perjury as quadrennially and annually ascends to heaven from every quarter of our land. Could the spiritual and invisible take visible form before us, we might see its black columns going steadily up and calling down the insulted vengeance of the Eternal Justice on those who could so trifle with the most sacred ideas of religion, as well as the most vital interests of humanity.

We have characterized the abominable practice as a breach of trust, and it may be well to insist a little farther on this most odious feature of its deformity. A breach of trust has ever been supposed to involve a higher crime than ordinary theft, or ordinary dishonesty, where no great confidence is reposed, and can not, therefore, be said to be violated. Private gambling is universally condemned as vile and abominable. But the private gambler, as we have said, gambles with his own property. The political gambler employs for this purpose the peoples' offices. The stakes are not his own, but deposits of the highest value committed to his care and keeping. Offices created especially for their most careful conservation, he regards in no higher light as the rewards of private partisan services, and the punishment of partisan opponents. What can be more utterly base than this? Trusts so sacred might well beget, in any sober mind, a feeling of religious awe, even without the religious solemnities of the oath; and yet, in relation to them, his philosophy, his morality, and his religion may all be expressed in the pithy yet abominable maxim: "To the victor belongs the spoil of the enemy."

So, to, we all condemn the practice of private bribery at our elections. The most corrupt politician will seek to gain credit by supporting the severest laws for its suppression. The very men who are guilty of the practice will join in its reprobation. But what is its petty moral enormity when compared with the wholesale bribery involved in the higher and more mischievous political corruption? Here, too, it may be said, the private briber bribes with his own money; whereas the politician who pays for partisan services, either prospectively or retrospectively (for either way it certainly makes no difference in the guilt) does so with what does not belong to him. He is not only guilty of bribery more mischievous and more corrupting, but adds to this the deeper and more damning guilt of a base breach of trust. He bribes men on the most extensive scale. He purchases votes; he bargains for political services; he hires political bullies, or pays with offices those who hire them; he has contracts with

political editors; he keeps in pay political organs; and to meet all these engagements, or these "fair business transactions," draws upon deposits of which he has been appointed the guardian for far different and higher purposes, or of which he seeks to become the keeper through a prospective credit grounded on the expected future practice of some unholy perfidy.

SUNDAY'S MAIL.

CHINA.

During the half month elapsed since the last Overland despatch we have not heard of any notable occurrence in connection with the movements in the interior of China. Of the hero of the rebellion and his army, excepting now and then a report of some point having been reached, or some town taken, we are in to all ignorance; and the same has to be said of the old court at Peking, from which there has not been any reliable information for a considerable period. A good many of the so-called latest Peking Gazettes having been fabricated at Soo-chow (a town midway between Canton and Peking; now in the hands of a body of independent insurgents).

At Shanghai the aspect of affairs is very bad. We printed a communication in our last overland summary, in which we were informed that on the eight day after the capture of the place the rebel leader hoisted the flag of the Nanking dynasty, and it was supposed that "the leader had been waiting for permission from Nanking" before so hoisting it. Since then, however, it has become known that the Nanking ruler will not promise to accord to the party in possession of Shanghai any kind of support, and have intimated that, as they have acted hitherto on their own responsibility, they must continue to do so, and be prepared to give up possession (if able to keep it) directly the Tae-ping Wang resolves on its occupation by his officers. This having become known to the general commanding the large body of imperialist troops encamped between Chin keang foo and Nanking, he was valiantly resolved on doing his best to get Shanghai again under the control of his royal master. If money can be raised it is not improbable that he will attempt to buy such possession; but money is a scarce commodity with the imperialists, and it is more than likely that there will be some fighting, and in the prospect of an evacuation, a ransack, before Shanghai's custom house is again superintended by the Taoutai-woo. Already there have been several encounters, in one of which, at but a short distance from its walls, the rebels were worsted and driven in. This took place within sight of several foreigners, who had a pointed opportunity for observing the total want of faith exercised by the imperialists. After firing away at one another for some time, the chief of the rebel party was seen to give his sword to his followers and to walk forward making gestures indicative of desire for a parley.—But his good intentions met no similar response; a party of the imperialists rushing on, seizing, and cutting him in pieces before the eyes of his comrades, who did the utmost to revenge his death, but with little effect.

