By a recent decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of Norris against the city of Boston, by a bare majority of its judges, so much of a statute of this Commonwealth, "relating to Alien Passengers," passed the 20th of April, 1837, as imposes a tax of two dollars on alien passengers, is declared not to be within the constitutional power of the state, and therefore void.

Though this judgment of the court deeply affects the interests of Massachusetts, and other Atlantic states, and is alarming to the constitutional rights of the states, and overrules the unanimous decisions of the supreme courts of two of the states of this Union, it is the law of the land, and is to be respected and obeyed as such, by the people and the states of the Union, until it shall be reversed by the same high tribunal which has pronounced it.

Without some prompt action on the part of the Legislature, to protect the state against the unrestricted influx of aliens, of all classes, into its territory, which must follow this unexpected overthrow of one of its important and salutary laws, the consequences to the treasury, morals, and health of the people of the Commonwealth, may be most disastrous.

I suggest the propriety of so modifying the existing laws, as to require the master, owner, or consignee of such vessels as...
shall bring alien passengers within the limits of this state, to
execute sufficient bonds to save the state harmless from any fu-
ture charges or expenses, in supporting such aliens as paupers,
giving to the persons of whom such bonds shall be required, if
they shall ask it, the option of paying a sum of money for each
of said alien passengers, so brought into the state, instead of
said bond; the money so paid, to be appropriated for the support
of alien paupers.

It is believed that a provision of this kind would be within the
"power of the state to protect itself from foreign paupers, and
other persons who would be a public charge," according to the
principles laid down by the majority of the court, in the case
of Norris vs. the city of Boston.

GEO. N. BRIGGS.