EASTON GAZETTE.

WHERE THE PRESS IS FREE—"Literature well or ill-conducted, is the Great Engine by which ... Popular States must ultimately be supported or overthrown—RELIGION purifies the Heart and teaches us our Duty—Morality refines the Manners—Agric... makes us Rich, and Politics provides for the enjoyment of all."

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ADVERTISEMENTS

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From the Saturday Courier.

THE FRAUD UPON THE BANKS.

ARREST OF DR. WILLIAM H. ELDRIDGE, AN ACCOMPLISHED VILLAIN.

ACCOUNT OF HIS PAST CAREER—HOW HE OBTAINED $20,000 BY FORGED CHECKS—AND HOW HE WAS ABOUT TO MARRY A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG LADY OF THIS CITY. MOST PERFECT HISTORY.

Our readers will recollect the full account we gave, a few weeks since, of fourteen of the banks of the city and county of Philadelphia having been swindled out of about $20 000 by means of checks, which were afterwards discovered to be forgeries. We explained at that time the modus operandi by which the money was obtained from the banks.—It was thus. Accounts were opened with the banks, in the name of Vanarsdale Roberts, George M'Kee, and Steiner and Wood. It having been the custom for many of our banks, instead of paying checks drawn upon them, by those who had made deposites, to mark the word 'Good" upon them, underneath which the paying teller wrote his name,—the frauds upon the institutions which were swindled were perpetrated by the manufacture of false checks, upon which was forged the names of the paying tellers of the said banks These checks were deposited in the names of the pretended individuals above named and then, in one day, the money was drawn, and the accounts were closed with every bank where such fictitious deposites had been made; and when the exchange clerks, about 28 days afterwards, made an exchange of their balances with the different banks, the general forgery was detected.

That rogues have but little chance finally to escape, has been illustrated in the case of the individual who perpetrated these forgeries. Of course the officers of the banks had been constantly on the look out, and on Friday Dr. William H. Eldridge was arrested under circumstances which show him to have been in his own person the united firms, and the distinct individuals, whose names we have written as having made the fictitious deposites. As Eldridge has evidently been one of the most accomplished villains of modern times, we have taken great pains to collect (availing ourselves of all sources of information) a full history of his past career.

Oliver M Lowndes, Ex-Police Magistrate of New York, it appears was the gentleman who finally ferretted out the rogue. He has communicated to the Herald an interesting account of the Doctor, of most of the facts and language of which we shall avail ourselves in our perfect narrative.

Wm. H. Eldridge was born in the year 1809, at Woodbury, New Jersey, but where he received his scholastic lore is uncertain. The first we hear of him was as a compounder of drugs, at a store in New York. He was then about 16 or 17 years old, and was looked upon as "a smart clerk." Whilst he was there a robbery was committed, but he was not suspected. He shortly afterwards left his employers, and arrived in Philadelphia, where got a similar situation at the store of a Mr. Okey, cloth dealer, in Market st. Here Eldridge fell in love with a very pretty and pious young Quakeress. The day was fixed, the lady's friends not objecting, but fondly calculating on receiving the youthful Doctor into "the society;" and every thing progressed to the high satisfaction of all concerned. Before, however the happy day arrived, a discovery was made, which not only prevented the Quakeress from becoming the wife of the Doctor, but, sad to say, brought her to an untimely grave. Eldridge was arrested for the robbery of Mr. Okey, and confessed that a portion of the abstracted property had been left at the lodgings of his mistress. The lady was then arrested, but discharged. The Society of Friends, however submitted her conduct to one of their inquisitorial committees, who directed her suspension. Eldridge was tried, convicted, and sentenced to the Penitentiary for one year, but on furnishing testimonials of previous good character, his sentence was commuted to a confinement in the house of Refuge. Whilst he was in prison, the lady to whom he was to have been married, died of a broken heart; and partly in pity to him at that event, and partly from the application of some of his connexions, the magistrates of Philadelphia permitted Eldridge to be apprenticed to some merchant who was going to the South, and who promised to keep an eye upon him.