From Ningpo, the next port south of Shanghai, the news is very threatening, the country all around, by advices to the 29th ult., being in a disturbed state, and a rising daily expected.

Amoy is still in possession of the rebels, and likely to remain so; although their ill equipped fleet, it is probable will be destroyed in detail by their opponents. The possession of the water frontage, however is not possession of the town, and there are but few prospects of an early resumption of the usual trade of the place.

The island of Formosa is also the theatre of an insurrection. Her Majesty's steamship Hermes, en route, from the Madjicosinabs to Amoy, called at Tai-wau-fu, and found the inhabitants battling with the soldiery, Captain Fishborne being begged most earnestly to supply some gunpowder. This request was refused, but only on handing them 18 cartridges was he allowed to take some coals he had requested might be furnished to him.

Between Canton and Hong Kong there is still continued fighting.

In Canton all is at present quiet. The period for northerly winds and incendiary fires, however, has commenced—that period which the peaceable disposed inhabitants have so much reason to dread.

At Whampoa the British Vice-Consul Bird is in some trouble. A Chinese female whom he had in confinement jumped overboard in the night, and was found in the morning hanging on a rope along side, dead. The friends of the deceased having sent threats to Mr Bird that his life should pay the forfeit, he has been constrained, in consequence, it is reported, to apply for removal to some other post in her Majesty's service.

UNITED STATES.

AUFUL CONFLAGRATION.—A more destructive fire than the awful conflagration of Saturday, it has not been our duty to record for a long time back. Within a few brief hours a great pile of buildings, full of bustling life and industrious activity were transferred into a mass of flaming ruin, and hundreds of artisans and working people, engaged in comfortable and remunerative occupations, were within the same short time, deprived of their employment, and thus thrown destitute upon the world. The fire commenced a little before one o'clock in the afternoon, in the extensive publication establishment of Harper & Brothers, just as the employees of the place were resuming their labors after the dinner hour. We have been at considerable pains to collect every item of in-

formation relating to the calamitous occurrence, and the subjoined may be taken as a fair statement of the particulars. We understand that the flames were first observed at the Cliff Street portion of the immense book establishment of Messrs. Harper and Brothers, which is located at Nos. 80, 82, 84, 86 and 88, Cliff street, and extends through to Pearl street, occupying the same number of buildings, namely: Nos. 325, 327, 329, 331, two of each were just erected and were just being finished off.

The fire broke out (we are credibly informed,) in a small room where the rollers were cleaned, at the back of the Press-room on the 2d floor of Nos. 329 and '31. There was a Plumber at work in the room who after lighting a lamp with a piece of paper, to extinguish it the sooner, threw the paper into what he supposed a basin of water, but which unfortunately was camphene; it immediately exploded and set the whole room on fire. The flames then communicated to a back room, kept exclusively for camphene, and from thence to the upper stories where an immense quantity of paper was at the time in a half dried condition. The building being filled with paper and matter of a light combustible nature, the ignition from roof to basement was almost like the flashing of powder. The flames burst through the partitions with great fury, and swept in all directions of the rooms, in the building until five of them were entirely enveloped in the flames.

A police officer who was on the ground at the time observed to some of the reporters: "When the report of fire was first given, I went to work carrying out boots, &c., bent on saving as much as possible. While I was taken the first armful across the street, I could see no smoke, or nothing else that looked like fire, and I thought that a bucket of water had ended the affair. In less than a minute I looked towards the building again, and flames were pouring out of every window, from the roof to the lower floor."

