# The Louisiana Democrat.

E. R. BIOSSAT] THE WORLD IS GOVERNED TOO MUCH [EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

VOLUME 25.] ALEXANDRIA, LA., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1869. [NUMBER 6.



## The Democrat.

TERMS:

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W. H. JONES.
Alexandria, July 28, 1869-1m.


ESTIMATE

Of Parish Expenses for 1869.

| | |
|---|---|
| Court House Expenses | $ 1500 00 |
| Payment of debts | 10,000 00 |
| Paupers | 1500 00 |
| Jury and witnesses fees | 4000 00 |
| Officers, Clerks, Physician, Attorney and Printing | 2500 00 |
| Jailor's Fees | 4000 00 |
| Coroner's Fees | 250 00 |
| Returning Officer of Election | 300 00 |
| Members of Police Jury | 500 00 |
| Contingent Expenses | 2500 00 |
| Commissioners for Collecting | 2500 00 |
| Bridge purposes | 3000 00 |
| | $32,550 |

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J. C. ROBERT.
Bayou Rapides, June 12, 1969-2t.


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THE DEMOCRAT

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CLEMENT B. YEAGER.
April 28th, 1869-3m.

## INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF THE YERGER CASE

YERGER'S FREAKS AND FOLLIES—REMINISCENCES OF HIS YOUTH, HIS CRIME, AND POSSIBLE INSANITY—THE MILITARY COMMISSION—LETTER FROM AN OLD FRIEND OF THE FAMILY.

[Correspondence Cincinnati Commercial.]

VICKSBURG, July 15, 1869.

Ohio and Mississippi are alike interested in the Yerger case, now being tried before the Military Commission at the Jackson Barracks. Will you allow a Mississippian, who knows something of the facts of the case, and a good deal of the Yerger family and the antecedents of Edward M. Yerger, to tell you a few things that will go to show—

First—That the homicide had not the slightest political or sectional significance.

Secondly—That it is not a crime to be punished; and

Lastly—That it is a calamity which ought to have been prevented.

The Yerger family is a numerous one, of the best standing, and more than usually intelligent. The madness of Colonel Yerger and this culminating trouble will not eclipse it. Edward's father was, without exception, one of the best of men. If he had a fault, it was indulgence of this youth. The boy was bright, and in make and deportment such as would delight a father's heart and gratify his pride.

From twenty to twenty-five Edward Yerger was the Chesterfield of Mississippi, and in dress a Beau Brummell. Those who remember him will readily admit, that, if not the handsomest, he was the best and most exquisitely dressed man in Mississippi. His fine person, bearing and style were just sufficiently tempered with a love of approbation, to tone down the imperiousness of an almost overpowering vanity. Yet he was not a fair representative of our Southern youth; he had vastly too much conceit. It fills me with something akin to scorn for this man, when I think of the thousands on thousands of our youth, with his graces of person, with more than his culture, and a thousand fold more honor and courage (as after events proved), the pride of our homes, the hope of our hearts, who were literally swept from the earth in their devotion to the Southern cause, during our calamitous struggle; but I have promised you facts, not sentiments.

Before the war Col. Yerger conducted things in great state. The turn-out he provided for Mrs. Yerger was finely appointed. He was never to be seen in my lady's carriage. He himself drove a splendid team, with liveried servants and appointments to match. His house, still standing, is a fine one, perhaps the largest, excepting the Executive mansion, that Grant and Sherman left. It is sad for me to visit Jackson now and behold the wreck that is of its former self. Before the war it was what it now, professes to be, but is not, the capital of the State. Then our richer planters often settled here for the sake of society and the education of their daughters. Jackson and the neighborhood contained many beautiful residences, homes of wealth and refinement, with surroundings belonging to an order of things now past, but that seem from this distance to have had a halo of grace and beauty peculiarly their own.

I look in vain for these fine homesteads now. The chimney stacks of many of them still stand, in grim mockery, amid the desolation of their once charming grounds. So numerous were our chimney stacks at one time, that at Vicksburg we spoke of Jackson as Chimneyville.

