Friday, March 24, 1854.

The branch met pursuant to adjournment.

Present — John S Brown, Esq. President, and all the members except Messrs. Peters and Boulden.

Mr Roche presented the petition of James Menzies, relative to the steps of a house on Lombard Street, which was read and referred to the joint committee on highways.

Mr Simms presented the petition of the watchmen of the Southern District, asking an increase of pay, which was read and referred to the joint committee on police and jail.

Mr Weathers presented the petition of the Deptford fire company, asking an appropriation of $4,000, to rebuild their engine house, which was read and referred to the joint committee on fire companies.

The President presented the petition of Charles R Gallagher and others, asking leave to open a street on the south side of the Basin, construct a rail road, &c., which was read and referred to the joint committee on internal improvements.

Mr Norwood presented the petition of A. Schoubla, asking certain redress, which was read and referred to the joint committee on claims.

Mr Norwood presented the petition of C A Baker, asking the return of taxes paid in error, which was read and referred to the joint committee on claims.

Mr Weathers, chairman of the joint select committee, presented the following report and resolutions, which were read and laid on the table:

The joint select committee, to whom was referred a communication from the Mayor, covering a letter from Mr Tarver, of St. Louis, in relation to the donation of a portion of the public lands by Congress, for the benefit of juvenile reform schools, and also, a report from the board of managers of the House of Refuge, on the same subject, beg leave respectfully to report:

That deeply impressed with the incalculable utility of the establishment of Houses of Refuge, or Reform schools for juvenile delinquents in large cities, they have given due consideration to the subject of the Mayor's communication. The committee have also carefully examined the memorial already transmitted to Congress, and referred to by Mr Tarver, and are happy in discovering that the prayer therein made, is deserving of the

hearty co-operation of the City Council and entitled to the most favorable results from the action of Congress.

From their very nature large cities not only breed crime, but they attract it from surrounding districts. From the facilities for its commission, as well as from the greater immunity from detection, cities become nurseries in which are congregated the pauperism and vice of the whole country. Alms Houses may be provided for the first, and jails and penitentiaries may confine the older or more expert criminal, but in neither of these, nor even in the public school, nor in the institutions of religion with all their influence, is a sufficient and infallible remedy found for the prevention or reform of juvenile delinquency. It may not be urged that Governments have nothing to do with all this. It has been well said that "the State is parent of the child", and it is just here that responsibility rests. It is not all the duty of the Statesman to legislate for peace or war, for commerce, for manufactures, or for agriculture, for the acquisition of new territory or the forming of new states, but he is the profoundest in his political sagacity and the soundest in the science of political economy who keeps his eye on the moral condition of the masses and watches most closely the elements of the social organization as they are developed for good or for evil. If public virtue be pre-eminently the stay from republican institutions, then surely every means legitimately available for so great an end presents the highest claims for the consideration of the legislator. To prevent crime is a nobler duty than to pursue and punish it.

The memorial makes no unconstitutional prayer. It certainly has not thus been considered when other claims have been set forth for the support of common schools, for the indigent insane, for homesteads in the far west, or even for the construction of rail roads, all to be provided for either from the proceeds of the sales of public lands, or directly by a distribution of these lands themselves. The public domain is the right of all and should enure to the benefit of all. If it be wiser to reclaim the juvenile offender, than to permit him to grow up to manhood to become the expert graduate in crime, — and if no unconstitutional objection can be sustained to take of the common right to a common domain to aid in this reclamation, then most assuredly it were a wise policy to donate a comparatively small portion of the immense quantity of the