The alarm and panic was terrific among the male and female operatives, who barely had time to fly for safety, and many of the girls found no other means of egress except from the upper story windows, by the firemen's ladders. The City Hall bell continued to ring and all the fire companies in the district were speedily on the ground, and arranged their apparatus on both streets with such management as to play the most powerful streams to the best advantage. Their energetic exertions seemed to be of no avail, as the fire appeared perfectly uncontrolled, and kept increasing with great rapidity, the general alarm was then given by the firebells throughout the city, and the force of firemen was quickly increased by engine, hose, and hook and ladder companies from all parts of the city, Harlem, Yorkville and Brooklyn.

The flames made a complete sweep throughout the whole of the second floor of the centre building, thus cutting off the escape of those in the upper floors. On our arrival at the Cliff street entrance the scene was terrific. A number of girls were at the windows of the third and fourth story, several of them appearing perfectly panic struck. A ladder was raised, and a large number of them taken down in safety. Some, however, preferred jumping to running the risk of waiting for any other mode of escape. At least a dozen did so—their fall being broken by a number of bales of paper cuttings and remnants tumbled into the street.

We regret to have to say that one of the young girls that jumped from the window was seriously injured. She was first observed by a young gentleman doing business in Pearl street, who stood in a position to partially catch her in his arms. He held out his arms, but the female came with such a force that he was unable to save her from falling on the ground, yet the fall was somewhat broken by the commendable conduct of the gentleman in question—otherwise the unfortunate lady would probably have been instantly killed. As the poor girl came to the ground, she struck upon her hip, producing a dislocation, and other injuries of serious nature internally. A coach was immediately procured, and the sufferer was conveyed to her residence in 1st avenue. Her name is said to be Miss Lambert.

A young lad about twelve years old was injured on the head by the fall of a brick, and he was conveyed to a drug store, at the U. S. Hotel.

In the various departments there were some five or six hundred men and women employed, and as far as we could learn, these all escaped in safety, except some three or four of the females of Messrs. Harper's concern, who received slight injury. There were two young ladies rescued from the flames, with severe burns about their arms and breasts. They were taken to a drug store in Pearl Street, carefully attended to, and pronounced out of danger.

The flames having raged fiercely for about a quarter of an hour, it was thought that they could be deadened in time to save a portion of the establishment. The fire, however, became more and more furious, and it was apparently out of human power, to check the flames, and the fire swept all before it, through the solid block from Cliff to Pearl Street, and also other large buildings. Between 2 and 3 o'clock P. M., the appearance of the burning mass was awfully grand. By this time nothing was standing of Harper's immense warehouse but the outside walls, and within these the lashing flames realized a picture of a "lake on fire."

At this time, much apprehension was felt as to the extension of the conflagration, many fearing, and justly, that the flames would reach the adjoining blocks. The wind was very high, the huge coils of

the fire were carried off to the distance of Beekman Street, and even there fell thick and fast upon the roofs of buildings and heads of spectators.

The buildings on Cliff street that were laid in ruins and damaged, are enumerated as follows: Nos. 80, 82, 84, 85, 88, (all of these were those of Messrs. Harpers, and were consumed,) 90 and 62. The latter premises were occupied as a large carpenter's shop of Mr. Albro. Howell, and his damage was not very great.

In the above five buildings were the mammoth steam power presses of Messrs. Harpers, and as the fire advanced the beams burned away, and about 3 o'clock the floors and walls tumbled down with a crash that was heard the distance of a mile. Fortunately for the occupants of buildings on the opposite side of Cliff street, the building in question fell from the street. There are three other beautiful buildings of the Harpers, on the corner of Cliff and Ferry streets, which escaped any damage whatever.

The loss of property sustained by Messrs. Harper & Brothers, in buildings, presses, machinery, stock of paper, books, &c., together with the proof sheets of the next number of the magazine, and their trade for the next three months, will no doubt exceed \$350,000. This is but a rough estimate, and the firm themselves are unable to give any accurate account of their loss. Their insurance is between \$225,000 and \$250,000, half in City, and half in Country offices. Their insurance averages \$5,000 in each office with the exception of one policy of \$20,000, in a European office, either in Liverpool or London, the agency of which is in Boston.