Colonel Yerger's family, in wealth and position, was among the first. How, I know not, whether the war, or his newspaper enterprises, or both combined, but certain it is that this branch of the Yerger family is now poor. Yerger has, till this trouble, lived in his fine home, but I verily believe that his refusal to pay his taxes arose from sheer inability. I think it may have been said with truth that, before this unfortunate occurrence, Col. Yerger's family was the poorest and proudest in Jackson. Of course, I mean relatively. A man who needs fifteen thousand dollars a year to keep up his establishment, and who could only, wit the most stingy economy, do it on ten thousand, but who has to do it in some way or other on five thousand or less, is poor indeed. This was Yerger's condition.

Now recall the circumstances attending the seizure of the piano. A respectable and leading family, with their just pride and associations, owing some three or four hundred dollars delinquent taxes, but believing in a counter claim of at least double the amount, for damages done their [property by an overflow, for which the city was supposed to be responsible. To satisfy the city's claim a levy is ordered. The Sheriff and officers of the law, armed with the Mayor's authority, with an express cart and a sufficient number of aids hired for the occasion, force an entrance to the house. The household is frightened, the piano, a cherished instrument, owned by the wife before her marriage is seized, and for the first time in the history of Jackson a respectable family is seemingly insulted, outraged and disgraced. Colonel Yerger was in Memphis at the time. To a man of ordinary type such a proceeding would have been a deep, bitter, galling humiliation; to a man of Yerger's temperament it was not merely maddening—it made him mad,—and the result is what we now deplore.

I have inquired of many persons why Col. Crane, a man uniformly well spoken of, could have acted in this unfeeling way, when Yerger had a *bona fide* claim against the city for at least twice the amount of these taxes. I am told that Col Crane was urged to do it, some say by those high in authority here; that he was twitted with cowardice, that he feared to do his duty, &c. My own opinion is that some base souls here, envious and craven-hearted, sought the humiliation of this family, and rested not till it was accomplished through official interference, but in such a way as to save their own skins. The trouble was provoked; a worthy man and good officer has lost his life. Why I think it a calamity, and no crime punishable by law, I can tell in a few sentences.

During a recent visit I made to Jackson, I spent one day at the Barracks, where the Military Commission is being held, and listened to the testimony of one of the medical experts, a physician of ability and good standing, and who had for many years known Col. Yerger and his kindred. The physician detailed some of the hallucinations he had himself witnessed, and gave his opinion of others that had been deposed to by others. He expressed his conviction that there was but one rational explanation; that it was a case of moral mania, a derangement of the moral faculties, but where the intellectual faculties were in a great measure undisturbed.

I confess that the testimony of this physician let considerable light into my own mind. I had again and again heard of Yerger's eccentricities, but I had not heard of many of the absolutely crazy acts, detailed in the testimony, and which, occurring for the most part in his own house, had been kept from the public. I had known of many of his unparalleled conceits, and, as I supposed, superabounding vanity. I used to laugh when my friend, the editor of the Memphis ———, would repeat to me dispatches he occasionally received from this genius. The usual strain ran thus: "Colonel E. M. Yerger, the undoubted leader of the Mississippi press, has announced his intention," "Col. E. M. Yerger, of Jackson, whose position as head of his party, and whose unquestioned ability," &c. Poor Yerger!

At the time the Democratic Convention was held in New York, I heard of some of the unaccountable conceits of Ed. Yerger, conceits now solved, but that came very near breeding grave disturbances at the time. General Freeman, and other delegates from this State, felt some astonishment and no little annoyance that so little attention was paid, and so few cards left for the Mississippi delegation. The usual attentions and courtesies were almost entirely wanting. It was soon accounted for. Ed. Yerger, with his damnable effrontery, (this was the explanation given to me) had ordered the clerk of the hotel to send all the cards for the Mississippi delegation, to his room, and it was done. He was the Mississippi delegation, the honors should therefore be his.

During that memorable convention a little event transpired, which for certain reasons, I recall with peculiar interest. Mrs. Senator Sprague invited Colonel Yerger to one of her receptions. Whether others of the Mississippi delegation, were invited or not, I am not now positive, but our hero alone went Mrs. Sprague was, as she always, is, enchanting; "she fanned herself with the grace of an hour;" so Ed Yerger said, "but I captivated, I perfectly vanquished her."

It is convincing evidence to my mind that Yerger is morally and legally irresponsible for the terrible deed he has committed, that he has, as I am credibly informed, no realizing sense of the heinousness of his offense. His manner in the Court room interested me. He pretended to be reading a newspaper most of the time, but when some point in the testimony would arrest his attention, he would lift his eyes over his glasses, as they were perched upon his nose, direct them toward the witness with a sort of half inquiry, half pitying contempt, as much as to say, "what will the idiot say next?" You could not say he was in the least interested in the testimony, at the same time he seemed not unconscious that it was testimony that might save his life.