It would appear that this promise was not kept very faithfully, for Eldridge soon ran off, and was next heard of at Baltimore. In 1830, he married a Miss Carlton, in Philadelphia, and moved with her into the State of Ohio, where they lived nearly four years, and had three children. From this wife he ran away, and went to New York, and shortly afterwards got into the family of Dr. Valentine Mott, with whom he was a great favorite. At this time he was in the habit of contributing to some of the papers of New York, and at one period was connected with the New Yorker.

In the month of August, 1834, a check purporting to be drawn by the firm of Wanser & Harrison, for $540, was presented to the Fulton Bank, New York. This check was paid, but all attempts to trace the forger proved fruitless. Mr. Lowndes, who was then one of the Special Justices, was applied to, and after considerable search among other checks drawn by the same firm, it was finally suspected that the signature had been traced over a small draft which that firm had paid to Dr. Mott. The Doctor, however, repudiated this notion, and nothing came of the enquiry.

On the 13th of September, 1834, an account was opened at the Merchant's Bank, in the same city, in the name of Morgan & Drake. This account run until the 25th of November, when the person who usually made the deposites, paid in the sum of $2,892 41 The same day the whole balance was drawn out, and on the following day it was ascertained that part of the deposite consisted of three checks on other banks in the city which turned out to be forgeries.

Mr. Lowndes was again applied to, and he made a long examination of the checks, compared the signatures of those drawn out, and ultimately satisfied himself that the signatures of the three forged checks had been traced over three checks which had passed through the hands of Dr. Mott, and had been by him deposited in the Mechanics' Bank — These drafts were severally drawn by James Lorimer Graham, Samuel Cassidy, and J. H. Mason & Co. Many interviews took place between the Doctor and the Magistrate, for the purpose of ascertaining who could have got possession of these checks. The Doctor was confident that the drafts had never been out of his hands except to his mother who kept his accounts, and usually made his deposites. He said that the clerks of the Mechanics' Bank had either abstracted the checks for purposes of their own, or they had permitted some other person to use them. The officers of the Bank differed from the Doctor, and the latter withdrew his account in a huff.

On the same day that the firm of Morgan & Drake closed their account at the Merchants' Bank, a forged check was presented and paid at the North River Bank for $310 25. This check purported to be drawn by a Mr. Cassidy and being a very good imitation, was immediately paid. A short time after the man who presented the check had left, he returned and requested the officers of the bank to examine the check, as there was something suspicious about it. Being asked to explain himself, he said that he was crossing Pearl street in the morning, when a gentleman met him, who directed him to go to the Philadelphia steamboat landing and get a box, which he described to him, and on his way back to call and draw the check, and then meet him on the corner of Pearl and Fulton streets. He went first to the depot, but found no box like that described. He then went to the bank and got the money Crossing Franklin square, he saw the same gentleman walking on the sidewalk, and told him he could not find the box. The gentleman asked, "if he had been to the bank?" he said "yes," and paid him the money. The carman thought the whole affair was "very odd," and said he could not rest until he had been again to the bank to tell them what he thought about it:"

The cashier became alarmed, and sent for Mr. Cassidy, who pronounced the signature a forgery. The same day another man was sent to the Merchants' Bank, with a cheque for $1200, purporting to be drawn by the firm of J. H. Mason & Co. That bank teller asked the man who presented it some questions, and told him "that he dare say the money was wanted to take up a note, and that if he certified the cheque it would do just as well."

The man said he did not know, and departed with the cheque. When he arrived at his destination, the clerk told him "he knew nothing about any $1200, and that there must be some mistake."

The man then returned to the bank, and they sent for the drawer, and thus found out the trick.

In the month of June, 1835, some person opened an account at the Lafayette Bank, New York, in the name of Isaac J. Aymer & Co., and on the same day another was opened at the Commercial Bank, in the name of Wyeth and Cochrane. These accounts ran until the 13th of February following, when both firms disappeared from the city, and the accounts were overdrawn in the sum of $5,728.

Mr. Lowndes was a third time applied to, and he made such an examination of the checks used by these two firms, as satisfied him they were drawn by the same hand as signed the drafts on the Merchants' Bank, in the name of Morgan & Drake. It would seem also that he suspected *a person* then, and in our opinion he was not far out, but as nothing could be got hold of that would serve to fasten the guilt on *the* one, why the matter was permitted to drop.