We are informed that the mass of valuable stereotype plates owned by Messrs. Harper, are saved, as they were all packed away in the large street vaults.

The other losers of property in both streets will undoubtedly swell the amount to nearly one million of dollars in the aggregate. This enormous amount will fall heavily upon the city and country insurance companies.

CALIFORNIA.

Steamship George Law, John McGowan, commander, left Aspinwall at 10 o'clock, on the evening of the 1st instant, and arrived at Sandy Hook, this morning at 2 o'clock.

She encountered heavy weather on her passage homeward. Stormy head winds on the 4th, 5th, and 6th, and a heavy gale from the N. E., on the 9th and 10th, during which she passed several vessels lying to, but could not make them out.

She brings the California mails of Nov. 16, \$887,666 in treasure on freight, and 467 passengers.

The bridge across the Chagres river at Barbacoas is completed, and a train of five cars passed over it on the 24th ult.

The road to Gorgona will be completed by the 1st of January, and passenger trains will then run to that place, doing away with all necessity for boating, and confining the transit to railroad and mule travel alone.

The principal feature of news is the excitement incident to the reported discoveries of gold in the valley of the Amazon.

The fever says the Herald, prevails to great extent in the city of San Francisco, and extends throughout all portions of the State.

Two expeditions, having their heads in San Francisco, are now fitting out in the State; the destination of one is Peru, and the other Ecuador.

FROM SONORA.—The John L. Stephens, on her way home from San Francisco, reports 19th, at 5 p. m., spoke bark Caroline, belonging to Walter's Sonora Expedition. She reported having taken and declared the independence of Lower California. She has on board as prisoner the Governor of that province.

The bark "Caroline" also reported that Lower California, (Sonora,) had declared its independence of Mexico, and had elected two Governors.

By the brig Tryphenia, we have later news from Guaymas.

The British steamer Virago arrived in that port about two months since with news of the intended Filibuster expedition from this port. The information created a great excitement, which kept increasing till the Tryphenia sailed.

Shortly after the arrival of the news, about 150 soldiers, all the available force, was sent from Guaymas to Ures, with the purpose of being united there to troops from other quarters, to go to the frontiers and resist any filibusters that might approach overland. The idea prevalent with the Government appeared to be, that the only danger was from the invasion by land, and accordingly, the coast was to be left almost defenceless.

There were nominally about 600 troops in the whole state of Sonora; but there were no stores, no means of conveying supplies for the army, few good arms, little ammunition, and very poor clothing for the soldiers; so that the whole effective force of the State to be sent to any distance from the garrisons would hardly amount to 100 men.

It was reported that Gen. Tacon, an officer of reputation, was on the march with 2,000 of the oldest and best troops of the regular army from Guadalajara for Ures.

The Sonorians are said to have a lively hatred for the Americans, yet some of them desire to see the invaders. Nearly all, on hearing of the benefits which would ensue from the conquest, say they wish to be under the American Government. And the next moment if any one describes the evils of Yankee rule, they will visit upon them all the *carrajos* imaginable. In the interior, where the Apaches have lately been particularly troublesome, it is probable that the Americans would be received very cor-

dially. Indeed, the invaders, if they act judiciously, will meet with little opposition from the great majority of the natives; and all the foreigners desire nothing more ardently than to see Sonora annexed to the United States.

The harbour of Guaymas is excellent, one of the most secure upon the coast.—About 30 miles north is a second harbor, scarcely inferior, called the Morro Colorado where any invading force might land without any difficulty. This port is only fifty miles from Hermosillo, to which any invading force would necessarily go; and Guaymas is 90 miles from Hermosillo. There is no settlement at the Morro Colorado.

NOVA SCOTIA.