I reached the Court-room before the opening of the Commission, and just as Yerger, his five or six guards with fixed bayonets, and the officer of the guard, came marching into the room. Yerger was hand-cuffed and manacled, but the chain was long enough to permit a tolerable stride. Yerger came on bolt upright, clanking his chain perfectly unabashed, neither broken nor bent. I caught his eye, at least I have no doubt of it, but he deigned no recognition. His hand-cuffs were removed as soon as he came into Court. No sane man, unless hardened in crime which Yerger is not, could bear up under this ordeal as this man does.

Colonel Yerger is fortunate in his counsel. The most striking circumstances in the court-room, next to seeing a civilian and an old friend tried by United States officers in bullion epaulettes, was the array of counsel. Mississippi might be searched in vain to match William Yerger, Harris, Simrall, Anderson, and Marshall as lawyers. They are the pride and the flower of the State. And how admirably, how patiently, how thoroughly they are managing the case! All that ability and manage can do is being done for Yerger, and, let me say, in the interests of law and justice.

The Commission are apparently officers of intelligence. Whatever their prejudices may be, they look like men quite able to decide, even in an unusual case like this, with justice and judgment. The President of the Commission, Gen. Swift, a medical officer, I judge, by his green sash, and probably selected for this reason—is a man of imposing appearance, and judging by a few words I herd from him in calling the Commission to order, is a person of culture and ability.

The two Judge Advocates who represent the Government in the prosecution, showed no lack of zeal in endeavoring to account for all of poor Yerger's crazy tricks on the ground of intoxication and *delirium tremens*. Those who know Yerger would never attempt the solution of the problem in this way.—It is not your hard drinker who, for instance, delivers a speech in New Orleans, and is so overpleased with his exploits that nothing short of presenting himself with a carriage, on behalf of his admirers, will satisfy him.

But enough. Poor Yerger should never have been allowed to commit this deed. His friends are to blame that he should have been allowed to be habitually armed. Justice will not permit him to be hanged, but for the rest of his life, he should be confined.

My gossip would be incomplete were I to omit saying that Colonel Yerger is not a type of a Southern man, and is very far from being dear to Southern hearts. When conscription was the law of our necessity, Colonel Yerger forsook his friends, sought shelter at the Federal headquarters at Vicksburg, and betrayed cowardice and disloyalty to his section by telling all he knew or could learn of the Confederate movements.

But enough. We like the Cincinnati Commercial down here, because it gives us reliable news. We don't always like your opinions, but we do like your enterprise and honesty.

When we get more labor settled in our State—it matters not much whether it is black, white or copper-colored—and when our State capital is removed, as it will be, to a more eligible and advantageous position, you may expect to hear of the increasing prosperity and growing importance of

VICKSBURG.

☞ Old errors are stubborn errors. It took a long time to prove to people that the earth was round, and turned on its axis and revolved around the sun. It was, however, satisfactorily demonstrated at last. It seems that an error almost as hard to eradicate has been found in the English Admiralty chart. The London Times, speaking of the laying of the French cable by the Great Eastern, says:

The course of the vessel would have brought the Great Eastern close to the northward of the supposed gaunt spires of rocks called the "Three Chimneys," and which, as laid down in the Admiralty chart, were confidently believed to exist. When this was mentioned some months ago in the Times, a controversy at once arose in these columns, some naval men utterly denying the existence of these extraordinary rocks, while the other side tendered the evidence of eye witnesses, who averred that they had actually seen them. The matter is now at rest, and if ever the "Three Cimneys" had an existence, they have none now. The Atlantic cannot afford to lose the small amount of interest which attached to the supposed presence of these solitary peaks, but "facts are stubborn thing," and it has been placed beyond a doubt that they are not to be found, at least in the latitude and longitude in which they appear on the charter. Lieut. Johnson, in the course of his soundings, went over the exact spot where they are indicated in the chart, and found more than two thousand fathoms of water, with deep water all around, and not the slightest trace of rock or shoal in any direction. The sooner, therefore, they come out of the Admiralty map the better, and it would be curious to know how they ever got there at all.