Subsequently, Dr. Mott visited France for scientific purposes, connected with his profession. His late pupil took it into his head that he must finish his medical education in Paris, and accordingly soon after followed Dr. Mott to that capital of extensive medicinal science and skill. While there, he appears once more to have indulged in the natural propensities of his wicked heart, for he found ways and means to rob his late instructor of over three thousand francs, which we have reason to fear was indiscreetly hushed up, out of 'respect to his family'—a clemency let us remark, which is too often bestowed to the deep injury of human society. A rogue is a rogue, let him belong to whatsoever family he may; and if he has had the benefits of education and good society, and still sets at defiance all such advantages, there is the more reason why he should be made an example of, instead of his being let loose to gain an increased confidence in his schemes of villainy and rascality, and to perpetrate new swindlings upon the honest and the deserving

While the Doctor was in Paris he followed a mania, of which he appears to be possessed, for corresponding. He wrote long epistles to several of his friends in this country. Many of these letters were to ladies; and it is to this mania for corresponding that his present array may be partly attributed. One of these letters among many, is in the possession of Mr. Lowndes, and details the loss of the 5000 francs, which the writer would make it appear, was abstracted whilst himself and Dr. M. were viewing some natural curiosities on the road to Lucerne. He says that 'suspicion had fallen upon the Courier and Postilion, and that the Police had great hopes of getting the funds out of their clutches.'

The Doctor next figures in Paris in the winter of 1836, which was a very gay season there among the British and American residents. Several very curious affairs happened, which he describes in his letters to his fair friends. Mrs. Well issued cards for a grand party on one occasion. Her rooms were brilliantly lighted—the music ready—the supper prepared—but no guests came. The whole family were perplexed, but the next day unravelled the whole mystery. Some person had counterfeited the signature of Mrs. W. and sent an excuse to nearly every one invited saying "that the fete was postponed on account of a domestic calamity."

He returned from France about two years since. Soon afterwards he arrived in Philadelphia.—Here he promptly commenced operations of a rogue. He at once opened an account with nine different banks, giving the names which we have before specified, viz: George M'Kee, Steiner & Wood, and Vanarsdale Roberts. The Reporter of the Daily Chronicle has learnt that in the month of August last, he absented himself from the city, but returned and renewed his accounts with the banks in September following. He kept an active account in the Western Bank, until near the time of the recent exposure, a month previous to which he went round to the banks and presented his own checks marked 'good' by different tellers. This system of fraud was commenced about the 30th of April, and on the same day he went to Baltimore, and there wrote and mailed four letters to as many cashiers in Philadelphia, enclosing checks on the banks, represented to be marked 'good' by the several tellers, and requesting that the amount might be remitted in drafts, as Philadelphia funds were useless.

He then returned again to this city, three weeks since, when the plot began to unravel. A gentleman connected with one of the banks in New York, having learned that the letters in question had been written, was immediately reminded of the circumstance that Eldridge, after committing the forgeries in New York (which we have described), had gone to Albany and written precisely similar letters. The letters in the one case were compared with those in the other, and were found to be the productions of the same hand.

The rogue was now discovered, and on the intimation being given, Messrs. Cope, Sturgess and Paul went to New York on Tuesday evening last, and ascertained that on the following morning the Doctor left that city for Philadelphia. On Thursday the indefatigable clerks of the different banks concerned, discovered him in his office, on Carpenter street, back of the Arcade. After being very closely watched through the course of the day, by Messrs. Cope, Sturgess, and a clerk of the New York Bank, in the afternoon about 4 o'clock, he was recognized by the clerks of the Western Bank, as the identical individual who had placed himself before the banks as Vanarsdale Roberts. He was taken before Alderman Davis, where he was indentified by several other individuals belonging to the different banks. After a full examination, he was committed to Moyamensing prison.

There were found in the Doctor's premises, pro... valued at about fourteen thousa... dollars, which will do something to... ds paying for his swindlings. Of t... amount, five thousand dollars were ... Bank bills, a part of which only was on ...hiladelphia banks. He had no doubt take... good care to get an exchange of su... money, in order to put out of the wa... one circumstance which might ha... excited suspicion.

