

THE AUTHORITY OF POLICEMEN The trial of policeman Patrick McDonald for the **murder** of Daniel Brown, colored, which has occupied the attention of the Criminal Court for some days, came to a conclusion yesterday, by the jury rendering a verdict of guilty of manslaughter, the least offense that could be found against the prisoner, which involves a penalty of imprisonment in the penitentiary for not more than ten years, or, at the discretion of the court, a fine of not more than \$500, or imprisonment in jail for not more than two years, or both fine and imprisonment in jail. The facts of the case are too familiar to our readers to require recapitulation—for they excited considerable public indignation. It seems to be conceded that there was no law to prohibit anyone from giving such an entertainment as was given by Brown on the night on which he was killed, and the noise that was made within the house did not justify an entrance of the police to stop it. Every man's house is his castle in the eye of the law, and it is the boast of an English orator that though the winds may enter the poorest hovel of the land, the king of England cannot enter it. Of course there are limitations to such a rule, but the offense given by the noisy party at Brown's did not come within any of the exceptions. The policeman had no right to go into his house for the reasons alleged in his excuse, and much less in resentment of offensive expressions. The verdict, while not of the gravest character which it was deemed would be justified by the facts, ought at all events to be an impressive admonition to policemen to understand the legal limits of their authority, instead of indulging such vague ideas on that subject as seem to have been held by the slayer of Brown. Policemen should bear in mind that they are ministers of the law, and hence should be conservators of the rights of the citizen and of the domicile. Above all, a man who accepts a police position puts himself under a moral obligation not to be governed by personal motives, and especially to keep cool and preserve self-control under the most irritating circumstances. The police board and its higher officers, while doing all in their power to maintain the efficiency of the force, should be careful to keep its members fully and clearly apprised of their powers as well as duties, so that they may not, under mistaken ideas of their authority, exercise arbitrary power, or even their functions, in any way except for the preservation of law and order, and in a spirit which both respects and protects the rights of the citizen, the humblest as well as the highest.