

cing the number of Magistrates in the several counties in the State;

In pursuance whereof, the speaker appointed Messrs. Coombes, Hicks, Matthews, Harding and Comegys, to compose said committee.

Mr. Carpenter, chairman of the committee on divorces, made an unfavourable report upon the petition of Ann Flinn, praying to be divorced from her husband Patrick Flinn,

Which was read the first, and by a special order the second time and concurred in.

Mr. Harris, chairman of the committee on grievances and courts of justice, delivered the following report;

The committee on grievances and courts of justice, to whom was referred a bill entitled, "an act to alter the Constitution so as to disfranchise persons convicted of felony," have considered the same and ask leave to submit the following report:

They presume it will not be contested that the right to vote, proposed by this bill to be withheld forever from a certain portion of the people, is in its character and consequences inestimable. To withhold it from all, would be effectually to establish a despotism. To deprive any of its advantages for present time, and in addition to cut men off from the prospect of its enjoyment in all time to come, is, in theory at least, and may be in fact, to visit them with the curée of unlimited slavery. Their chief defence, their most efficient guards against encroachments on their personal rights, are taken from them when you deprive them of this great parent of all rights, whether political or personal. They become subjected to laws which may have been made "without their consent," and which, however much their "lives, liberties and happiness" may require it, they can never have a part in "altering or abolishing." In a word, they are deprived of that which constitutes the only mode by which participation in the legislature is secured to them; a participation truly declared by our Bill of Rights to be "the best security of liberty, and the foundation of all free government." The persons proposed to be disfranchised forever by the 1st section of the bill, are such as shall be convicted of felony, and sentenced to confinement in the penitentiary; in other words, the political punishment, (if we may so call it,) is to be continued after personal punishment has made full atonement for the offence. The right to vote, it is true, is suspended during their confinement; this is a necessary consequence, and does not weaken, but rather strengthens our position. For the convict, when confined