In the fall of 1838 it is believed that Dr. Mott s... his talented friend returned to New Yor... and in the following spring, Mr. Lowndes, though out of office, was consulted by the Directors of the Butchers & D... Bank, and the officers of the Seventh Ward Bank, in relation to a fraud that had been perpetrated on these institutions. This was a similar trick to that pra...ised on the Merchants' and other Banks, by opening two accounts, and overdrawing them by paying in checks on ..., and drawing out the credit before the checks could be presented. Mr. Lowndes said then that he was satisfied this fraud was committed by the same party, but that he was unable to trace it to him.

It would appear that *some person* has been, fr... time of the first application to Mr. Lowndes, in the year 1835, in constant correspondence with that gentleman on the subject of these mysteries; and that, when the recent forgeries on the Philadelphia banks came to light, the two gentlemen determined to try if they could not fix the guilt on the proper person.

For this purpose they wrote to Philadelphia, ... a description of the person who had drawn the checks, and appeared as the managing man of the three firms which had overdrawn their accounts to such an enormous sum. The description ... tallied with the person who was suspected by Mr. Lowndes and his friend. They then collected together all the letters of Dr. Eldridge they could lay their hands on.—For this purpose they applied to a number of ladies, and a mass of very curious and instructive MSS. were got together. On comparing these writings with the filling up and signatures of the real checks, the proof of similarity was irrefragible. The same character ran throughout, although much diversity of writing was evident. Armed with this proof, the three officers of the Philadelphia Banks were directed to trace out the residence of Dr. Eldridge, without Mr. Lowndes informing them of the lengths of the suspicions.—With some difficulty ... found out that the Dr. resided in Seventh street, and on their reporting this fact to Mr. Lowndes, the three officers were instructed to place themselves inside a house opposite the Dr.'s, and to see if they could identify any person who should have ingress and egress. They watched one day, and saw the Dr three times. That experiment satisfied them of his identity, and one of the officers of the bank took the the opportunity of his coming out, to invite the Dr. in a quiet way, to pay a visit to a sick gentleman close by. The Dr bowed, and they reached the residence of an Alderman, in an adjoining street, and there the cause of his visit was explained to the astonished M. D.

At first he was indignant; spoke of his respectable connexions, and of the improbability of his having committed such an offence. Bail to the amount of $30,000 was asked, and then some of the evidences of his guilt shown to him; it was then his spirit fell, and he gave vent to his feelings in tears. He was soon after conveyed to prison in a coach, but whilst on the road was seized with vomiting, and it was feared that he had taken poison.

The wardrobe of the Doctor, we are told, was most splendid; it presented over forty suits entire. Great scoundrels are always apt to understand the influence of fine clothes, and Eldridge is evidently well schooled in the externals of his profession of rascality. He had a large quantity of jewelry in his possession; and here we come most naturally to the last of the Doctor's essay at scoundrelism, which was to woo and win the heart of a beautiful and accomplished young lady, belonging to one of our richest & most respectable families, to whom he was about to be united in the silken bands, on Tuesday of this very week.—The bridal presents had been made, many of the rich and glittering ornaments probably having come from the lot of jewelry he had on hand. The bride-to be was regarded as a fortunate girl by her female associates, in asmuch as she had won the heart of a "rich man, distinguished in his profession, and one, too, who had studied in France." The wedding day was fixed for the 2d of June, a sweet time for the union of two loving hearts. But, the espionage of the bank officers is very uncongenial to matrimonial anticipation, because instead of allowing Doctor William H. Eldridge to do as he liked in such matters, their peeping about has had the effect to transfer the blushing bridegroom to Moyamensing prison, instead of permitting him to be transported to the arms of a lovely fair one; and when he shall have met the just sentence of the law, he will be very likely to be transported to the Eastern Penitentiary to turn a spinning jenny in the employ of the Great State of Pennsylvania.

