

Judge SMALLEY delivered an important charge to the Grand Jury in the United States Circuit Court, yesterday, on the law of high treason. He told them that the seizure of United States property and firing on the United States flag by persons owing allegiance to the United States, constituted high treason by levying war; that no State could absolve citizens from their allegiance to the General Government; and that neither South Carolina nor any other State could legally protect citizens of other States in waging war against their Government. He laid down the legal definition of treason, and declared it to be the duty of all good and true citizens to do everything in their power to suppress rebellion, expose treason and bring traitors to justice.

No new movements of importance have taken place at Charleston. Gov. PICKENS yesterday sent an Aid to Fort Sumter with dispatches for Major ANDERSON, but the nature of their contents did not transpire. The Legislature of South Carolina have unanimously passed resolutions declaring that any attempt by the Federal Government to reinforce the garrison at Fort Sumter will be regarded as an act of open hostility and a declaration of war. The resolutions also approve the action of the military in firing upon the *Star of the West*.

Messrs. HAYNE and HALL, the former a messenger on behalf of Gov. PICKENS, and the latter for Maj. ANDERSON, arrived in Washington yesterday afternoon, but neither of them at last accounts had seen the President or any member of the Cabinet, and the nature of their mission was not known.

Mr. BIGLER, of Pennsylvania, yesterday presented in the Senate a bill proposing amendments to the Constitution, to be voted on by the people on the 12th of February. This bill, which carries out substantially the ideas of Mr. CRITTENDEN, though with some variation of detail, will be found in full in our report of the proceedings. In the absence of Mr. CRITTENDEN and other Senators, Mr. BIGLER preferred to postpone its consideration and reference. During a brief discussion in relation to it, Mr. BROWN, of Mississippi, announced the secession of his State from the Union, and said that although he and his colleague, had not yet received official notice of the State's action, they should decline hereafter to take part in the Senate's proceedings. Mr. GRIMES of Iowa, offered a resolution, which was laid over, calling upon the President for information relative to the alleged intention of certain men or bodies of men to obstruct the free navigation of the Mississippi. Consideration of the Crittenden resolutions was postponed until to-morrow at 1 o'clock. Mr. POLK, of Missouri, then addressed the Senate, the subject under consideration being the resolution offered by Mr. HUNTER, of Virginia, calling for information regarding the attempt to reinforce the garrison at Fort Sumter. He found the Republican Party answerable for all the ills which now afflict the country, and insisted that the only means by which the Union could be saved was through such

guarantees from the North to the South as would assure the latter equal rights and facilities in it. In the House, Mr. ENGLISH, of Indiana, asked leave to offer a resolution, instructing the Committee of Thirty-three to report the proposition of Mr. CRITTENDEN for the pacification of the country, but objections were made, when Mr. ENGLISH gave notice that at the proper time he should move a suspension of the rules; and subsequently did so, but without success. Several measures were introduced bearing on the present condition of affairs, which were referred to the Select Committee of five on the President's Message. A resolution was adopted instructing that Committee to consider and report as soon as possible upon that portion of the Message which recommends that a vote of the people be taken upon the great questions at issue between the North and South. Mr. STANTON, of Ohio, made an effort to appoint to-day for the consideration of the bill providing for the organization and discipline of the militia of the District of Columbia, but he failed by one vote. The House then went into Committee of the Whole on the Army Appropriation bill, and the general debate which was on Saturday agreed to, was commenced by Mr. McCLENNAND, of Illinois, who took strong ground against the right of secession, and closed with an appeal to all conservative men to rally to the support of the Constitution and the Union. He was followed by Mr. COX, of Ohio, who will be succeeded by Mr. REAGAN, of Texas, to-day. Mr. CORWIN, of Ohio, presented the majority report of the Committee of Thirty-three; Mr. TAYLOR, of Louisiana, obtained leave to have the minority report printed, and the House adjourned.

In the State Senate yesterday, Mr. SPINOLA introduced a bill providing for submitting the Crittenden amendment to the people at an early day, and another for a more perfect organization of the militia. In the Assembly, Mr. BINGHAM introduced a bill to "further secure the people of the State against involuntary servitude." It is an anti-rent measure, and does not refer to negro Slavery. It provides that holders or owners of estates in fee shall not be liable to involuntary service or to involuntary obligations of any kind to any person as the condition or obligation of such ownership, except when such obligation has been made a lien on the premises by mortgage or otherwise.

By the *America's* mails, which reached this City yesterday morning, we receive interesting details of the important events that have lately occurred in China. The ceremonies observed at the signing of the Convention between Great Britain and China are graphically described by a correspondent of the *London Times*. Lord ELGIN entered Peking with great pomp and military display, and in all his actions endeavored to impress upon the Chinese mind that in agreeing to the establishment of peace, and signing the new Convention, he was conferring an immense benefit upon the people. Prince KUNG, the Emperor's brother, and the Commissioner appointed to negotiate, was treated with very little ceremony by Lord ELGIN, and the policy of attempting to overawe the Chinese, which the British have pursued from the outset, was strictly observed to the most minute particular. We have already given the points of the Convention, and print now the document in full. The land ceded to Great Britain is an insignificant strip of territory opposite Hong Kong—useful only to the British as a healthy locality for the rendezvous and encampment of troops.

The Trustees of Clinton Hall, where Mr. H. R. HELPER was announced to lecture last evening, on "Two Systems of Labor," refused to permit him to hold forth there, on the ground that the excited state of public feeling gave reason for apprehension of trouble. A crowd assembled in Astor place was disorderly in its expressions of disapprobation of Mr. HELPER and his principles. The Police finally dispersed it, arresting Col. H. H. TITUS, one of its ringleaders, who was locked up in the Fifteenth Ward Station-house.