A VISIT TO THE HUMBOLDT.—The wreck of this fine steamer has attracted numbers of visitors during the last week to the unfrequented village of Portuguese Cove. All classes seem to take an equal interest in it—Clairical gentlemen, whose presence is always looked upon by Jack as ominous of wrecks, seemed to keep up the ill fame of "the cloth;" and every day some of these block-coated gentry were seen pacing up and down the deck like crows on a carcass. His excellency, and the Admiral's family rode down to the shore, to inspect the scene of the disaster, while at the same time, we noticed a gentleman taking a sketch of it.

On nearing the ship we found the little Dartmouth steamer engaged in transhipping the cargo, and looking smaller than ever beside her Leviathan sister.

We were much astonished in the midst of so much activity and bustle, and on an emergency where so much energy was required, to see crowds of strong, sturdy looking men, evidently fishermen belonging to the place, leaning idly on the side of the quarter deck, and gazing listlessly at those at work, while some village Hampden was decanting on their wrongs. This amphibious patriot was quite as modest in his expectations as most grievance mongers elsewhere are. The first item in his "catalogue of woes" was that the Captain was unreasonable enough to expect them to work for twenty shillings per diem! On enquiring, we found that the men had demanded ten shillings on the first day, fifteen on the second, and struck for more until they reached twenty shillings. Nothing can be more discreditably than such conduct.

Fortunately a sufficient gang was at hand to perform all the necessary labor; and the malcontents, looking very sulky, and not a little sheepish, were "left alone to their glory."

The tide was then low, and we were enabled to get into the saloon. The water on the leeward side had risen over the floor. Pieces of ornamental wood work were floating about; and the traces, where furniture, &c., had been wrenched off and removed, presented a sad aspect of destruction.

But there was still much that had not been displaced, and which, if a severe easterly gale came on, must inevitably be destroyed with the ship, and a large portion of the cargo.

The clusters of Grapes tastefully cast in broze, with which the panellings were adorned, and the pipes, by which the Saloon was heated by hot air and which were evidently for ornament as well as use, and many other valuable fixtures, were still there.

While rambling about through the Cabins, the groaning and creaking of the Steamer, as she strained heavily on the rocks, with every swell, induced us, as we have nothing nautical about us, and have a pious horror of salt water, to think "discretion the better part of valour," so we scrambled up on deck, and amused ourselves, by watching the sailors raising the cargo from the fore-castle.

Every box and bale, that came up was dripping with water—some of them we noticed marked "this side up with care," "to be kept dry," the owners, evidently, never having dreamed of such a mishap.

On enquiring from one of the officers the cause of the disaster, he informed us, that at seven o'clock a. m., they were near Sambro, where they took on board a fisherman, who represented himself as a Pilot, but pretended that he had left his Branch at home.

It was then quite clear. They soon, however entered into a dense bank of fog, and half an hour afterwards the Ship struck heavily on a rock. By reversing the engines, she was got off; but, as it was soon apparent that she was in a sinking state, the Captain determined to strand her. He accordingly ran her in the direction of the land, and the soon struck on a shelving ledge nearly opposite the village of Portuguese cove. Although not more than forty feet from the shore, the mist was so dense that they were unable to see the land. Their guns, however, had alarmed the whole nest of fishermen who soon swarmed on board and informed them of their position.

The conduct of the Captain and crew have been most praiseworthy. Every effort having been made to save all that can be preserved. The ship has been put in charge of the Hon. S. Cunard & Co; and we understand a powerful steamer is on her way from New York, with every description of motive powers for the purpose of removing the cargo, and, if possible of floating off the ship.

We fear the latter object can scarcely be attained. Every exertion, however, we are sure, will be made, to lighten this calamity, which it is said, is entirely attributable to the pretended pilot, who was "half seas over" at the time.—He may thank his stars, and the forbearance of the sufferers that he did not meet at their hands with the punishment he deserved.—B. N. American.