The lady must rejoice, poetically, that there is a "slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," otherwise she would have been lost in her connexion with a scoundrel who is evidently a disgrace to human nature, and who has ever been a burthen upon his fellow-men. How awfully are almost all our communities preyed upon by such scoundrels, well-dressed and even accomplished in the manners of gentlemen. Eldridge has walked in the first society, in various places.—Trenton, New York, Albany, Paris, Philadelphia and elsewhere. He is a man of superior address, well calculated to deceive. But what a lesson does he leave for young ladies and their parents, to be ever determined to receive no stranger by appearances: Infinitely better have a worthy mechanic for a husband, than a travelled rogue, with "forty suits." We make this remark for the benefit of others, and not to inflict another pang upon the heart of the deceived young lady, for whom we feel the most sincere regret.

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We append the following letter from our colaborer, which will be of interest to our readers although some of the particulars are elsewhere alluded to:

SOUTH TRENTON, Saturday night.

E. Holden, Esq.

Dear Sir:—I have just passed half an hour in conversation with an intimate friend of the young lady's sister to whom Dr Eldridge was engaged to be married.—Her friends are very anxious lest her NAME should be bandied about in the newspapers. She is now in the deepest distress, as the fellow was a very interesting and loveableable man for a young lady of sixteen. A week ago he said to his betrothed's mother, "One week from to-day I shall have the honor to call you mother; as on that day I shall be united to my adored ———, to whom I shall bring an unstained name and an honest heart!" I am assured the scoundrel has a wife and several children! This is the blackest crime of all. My friend says he is another *admirable* Crichton in accomplishments and address. He is perfectly lavish of his funds, (well he may be!) and the centre-tables of his intended groaned beneath the weight of the choicest foreign and domestic souvenirs, &c.—A singular circumstance is that the intended father-in-law was one day reading to Eldridge, from a city new-paper, the very account of his successful fraud upon the Banks and remarked that he admired the exceeding adroitness of the trick, which must have been one of a master-hand. "Yes," carelessly said the rogue himself, "it was pretty well done, I guess the chap has sense enough to make himself scarce."

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FARMERS LOOK HERE.—We published in a late number, an extract from the Ledger, mentioning that a valuable importation of cattle, *had been made* by the packet ship Philadelphia, lately arrived at New York. We are happy to lay before our friends in the country the following statements in reference to their original cost, &c. and we are sure that our farmers will agree with us in the pleasure we feel that such an addition has been made to the stock of our country.

[Del. Gaz.

Valuable Importation of Cattle and Sheep.—We yesterday inspected the valuable collection of cattle and Sheep, brought out in the packet ship Philadelphia, Captain Morgan, from London. They consist of the following:

A cow called Gray, 5 years old, cost 120 guineas.
A calf, Sir George, 6 weeks old, 10 do.
A cow, Lumpey, 8 years old, 100 do.
Ditto, Maria, 3 years old, 105 do.
A calf, Matilda, 9 weeks old 20 do.
Ditto, Major, 11 weeks old, 50 do.
A Heifer, Spot, 2 years old, 100 do.
Ditto, Astor Beauty, 2 years old, 80 do.
Ditto, Nancy, 2 years old 60 do.
Ditto, Victor, 1 year old, 80 do.
Ditto Flora, 1 year old, 60 do.
Ditto, Cherry, 1 year old, 60 do.
Three rams, 75 guineas; 10 ewes, 75 do; 1 do, 10 do; 1 do, 20 do; insurance, freight and passages, 453 do—Total 1518 guineas, or $17,761,55.

We have never seen so fine a selection of stock landed on our shores. The cows are prodigious in size, and their form denote great strength and power. They are all from Herefordshire, and are the very best breed that England can produce. The sheep are of extraordinary size, being the Costwold cross, with the Bakewell Lincolnshire, and the very best animals of the kind we have ever seen. They are imported by Mr. Wm. Henry Southard of Jefferson county, New York, who sent expressly to England to select them, being for himself and Mr. Erastus Corning of Albany. The introduction of valuable stock like this is of immense importance to our agricultural and farming interest, for which Mr. S. deserves the thanks of the public. They have been brought out in fine condition by Captain Morgan, and without any accident.

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GREAT GUESSING.

A SHEEP STORY.