☞ Governor elect Walker, of Virginia, was serenaded at Binghampton, New York, on Friday night. He made a speech in response, saying his election in Virginia was the triumph of reconstruction measures over carpet-baggers.

## A First Class Yawp.

The Virginia election has brought forth nothing so stupendous as this howl from Wendell Phillips:

"Still, while the Chief Justice plots to bring rebels into power, this shiftless and incapable Administration allows State after State to slip out of its hands. It is time some one should sound a note of warning. We gave Johnson six months trial, and are willing to wait as long for Grant. We mean, therefore, to express now only our serious fears, not our settled distrust. When Grant, so absurdly, and without consultation, flung an Administration at the country, we trembled at such proof of his unfitness for his great place. And every hour's experience with that Administration has increased our fears. What we demand of the thoughtless and timid men who made a mere camp captain our President, is that they save us from the consequences of their mistake by surrounding him with men who comprehend the hour and are brave enough to meet it. General Grant has all the physical courage that the Virginia campaign of 1863 needed. He has shown himself too weak and irresolute to conduct the Virginia campaign of '69. A soldier's courage is one thing. General Grant has it. A statesman's courage is a totally distinct quality.—Hitherto Grant has given no evidence of possessing it. In the camp one of his chief merits was that he knew how to choose his agents admirably. In civil affairs he has blundered in his choice like a child.

* * * * * *

"Until Georgia admits colored men to their Legislative seats, fill every office in the State with blacks, to make rebels understood the Government and keep the balance even. Throw the whole weight of the National Government into that scale in Tennessee, Mississippi and Texas, which will give loyal men the rule—loyal men sustained by education, land, political rights, and by business so fostered and protected that it will remodel the State.

"The nation gropes and feels round for a Government—and grasps only air. Mr. President, if you cannot draw your sword,, at least show your hand! Rebeldom is doing great things illegally. Your administration is doing nothing strictly according to law.

"The pilot who sleeps at the helm is as guilty as he who deliberately runs the ship upon Gibraltar. The blood of the murdered loyalists of Georgia is on the skirts of this Administration. I would rather be Lee at Appomattox—no, not Lee, the executioner and assassin of Libby Prison—be any kave rather that Lee—but I would rather be Pemberton, surrendering at Vicksburg, than Grant successfully and safely defied in the White House.

"WENDELL PHILLIPS."

FEMALE SOCIETY.—You know my opinion of female society. Without it we should degenerate into brutes. This observation applies with tenfold force to the young men, and those who are in the prime of manhood. For, after a certain time in life, the literary man may make a shift (a poor one I grant) to do without the society of ladies. To a young man, nothing is so important as a spirit of devotion (next to his Creator) to some amiable woman, whose image may occupy his heart; guard it from polution which besets it on all sides. A man ought to choose his wife, as Mrs. Primrose did her wedding gown, for qualities that "wear well." One thing at least is true, that if matrimony has its cares, celibacy has no pleasures. A Newton, or mere scholor, may find employment in study; a man of literary taste can receive in books a powerful auxiliary; but he must have a bosom friend, and children around him to cherish and support the dreariness of old age.

THE WONDER OF THE AGE.—Professor Samuel Gardiner, the electrician, at the Capitol, has lately invented and patented in Europe and this country, a self lighting gas-burner which, on turning on the gas, it is instantaneously lighted. If blown out by accident or intentionally it immediately reignites himself. In fact, it cannot be blown out without immediately lighting again. The burner is so constructed as to cause fifteen per cent more perfect combustion of the gas, flame being steady and preventing the flickering of the gas flame, which is the case with all burners now used. It is just what the public has been looking for since the introduction of gas. No matches or electricity are required. Public buildings, churches, theatres, hotels, stores and private residences can now dispense with the danger of matches and flambeaux. By turning on the gascock of any public building, 10,000 gas burners will spring in light in a second of time. Hundreds have, within a few days, visited the rooms of Mr. Gardiner, at the Capitol, and witnessed the wonderful invention. Two of the largest gas-burner manufactories in New York are now manufacturing this burner, and orders are received daily from all parts of the country. Prof. Gardiner has spent years in perfecting the lighting and turning on gas by electricity, which has proved a perfect success for the last four years in lightoing the Capitol. His scientific studies have now resulted in this last invention—a self-lighting gas-burner—which can be seen in the rooms of the electric gas lighting department at the Capitol.—[Washington Intelligencer.