In the bar room of a public inn located near the central portion of the "down east," dominion, there were gathered together one evening a knot of politicians upon a small scale, intermixed with a due proportion of gratified listeners, among whom might be counted a traveller who had stopped at the tavern for the night. As is usual in a country village, this bar room answered for a coffee house, theatre, &c., for the only amusement the residents could avail themselves of was that of listening to each other's stories. Upon the evening in question, then, the usual assemblage was busily engaged in contributing to the general fund of entertainment. The post master, a man of letters, had told a moving tale; the shoeker had perpetrated a joke, which was stupid enough to be his *last*; the blacksmith, a great hand at "old SLEDGE," gave in his experience; and the landlord, "himself a HOST," performed a prominent part. For a good length of time the traveller to whom we have before alluded, a rough specimen of country farmer, shrewd, intelligent and good humored, amused himself by laughing at their jokes when they laughed, admiring their faculty of relating great lies with an air of candour and apparent truth and seemingly was much edified and instructed — Finally the conversation turned upon farming matters, one about a large hog he had raised, and another had been fortunate enough to own an immense calf. — The stranger properly determined not to be outdone in this line, now lifted his voice.

"You all know where Stoddard is, don't you?"

"O, yes," replied the crowd.

"And what a darned place it is for rocks?"

"O, yes."

"Where they have to sharpen the noses of the sheep so that they can pick out the grass between the stones? Well, I live in that town and own a farm on the hill near the meeting house. Last May I went to Wethersfield and bought of old Consul Jarvis a sheep, half blood merino, one of the same he himself brought from Spain. It was one of the finest looking wethers I ever saw, white as milk, fat as butter, and very large, with long wool. I wanted to try an experiment in the mutton line because I had discovered a new mode of keeping which every body said would be everlasting fine. I took the sheep home and for the first month kept it on nothing but herd's grass, and gave it nothing to drink but rain water! for the next month I turned it into a pasture where there was not a spear of clover, and gave it a little salt precisely at twelve o'clock each Saturday and Wednesday; I then put the sheep in the barn again, and kept it on new mowed clover one month longer and gave it a pint of milk and water every night at sundown. Three days afterwards I killed the sheep, the fattest animal I ever saw. Now, gentlemen, how many pounds of tallow d'ye think that sheep yielded? Guess."

During this recital, which had been listened to with much interest, several of the "knowing ones," had interrupted the stranger to make enquiries, in order to understand fully the course of feeding and treatment which had been adopted: After he finished the landlord brought a piece of chalk and shingle and they all "chalked round," that is, each one marked the number of pounds of tallow he supposed was taken from the sheep. Some named twenty pounds, some thirty and some less, all had made a guess, and the stranger stood, with coat tail parted and back to the fire evidently thinking of other matters."

"Well, neighbor," said the post master, we've all chalked. How much did the tallow weigh?

"How much?" said the traveller, "Oh! there you are too hard for me—*I did'nt take the trouble to weigh it.* Landlord, if you'll give me a candle I'll go to bed. Good night, gentlemen."

We have heard this story told a thousand times, but never having seen it in print, we give it to our readers in the absence of other matter.

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Messrs. Editors:—The following notice of the fourth Provincial Council, or the fourth Council of the Catholic Bishops of the United States, may not be uninteresting to your readers.

About 11 o'clock on Sunday morning the 17th inst., a numerous procession, comprising thirteen prelates, a large body of clergymen, clerical students, and others appointed to serve in the sanctuary, moved from the Archbishop's residence around the Cathedral, on the south side, and entered the great western door. Seldom has it fallen to the lot of our citizens to witness a more solemnly impressive scene, than that afforded by this procession. The Cross, the well known emblem of redemption, was borne at the head. The richness and variety of the costumes of the second order of the clergy, presented a most gorgeous spectacle; but when the prelates appeared, advancing with solemn step—their splendid vestments and mitres reflecting the rays of a clear sun—the effect was indescribable, and the dense mass of spectators that filled the Cathedral yard, testified their admiration by the most respectful conduct. As the procession entered the church, the choir struck up an enliving march, which added much to the grandeur of the occasion.

At the end of the solemn pontifical Mass, which was celebrated by the Most Rev. Archbishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. England delivered one of those powerfully argumentative discourses which have so justly earned for him the first distinction

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